(103:1-3)

It is the duty of the head of state and all his representatives to implement the *Sharī'ah* at the state level. Keeping in view the welfare of the society, they must enforce the directives of Islam. While pointing out the objectives of an Islamic State, the *Qur'ān* says:

> [These believers are those who], if We grant them authority in this land, will establish regular prayers and pay *Zakāh* and enjoin what is virtuous and forbid what is evil. (22:41)

It is the duty of religious scholars to guide the people in their religious obligations and warn them against the dreadful fate that awaits them if they do not fulfill these obligations. The *Qur'ān* refers to this responsibility of the scholars in the following words:

> It was not possible for all the believers to undertake [this job]. So why did not a few from every group among them come forward to gain sound knowledge in religion and warn their [respective] people, when they returned to them that they may also take heed. (9:122)

It is to be noted that the sphere of authority in which a common Muslim can forcibly forbid evil lies within his sphere of responsibility is his own family, as is evident from the following *Ḥadīth* of the Prophet (sws):

> Beware! Each of you is a shepherd of his flock, and each shall be asked about his flock. (*Muslim, Kitābu'l-Imārah*)

A Muslim has not been given the permission to use force outside his sphere of authority. The only thing he can do outside this sphere is to urge and exhort people.

The sphere of authority of an Islamic State is all its citizens. It has all the authority to forcibly eliminate evil among its citizens.

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Some Types of Corruption
in the Text of the Old Testament

Abdus Sattar Ghauri

Some excerpts are being quoted below from some authorities to afford the reader a first hand knowledge of corruption and interpolation in the Old Testament. Encyclopaedia Britannica, under the article 'Bible', explains that the books of the Bible are younger by almost 1,000 years than its earliest text and during this gap (i.e. prior to the 2nd century AD), owing to various causes, a larger number of corruptions indisputably were introduced into the Hebrew text:

The form in which the Hebrew text of the OT [Old Testament of the Bible] is presented in most manuscripts and printed editions is that of the Masoretic text, the date of which is usually placed somewhere between the 6th and 8th centuries AD. It is probable that the present text became fixed as early as the 2nd century AD [i.e. ca. one thousand four hundred years after Moses], but even this early date leaves a long interval between the original autographs of the OT writers and the present text. Since the fixing of the Masoretic text [the 2nd century AD] the task of preserving and transmitting the sacred books has been carried out with the greatest care and fidelity, with the result that the text has undergone practically no change of real importance; *but before that date [the 2nd century AD], owing to various causes, a larger number of corruptions indisputably were introduced into the Hebrew text. Originally the text consisted only of consonants, since the Hebrew language had an alphabet without vowels. It is also likely that in the*

earliest texts the words and sentences were not divided [stress added]. The evolution of the Masoretic text was an attempt to make up for both these deficiencies. It supplied vowels by adding marks to the consonantal text, and it divided the words and sentences. For many centuries it was believed that these vowel points formed part of the original text; some theologians argued that the points were inspired by the Holy Spirit. But subsequently research has proved beyond doubt that they are younger by almost 1,000 years than the text itself.[1]

The Encyclopedia Britannica asserts that the credibility of even the Massoretic text is not above board and it is obvious that the text has been tampered with in some places:

On the basis of a variety of evidence it is possible to show that the Masoretic text is not a completely reliable index to the readings of the autographs of the OT. *Even a superficial comparison between its readings and the Septuagint[2] translation discloses many passages in which the translators of the OT into Greek ascribed different vowels to the consonantal text or divided the words differently from the way they are now divided in the Hebrew text* [stress added]. In other passages, they simply had another text before them. Considering that the Septuagint translation antedates the Masoretes by so long a span, we are forced to admit that the Hebrew text underlying it sometimes comes closer to the original reading of a particular passage than does the Masoretic. Other evidence, too, renders an uncritical acceptance of Masoretic readings impossible; it is obvious that the text has been tampered with in some places. [3]

According to this article of the Enc. Britannica, the case of the Septuagint (LXX) is also very disappointing. Some of its texts

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, na, Vol.3, p. 577.
2. Septuagint means seventy commonly written as LXX. It was the Greek translation of the OT of the Bible made by almost seventy or seventy two scholars in Alexandria during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.
3. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, na, Vol.3, p. 577.

are confused:

> What complicates the task is, among other things, the sorry
> state of the Septuagint text itself. Parts of it are well attested
> and may form the basis for judgements about the Hebrew,
> but other parts are so confused textually that in some
> instances scholars are inclined to posit two or more
> translations. After all, without a reliable text of the
> translation, the translation cannot very well be used to
> emend the text of the original. What is more, a study of the
> Septuagint also reveals many passages in which the
> translators purposely paraphrased the text or changed its
> meaning when the original was either embarrassing to them
> or unclear; for example, certain concrete terms in Hebrew
> are translated into abstract terms in Greek to avoid the
> charge of anthropomorphism.[4]

The Encyclopedia Britannica indicates that the Dead Sea
Scrolls provide the evidence of the existence of several textual
traditions even in Hebrew:

> They [The Dead Sea Scrolls] make clear the existence of
> several textual traditions even in Hebrew; they have
> therefore made important contributions to the textual
> criticism of the OT, but they have not solved its fundamental
> problem. Barring a major discovery of manuscript materials,
> this problem is probably insoluble, and the best that can be
> achieved is an approximation of the text of the OT.[5]

To sum up the above article of the Encyclopedia Britannica, it
is presented as follows. Attempt has been made to remain as
close to the writer's words as possible:

1. Probably the present text became fixed [canonized] in
   the 2nd century AD [ca. 1400 years after Moses].
2. Before the 2nd century AD, owing to various causes, a
   number of corruptions indisputably were introduced
   into the Hebrew text.

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4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, na, Vol.3, p. 577.
5. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, na, Vol.3, p. 577.

3. The original text consisted only of consonants, without vocalization or vowel signs, which was a large source of confusion.

4. The words and sentences were not divided in the earlier texts.

5. Even a superficial comparison between the Hebrew Masoretic text and its Greek translation (Septuagint or the LXX) discloses that in many passages of the LXX the words are differently divided from the present Hebrew text.

6. As the texts have obviously been tampered with in some places, the task of arriving at a reliable text is very complicated.

7. The sorry state of the Septuagint text itself also complicates the task.

8. The translators of the LXX purposely paraphrased the text or changed its meaning when the original was either embarrassing to them or unclear.

9. The Dead Sea Scrolls make clear the existence of several textual traditions even in Hebrew.

10. The best that can be achieved is an approximation of the text of the OT.

AD 1988 Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica has afforded a 104 page article on '*Biblical Literature*'. It has explained the theme under the sub-heading 'Textual Criticism: Manuscript Problems.' Some of the relevant passages are reproduced hereunder. It asserts that the vowel signs were introduced to the Bible text between the 7th and 9th centuries CE:

The text of the Hebrew printed Bible consists of consonants, vowel signs, and cantillation (musical or tonal) marks. The two latter components are the product of the school of Masoretes (Traditionalists) that flourished in Tiberias (in Palestine) between the 7th and 9th centuries CE. The history of the bare consonantal text stretches back into hoary antiquity and can be only partially traced. (….); there is much evidence for the existence of a period when more than one Hebrew text-form of a given book was current. In fact, both the variety of witnesses and the degree of textual divergence between

them increase in proportion to their antiquity.[6]

According to the writer of this article of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the biblical text must have endured a long period of oral transmission before its committal to writing:

In the case of some biblical literature, there exists the real possibility, though it cannot be proven, that it must have endured a long period of oral transmission before its committal to writing. In the interval, the material might well have undergone abridgement, amplification, and alteration at the hands of transmitters so that not only would the original have been transformed, but the process of transmission would have engendered more than one recension from the very beginning of its written, literary career. (….), the possibility of inadvertent and deliberate change, something that effects all manuscript copying, was always present.

The evidence that such, indeed, took place is rich and varied. First there are numerous divergences between the many passages duplicated within the Hebrew Bible itself — e.g. the parallels between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. (…). There are also rabbinic traditions about the text-critical activities of the scribes (*soferim*) in Second Temple times. These tell of divergent readings in Temple scrolls of the Pentateuch, of official 'book-correctors' in Jerusalem, of textual emendations on the part of scribes, and of the utilization of sigla (signs or abbreviations) for marking suspect readings and disarranged verses. The Samaritan Pentateuch and the pre-Masoretic versions of the OT made directly from the Hebrew originals are all replete with divergences from current Masoretic Bibles. Finally, the scrolls from the Judaean desert, especially those from the caves of Qumran, have provided, at least, illustrations of many of the scribal processes by which deviant texts came into being. The variants and their respective causes may be classified as follows: aurally conditioned, visual in origin, exegetical, and deliberate.[7]

6. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, 1988, Vol. 3, p. 759f.
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, 1988, Vol. 3, p. 759f.

According to it the 'Problems resulting from Aural Conditioning', 'Problems Visual in Origin', 'Exegetical Problems', and 'Deliberate Changes' are as follows:

1. Aural Conditioning
These would result from a mishearing of similar sounding consonants when a text is dictated to the copyist. Negative particle *lo'*, for example, could be confused with the prepositional *lo*, 'to him', or guttural *ḥet* with spirant *kaf* so that *aḥ* 'brother' might be written for *akh* 'surely'.

2. Problems Visual in Origin
The confusion of graphically similar letters, whether in paleo-Hebrew or Aramaic script, is another cause for variations. Thus, the prepositions *bet* ('in') and *kaf* ('like') are interchanged in the Masoretic and Dead Sea Scroll texts of Isaiah.

i. The Order of Letters also might be Inverted. Such 'Metathesis', as it is called, appears in Psalms, in which *qirbam* ('their inward thoughts') stands for *qibram* ('their grave').

ii. *Dittography*, or the inadvertent duplication of one or more letters or words, also occurs, as, for example, in the DSS (Dead Sea Scroll) text of Isaiah and in the Masoretic text of Ezkiel.

iii. *Haplography*, or the accidental omission of a letter or word that occurs twice in close proximity, can be found, for example, in the DSS text of Isaiah.

iv. *Homoeoteleuton* occurs when two separate phrases or lines have identical endings and the copyist's eye slips from one to the other and omits the intervening words. A comparison of the Masoretic text I Samuel, chapter 14 verse 41, with the Septuagint and the Vulgate versions clearly identifies such an aberration.

3. Exegetical Problems
This third category does not involve any consonantal

alteration but results solely from the different possibilities inherent in the consonantal spelling. Thus the lack of vowel signs may permit the word *DBR* to be read as a verb *DiBeR* ('he spoke', as in the Masoretic text of Hosea) or as a noun *DeBaR* ('the word of', as in the Septuagint). The absence of word dividers could lead to different divisions of the consonants. Thus, *BBQRYM* in Amos could be understood as either *BaBeQaRYM* ('with oxen', as in the Masoretic text) or as *BaBaQaR YaM* ('the sea with an ox'). The incorrect solution by later copyists of abbreviations is another source of error. That such occurred is proved by a comparison of the Hebrew text with the Septuagint version in, for example, II Samuel, chapter 1 verse 12; Ezkiel, chapter 12 verse 23; and Amos, chapter 3 verse 9.

4. Deliberate Changes

Apart from mechanical alterations of a text, many variants must have been consciously introduced by scribes, some by way of glossing—i.e. the insertion of a more common word to explain a rare one—and others by explanatory comments incorporated into the text. Furthermore, a scribe who had before him two manuscripts of a single work containing variant readings, and unable to decide between them, might incorporate both readings into his scroll and thus create a '***conflate text***'.[8]

After pointing out the forms of corruption in the text of the OT, the writer of the article describes the difficulties in the reconstruction of the original text:

The situation so far described poses two major scholarly problems. The first involves the history of the Hebrew text, the second deals with attempts to reconstruct its "original" form.

As to when and how a single text type gained hegemony and then displaced all others, it is clear that the early and widespread public reading of the scriptures in the synagogues of Palestine, Alexandria, and Babylon was

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8. Encyclopaedia Britannica, University of Chicago, 1988, Vol. 3, p. 759f.

bound to lead to a heightened sensitivity of the idea of a 'correct' text and to give prestige to the particular text form selected for reading. Also, the natural conservatism of ritual would tend to perpetuate the form of such a text. The *letter of Aristeas*, a document derived from the middle of the 2nd century BCE that describes the origin of the Septuagint, recognizes the distinction between carelessly copied scrolls of the Pentateuch and an authoritative Temple scroll in the hands of the high priest in Jerusalem. The rabbinic traditions about the textual criticism of Temple-based scribes actually reflect a movement towards the final stabilization of the text in the Second Temple period. (…).

In regard to an attempt to recover the original text of a biblical passage—especially an unintelligible one—in the light of variants among different versions and manuscripts [MSS] and known causes of corruption, it should be understood that all reconstruction must necessarily be conjectural and perforce tentative because of the irretrievable loss of the original edition. But not all textual difficulties need presuppose underlying mutilation. (…) Furthermore, each version, indeed each biblical book within it, has its own history, and the translation techniques and stylistic characteristics must be examined and taken into account. (…). None of this means that a Hebrew MS, an ancient version, or a conjectural emendation cannot yield a reading superior to that in the received Hebrew text. It does mean, however, that these tools have to be employed with great caution and proper methodology.

Texts and manuscripts. *Sources of the Septuagint*. A Greek translation of the OT, known as the Septuagint [LXX] because there allegedly were 70 or 72 translators, six from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, and designated LXX, is a composite of the work of many translators labouring for well over 100 years. *It was made directly from Hebrew originals that frequently differed considerably from the present Masoretic text. Apart from other limitations attendant upon the use of a translation for such purposes, the identification of the parent text used by the Greek translators is still an unsettled question* [stress

added].[9]

The salient features of the above quotation are being afforded hereunder as a recapitulation to make the concept clear. Attempt has been made to remain as close to the writer's words as possible:

1. Vowel signs were introduced into the Heb. Bible by Masoretes between the 7th and 9th centuries CE [AD]. They did not exist before it.
2. More than one Hebrew Text-forms of the books of the Bible existed for a long time.
3. Some Bible books must have endured a long period of oral transmission before their committal to writing.
4. Between its oral transmission and committal to writing the material might well have undergone ***abridgement***, ***amplification***, and ***alteration*** at the hands of the transmitters.
5. The possibility of inadvertent and deliberate change was always present. The variants and their respective causes may be classified as follows: (a) ***Aurally conditioned***; (b) ***Visual in origin***; (c) ***Exegetical***; and (d) ***Deliberate***.
6. Problems resulting from ***aural conditioning*** occurred due to mishearing of similar sounding consonants when a text was dictated to a copyist.
7. ***Problems visual in origin***: (a) The confusion of graphically similar letters, e.g. '*B*' and '*K*', which respectively mean '*in*' and '*like*'; (b) ***Metathesis***, i.e. inversion in the order of letters in a word, e.g. '*qibram*' [their grave] was changed as '*qirbam*' [their inward thoughts]; (c) ***Dittography***, i.e. Duplication of one or more letters or words; (d) ***Haplography***, i.e. Omission of a letter or word that occurs twice in close proximity; (e) ***Homoeoteleuton***, which occurs when two separate phrases or lines have identical endings and the copyist's eye slips from one to the other and omits the intervening words.

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9. Enc.. Britannica, University of Chicago, 1988, Vol. 3, p. 760.

8. ***Exegetical Problems***: (a) due to different possibilities inherent in the consonantal spelling in the absence of the vowel signs; (b) the incorrect solution of the abbreviations by the later copyists.

9. ***Deliberate Changes***: Glosses and explanatory comments consciously introduced by the scribes and subsequently incorporated in the text.

10. In regard to an attempt to recover the original text of a biblical passage—especially an unintelligible one—in the light of variants among different versions and MSS and known causes of corruption, it should be understood that all reconstruction must necessarily be conjectural and perforce tentative because of the irretrievable loss of the original edition.

The Cambridge History of the Bible is a reliable reference book and an excellent source of knowledge. It has dealt with the theme in a number of articles. Some excerpts from only one of them, '*The Old Testament Text*', written by Shemaryahu Talmon, Professor of Bible, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem are afforded below:

Any account of the development of the text prior to c. 300 B.C., i.e. in the Persian period, not to mention the periods of the Babylonian exile or the first Temple, must perforce rely upon conjecture and, at best, upon deductions and analogies derived from later literature and later manuscripts. (….).

The *absence of vowels meant that many a Hebrew consonant group could be differently pronounced* [stress added], and from this resulted the fact that a variety of meanings could be attached to one and the same word in the original. When ultimately vowels were introduced into the Hebrew text of the Bible, these pronunciation variants sometimes became the basis of *variae lectiones*.[10]

The lack of any system of interpunctuation in written Hebrew at that time was another factor which gave rise to different interpretations of many passages. These diverging

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10. *variae lectiones*, ie. various readings.

interpretations may also in the end turn up as variants in versions which are based on fully interpunctuated manuscripts.[11]

The learned writer of this article asserts that 'In fact not one single verse of this ancient literature has come to us in an original MS, written by a biblical author or by a contemporary of his, or even by a scribe who lived immediately after the time of the author'. He asserts:

There is probably no other extant text, ancient or modern, which is witnessed to by so many diverse types of sources, and the history of which is so difficult to elucidate as that of the text of the OT. The task of the scholar who endeavours to trace the antecedents of the text as we know it today is further complicated by the fact that he is concerned with sacred literature, every word of which is considered to be divinely inspired and therefore infallible. However, *having been handed down by human agents for more than two millennia, the text of the scriptures suffered from the shortcomings of man. It becomes faulty to a greater or less degree and even at times distorted. It must therefore be subjected to scholarly critical analysis like any other ancient literary document* [stress added].

The OT books were handed down, as has been said, not only in their original Hebrew or, in some passages, Aramaic tongue, but also in a variety of translations into Semitic or non-Semitic languages. All these textual traditions, as we know them today, differ from one another. What is more, even the witnesses to one tradition, in the original language or in a translation, often diverge from one another. As a result, the scholar who takes a synoptic view of all the sources at his disposal is confronted with a plethora of *variae lectiones* in the extant versions of the OT books. This fact obviously does not become apparent in the common editions of the OT, in

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11. '*The Old Testament Text*', written by Shemaryahu Talmon, Professor of Bible, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in The Cambridge History of the Bible, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1970, p. 159f.

Hebrew or in translation, which are in every-day use. *However, it should be borne in mind that the printed editions represent the end of a long chain of textual development and of editorial activities which were aimed at unifying the sacred texts. These late editions can in no way be taken to exhibit faithfully the autographs of the biblical authors. In fact not one single verse of this ancient literature has come to us in an original MS, written by a biblical author or by a contemporary of his, or even by a scribe who lived immediately after the time of the author. Even the very earliest manuscripts at our disposal, in Hebrew or in any translation language, are removed by hundreds of years from the date of origin of the literature recorded in them* [stress added].

Even a cursory perusal of the sources available immediately reveals that *not one tradition and not one MS is without fault. Each and every one patently exhibits errors which crept into it during the long period of its transmission in the oral stage, when written by hand, and even, though to a lesser degree, when handed down in the form of printed books*. [stress added][12]

In spite of all his above findings the writer of the article has stressed that these errors and textual divergences between the versions materially affect the intrinsic message only in relatively few instances. He asserts:

It should, however, be stressed that these errors and textual divergences between the versions materially effect the intrinsic message only in relatively few instances. Nevertheless this may occur. Some examples of variants significant from a theological or ideo-historical angle may in fact be found. In most instances the differences are of a linguistic or grammatical nature, which resulted either from the unpremeditated impact of the linguistic peculiarities of successive generations of copyists, or from their intentional attempts to adjust the wording of scripture to changing concepts of linguistic and stylist norms.[13]

12. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 161f.
13. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 162.

The writer of the article has admitted that the older the biblical MSS (manuscripts) be, the wider is the over-all range of textual divergence between them. He says:

The above remarks do not, however, absolve us from accounting for the fact that the further back the textual tradition of the OT is followed, i.e. the older the biblical MSS perused, and the more ancient the records which come to the knowledge of scholars, the wider is the over-all range of textual divergence between them. The existing variants, therefore, cannot be simply explained as having arisen solely from the cumulative effect of imperfect copying and recopying of the text over many centuries. The very earliest biblical MSS known—and in this respect the biblical scrolls from Qumran are of decisive importance — exhibit practically all types of variants found in later witnesses. [14]

According to the learned writer of the article, Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon, it is almost impossible to trace back the original text of some book of the OT:

Even if by retracing the steps of textual development we may be able to arrive at the *Ur-text*[15] of this version or that, the question still remains open whether we shall ever be able to recover the *ipsissima verba*[16] of a biblical author.[17]

Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon points out that originally oral variations may ultimately turn up as textual variants. He further states that by the early third century B.C., the written transmission of biblical literature had completely replaced the oral tradition:

It should, however, be pointed out that originally oral variations may ultimately turn up as textual variants between duplicate texts within the OT. Such instances are found in

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14. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, p. 162.
15. The earliest version of a text from which extant texts are deemed to be derived.
16 The very word.
17 The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 163f.

two versions of one and the same Psalm embedded in a book of the Former Prophets and Psalms (e.g. 2 Sam. 22 = Ps. 18), in Chronicles and Psalms (e.g. 1 Chron. 16:8-36 = Ps. 105:1-15; 96: 1-13; 106: 1, 47-8), or in the Book of Psalms itself (e.g. Ps. 31: 2-4b = 71: 1-3; 60: 7-14 = 108: 8-14). Again, we meet with two or even three presentations of a piece of biblical literature in parallel passages in the Former and Latter Prophets (2 Kings 18:13 - 20:19 = Isa. 36:1 - 38:22 = 2 Chron. 32:1-20; 2 Kings 25:1-22 = Jer. 39:1-10 = 52:4-27; 2 Kings 25:27-30 = Jer. 52:31-4). To some extent also quotations from an earlier book in a later one may exhibit textual variants. However, in these cases literary license and a possible tendency towards intentional variation or rephrasing on the part of the writer who is borrowing may lie at the root of the present divergences. (…). The definite shift of emphasis from oral to written transmission of the biblical books would thus have become clearly apparent during the period of Return, i.e. at the end of the sixth and in the fifth century B.C., in what, from a wider historical viewpoint, may be termed the Persian period. (….) at this stage [i.e. the early third century B.C.], the written transmission of biblical literature finally and, to all intents and purposes, completely replaced oral tradition.[18]

The writer of the article under study, Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon, asserts that while translating the Hebrew text of the OT neither proper care had been observed nor authorized supervision:

At first, the translation of the scriptures into Aramaic was most probably sporadic and undirected. (…). Lacking authorized supervision, the resulting translation often assumed the form of a somewhat free paraphrase of the original, rather than of an accurate rendering into the translator's language. But even when a word-by-word translation was attempted, divergence from the Hebrew *Vorlage*[19] was inevitable. Translation from one language into another always produces inaccuracies since there is no exact

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18. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 164f.
19. An original version of a MS from which a copy is produced.

correspondence between the vocabulary and the syntax of the two, even if they belong to the same language family. Moreover, the probably divergent first renderings of the Hebrew scriptures into Aramaic were based on originals which may well have differed among themselves to a smaller or larger degree, for reasons set out above.

The same considerations apply with additional force to the translation of the OT books into Greek, a non-Semitic language. This translation was required, for reasons similar to those mentioned above, by Jews living within the sphere of Hellenistic culture, whether in Ptolemaic Egypt, where the Jewish community of Alexandria was the focal point, or in Palestine. Tradition maintains that in this case official non-Jewish agents also showed interest in rendering the OT into Greek, and instigated a properly supervised scholarly translation. This tradition will be further discussed subsequently. The Pseudepigraphic letter of Aristeas credits King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) with having inaugurated the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek by seventy sages. As a result of their concerted effort, the Septuagint, commonly designated LXX, was in the Pentateuch less open to the controlled impact of translators' idiosyncrasies. It contains indeed fewer deviations from the Hebrew text here than in the renderings of the other books. But it is still open to discussion that this reputedly official undertaking is to be considered the first attempt at translating the OT or parts of it into Greek and to have provided the impetus to further ventures of the same kind, or whether it should rather be viewed as an event which crowned a long series of previous diffuse attempts with a standardized version. (…). The ensuing embarrassing textual diversity of the versions of the sacred books soon called for the application of the methods of textual analysis and textual criticism to remedy this deficiency. As stated above, the ground for this new approach had been laid by the conjunction of scholarly norms borrowed from the Greeks with the care for the accurate transmission of the inspired literature which had been developed within Judaism.[20]

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20. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 167f.

The writer notes that deviations of the Samaritan Hebrew text—rediscovered by Pietro della Valle in 1616 and printed in 1632 by Morinus in Paris alongside the other versions—from the Massoretic text were estimated at about six thousand:

> The Samaritan text [the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch was rediscovered by Pietro della Valle in 1616] was made available to scholars shortly afterwards when Morinus first printed it in 1632 alongside the other versions in the Paris Polyglot. *Its many deviations from the Massoretic text, later estimated at about six thousand, were soon observed* [stress added]. It was further established that approximately one third [i.e. about two thousand] of these *variae lectiones* could be traced also in the LXX. This concurrence enhanced the doubts which had been raised concerning the veracity of the Massoretic text. It was maintained that, having been revised by the rabbis after the destruction of the Temple, in the first half of the second century A.D., it did not represent the *ipsissima verba*[21] of the divinely inspired message, but a faulty text, resulting from *incuria librariorum* or from wilful malicious tampering with it on the part of the Jews. (…). The rich crop of individual variants which were recorded in the apparatus of these works at first sight appeared to disprove the compactness and stability of the Hebrew text. However, closer scrutiny more and more strengthened the conviction that almost all of them can and should be classified as intentional or unintentional secondary scribal alterations. (….), the Greek tradition was deemed especially valuable for the purpose of purging the OT of anti-Christ falsifications which allegedly had been introduced into the Massoretic text by the rabbis.[22]

The worthy writer has also elucidated the impact of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are the oldest extant MSS of Bible, on the credibility of the text of the OT. He asserts, 'The Hebrew scrolls from Qumran prove beyond doubt the actual existence of variant readings in the biblical books of the

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21. ie. The very word.
22. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 170,71,74.

Hellenistic or Roman periods.' He concludes, 'the very notion of an exclusive *textus receptus* had not yet taken root at Qumran:

This (the First Isaiah Scroll, IQIs[a]), like many other MSS from Qumran, precedes the oldest extant MSS of any part of the OT in the Hebrew Massoretic tradition by more than a millennium, and those in Greek or any other translation by several centuries. (…). [p.183] Because of their diversity, the kaleidoscope of the textual traditions exhibited in them, their concurrence here with one, here with another of the known versions, or again in other cases their exclusive textual individuality, the biblical MSS found at Qumran, in their totality, present in a nutshell, as it were, the intricate and variegated problems of the Hebrew text and versions. (….) [p. 184ff].

The coexistence of diverse text types in the numerically, geographically and temporally restricted Covenanters' community, the fact that some or most of the conflicting MSS had very probably been copied in the Qumran scriptorium and that no obvious attempts at the suppression of divergent MSS or of individual variants can be discovered in that voluminous literature, proves beyond doubt that *the very notion of an exclusive textus receptus had not yet taken root at Qumran* [stress added]. (p.185)

We have no reason to doubt that this 'liberal' attitude towards divergent textual traditions of the OT prevailed also in 'normative' Jewish circles of the second and first centuries B.C. According to rabbinic testimony, even the model codices that were kept in the Temple precincts—the [a]zārāh—not only exhibited divergent readings, but represented conflicting text-types. [p.185] (…). The difference consists in the fact that in the end the Temple codices were collated, probably in the first century A.D. and, what is more important, that rabbinic Judaism ultimately established a model text and strove to banish deviant MSS from circulation. [p.185,86] (…). However, even the latest MSS from Qumran which provide evidence of the local history of the text in the crucial period, the last decades

before the destruction of the Temple, do not give the slightest indication that even an incipient *textus receptus* emerged there, or that the very notion of a model recension was ever conceived by the Covenanters.[23]

The writer says that mostly the textual variations involved are of the simplest and most common types:

In a majority of cases the textual variations involved are of the simplest and most common types: interchange of graphically similar letters or auricularly close consonants; haplography or dittography; continuous writing of separate words or division of one word into two; *plene*[24] or defective spelling (as in the cases adduced above); metathesis; differences of vocalisation, sometimes entailing a change of verb conjugations.[25]

He observes that the deliberate alterations into the text of scripture for various reasons of style and dogma have been incorporated in both: the MSS of Qumran and the Jewish MSS alike. He further says that the development of biblical text-transmission may be considered prototypes of phenomena that emerge concurrently and subsequently in the text-history of the OT in Jewish and Christian tradition:

(….), the deliberate insertion of textual alterations into scripture for various reasons of style and dogma, and uncontrolled infiltration of haphazard changes due to linguistic peculiarities of copyist or to their characteristic concepts and ideas, which may be observed in the wider transmission of the text, have their counterparts in the 'Qumran Bible' [p.190] (…). We thus encounter in the Qumran writings development of biblical text-transmission which may be considered prototypes of phenomena that emerge concurrently and subsequently in the text-history of the OT in Jewish and Christian tradition, albeit in less

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23. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol. 1, pp. 180-86.
24. Plene = pertaining to a system of full orthographic notations in Hebrew, whereby vowel sounds are indicated by certain vocalic signs.
25. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol.1, p. 188

concentrated form, and at different grades of variations.[26]

It is important to note that the worthy writer admits the actual existence of variant readings in the biblical books:

> The Hebrew scrolls from Qumran prove beyond doubt the actual existence of variant readings in the biblical books of the Hellenistic or Roman periods which until their discovery had been beyond the scope of textual research proper.[27]

To conclude and sum up the esteemed observations of Prof. Shemaryahu Talmon, Professor of Bible, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, they are presented as under:

1   Any account of the development of the text prior to c. 300 B.C. rely upon mere conjecture.

2   The absence of vowels meant that many Hebrew consonant groups could be differently pronounced and, consequently, a variety of meanings and interpretations could be attached to one and the same word in the original. When vowels were introduced into the Hebrew text of the Bible, they sometimes became the basis of *variae lectiones.*

3   Having been handed down by human agents for more than two millennia, the text of the Scriptures suffered from the shortcomings of man. It becomes faulty to a greater or less degree and even at times distorted.

4   In fact not one single verse has come to us in an original MS, written by a biblical author or by a contemporary of his, or even by a scribe who lived immediately after the time of the author.

5   Even a cursory perusal of the sources reveals that not one tradition or MS is without fault. Each and every one patently exhibits errors which crept into it during the long period of its transmission in the oral stage, when written by hand, and to a lesser degree, when handed down in the form of printed books.

6   These errors and textual divergences effect the

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26. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol.1, p. 190.
27. The Cambridge History of the Bible, op.cit., Vol.1, pp. 190-92.

intrinsic message only in relatively few instances.

7   The older the biblical MSS be, the wider is the over-all range of textual divergence between them.

8   It is almost impossible to trace back the original text of some book of the OT.

9   Originally oral variations may ultimately turn up as textual variants.

10 While translating the Hebrew text of the OT neither proper care had been observed nor authorized supervision.

11 Deviations of the Samaritan Hebrew text from the Massoretic text were estimated at about six thousand.

12 The Hebrew scrolls from Qumran prove beyond doubt the actual existence of variant readings in the biblical books of the Hellenistic or Roman periods.

13 Textual variations involved are of the simplest and most common types: interchange of graphically similar letters or auricularly close consonants; haplography or dittography; continuous writing of separate words or division of one word into two; *plene* or defective spelling; metathesis; differences of vocalisation.

'Peake's Commentary on the Bible' is a renowned and reliable work. One of its 'Introductory Articles to the OT' is 'Canon and Text of the OT', written by B. J. Roberts. The writer observes that 'the text transmission of the LXX was far from strict':

From the very outset, and certainly from a very early time in the Christian era, the text transmission of the LXX was far from strict: indeed from the early 3rd cent. A.D. we have a comment by Origen, the first scholar, in our sense of the word, in the history of Christendom, that *the MSS showed the greatest divergence, due both to scribal errors and, what is worse, to revision of the text and additions and omissions of 'whatever seems right' to the revisers* [stress added]. (…), the Church in various areas adopted different recensions of the LXX, which further added to the chaos. After the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313 and the consequent acceptance of Christianity by Constantine as an empire religion, there was

an attempt to secure for the OT, just as for the NT, a semi-standardisation of the text; but one need only look at the Greek Codices of the Greek Bible which were produced as a result of the Edict, to realise that there was very little consistency used in the production of such a text, and still less success in establishing the textual minutiae.[28]

Jerome was commissioned by the then Pope to produce a Latin rendering of the whole of the Bible, who accomplished his work, Vulgate, in the late 4th and early 5th cent. BC. B. J. Roberts observes in the same article:

(…), he [Jerome] stressed that, in translating, 'if we follow the syllables we lose the understanding', and there are innumerable instances of departure from the Heb. Text to accommodate Christian dogma and interpretation.[29]

The same writer says that there are numerous scribal errors and textual divergences from the LXX and other MSS (manuscripts):

(…), the Isa. A document, which contains the whole of Isa. apart from a few minor lacunae due to wear and tear of the MS. It was the first biblical MS of the scrolls to be published, and even now it is by far the best known. The average person who reads about the Dead Sea Scrolls—and his number is legion—is reassured by the authorities that the scroll agrees to a remarkable degree with the text of the standard Hebrew Bible, and there is no need to dispute this verdict, at least as far as the average reader is concerned. But textual criticism is a detailed study, and from this standpoint it is quite misleading to emphasize this very great measure of agreement. Apart from scribal errors which are numerous, the following divergences stand out: (*a*) the scroll, especially in the second half, presents a widely divergent orthography and grammar from that of the classical text; (*b*) there are numerous divergent readings, some of which correspond to known alternatives, e.g. in the LXX and in the *K^ere* and *K^ethibh*

28. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, OT Ed H. H. Rowley, Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd, London, 1967, p. 75.
29. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, op. cit., p. 76.

variants, whereas others were previously unknown; (*c*) in some instances the proper names agree not with the form they have in the common Isa. text but with that in later books, e.g. Chr. That is, the text in MS A might be regarded as a recension, approximating to the classical form, but by no means identical with it.[30]

It is remarkable to note that one of the reasons of errors and misunderstandings in the biblical texts was the absence of any kind of vocalization system in the Hebrew script. It was only after the advent and under the influence of Islām that it was introduced in the Bible texts, as the writer asserts:

Some time in the 7th cent., probably under the indirect influence of Islam and of developments in the Syriac language, a rough and ready beginning was made to vocalise the consonantal text by the addition of vowel signs.[31]

The text of the Bible was changed both (a) due to deliberate alterations by the scribes and (b) due to accidental/involuntary errors. As regards the first type, i.e. *deliberate alterations* the writer asserts:

Long before the text assumed its present form it was modified for reasons known to us and unknown. Glosses were added, explanatory, pious, habit (e.g. the adding of the words 'of the covenant' to 'ark' in many places), and others [sic.]. Unfortunately, some commentaries in the past have shown an undue enthusiasm for this class of textual corruption, and any phrase in the text which might contradict a preconceived theory was apt to be dismissed as a gloss: on the other hand it is generally recognized that, e.g. the book of Ezek. contains numerous instances of the glossator's work. Other early interferences were made by scribes who expunged the names of foreign deities and substituted for them the word *bosheth* ('shame'), e.g. Mephibosheth for Meribaal.

From the period which followed the fixing of the

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30. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, op. cit., p. 77.
31. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, op. cit., p. 78.

consonantal text we have Rabbinic evidence of textual criticism. *Tikkune ha-Soph^erim* (emendations of the scribes), mentioned in Rabbinic commentaries, refer to attempts to avoid anthropomorphisms in the text by a change of suffix, in as many as eighteen passages. '*Itture ha-Soph^erim* (omissions of the scribes) refer to grammatical points. *Soph^erin* are marginal notes inserted in the Massoroth to indicate that the form is 'unexpected' and should probably be replaced by another word. *N^ekuddoth (puncta extra-ordinaria)* are dots placed over words in ten passages in the Pentateuch which were queried by Massoretes on textual or exegetical grounds, and the fact that they are frequently mentioned in the Mishnah and other Rabbinic writings shows that they were commonly acknowledged. Again the retention of *K^ere* and *K^ethubh* variants shows Massoretic concern for textual criticism.

There are other places where scribes can be held responsible for textual corruption. There are innumerable instances where a vocalization is queried on the basis of an LXX reading, and it lies to hand to suggest that if any case is to be made for a 'recension' in the Massoretic text, it is in the interpretation given to it by the Massoretes responsible for the Tiberian vocalization. On the other hand, it is sometimes thought these late Massoretes confused the meaning of a passage because they had failed to understand it and consequently pointed it wrongly.[32]

As regards the second type, ie *involuntary scribal errors*, the writer asserts:

The possibility of **involuntary scribal errors** is well demonstrated by the very carelessly written Qumran Scroll 1QIs[a], and in a recent introduction to the study, *The Text of the OT*, by E. Wurthwein (Eng. Tr. P. R. Ackroyd, 1957), very good use is made of the MS to demonstrate the types and classes of error in the Heb. MT. The only caveat which might be entered is that 1QIs[a] is not a Massoretic MS nor

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32. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, op. cit., p. 79.

does it belong to Judaism but rather to a sect, and perhaps it is not fair to the Massoretes to put them to this undeserved disrepute. A better source would be the fragments from the Cairo Geniza, where the same types of error occur, but the incidence is not nearly so common.

There have been useful manuals of textual corruption published—one in English by J. Kennedy (ed. by N. Levison), *An aid to the Textual Amendment of the OT* (1928). It discusses such errors as confusion of similar letters, in both the archaic and Aramaic scripts, e.g. *Beth* and *Kaph*, *Daleth* and *Resh*; inversion of letters; haplography (writing a letter once where it should be repeated, or omission of a word which is similar to the adjacent word); dittography (the reverse of the previous error); homoeoteleuton (where phrases and even passages have been omitted from between two similar words or even endings of words). How such omissions could have taken place in such official texts as the prototype of the present *Biblia Hebraica* and all the MSS supporting it defies explanation, because the Rabbis were strict in the matter of checking and correcting standard MSS, but it is a fact that they exist. For instance in I Sam. 14:41a lengthy passage has disappeared by homoeoteleuton with the word 'Israel', which occurs immediately before the beginning of the lost passage and which ends the passage.

Other assumed errors or sources of error are disputed among scholars. It is sometimes thought that abbreviations, particularly in the divine names, coupled with the wrong division of words constitute a possible error. That such abbreviations occur in the Geniza fragments is demonstrable, but it is still open to argue that they did not occur in more official MSS. Another debatable point is whether or not MSS were copied by dictation. This could have been a common source of corruption and would account for the numerous variations between similarly sounding gutturals; but, again, there is skepticism among scholars on the possibility.

The final note, however, in any discussion of textual errors

must be one of caution. The prestige of the Massoretic scribal activity, increasingly recognised of recent years, makes the *a priori* likelihood of errors less than was previously believed. Increased study of Hebrew philology and semantics, and better acquaintance with cognate languages show that departure from the accepted text is frequently hazardous, and fresh information, particularly from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Cairo Geniza, makes the history of the text not only more interesting but enhances its standing as a text-form, the early standardisation of which made it unique among all textual transmissions.[33]

Almost similar views have been expressed by the Dummelow's Commentary in its introductory articles in a different way:

For many centuries no vowel signs were used at all, and the consonants were written without any spaces between words. The scribes who copied were undoubtedly very careful, but sometimes the same consonant was written twice. Sometimes, of two consonants of the same form one was omitted; or a word might occur twice in one verse, and the scribe going on to the second as he copied the first would omit the intervening words. About the third century A.D. certain consonants began to be used to express unchangeably long vowels. This was called *scriptio plena*, i.e. full writing. About the middle of the sixth century when the Jews were much scattered, the danger arose that the proper pronunciation of Hebrew would be lost. A set of scribes called Masoretes, i.e. Traditionalists, introduced a complete system of points to indicate the vowels as traditionally pronounced.[34]

Encyclopedia Americana has afforded 73 pages (p. 647-719) for Bible and its related themes under different topics by different writers. The topic of its 4th article is 'Textual Criticism of the OT' which is written by J. Philip Hyatt, Vanderbilt University. The author of the article has also pointed out similar forms of corruptions in the text of the Bible:

33. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, op. cit., p. 79.
34. A Commentary on the HB, Ed The Rev. J. R. Dummelow, NY, The Macmillan Co, 1956, p. xiv.

The purpose of textual criticism is to reconstruct the original text of the OT. It frequently is called *lower criticism,* to distinguish it from *higher criticism*, which deals with questions of authorship, date, source analysis, historical background, and the like.

This type of criticism is not peculiar to Biblical studies. It must be practiced on any piece of literature that we wish to study seriously and that has not come down to us in a copy made by the author's own hand. There is a textual criticism, for example, of the plays of Shakespeare. The peculiarities of OT textual criticism arise from the nature of the Hebrew language and the history of the OT text.

The OT is written in Hebrew, with the exception of the following passages, which are in the closely related Aramaic language: Ezra 4:8 to 6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4b to 7:28; and Jeremiah 10:11, and a few isolated words or expressions in Genesis. *In ancient times these languages were written with consonants only, the pronunciation of vowels being preserved only by oral tradition* [stress added]. In time some of the vowels were indicated by the use of certain consonant letters (called *matres lectionis*), and eventually all vowels were marked by these or by vowel points. Certain of the letters of Hebrew and Aramaic are similar, either in appearance or in sound. For example, in the square script that came into use about 200 B.C. the following pairs of letters are very similar in appearance and may easily be confused: D and R, B and K, H and CH, T and CH. Certain letters may be readily confused in sound; there are two K-sounds, three S-sounds, and two T-sounds. In ancient times the words often were not divided in manuscripts, and verses were not separated as they are now. These features of the original languages of the OT have helped to make errors possible in the transmission of its text.[35]

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35. J. Philip Hyatt, Vanderbilt University's article 'Textual Criticism of the OT' in The Encyclopedia Americana, Grolier Incorporated, Vol.3, 1984, p. 658.

The same writer, J. Philip Hyatt, traces the **history of the text** as follows:

The books of the OT were written between 1000 and 100 BC., and the canon was closed toward the end on the 1ˢᵗ Christian century. *Not a single book has come down to the present in its original, autograph form* [stress added]. The earliest manuscripts are those generally known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were found in the caves of Wadi Qumran and Wadi Murabbaat and elsewhere in the desert region of Palestine near the Dead Sea. Complete scrolls or fragments have been found of all books of the OT except Esther. Many are from the 1ˢᵗ and 2ⁿᵈ centuries B.C. These manuscripts contain several difficult kinds of Hebrew text. Some are like the Greek Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch, while others are very similar to the Masoretic text, which is discussed below.

(**…**). It is probable, therefore, that a 'proto- Masoretic' text was established by the year 100 A.D. This was the result of a process extending over two or three centuries, climaxed by needs that were felt in Judaism as the result of the rise of Christianity and the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. Rabbi Akiba may have been the leader in the final stage of this process.

For four centuries after Akiba the textual scholars were the *Sopherim*, the Scribes. While they were concerned mainly with the correct copying of the text, they were students of it as well. In various ways they sought to point out difficulties in the text: by the 'extraordinary points' placed above words in fifteen passages, which point out passages that are doubtful in one respect or another; by the eighteen 'emendation of the scribes' (*tiqqune ha-sophrim*), most of which attempt to avoid blasphemy against God; and by the *Sebirin*, which point out 'unexpected' forms. The Scribes made subdivisions in the text that eventually became chapters and verses.

It was not until the time of the Masoretes that a really standard text was established. The Masoretes were biblical

scholars who lived in the period between the 6th and 10th centuries A.D. the word *Masorete* means 'one who hands down the tradition'. These scholars were not scientific critics of the text but men who sought to preserve the best traditions regarding the reading of the text. There were several Masoretic schools, both in Palestine and Babylonia. The Masoretes sought to fix a standard, authoritative text on the basis of the MSS available to them, and to provide the text with the notations that would be of aid in its study. One of the most important of their activity was to provide the text with complete vowel points. They also provided it with elaborate symbols to aid in the correct reading of the text, partly the equivalent of modern punctuation marks. They furnished in some cases indications of variant readings in two families of MSS (the so called *kethib-Qere*).[36]

Under the sub heading 'Reconstruction of the Original Hebrew Text' the writer, J. Philip Hyatt, explains the types of corruption of the biblical text:

It should be obvious from this history of the text that a period of a thousand years or more elapsed between the completion of the latest book of the OT and most of the MSS on which modern study is based. During this time the text was repeatedly copied and recopied by hand. When one thinks of the errors that may arise even with the use of modern typewriters and composing machines, it is not difficult to realize why errors arose in this repeated copying by hand. Errors could arise from failure to read a text properly, failure to hear correctly when manuscripts were written from dictation, fatigue, failure to understand what one was writing, and even sheer carelessness. Sometimes material originally written in the margin was incorporated in the text.

It can be proved that errors have slipped into the text by comparison of parts of the Hebrew Bible that give the same material in two places: for example, II Samuel 22 and Psalm 18; or Psalm 14 and Psalm 53; or Isaiah 36 to 39 and II Kings 18:13 to 20:19. More extensive comparison may be made of

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36. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., p. 658.

the material in I-II Chronicles that has been adapted from I-II Samuel and I-II Kings. Small or large differences suggest that one form or the other [or none of them] may be original.

Errors also are obvious to the modern scholar in passages that do not make sense, even when read by one who has a thorough knowledge of Hebrew. The purpose of textual criticism, therefore, is to remove as many errors as possible from the present text and thereby to recover the original text.

A comparison of the available Hebrew MSS helps only a little in recovery of the original text of the OT. Careful studies have shown that the Masoretic MSS that have come down to us contain few significant variants. Those that occur are largely differences in orthography or vocalization (and possibly dialects) and seldom give differences in meaning. The task of the OT textual critic is therefore different from that of the NT textual critic, who must rely largely upon careful comparison of early Greek MSS.

The complete Isaiah scroll among the Dead Sea Scrolls (known as IQIsa) is one of the earliest and best known pre-Masoretic MSS. While it very often agrees with the Masoretic text, it offers in a few places readings that appear to be superior to the readings of that text. For example, the Masoretic text of Isaiah 3:24 may be translated as follows:

> Instead of sweet spices there will be rottenness,
> And instead of a girdle, a rope;
> Instead of well-set hair, baldness,
> And instead of a robe, a girdling of sack-cloth;
> Branding instead of beauty.

The last line of this verse presents two difficulties: it reverses the order of the words in the four preceding lines, and it assumes a meaning for the common Hebrew word *ki*, here translated 'branding', that it has nowhere else in the Bible. The Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah contains an additional word to the last line, which makes it possible to render it as follows:

For instead of beauty (there will be) shame.

In a few instances the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah supports the reading of the Septuagint or another ancient version. (Consult the marginal notes to Isaiah in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, where these readings often are cited.)[37]

The writer observes that the original text of the OT was altered in very ancient times, before the earliest known MSS and versions:

In a small number of cases the original text of the OT was altered in very ancient times, before the earliest known MSS and versions, for example, in II Samuel the word *Baal* (the name of a non-Hebrew deity) in personal names has been replaced by the word *bosheth*, which means 'shame'. In Chronicles, however, the original forms have been retained. For example, the name of Saul's son is given as *ish-bosheth* in II Samuel 2:8, but as *Esh Baal* in I Chronicles 8:33. It is certain that his original name was not one that meant 'man of shame', but rather 'man of Baal'.[38]

The writer asserts that sometimes the textual critic must resort to emendation of the received Heb. text; but his purpose should be to recover the actual text rather than to improve what was written by the ancient author:

Recovery of the original text often requires more than comparison of ancient Hebrew MSS and comparison of parts of the OT. The textual critic sometimes must resort to emendation of the received Hebrew text. The purpose of an emendation never should be to 'improve' what was written by an ancient author but simply to recover what he actually wrote. *OT scholars in the latter part of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th very often emended the Hebrew text and frequently seemed to have little respect for the Masoretic text* [stress added]. Scholars now have greater respect for that text and resort to emendation only as a last resort. This heightened respect has come in part from the

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37. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., pp. 659f.
38. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., pp. 660f.

discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in part from increased knowledge of the history of the text and the recovery of the relatively early MSS, and in part from careful study of the Semitic languages that are cognate with Hebrew.

Thus the primary concern of the scholar should be to understand and interpret the Masoretic text; if he cannot do that, he may resort to emendation.[39]

The writer has classified the task of emendation in the following three categories:

Emendations of the Hebrew text may be classified as follows:

1. Those that rest on the evidence of an ancient version, such as the Septuagint;

2. Those that are based on conjecture without versional support; and

3. Emendations that involve both conjecture and occasional evidence.[40]

As regards the emendations based on the evidence of an ancient version, such as the Septuagint, the writer writes:

Several of the ancient versions of the OT were produced before the time of the Masoretes. The most important are the Greek Septuagint, the Aramaic Targums, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome. These versions sometimes differ in detail from the Hebrew Bible. It is possible, therefore, that in some instances they represent the original text and the Masoretic text does not.

It is frequently very difficult to decide whether one of these versions or the Masoretic text represents the original reading. It is rash to assume that in every case of difference the Septuagint or another version is more original only because it

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39. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., p. 661.
40. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., p. 661.

is older than our Masoretic MSS. The scholar must very carefully consider every individual case of variation. For example, in comparing the Septuagint with the Hebrew text, the scholar must exercise great care. He must realize that the various translators of the Septuagint differed in their competence and in care they took in their work. Sometimes they paraphrased rather than translated literally; sometimes they misunderstood a verse or passage. Corruptions have taken place in the MSS of the Septuagint itself, as in the Hebrew text. Nevertheless, even when these and other possibilities have been considered, the Septuagint and other ancient versions sometimes do give sound aid in restoring the original Hebrew. The writer has afforded here 'an example' that 'will illustrate their use in textual emendation'. He explains:

In I Samuel 14:41 a long clause obviously has dropped out of the Masoretic text but has been preserved in the Septuagint and the Vulgate. In the following translation, the words in italics are omitted in the Hebrew:

And Saul said to the Lord, God of Israel, '*Why hast thou not answered thy servant today? If the guilt be in me or Jonathan my son, O Lord God of Israel, give Urim; but if the guilt be in thy people Israel give Thummim*'. Jonathan and Saul were taken, and the people escaped.

It is clear that this longer form of the verse is necessary to the sense, and it is easy to see why the Hebrew scribe made the omission. His eye skipped from the word 'Israel' near the beginning of the verse to the same word near the end, and he unconsciously omitted all the intervening words. This type of error is known as homoioteleuton. The same error sometimes is made by typists today [stress added].

Another kind of error may be illustrated from Psalm 49:11. The first half of the verse in Hebrew may be translated literally: 'Their inwardness (*qirbam*) is their home for ever, their dwelling places to all generations'. This is nonsense, which is not adequately relieved by the King James Version: 'Their inward thought is, *that* their house *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations', the words

in italics not being in the Hebrew at all but inserted in order to attempt to make sense of the verse. Yet, when one turns to the Septuagint, Peshitta, and Targum, one finds that the verse should be read: 'their graves (*qibram*)' are their homes forever, their dwellingplaces to all generations." The scribal error was simply that of transposing B and R, so that what was originally written as *qibram* eventually became *qirbam*.

A few suggested emendations of the Masoretic text have been confirmed by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls of Isaiah. For example, the Masoretic text of Isaiah 49:24, 25 reads as follows:

> Can prey be seized from the mighty,
>   or the captives of a *righteous man* be rescued?
> For thus says the Lord"
> Even the captives of the mighty shall be seized,
>   and the prey of the tyrant be rescued;
> For I will contend with those who contend with you,
>   and your children I will save.

In the second line the italicized term seems strangely out of place. It breeds the poetic parallelism, and one expects on the basis of the reading of the fifth line a word such as 'tyrant'. That is just the word that is presupposed by the Septuagint, Peshitta, and the Vulgate, and the Hebrew word for 'tyrant' occurs in the Dead Sea Scroll. The error probably arose from the fact that in the Hebrew square script the word ^c*aris* ('tyrant') and *saddiq* ('righteous man') are very similar in appearance.[41]

As regards the emendations that are based wholly on conjecture the writer of the article explains:

Emendations that are based wholly on conjecture must be the last resort of the textual critic, yet they are sometimes necessary and sound. They may be suggested out of a knowledge of the types of errors that scribes can make, the forms of the Hebrew letters, and common sense as to the

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41. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., pp. 661f.

meaning of a passage. One very simple emendation that has commended itself to most modern scholars may be found in Amos 6:12. The first half of the verse reads in Hebrew: 'Do horses run on the rock? Does one plow with oxen?' the first rhetorical question implies the answer 'no', but the second implies 'yes'. One naturally expects in the light of the context that both questions imply the same answer. The King James Version attempts to resolve difficulty by translating, 'Will one plow there with oxen', but 'there' is not in the Hebrew. A simple solution gives a suitable rendering. The Hebrew word *bab^{e}qarim,* 'with oxen' can be divided into two Hebrew words, *b^{e}baqar yam*, 'with oxen the sea'. We thus translate the emended text: 'does one plow the sea with oxen?' the difficulty arose from the fact that in ancient times manuscripts did not always separate words, or in some cases words were wrongly separated.[42]

As regards the emendations that are exercised partly on the basis of ancient versions and partly by conjecture, the writer elucidates as follows:

Sometimes the text may be emended partly on the basis of ancient versions and partly by conjecture. A good example is Proverbs 25:27. Translated literally, the Hebrew seems to say: 'It is not good for one to eat much honey; and searching out their glory is glory'. The meaning of this is far from apparent. One may attempt to restore the original text by comparing the Septuagint and Targum and adopting their reading at the end of the verse, and then conjecturing that the first word (in Hebrew) of the second half of the verse is the same as the first word in the Proverbs 25:17. One then gets the proverbial saying: 'It is not good for one to eat much honey; so be sparing of complimentary words'.[43]

However, it is heartening to note that the learned writer has, ultimately, acknowledged the worth and credibility of the biblical literature to some extent. He has observed:

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42. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., p. 662.
43. The Encyclopedia Americana, op.cit., p. 662.

Textual criticism has made great progress in the attempt to restore the original text of the OT. Much remains to be done, but on the whole the original text of the OT is as well known as that of any other book that has survived from antiquity and probably better known than most.[44]

The Dummelow's Commentary asserts that the Mosaic authorship regarding the Pentateuch is not genuine:

The traditional view was that Moses was the author of the five books which bear his name in our Bibles; and until comparatively recent times this belief was accepted without question or inquiry regarding its grounds. *A thorough study of these books, however, has led many to the conclusion that this view of their authorship does not fit in with the facts, and that another view is necessitated by the evidence which the books themselves present* [stress added].[45]

The Dummelow's Commentary expresses the view that the Pentateuch was anonymously written and it is not fair to ascribe it to Moses in its present form:

It must also be noted that as a whole the five books are anonymously written, and that there is no passage in the OT which claims Moses as their author. The 'Law of Moses' indeed is frequently spoken of, and it is unquestionable that Israelite law did originate with him; but this expression is not evidence that Moses was the writer of the Pentateuch as we have it, or that the laws which it contains represent throughout his unmodified legislation. (….).

On close examination, however, it must be admitted that the Pentateuch reveals many features inconsistent with the traditional view that in its present form it is the work of Moses. For instance it may be safely granted that Moses did not write the account of his own death in Dt 34. (…). In Gn 14:14 and Dt 34 mention is made of Dan; but the territory did

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44. J. Philip Hyatt, in The Enc. Americana, op.cit, pp. 659-662.
45. A Commentary on the HB, Ed the Rev. J. R. Dummelow, NY, The Macmillan Co, 1956, p. xxiv.

not receive that name till it was conquered by the Danites, long after the death of Moses (Josh 19:47 Jg 18:29). (….).

A careful examination has led many scholars to the conviction that the *writings of Moses formed only the rough material or part of the material, and that in its present form it is not the work of one man, but a compilation made from previously existing documents* [stress added]. In this connexion it must be remembered that editing and compiling is a recognised mode of authorship in OT history. Just as St. Luke tells us (Lk 1:1) that before our Four Gospels were written, there were many earlier accounts of our Lord's life already in existence, so the OT writers tell us of similar accounts already written of the facts which they record. And not only so, but they distinctly indicate that they used these earlier accounts in composing their own books. It is most interesting to find embedded in the existing books fragments of the old literature of ancient Israel, as geologists find the fragments of the lost animal life of early ages embedded in the rocks of to-day. See, for example, 'the book of the Wars of Jehovah' (Nu 21:14), 'the book of Jesher' (2S 1:18) 'the book of Gad and Nathan' (1Ch 29:29), 'the book of Shemaiah and Iddo' (2Ch 12:15). Here we have evidence of the existence of sources of information to which editors and compilers of later days had access. We find also several ancient poems incorporated in the sacred text, eg. Gn 4:23f, Ex 15, 17:16, Nu 21:17,18,27f, Jg 5, etc., and it is probable there were other early writings available besides those which can now be traced. *There is thus nothing strange in the suggestion that the books of the Pentateuch were based on preexisting materials* [stress added].[46]

Hereunder the Dummelow's Commentary affords the main grounds of the conviction that the Pentateuch is not the original work of one man, but a compilation of the previously existing documents:

Composition: The following are the main grounds of the conviction that the Pentateuch is not the original work of one

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46. Dummelow's Commentary, op.cit., pp. xxvf.

man, but a compilation of the previously existing documents:

(1) *In the historical parts we find duplicate accounts of same event, which do not always agree in detail* [stress added]. Sometimes the two accounts are set down side by side; sometimes they are fused together more or less completely; but in many instances no attempt has been made either to remove or to reconcile their differences. Thus two distinct and independent accounts of the Creation are given, one in Gn 1-2:4, the other in Gn 2:4-25. Two accounts of the flood may be detected on a careful reading of Gn 6-9. Again we find two sets of instructions for the observance of the Passover in Ex 12, one in vv. 1-13, the other in vv. 21-27. We may also instance the contrasts between such passages as Gn 27:1-45 and 27:46-28:9, where Rebekah is actuated by one motive in the former and by quite another in the latter; Gn 28:19 and 35:9-15, where the name is given to Bethel in very different circumstances; Gn 35:10 and 32:28. Compare also Ex 3:1-6:1 with 6:2-7:13, where the latter section takes no account of the former, but begins the story of the mission to Pharaoh anew, as if 3:1-6:1 had never been written.

(2) Similarly *in the legislative portions of these books we find apparent contradictions, and these not in minor or insignificant details, but in fundamental enactments* [stress added]; and the only way in which we can solve the problem thus presented is by understanding that in these books (especially Exodus to Deuteronomy) we have the records of laws laid down at various periods of the national history, and dealing with radically different conditions of life. In Ex 20-23, e.g., we have a set of laws which are evidently suited to the circumstances of an agricultural and pastoral community scattered over a considerable tract of country with their flocks and herds. This legislation is of a very simple and practical nature, based on the fundamental principles of truth and righteousness, and having reference to a primitive state of society. (….).

In the book of Deuteronomy we find a more advanced type of legislation, applying evidently to different circumstances.

Many injunctions, indeed, are repeated, but many others are changed. The principles are the same as in the older legislation, but the rules are largely modified. (….).

Again, in the book of Leviticus, with parts of Exodus and Numbers, we find another type of legislation, founded still on the same Mosaic principles, but more elaborate, more priestly, more rigid than that of Ex 20-23 or that of Deuteronomy. (…).

(3) Different parts of the Pentateuch exhibit marked differences of vocabulary and literary style. Many of these differences, especially of vocabulary, can only be appreciated by those acquainted with Hebrew; but any one can see that the book of Deuteronomy is written in a much more rhetorical style than, say, the book of Leviticus, and can appreciate its lofty and inspiring eloquence. Again, in one set of passages, of which Gn 1-2:4 is a type, the Almighty is called God (Hebrew *Elohim*), while in another set, of which Gn 2:4-26 is an example, He is designated Lord (Hebrew *Jehovah*); and there are many other points of difference which are most satisfactorily explained by the theory that the writer of the Pentateuch, as we have it, made use of and incorporated into his work documents originally separated.

Following up the clue given by these differences, scholars have endeavoured to disentangle the separate documents from which it is suggested that the Pentateuch was compiled, and we shall now give a brief outline of the results of their investigations.[47]

The writer has also tried to trace the various sources of the material contained in the books of the Pentateuch:

4. Sources.
(a) There is first what we may call the Primitive source (itself resting upon older written authorities), usually denoted by the symbol JE. (…). It begins at Gn 2:4, and may be said to supply all the more detailed and picturesque narratives in Genesis, and Exodus, part of Numbers, and the

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47. Dummelow's Commentary, op.cit., pp. xxvif.

first twelve chapters of Joshua. (…). It makes use of the term 'Jehovah' for God from the very outset of its narrative. Plausible attempts have been made to analyze it into two components, J and E; but for these reference must be made to larger works. (….).

It seems probable that the older written authorities underlying this Primitive or Prophetic narrative were drawn up not later than 750 B.C., and perhaps even a century earlier; (…).

(b) There is, secondly, the Priestly document (usually designated P). This work so called because it regards the history of Israel from the Priestly point of view, (…).

This Priestly document avoids all anthropomorphic representations of God, and in this respect is in striking contrast to the Primitive writing JE, which represents God as thinking and acting like a man: (…). A feature of its references to God is that it makes use of the name Elohim (God) for God almost exclusively (…). The writer of this document evidently belonged to the priestly class; his aim was entirely a religious one; (…). The Priestly thus exhibits signs of the discipline and purification which the nation experienced in the exile and is appropriately dated at the close of that event.

(c) The third document underlying the Pentateuch is the book of Deuteronomy, usually cited as D, and identified in its main parts with the Law-book discovered in the Temple by Hilkiah in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, 621 B.C. (…).

It is supposed that these three documents—the Primitive writing, the Priestly writing, and the the book of Deuteronomy—were welded together somewhat in this way. The first attempts to write a history of Israel probably originated in the schools of the prophets in the ninth century B.C.: and in the Primitive writing JE we have the finished result. About the same time as JE was composed, the Second Legislation (D) was set down in writing and made public as recorded in 2K 22. This was afterwards combined with the

earlier writing, which gave it a historical background. Then during, or immediately after the exile, the ritual law was drawn up in accordance with the priestly traditions, and given an appropriate setting in a historical framework, the result being the Priestly writing (P). Finally a later historian, taking these as his authorities, wove them together into a complete whole, connecting them by notes and explanations, where these were necessary; not putting the history in his own words or presenting it from his own standpoint as a modern historian would do, but piecing together the sections of the sources which referred to the same events, and thus preserving not only the history, but the very words in which it had reached him, for all coming generations. In this writer's work we have the Pentateuch of the OT Scriptures.[48]

Geddes MacGregor has afforded, inter alia, another type of corruption in his esteemed book 'The Bible in the Making'. It would be pertinent to give an excerpt from it as well:

(…). For all the care that scribes often devoted to their task, a great many errors inevitably crept in. Deviations occur even among the most reliable of the ancient Greek manuscripts.

Before the invention of printing, the difficulty of reproducing the Bible did not consist solely in the labour of copying by hand. Parchment was scarce, so that contractions were very freely used. Sometimes a valuable manuscript, such as the Codex Ephraemi, a fifth-century Bible now in the Bibliotheqe Nationale, Paris, was treated so that, the writings have been erased by scraping and pumicing, the pages might be used over again for making another book. The lower writing was not usually quite obliterated, however, though it was extremely difficult to decipher it until chemical means were found to revive what had been rubbed out. *Such a book, with one set of writing superimposed upon another, is called a palimpsest* [stress added]. Again, MSS were often corrected by later copyist who scraped out with a knife what seemed to them incorrect, and modern scholars know that in

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48. A Commentary on the HB, Ed The Rev. J. R. Dummelow, NY, The Macmillan Co, 1956, pp. xxvii-xxix.

many cases it was the corrector, not the MS, that was at fault. Sometimes a note would be made in the margin which a subsequent copyist would take to be part of the text. The hazards of inaccuracy in copying out the Bible by hand in the circumstances that prevailed in those days were so great that it is indeed astonishing that a text has been preserved which, despite technical problems it presents to the learned, may be taken as generally not straying very far from the sense of the original.[49]

Point-wise recapitulation summaries have been afforded for some of the early parts of this article. They cover almost all of the important points. Thereafter, it was not deemed necessary. It was also not considered proper to quote more authorities. All the important themes have been elucidated. Moreover, almost all of the real and unbiased authorities unanimously endorse these themes. It can safely be concluded on the basis of the above evidence that the text of the OT of the Bible, *verbatim et literatim*, cannot be taken as free from corruption and alteration. However, the real message can be collected from it, using the critical and analytical apparatus. It may be noted that these types of corruption crept into the text of the Bible in spite of all the humanly possible care that had been sincerely afforded by the early scholars of the Bible. Geddes MacGregor has noted some measures taken towards the faultless transmission of the Bible texts. He notes:

(…). With the fall of the Temple at Jerusalem in that year [A.D. 70], the ritual worship with its animal sacrifices was at end, and the dispersed Jews had nothing to take with them on their wanderings but their Bibles. To the copying out of these they devoted immense care. The regulations for making a copy of the Scriptures are set forth in the Talmud (the great post-Biblical collection of Jewish law and legend) and show how scrupulously careful the scribes had to be. The scroll of the Law for use in a synagogue had to be fastened, for instance, with strings made from the skin of 'clean' animals.

49. Geddes MacGregor, 'The Bible in the Making' London, John Murray, 1961, p.9f.

The length of each column was prescribed: not more than sixty nor fewer than forty-eight lines were permitted. Lines had to be drawn before the writing was done, and if a scribe inadvertently wrote more than three words without first lining his copy, the whole thing was rendered worthless. He had to see that the space of a thread lay between each two consecutive letters that he wrote, and he was not allowed to write even a single letter from memory, without first looking at the approved text from which he was making the copy. He had to see that he never began the sacred name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink, lest he spatter this. The ink had to be black, made exactly according to a carefully delineated prescription. Throughout the whole of his work, the scribe was required to sit in full Jewish dress, and he was forbidden to speak to anyone, even a king. Any copies that did not entirely conform to the exacting standard had to be destroyed. What chiefly accounts for the absence of early Hebrew MSS, however, is the fact that as soon as any scroll became worn out it had to be put in a special room called Geniza, adjoining the synagogue, the contents of which room were periodically cleared out and destroyed. The Jews had no interest in preserving tattered old copies of the Scriptures for the sake of their antiquity: what they wanted were accurate copies, and so long as accuracy of current copies was ensured by the rigid regulations, old ones could be discarded.[50]

It can thus be safely concluded that the text of the OT had to suffer many a type of setback due to a number of reasons as detailed above. As such all possible analytical and critical measures should be adopted to ascertain the validity and intent of its text. But, at the same time, withal its shortcomings, it has preserved a lot of theological, historical, and prophetic substance in it and is not to be discarded outright.

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50. Prof. Dr. Geddes MacGregor, Dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Professor of Philosophical Theology in the University of Southern California, John Murray, Albemarle Street London, 1961, pp. 8f.