1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה
תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי ...אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
3 הַמָּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי ...ית אֶת־הָאוֹר
4
5 כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים ...
לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָ...
6 אֶחָד: פ וַיֹּאמֶר ז...
7 בֵּין מַיִם לָמָיִם: וַיַּעַשׂ ...
8 מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ ...ים אֲשֶׁר ...
אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִי... ...יְהִי־בָּ...
9 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים ...הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶ...

An introduction for dummies

[1:1] בראשית ג ר...
מלכות מלכות :ס... ...ג בראש...
לעשות :ס [2] וה...והארץ
שמה . והארץ תעז... ...הגבלי .
...ויאמר אלהים ג בטע בעינ יהי רכיי...
נעשה :ס [יהי] אור . והא...
המים . תוצא הארץ . תדשא הארץ . יהי
נח . אשר הקימתי . אות ה...
בריתי . שרי אשתך . אב... ...ה . [ל]אל . במר[אה] . אהיה [.
בלעם . שאל . שאלת . ההיטב . [...] :ס

1:1   5 יוֹם[1] Smr | יומם 4QGen[g] (modern) | G V S T... (indet) ✣ •
בֵּין מַיִם ...חֶד: G V S T[OJ] | πρώτη α' T[NF] (assim-ctext) •
...(T[JNF]) | foll καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. G (assi...
וַיַּבְדֵּל 7 • (insuf) 4QGen... Smr 4QGen[b] 4Q...G V I...M... בֵּין]
(assim-v 4) • וַיְהִי־כֵן: Smr 4QGen[b] 4QGen[g] ...
כמימריה T[NF] (explic) • 8 שָׁמַיִם Smr 4QGen[b] 4Q...
εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι καλόν. G (assim-vv 10, 12, 18, etc.) •
S T | יקאו 4QGen[g] (differ-gram?) ✣ • הַשָּׁמַיִם Smr 4...
4QGen[g] (S) T[J] (assim-v 7) | G V (indet) ✣ • אֶל־מָקוֹם ...S
[מקוה 4QGen[h1] G (assim-v 10) ✣ •
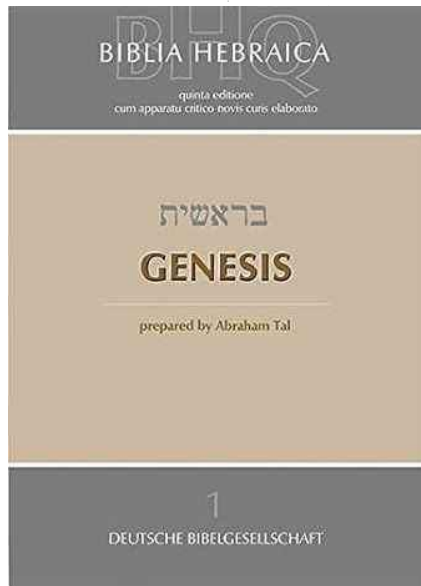
This is the **"Biblia Hebraica Quinta"** (**BHQ**). It is called this ("fifth Hebrew Bible") because it is the fifth edition of the "Biblia Hebraica" (BH), i.e. the Old Testament, which also offers a "critical apparatus" in addition to the Hebrew Bible text.

Why the fifth?

Because there had already been 4 issues before! hat's how it came about:
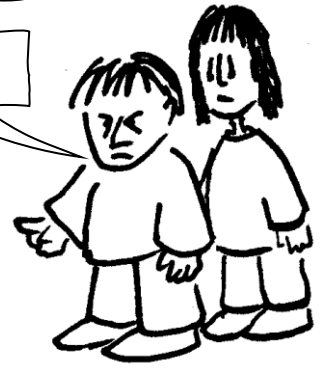
In 1906, **Rudolf Kittel** (1853-1929), then a professor in Leipzig, published the first **manual edition of the OT in a new form**: He did not simply have the Hebrew text printed, as was the case with the British Bible Society's standard Bible editions of the time (e.g. Meir Halevi Letteris' Bible of 1866).
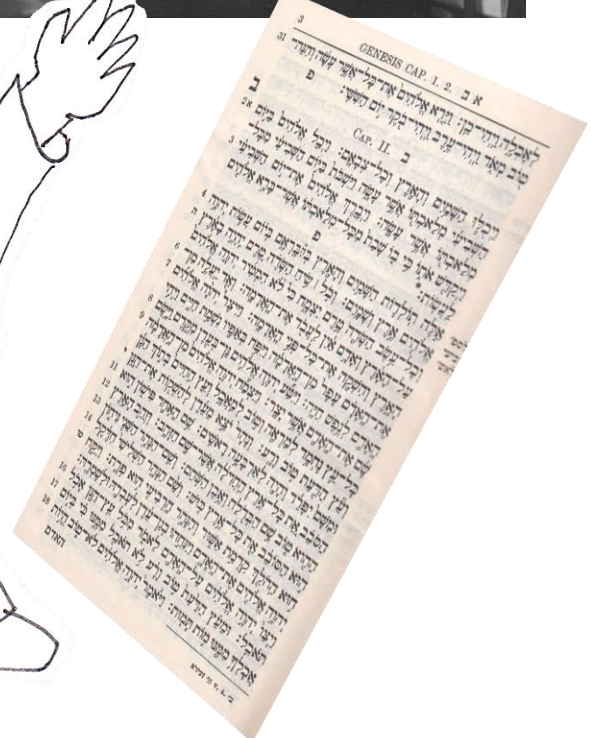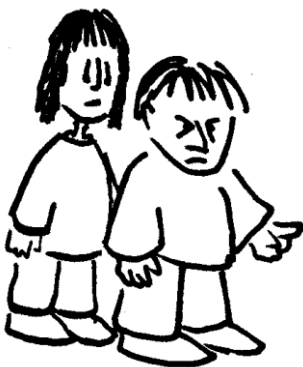
Instead, he used the traditional **Hebrew text of the second "Rabbi's Bible"** by Jakob ben Chajim, which had been printed by Daniel Bomberg in Venice in 1524-25.

However, he had added **notes to this *textus receptus*** at the bottom of each page of the book. These included important variants from Hebrew manuscripts and the old translations (especially the various Greek, Aramaic, Syriac and Latin translations) as well as - particularly significant - numerous suggestions for correcting the Hebrew text. These annotations looked like the "critical apparatus" of a historical-critical text edition. The second edition of this work was published in 1913.
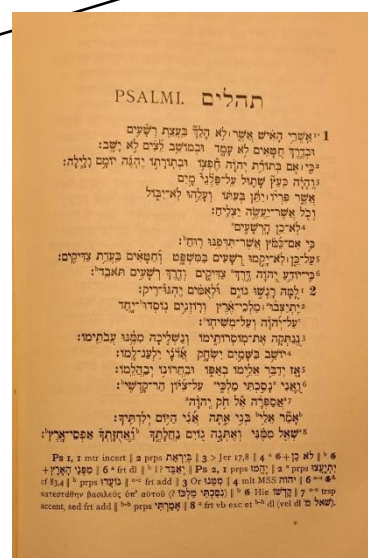
Between 1929 and 1937, the work was then published in a third edition (later revised on various occasions) (**BHK3 = Biblia Hebraica Kittel**). In this edition, the text of the Rabbi's Bible was replaced by the text of the oldest surviving manuscript containing the complete text of the Hebrew Bible: this is the **"Codex Leningradensis" (L)** from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (= Leninrad), dated to the year 1008 AD. The Masoretic marginal notes (*masora parva*, see below) of L were also printed for the first time.
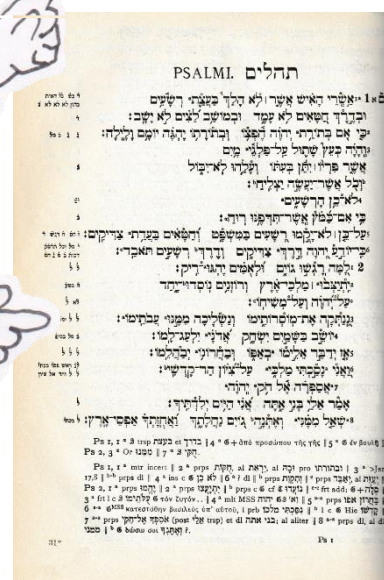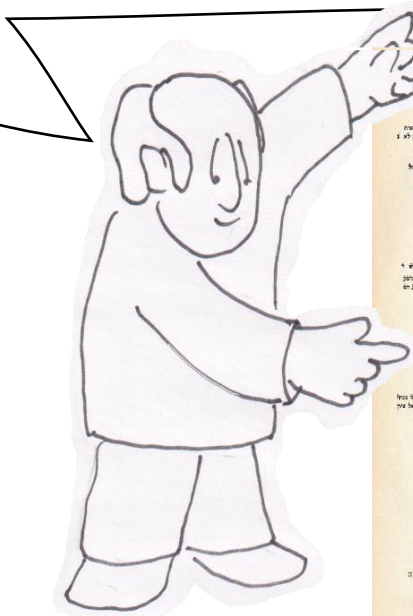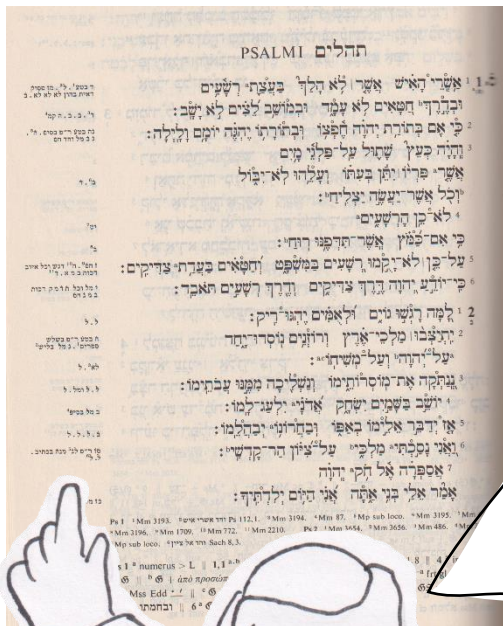
A fundamental new edition of this work was published as the fourth edition 1967-1977 by the German Bible Society in Stuttgart (**BHS = Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia**). It also prints the text of L (including a completed *masora parva* and references to the *masora magna*, cf. below). It also has a (seemingly) "critical apparatus" at the bottom of each page, but it has become some-what more cautious with its advice.

The BHQ, which has been published provision-ally in individual volumes since 1998, will thus be the fifth edition of Kittel's critical hand edition of the OT from 1906 when it is completed.

I don't understand anything anymore - what is this sup-posed to be: a critical apparatus and a critical edition of the OT? The biblical text is revealed by God, why are we sud-denly starting to criticise it?

No, no, just stay calm! A critical edi-tion of the Bible is a product of so-called "textual criticism". And textual criticism has nothing whatsoever to do with criticising God's word or even with rejecting the Holy Scriptures - quite the opposite! Textual criticism is a sub-discipline of biblical exegesis and as such is the expression of a spe-cial appreciation for the Bible. Let me explain all this to you in order.

What is a critical edition?

Critical (actually "historical-critical") editions in the proper sense have been known since the 19th century. Texts from classical (Greek and Roman) antiquity, for example, were edited in this way. A characteristic of these "critical editions" is that they not only offer the respective text, but also a "critical apparatus" at the bottom of each page (or sometimes at the end of the book).

Yes, you've already told us that. But what about this critical apparatus? It looks completely strange, complicated, illegible and incomprehensible. Do we even need it? It seems completely superfluous to me. The text is enough - especially if it's the Bible text...

Of course, the text is sufficient - provided you know it. And this is where the problem lies: before the invention of printing, texts had to be copied by hand. Copying errors could not be avoided. Unconcentrated and careless copyists made many of them, but even the good copyists could never completely avoid mistakes. The later copyists then copied the mistakes of their predecessors and added new ones.

Orig.   text
Good copy   bad copy
good copy   bad   good
bad copy   good copy
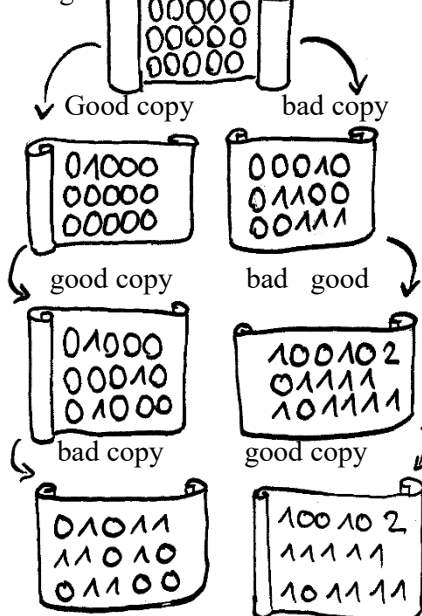
The result: over time, only a more or less large number of handwritten copies, so-called "manuscripts", remain of the original text, none of which exactly reproduces the original text in every detail. In order to recover this original text (which is of course always lost), "textual criticism" is required, i.e. the differentiation between correct and incorrect readings (criticism means "differentiation").

My goodness, how is that possible to find the original text??

You can get quite far in text criticism with close observation, perspicacity and lots and lots of patience!

First of all, the work is made easier by the fact that all copyists make the same **mechanical mistakes** over and over again. Their number is astonishingly small. You can see that here on this list.

1 Confusion of similar letters

Example: for the Hebrew Bible, this would be the following possible mix-ups: in the square script ב and כ, כ and ד, נ and ה, ר and ו, ח and ע, י and צ; in the ancient Hebrew script especially י and ה, א and כ, ת and ע, נ and ד.

2 Homeoteleuton or homeoarcton

I.e.: "same end or same beginning": The entire text between two identical or very similar words is omitted because the eye wanders from the first to the second word during transcription.
Example: WHAT ~~is a homeoteleuton?~~ WHAT is a homeoarctone?

3 Haplography

I.e. "one-time spelling": Repeated letters (groups of letters) are accidentally written only once.
Example: Oh God~~, oh God~~!

4 Dittography

"Double spelling": letters (groups of letters) are accidentally written twice. *Example*: Dittography is is the opposite of haplography.

5 Inversion

"Rearrangement": Two letters are rearranged in a somewhat "dyslexic" way. *Example*: common typos, such as "" for "", "" for ""

6 Errors at the word boundary

Letters (groups of letters) move from the beginning/end of a word to the preceding/subsequent word (rare!) *Example*:

These mechanical transcription errors can be recognized easily recognised and reversed. You have much more problems with another source of error: bad opyists! They not only made more mechanical errors because they worked quickly and carelessly. They also had fewer inhibitions about changing the text: they smoothed out bumpy passages, they standardised passages that were similar, but not exactly the same, they simplified sentences that were difficult to sentences to make them clearer.

But copyists are hired to make copies. Why did such people find work at all?

Perhaps because they worked more cheaply and someone just wanted a cheap copy for private use (a paperback, so to speak, not a luxury edition)! Whatever the case, even the damage caused by bad copyists can usually be repaired. To do this, one relies on the important basic text-critical principle **"Lectio difficilior potior"** = "The more difficult reading is the stronger one." But be careful: this principle does not apply to mechanical errors! It only wants to undo text smoothing by bad copyists!
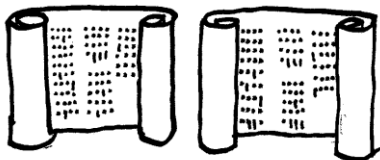
With the knowledge of these sources of error, one can begin with the actual text-critical work**: the "collation" of the manuscripts**. If possible, all surviving manuscripts are collated. Then compare them by going through them word by word and noting every difference, even the smallest one. Thanks to the knowledge of the above-mentioned sources of error, you can basically decide which form is the more original and which is the incorrect one for each difference found. This is the step that requires the most patience.

This is a completely pointless piece of work! Only the text is interesting, not the copyist errors!
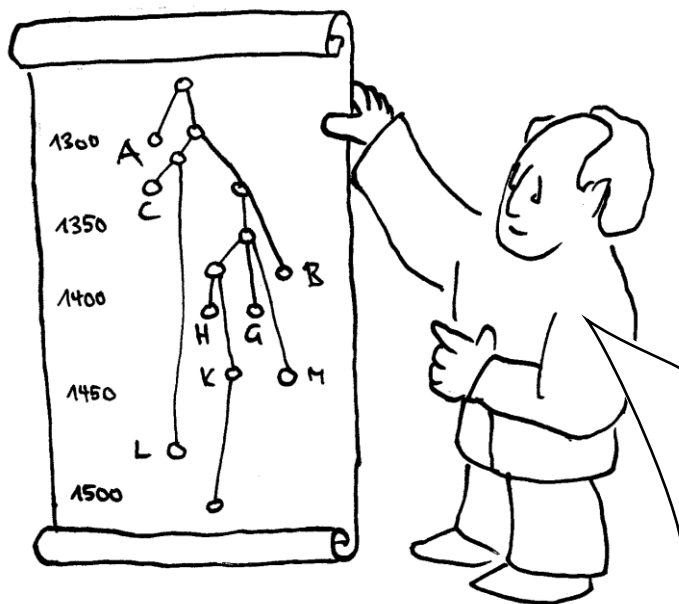
Yes, of course. But you can only get the correct text once you have corrected the copyist's errors. And this often works quite well: if you look at all the errors in all the manuscripts and take other features into account (material, written form, explicit dating in a colophon = postscript at the end of the manuscript, etc.), it is usually possible to create a **"stemma"**, i.e. a family tree of the surviving manuscripts. (In most cases, several lost manuscripts have to be added). This is the step that requires the most ingenuity.

After these steps, you are ready to produce a scientifically sound text edition. There are essentially two options: If the stemma reveals a very confused manuscript situation, a **"diplomatic edition"** will be chosen: As text, you print the contents of a single manuscript that you have recognised as particularly good and reliable thanks to the stemma. In the example just illustrated, this would be manuscript A. (This explains the term "diplomatic", from the Greek "diploma" = double-folded document). All (or, depending on the case, the most important) deviations of the other manuscripts from this main manuscript are then noted in the apparatus.
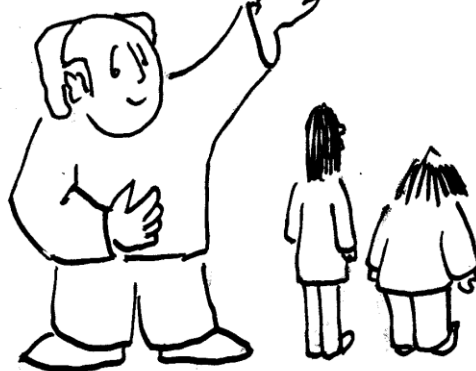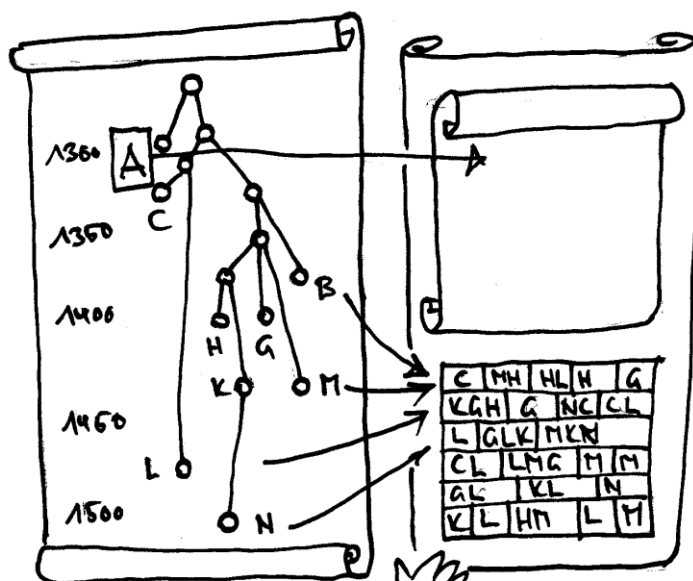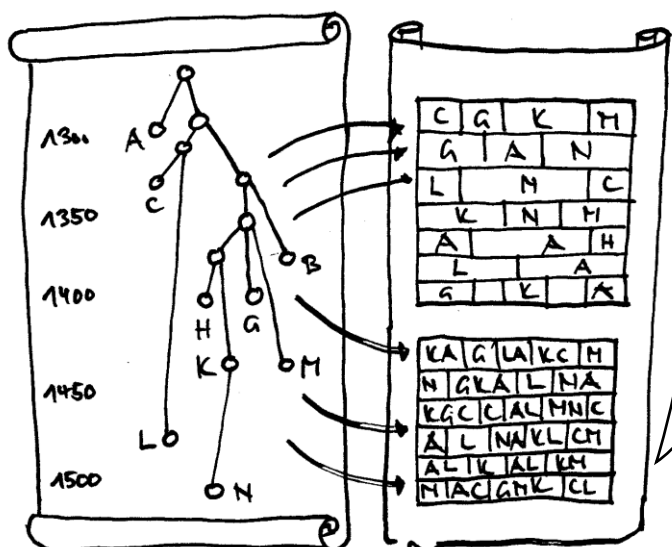
In the more favourable case, the situation shown by the stemma is less confused. One can then attempt a historical-critical edition in the true sense of the word, namely an **"eclectic edition"**. In this case, the text is a reconstructed, i.e. artificial, structure because it does not exist in any of the surviving manuscripts. For each text variant, the editor selects the one that seems to him to be the most original - based on the weight and number of manuscripts that attest to it. He hopes that his reconstructed text may not be exactly the original text itself, but that it comes very close to it. All (or, as the case may be, the most important) readings that were not selected are mentioned in the "critical apparatus".

All right, but as a simple reader I only need the text, regardless of whether it reproduces a good manuscript or is reconstructed. What am I supposed to do with the apparatus? It obviously only contains incorrect readings! This is at best something for specialists who know how to use it.

You're actually right about that, I have to admit. That's why many readers hardly ever take note of the apparatus. In fact, a critical apparatus is only useful and interesting if you know the characteristics of the manuscripts whose readings are included in the apparatus. In other words, if you know the stemma, and if you know which manuscripts carry weight because they are old and come from good copyists. Without this knowledge, you can do little with a critical apparatus...

And then, unfortunately, there is something else: certain critical apparatuses are actually uncritical apparatuses! They not only contain the readings that the editor has rejected. They also contain **conjectures**, i.e. hints, often even requests, to correct and "improve" the text because it is considered "corrupt", i.e. because it is not fully understood. In eclectic editions, these conjectures even appear in the text.

In the 19th century in particular, it was a favourite scientific hobby of philologists to invent conjectures. Just as people educated in the natural sciences since Descartes made themselves the "ruler and owner of nature" in order to technically subjugate and change it, philologists subjugated the texts they edited in exactly the same way. Nowadays, the natural sciences have become more cautious and so have the philologists...

But you said before that Rudolph Kittel also made "suggestions for improvement" in the apparatus of his Biblia Hebraica?

Yes, unfortunately he has made suggestions for corrections, and lots of them. And this is unfortunately the only thing that every reader of his apparatus understood straight away, without knowing much about textual criticism. In general, compared to classical philologists, theologians were much quicker to correct the biblical text without any basis in the manuscript tradition. Paradoxically, this was perhaps due to the fact that the biblical text was personally important to them as a sacred text. Homer was only of cultural interest to a philologist...

If that is the case, I will avoid scientific editions of the Bible! I don't want to have to read the Old Testament in a form that a professor has "improved"!

BHQ

BIBLIA HEBRAICA
quinta editione
cum apparatu critico novis curis elaborato

בראשית

GENESIS

prepared by Abraham Tal

1

DEUTSCHE BIBELGESELLSCHAFT
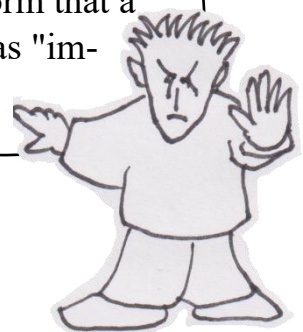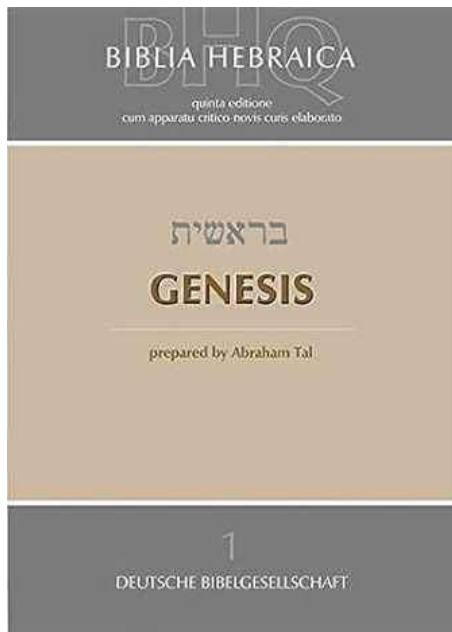
You would even be right if the BHQ didn't exist. This is a scientific edition of the Bible that assumes that the Old Testament is not an ordinary text and draws the right conclusions from it. I will now explain what that means!
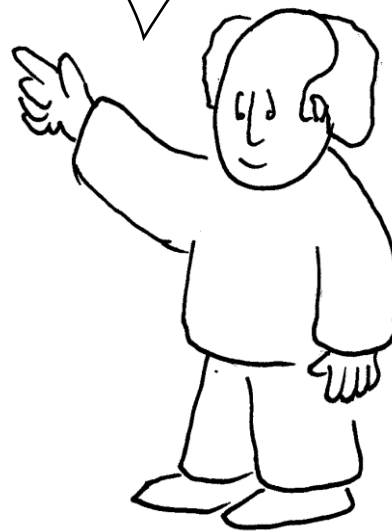
The Hebrew Bible is not an ordinary text
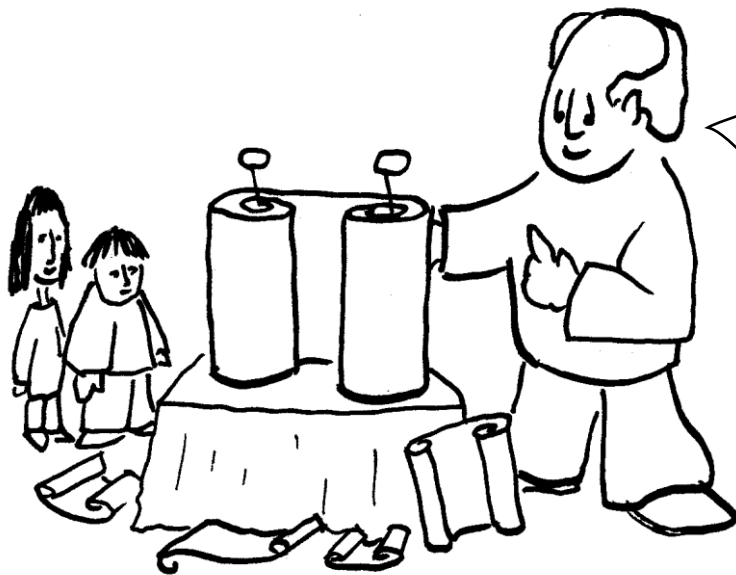
The Hebrew Bible is a very unusual book as far as its textual tradition is concerned. Therefore, if one wants to make a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible in the sense just described, one is suddenly faced with very peculiar problems. The two most important are the following:

First problem: The text of the Hebrew Bible was copied by hand for centuries, like all ancient texts - but since the 1st century AD, the copyists (at least the good ones) no longer made any mistakes. In other words, the Hebrew manuscript tradition offers no variants. This is due to the fact that all recognised and serious copyists adhered to a very elaborate and subtle transmission technique: the so-called "**masora**" (= Hebrew "tradition"). All manuscripts (Ms) that contradict this so-called "Masoretic Text" (TM) are without exception text-critically worthless cheap goods.
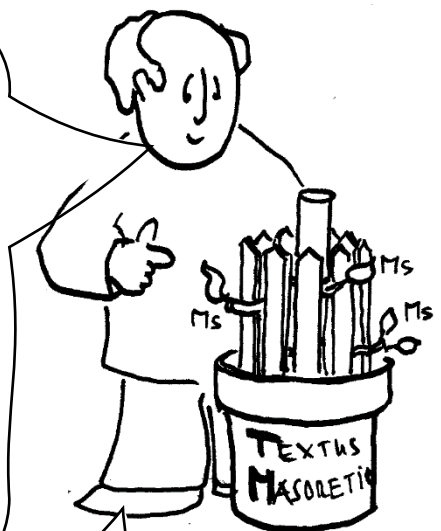
That's incredible! How did they do that with this "Masora"?

You will see this later when you visit these copyists, the so-called "Masoretes". But first the second problem:

The **second problem** is that variants of this extremely stable Masoretic text do exist. They are even very old and some of them date back to the 3rd century BC. However, they are not available in Hebrew. They are only tangible in the old translations of the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Greek translation, the so-called "Septuagint" (= [translation of the] 70", G). This means that we have to ask ourselves: did the ancient translators really have a different Hebrew text as a model ("*Vorlage*"), i.e. is there a genuine variant? Or did they merely freely translate or originally interpret the Hebrew text known today (TM)? This question can only be answered on a case-by-case basis and one must always recognise and take into account the particular nature of each translation.

Here you can see how many old translations there are. All of them could conceal variants of the Masoretic text! But the most important translation in this respect is the Greek (G)

And how do you get these variants?
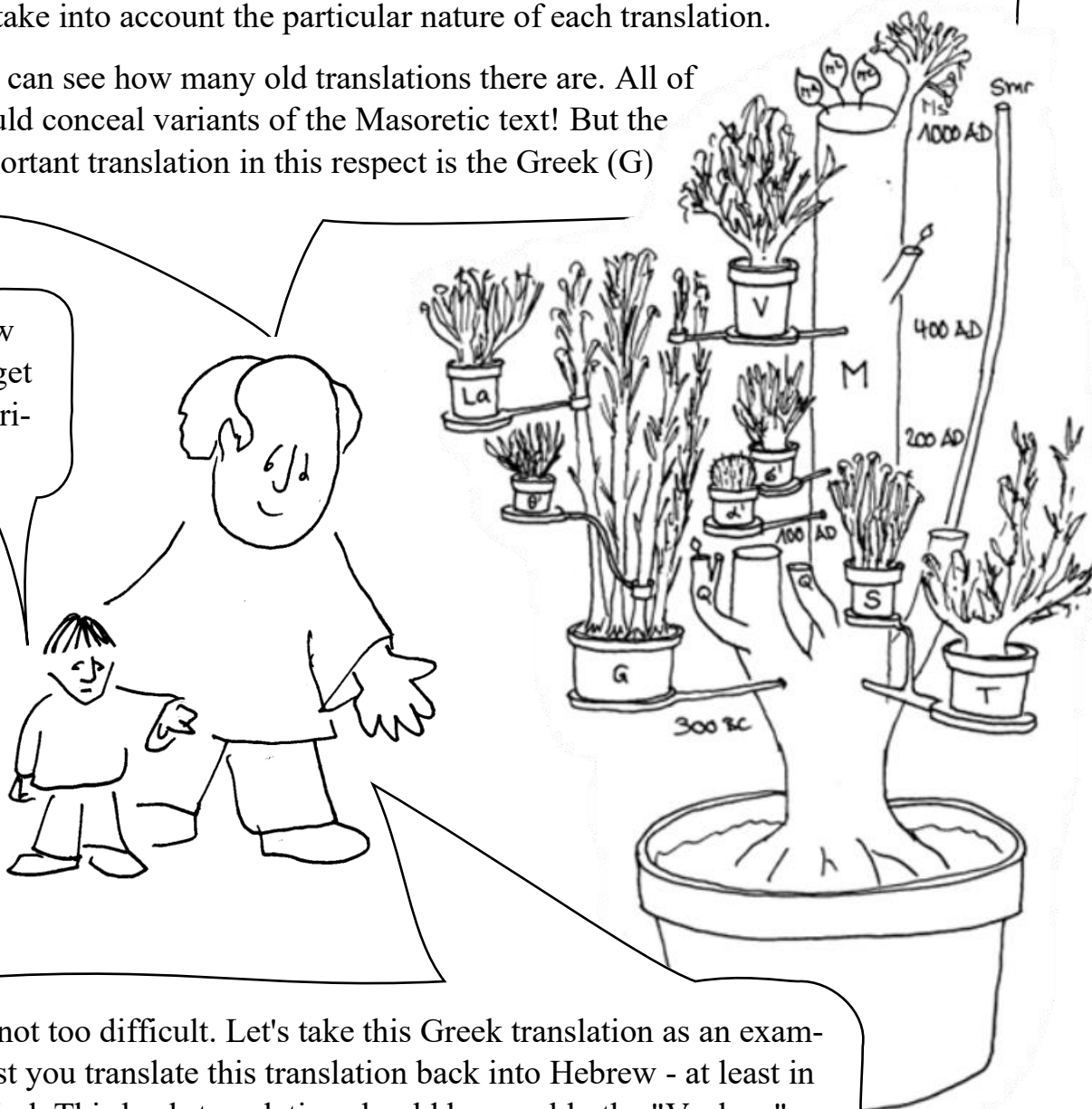
This is not too difficult. Let's take this Greek translation as an example. First you translate this translation back into Hebrew - at least in your mind. This back-translation should be roughly the "Vorlage" that the translators had in front of them. It can therefore be treated like a Hebrew manuscript (which the Hebrew original of G really was at the time). Then, as with the collation of manuscripts, one compares G in detail, word for word, with the Masoretic text. There are two possibilities:

Either G (and thus its "Vorlage") is identical to TM. Then G is a testimony that supports TM, like a Hebrew manuscript.

Or G deviates from TM. This is the more interesting possibility. Three cases must be distinguished here:

a) G differs from TM only at first glance. But if you take a closer look, you can see that this deviation is a consequence of the translation into Greek: i.e. the translators read the same text as TM, but had to or wanted to adapt linguistically (syntactically, semantically) or culturally to their Greek readership. This is an interesting **exegetical** case: translations are always also commentaries. Textual criticism thus becomes the history of exegesis!

b) The difference between G and TM can be traced back to a mechanical error that was possible at any time before the establishment of the Masoretic technique. This error (e.g. a homeoarcton or an inversion) can either be present in the original of G - or also in TM. This is a case that is interesting from a text-critical point of view. Here, an error in TM can be discovered and corrected thanks to G or, conversely, the G reading can be traced back to TM as obviously erroneous.
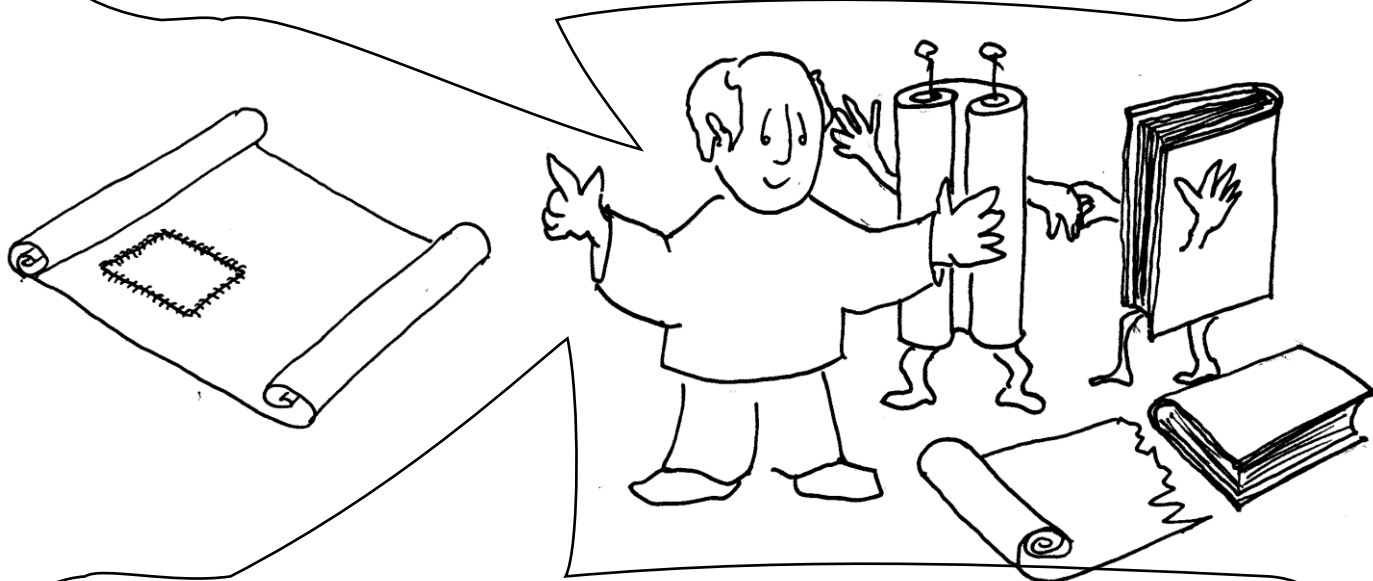
c) In other cases, however, the difference between G and TM can neither be understood as a result of the transfer nor can it be attributed to a mechanical error. In this case, it must be assumed that the difference between the TM and the G original is the result of a deliberate editorial intervention. This is a case that is interesting in terms of editorial history. It is usually the case that G, or the G-"Vorlage", is shorter, while TM is more detailed. Since the Greek translators generally translated accurately to very accurately (which is what is expected of a translator), this means that the G-"Vorlage" is an older, more original text form, while TM represents a later revision and update.

I always thought that the Hebrew Bible was a sacred text, and you can't change sacred texts! They are eternally true.

Perhaps it is the other way round: precisely because the Hebrew Bible is a sacred text that is true and should be authoritative for every era, it was necessary to prevent it from becoming museum-like and incomprehensible. This is why new, "improved" editions were sometimes necessary. Of course, these new editions were not the work of simple copyists. They had to be authorised by a competent authority, perhaps at the Jerusalem Temple. And as with today's books, the entire text is never changed in an "improved edition". Only the passages that were suddenly found to be misleading or offensive were changed.

A good example of this process outside of the Bible is the so-called **"Testimonium Flavianum"** (="Flavian Testimony"). The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus mentions Jesus of Nazareth in his "Jewish Antiquities" from 93 AD (Ant 18:63-64). The work was also read and thus copied by Christians. At some point in the 3rd century, the way in which Josephus portrayed Jesus was felt to be inadequate and one (hardly a lone copyist, but rather a school of theologians or a similar authority) improved this passage by expanding it. These additions are hardly conceivable in the mouth of a Jew, but without them the text reads smoothly as a completely correct, Jewish summary of Jesus' activity. Thus a second, improved edition of the "Jewish Antiquities" was produced, which was also attractive to Christians...

"Around this time lived Jesus, a wise man, *if you can call him a man at all*. For he was the accomplisher of incredible deeds *and the teacher of all people who gladly received the truth*. In this way he attracted many Jews and also many Gentiles to himself. *He was the Christ*. And although Pilate condemned him to death on the cross at the instigation of the nobles of our nation, his former followers were not unfaithful to him. *For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, just as God-sent prophets had proclaimed this and a thousand other marvellous things about him*. And the people of Christians who call themselves after him continue to this day."

The Hebrew Bible is therefore a very special book: its text has been handed down completely error-free and at the same time its old translations allow interesting insights into the development and interpretation of the work. All this is summarised in detail in the critical (and annotated!) apparatus of the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta.* That is why the BHQ is far more than a critical edition in the usual sense. And your justified criticism of critical apparatus no longer applies here at all! I will now show you this in order.
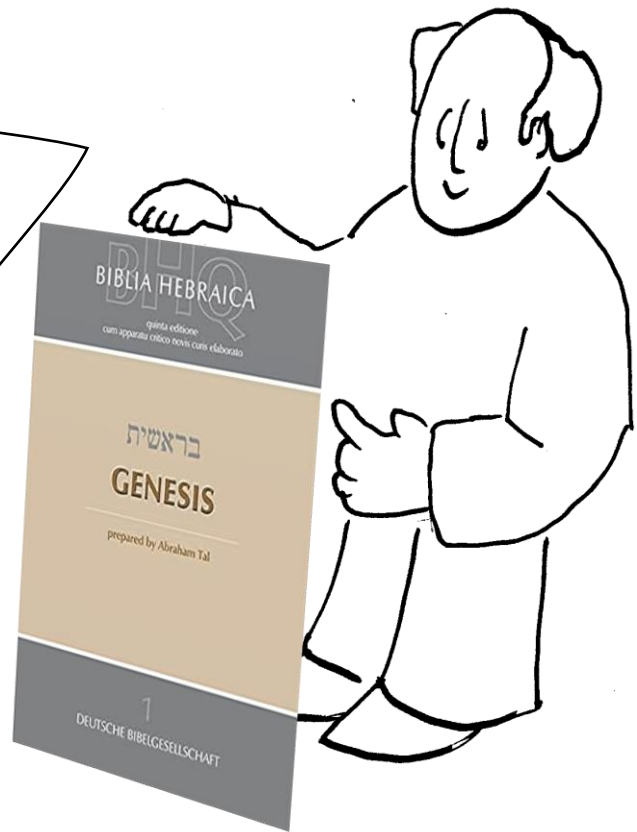
Can we visit the Masoretes first? I'd love to know how they did it to prevent any copyist errors!

Visiting the Masoretes

Good afternoon, Rabbi Jonah - you are a Masoret, a specialist in the Masora. Can you tell us what
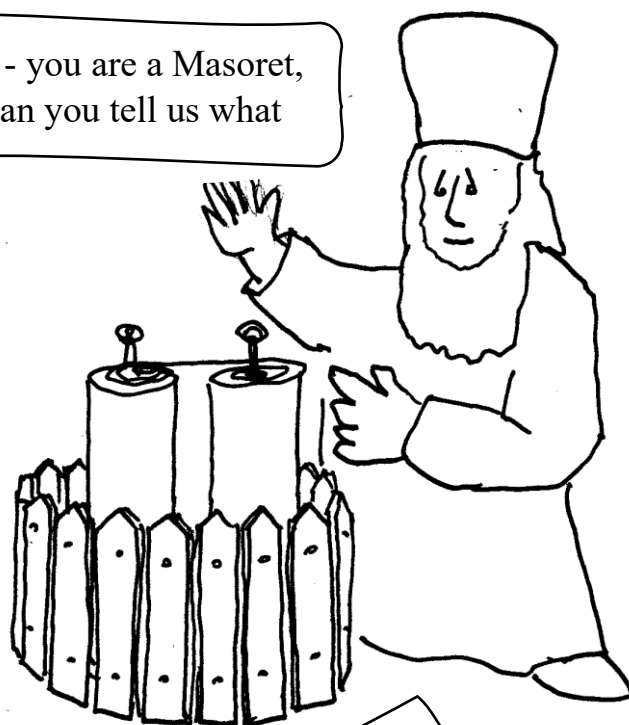
Yes, of course! Masora means "tradition". It is an elaborate, subtle but highly effective transmission technique that we Jews invented. Thanks to this technique, the text of the Hebrew Bible (which is therefore called the "Masoretic Text" = TM) could be handed down for centuries without any errors. This technique is very old. Even Rabbi Aqiba (ca. 55-137 AD) used to say: "Massorät sejag latThora" = "The Masora/tradition is a fence for the Torah." (Mishnah, Abot III 14).1952

The idea behind the Masora is quite simple: you count everything that can be counted in the Bible text and memorise these numbers.

We Masoretes have therefore determined all kinds of "official" numbers: Number of verses, words or letters in a biblical book and in the whole Bible, number of identical words with conspicuous spelling, number of identical, rather rare forms of a word. Word forms or word combinations that occur rarely or only once in the Bible are also labelled as such.

All this information - the "masora" in the narrower sense of the word - is usually noted in the margin of every good Bible manuscript ("masora marginalis" = marginal masora). This means that every scribe can check at any time whether the manuscript he wants to copy is complete and error-free down to the last detail.

Masora magna (Mm)

Bibeltext Bibeltext Bibeltext

Masora parva (Mp)

Masora magna (Mm)

Masora marginalis = Mm + Mp
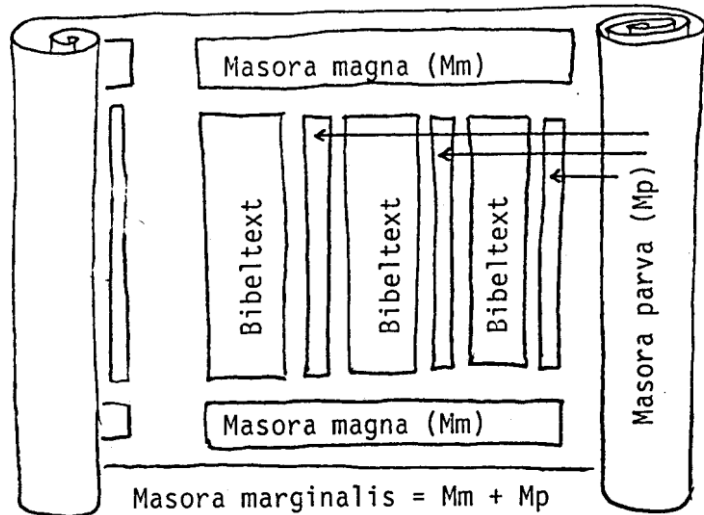
One part of the marginal Masora is the **"Masora parva",** abbreviated Mp = small Masora. It contains all the Masoretic information in concise form (abbreviations!) in the order of the Bible text. A small circle above the respective word ("circellus") indicates the Mp.

For *example*, the Mp says the following about Gen 1:1: a) "In the beginning" occurs 5 times in the Bible, 3 of them at the beginning of the verse. b) "God created" only occurs 3 times in the Bible. c) "The heavens and the earth" does not occur anywhere else in the book of Gen.

The other part of the marginal Masora is the "Masora magna", abbreviated Mm = large Masora. This compiles the biblical passages for the information in the Mp as in a concordance by quoting them in abbreviated form.

For Gen 1:1, the Mm therefore reads: a) "In the beginning" 3 times at the beginning of the verse with quotations from Gen 1:1; Jer 26:1; 27:1 and 2 times in the middle of the verse with quotations from Jer 28:1; 49:34. b) "God created" 2 times with quotations from Gen 1:1; 2:3.

This information from the marginal masorah is summarised again in numerous lists at the end of the good manuscripts. This is the masora finalis, abbreviated Mf = final masora. . Thanks to the list, the Masoretic information could be memorised or repeated more easily. The Mf also contains information on the number of verses of the respective book, its middle verse, its middle word, its middle letter, etc.
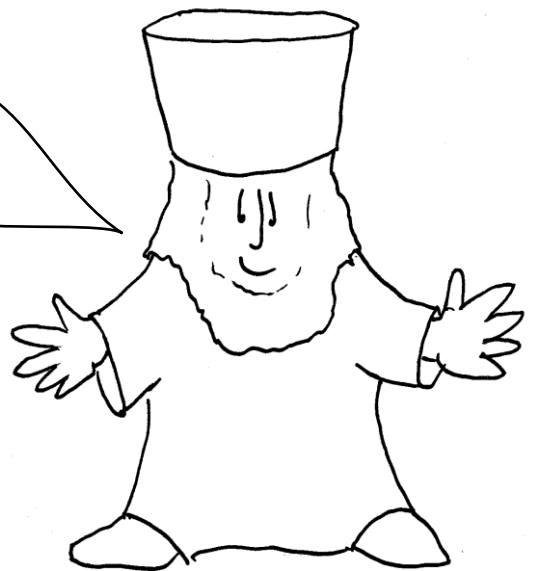
That is all very impressive. But we are not Masoretes, we only want to read the Hebrew Bible, not copy it. So we don't need to concern ourselves with all these terribly complicated details of the Masorah, do we?

Of course you have to deal with the Masora, even if you will never write Bible scrolls.

Firstly, reading the Masora is not difficult at all. If you know the Hebrew number symbols (i.e. the alphabet) and a dozen abbreviations, you can understand almost everything. The abbreviations you don't know can all be looked up.

Secondly, reading the Masora forces you to take a close look at the biblical text.

And thirdly: especially in Europe, after the Shoah, in which the theologians were not entirely innocent, it is quite appropriate to at least understand the Masora as a marvellous achievement of the annihilated Judaism and to regard it with respect.

Die BHQ ist viel mehr als eine kritische Ausgabe

After everything we have discussed here, you will now easily understand the structure and content of the BHQ. And you will see that it is much more than a critical edition of the Bible! So let us now open this Bible!

ברא שית GENESIS

You can see the text of the *Codex Leningradensis* with verse numbers in the fold, here on the outside the Mp and below, where I am standing, the Mm. The entire marginal Masora is annotated in detail in each volume!

1 בְּרֵאשִׁ֖ית בָּרָ֣א אֱלֹהִ֑ים אֵ֥ת הַשָּׁמַ֖יִם וְאֵ֥ת הָאָ֑רֶץ: וְהָאָ֗רֶץ הָיְתָ֥ה
תֹ֙הוּ֙ וָבֹ֔הוּ וְחֹ֖שֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵ֣י תְה֑וֹם וְר֣וּחַ אֱלֹהִ֔ים מְרַחֶ֖פֶת עַל־פְּנֵ֥י
הַמָּ֑יִם

3
4

5 כִּי־

6 אֶחָ֑ד

7 בֵּ֣ין ׀

8 מִתַּ֣

אֱלֹ֑ה

9 וַיֹּ֑אמֶ

[1:1]

וַיֵּ֣רָא אֱלֹהִ֑ים אֶת־הָא֑וֹר

וַיַּבְדֵּ֣ל אֱלֹהִ֔ים

וַיִּקְרָ֥א ל֑וֹ

מֵעַ֖ל לָ֑

וַתֵּרָאֶה֙

לעשות o: [2] והארץ ח ראש פסוק והארץ היתה תהו ובהו . והארץ אשר אתם עברים
שמה . והארץ תעזב מהם . והארץ הגבלי . והארץ הנפה תחת ישביה . והארץ הנשמה
תעבד תחת . והארץ תענה o: [6] ויאמר אלהים ג בטע בעינ יהי רקיע . ישר .
נעשה o: [יהי] אור . יהי רקיע . יקוו המים . תדשא הארץ . יהי מארת . ישרצו
המים . תוצא הארץ . הנה . [...] . אל נח . אשר הקימתי . אות הברית . ואתה את
בריתי . שרי אשתך . אבל שרה . [ל]אל . במר[אה] . אהיה [...] אהיה . עוד .
בלעם . שאל . שאלת . ההיטב . [...] . o:

● • ✛ 1:1 בְּרֵאשִׁית • 5 יוֹם[1] Smr | יומם 4QGen^g (modern) | G V S T (indet) ✛ •
6 לָמֶיִם מֵיַם בֵּין ‥ Smr ‥ QGen^g G V S T^OJ | πρώτη α' T^NF (assim-ctext) ✛ • אֶחָד:
‥ S T^O (T^JNF) | foll καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως. G (assim-vv 7, 9, 11, etc.) |
(insuf) • 7 וַיַּבְדֵּל Smr 4QGen^b 4QGen^g V La^Ms S T | foll ὁ θεός G
‥ וַיְהִי־כֵן: Smr 4QGen^b 4QGen^g Hex V S T^OJ | > G (om) | foll
‥ כמ T^NF (explic) • 8 שָׁמָיִם Smr 4QGen^b 4QGen^g α' σ'-θ' V S T | foll καὶ
εἶδεν ὁ θεός ὅτι καλόν. G (assim-vv 10, 12, 18, etc.) • 9 יִקָּווּ 4QGen^b G α'-σ' V
S T | יקאו 4QGen^g (differ-gram?) ✛ • הַשָּׁמָיִם Smr 4QGen^b T^ONF | לשמים
4QGen^g ‥ T^J (assim-v 7) | G V (indet) ✛ • אֶל־מָקוֹם Smr 4QGen^b γ' V S T |
4QGen^g ‥ מקוה [4 ‥ ^h1 G (assim-v 10) ✛ •

And here under the Mm you have the critical apparatus - unlike that of Rudolph Kittel, it will not provoke any criticism from you!

But this apparatus is horribly complicated. Nobody understands it!

Nonsense! Every critical apparatus seems complicated at first glance. But if you work with it a little, this impression disappears. The entries in the BHQ apparatus are even surprisingly simple when you consider that they usually reproduce entire arguments!

In any case, the structure of the entries is simple, as this table shows!

Yes, it does indeed seem less difficult than we thought...

Mmh

1. Lemma

The words/expressions from TM to which the entry refers. The text itself does not refer to the entry: this means that reading is not disturbed by a complicated system of references. This is the case in all critical editions of classical texts!

2. Witnesses for the lemma

All textual witnesses that support the lemma are listed, which is unusual but necessary and creates clarity. The witnesses are represented by sigla. These sigla can be looked up in the sigla index, but over time this becomes increasingly rare!

3. Variants of the lemma

The variants are either quoted or paraphrased (e.g. by the sign > if the variant consists of the content of the lemma being missing in certain witnesses). The witnesses of the variant are also named here.

4. Characterization of the variant

The most striking innovation of the BHQ! The editors explain the origin of the variant in a concise formula. The exact meaning of the formula can be looked up in an index. Where there is no characterization, we know that the editors do not fully understand how this variant came about, so the reader need not worry...

5. Reference to a commentary (cross)

Editors often give reasons for their characterizations and briefly summarise their thoughts on them.

Epilogue:

Speech of the dead Rudolph Kittel from purgatory that his guilt will soon be atoned for thanks to the BHQ

After my death on 20 October 1929, the Eternal, blessed be HE, cast me down into purgatory. "Against your better judgement," he said, "you have given my word a completely inappropriate apparatus. You did this in order to surround my eternal word with a scientific aura and - worse still - to bend it to your liking with conjectures!" Since then, I have been sitting in the purest olive oil, which is kept boiling by all the copies of my *Biblia Hebraica 1-4* that are in use. But soon only the BHQ will be used, my fire will go out and my punishment will come to an end.