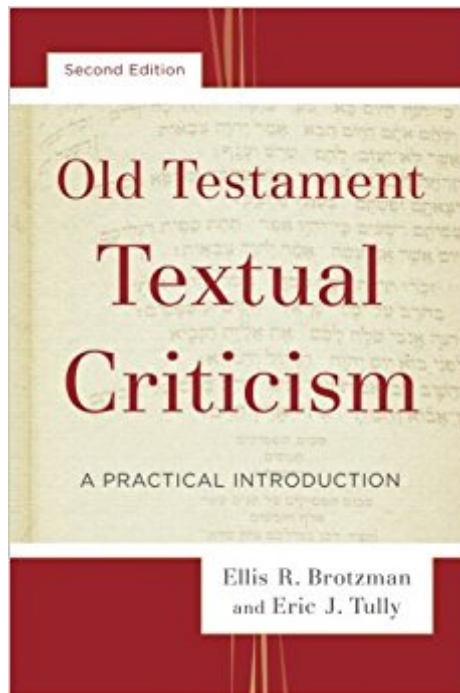




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Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction



Synopsis

A Readable, Updated Introduction to Textual Criticism This accessibly written, practical introduction to Old Testament textual criticism helps students understand the discipline and begin thinking through complex issues for themselves. The authors combine proven expertise in the classroom with cutting-edge work in Hebrew textual studies. This successful classic (nearly 25,000 copies sold) has been thoroughly expanded and updated to account for the many changes in the field over the past twenty years. It includes examples, illustrations, an updated bibliography, and a textual commentary on the book of Ruth.

Book Information

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: Baker Academic; 2 edition (July 19, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801097533

ISBN-13: 978-0801097539

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #109,560 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #89 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Language Studies](#) #145 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Criticism & Interpretation > Old Testament](#) #331 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study > Old Testament](#)

Customer Reviews

"It is a pleasure to welcome Brotzman's work in its updated form. There is no better introduction to the field of Old Testament manuscripts and their text-critical study. It is ideal for the student with little or no background."--Richard S. Hess, Denver Seminary "Brotzman's introduction has been a helpful guide for over two decades. His collaboration with Tully in this new edition ensures that the volume will continue to be useful as an entrance into the bewildering world of Old Testament textual criticism. I am pleased to see that the new edition refines the goal of textual criticism in light of our current understanding of textual composition and transmission in antiquity."--Bill T. Arnold, Asbury Theological Seminary "This updated version of Brotzman's original work provides a welcome introduction to Old Testament textual criticism that is well informed by recent scholarship. Incorporating current theories and analyzing newly developed resources, Brotzman and Tully's

judicious work gives students a firm foundation for understanding textual criticism in its unique Old Testament environment and for practicing it responsibly."--John H. Walton, Wheaton College

"This introduction to Old Testament textual criticism has been expanded and updated throughout without sacrificing readability and the practical features that have made it a popular seminary textbook. The complicated and evolving theories on the textual history of the Old Testament are explained clearly, while the new appendix discussing the goal of textual criticism allows the authors to avoid oversimplifying the issues. The chapter introducing BHS has been expanded to include BHQ and compares their textual apparatuses. Such updates will enable this textbook to serve the next generation of seminary students."--John A. Cook, Asbury Theological Seminary

"This practical book shows readers how to take first steps in the practice of Old Testament textual criticism and how it is relevant to exegesis. The authors present a comprehensive yet readable survey of the transmission history of the Old Testament text, they show how to make proper use of the standard critical editions of the Hebrew Bible, and they present a workable approach for actually doing Old Testament textual criticism. By unpacking the entire critical apparatus of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia for the book of Ruth, they provide expert guidance in how to decipher and utilize the textual information found there. I enthusiastically recommend it!"--Richard A. Taylor, Dallas Theological Seminary

Ellis R. Brotzman (PhD, New York University), now retired, was senior professor of Old Testament at Tyndale Theological Seminary in the Netherlands for more than twenty years. He lives in Houghton, New York. Eric J. Tully (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison) is assistant professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully. *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016, 255 pp. Pbk. ISBN

978-0-8010-9753-9. Brotzman's *Old Testament Textual Criticism* has been a standard beginner textbook for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament since 1994. Indisputably, however, since the field of textual criticism is constantly changing it is necessary at times to prepare revisions of even the "classics." This review will delineate some of the more extensive changes that Tully introduced in order to prepare a second edition of Brotzman's honored text. Prior to doing so, however, it is prudent to assist the reader by providing an orientation to the Tully/Brotzman text as a whole and the nature of

textual criticism in general. The book is eight chapters in length complete with an introduction, conclusion, two appendices, *“An English Key to BHS”* and *“What Text(s) Are We Attempting to Reconstruct?”*, a (modest) glossary, bibliography, and thorough subject/author/scripture indices. The preface by notable scholar Bruce Waltke, found within the first edition, has been removed. In brief, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* invites the reader to probe the sources, methodology, and goals of Old Testament textual criticism. Though it is perhaps tempting for the fledging student or harried pastor to ignore complex matters such as the transmission/copying process of the Scriptures or the procedures for evaluating different textual readings, learning this material effectively will unquestionably better equip and prepare the exegete to preach, teach, and understand God’s Word more circumspectly. The eight chapters are each of roughly equal length but only a mere three retain their original chapter names and are so indicated with an asterisk * below. Concerning the remaining five chapters, the first edition chapter names are written in square brackets [] following the second *“Tully”* edition in the list below.¹

- * Writing in the Ancient Near East
- 2. A Brief Overview of the Transmission of the Old Testament Text [Transmission of the Old Testament in Hebrew]
- 3. Hebrew Texts of the Old Testament [Ancient Versions of the Old Testament]
- 4. Ancient Translations of the Old Testament [The Dead Sea Scrolls]
- 5. Critical Editions of the Old Testament Text [Introduction to BHS]
- 6. Scribal Changes in the Old Testament Text [Scribal Errors]
- 7. * Principles and Practice of Textual Criticism
- 8. * Textual Commentary on the Book of Ruth

To begin the process of comparing and contrasting the two editions, one should mention that although the *“character”* and basic outline of Brotzman’s text have largely been retained (for example, the bold faced headings throughout each of the main sections has been continued), much of the entire volume has been revised and rewritten and a good amount of content has been added throughout. Perhaps the most prominent (and welcome!) change, aside from the detailed explanation of BHQ, of course, which Tully does most admirably, is the addition of the *“For Further Reading”* or *“For Further Study”* sections at the end of many of the volume’s chapters. These recommendations provide up-to-date, sometimes annotated, bibliographies of various references works, monographs, articles, etc. The resources listed are all well within the bounds of a so-called *“practical introduction”* and will serve the student exceptionally well. The lists of suggestions, however, do contain some notable omissions. For example, in chapter three, *“Hebrew Texts of the Old Testament,”* the recommended reading

section on the *“The Biblical Texts from Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls)”* fails to explicitly mention Flint and Vanderkam (2002), Vanderkam (2010) or any of the series of volumes in *Studies in the Dead Scrolls and Related Literature*, e.g. Ulrich (1999), Fitzmyer (2000) or Flint (2001). Also, within chapter four, *“Ancient Translations of the Old Testament”* the *“For Further Study”* list pertaining to the Greek Septuagint (i.e. the LXX) fails to mention Muraoka (2010), Dine (2004), Tov (2004), or Morrish (1970). The second most noticeable (and also heartily welcomed!) change is the addition of more than twice as many, in total, figures, i.e. charts and illustrative depictions, as compared to the first edition. Although space prohibits a full delineation of each new figure, suffice to say that they alone justify the purchase of the second edition and that Tully is to be most commended on his erudition in this regard. Although the only completely new table that has been added to the main text itself is 6.1 *“Possible Confusion of Archaic Letters”* table 5.1 *“Selected Sigla Found in BHS and BHQ”* previously entitled *“Symbols Used in the BHS”* now includes images from both of these major critical editions and 3.1 *“Biblical Texts from Qumran”* has been significantly brought more up-to-date. Minor other changes that improve readability and accuracy are also evident in some of the other tables as well: see. 1.1. *“Ancient Writings Systems”* 2.2. *“Transmission of the Old Testament Text”* and 3.2 *“Important Masoretic Manuscripts”* for more pronounced examples. All of the tables/figures are very well designed and will only serve to enhance the reader’s comprehension and understanding of the material at hand. Another, most welcome, addition to the Tully volume is appendix B, *“What Text(s) Are We Attempting to Reconstruct?”* wherein Tully opines: *“In summary, in the majority of cases we can state: The goal of Old Testament textual criticism is to recover the final, authoritative text”* (226). But, *“to account for those few cases in which manuscript evidence reflects different literary versions, we must add an (s)”* as a qualifier: the goal of Old Testament textual criticism is to recover the final, authoritative text(s). (226). Emphases original. Lastly, one notices the extensive, though not exhaustive, update to the

bibliography, the few minor updates to the glossary (which, when compared to Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* or the Fischer/Wahneema Lubiano volume *The Text of the Old Testament*, could have been substantially bolstered) and a markedly clearer presentation of the textual commentary on the book of Ruth. One (minor?) quibble, however, with this last chapter is the lack of engagement with the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: Megilloth*. Would it not have behooved the author to leverage, at least in part, the now-standard reference work for such a volume as this? On another note, one imagines that critical interaction with the rather controversial *Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (HBCE, formerly the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*) could also have been beneficial. Such criticism notwithstanding, this thorough revision of Brozdan will surely prepare beginners for further research in textual criticism and thoroughly equip students to use more scholarly, advanced textual criticism manuals, such as Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, with increased skill and fluidity. Its primary readers will be undergraduate/graduate students and, one hopes, pastors/ministers.

excellent

thanks its all Good

good read.

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