Bibles and Scholars: a Tribute to Paul Kahle and Gérard Weil, Aix-en-Provence, 9–12 June 2022 (version auteur)

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The legacy of Paul Kahle (1875–1964) and Gérard Emmanuel Weil (1926–1986) for the study of biblical text, the biblical scribal traditions, and the Masorah is of the utmost importance. It is sufficient to recall that the most widespread critical edition of the Hebrew Bible until today is still the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS).[1] It contains the text of the *Codex Leningradensis* (MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Heb. B19a, 1008 CE, identified by Kahle in 1926 as *codex optimus*) and the masoretic annotations (Masora Magna, edited by Weil).[2] The colloquium *Bibles and Scholars: a Tribute to Paul Kahle and Gérard Weil* intended to celebrate the two scholars and explore the impact of their studies on our understanding of the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible as handed down through ancient and medieval Hebrew or non-Hebrew manuscripts. It was originally planned to be held in April 2020, but had to be delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden demise of Philippe Cassuto (Institut de Recherches et d'Études sur les Mondes Arabes et Musulmans (IREMAM), Aix-Marseille University), who, in addition to being a co-organizer, was one of the last disciples of Gérard Weil.[3] As a result, the workshop, organized by Élodie Attia (CNRS, Aix-Marseille Université) with the support of the European Association of Jewish Studies, took place from 9 to 12 June 2022, at the Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme of Aix-Marseille University. It was the closing event of the project '*Manuscripta Bibliae Hebraicae*: The Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in Western Europe (England, France, Germany, Northern Italy) in the 12th and 13th Century: a Material, Cultural and Social Approach' (ANR, 2016–2022, PI Élodie Attia, hereafter MBH).[4]

1 The BHS was edited by R. Elliger, W. Rudolph, H. Rüger, and J. Ziegler in fascicles between 1968 and 1976 (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1968–1976)), and since 1977 in one volume (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia… Editio Funditus Renovata* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977)). The fourth most recent corrected version was produced in 1990.

2 G. Weil, ed., *Massorah Gedolah: Manuscrit B. 19a de Léningrad*, I (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1971), included in the BHS of 1977. See also G. E. Weil, 'La nouvelle édition de la massorah (BHQ IV) et l'histoire de la massorah', in G. W. Anderson et al., eds., *Congress Volume Bonn 1962*, Vetus Testamentum, Supplements, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 266–284.

3 Among others, see P. Cassuto, *Qeré-Ketib et listes massorétiques dans le manuscrit B 19a*, Judentum und Umwelt, 26 (Frankfurt am Main et al.: Lang, 1989).

4 On MBH, see <https://heurist.huma-num.fr/h6-alpha/?db=MBH_Manuscripta_Bibliae_Hebraicae&website> (this and other URIs last accessed 16 November 2022).

The conference covered such scientific fields and disciplines as Jewish studies, biblical studies and editions, Masoretic studies, manuscript studies. Besides, scholars who had had the opportunity to work with Gérard Weil shared their experience and provided an opportunity to shed new light on the 'Weil Archives' which, since 2017, have been kept at the Bibliothèque d'Antiquité d'Aix (BiAA, the Library of the research centre 'Textes et documents de la Méditerranée antique et médiévale', TDMAM-UMR 7297, of Aix-Marseille University).

The event featured 18 papers, organized into five sessions over three days, the opening session and four thematic panels. A visit to ancient synagogues of the Comtat Venaissin, was organized on the last day of the conference, with the help of the cultural services of the regional council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA).

The opening session was dedicated to biographies and memories. Élodie Attia explained how the idea of this conference came about, among other things, as a result of the university recovering the private library of Gérard Weil in October 2016. She recalled the different backgrounds and the scholarly evolution of Kahle and Weil, who both thought it important to study the Bible as an academic subject in the field of humanities, and not only as an object of belief. Coming from the studies of Babylonian biblical texts, they shared the idea that the Babylonian vocalization (expressed in the text of MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Or. 4° 680) was a pre-Masoretic tradition going back to the Tiberian pronunciation.[5] Weil considered the idea of the existence of 'a monolithic Masoretic Text' (MT), based on a 'model codex', inaccurate.[6] Weil also pioneered computer sciences applied to the Hebrew language and text analysis in the 1960s and early 1970s. Attia also used the opportunity to remember Philippe Cassuto, who was Weil's last and outstanding disciple between 1983 and 1986, and one of the greatest specialists of Masorah and Hebrew languages. Two former colleagues of Weil at CNRS, Anne-Marie Guény-Weil and Gérard Jobin, shared their memories. Guény-Weil read an unedited text by Weil (*une homélie funèbre*), which demonstrated all the admiration and friendship he had had for Kahle. Jobin recalled the activities of the 'Section Biblique et Massoretique' of the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, in Strasbourg, Nancy, and then Lyon, where he also had met Philippe Cassuto as a young PhD student in the late 1980s. Corrado Martone (Turin University) spoke of the project 'Kahle Documents Management, Or-

5 G. E. Weil, 'Propositions pour une étude de la tradition massorétique babylonienne', *Textus*, 2 (1962), 103–119, here 105.

6 G. E. Weil, 'La Massorah', *Revue des études juives*, 131 (1972), 5–104.

ganization and Study' (KADMOS, 2010–2014)[7] and the role the late Chair of Hebrew Language and Literature at the University of Turin, Bruno Chiesa, played in this research.

The first panel of the second day, chaired by Viktor Golinets (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg), was attended by specialists of Qumranic studies. Taking Kahle's crucial analysis of the textual history of Hebrew witnesses of the book of Ben Sira found in the Cairo Genizah and Dead Sea Scrolls as a starting point, Jean-Sebastien Rey (Nancy University) sought to demonstrate that, contrary to Kahle's hypothesis, it may be possible to reconstruct the genealogy of the medieval Hebrew manuscripts. In his paper *Paul Kahle and Ben Sira: from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Cairo Genizah*, he offered the case study of the so-called manuscript C, an anthological manuscript dating back to the thirteenth century. To reconstruct the *stemma codicum*, Rey used the method of conjunctive and disjunctive errors designed by Paul Maas, and based his study on the critical edition he is preparing with Eric Reymond (Yale). The author questioned the utility of stemmatology when it is not used to reconstruct an *Urtext* or an archetype. Between old philology and new philology, a path is emerging to understand the *mouvance* of the text, its variance throughout history, but also to apprehend the genealogy of scribal versions that shed new light on scribal behaviours. During the subsequent discussion, Rey compared several approaches to text criticism, including the Lachmanniann method (diplomatic archetype), the Bédier's method (each manuscript is important in the reconstruction of an eclectic edition), the New Philology (each manuscript is a unique product), and a fourth method developed by Nadia Altschul (genealogy of scribal versions), which he finally preferred. The definition of 'variance' was additionally discussed, the audience and the presenter agreeing on a suggestion by Ron Hendel to distinguish between 'horizontal transmission' and 'vertical transmission'.

In his paper *Qumran Biblical Manuscripts Written by Unprofessional or Unskilled Scribes*, Eibert Tigchelaar (Leuven University, via Zoom) raised two difficult questions: 'how do scholarly models of textual communities influence our interpretation of the Dead Sea Scrolls?' (or sources in general) and 'how does the study of the scrolls as scribal objects enable a reassessment of scholarly models?'. He suggested to use 'material and palaeographical approaches' in addressing the 'copying process through variants and errors'. He highlighted the problem with 'old', derogatory terminology (referring to biblical manuscripts as e.g. 'unskilled' / 'vulgar' / 'elementary' / 'substandard') and reminded that recent scholarship on the Dead Sea Scrolls has suggested new more neutral terms for describing manuscripts and hands, for instance

7 See <http://www.paulkahle.unito.it/index.php>.

4Q76 and 4QXII[a].[8] For Tigchelaar, 'unskilled writing' seemed to have correlations with elements such as smaller-sized scrolls, larger-sized script, the use of non-standard orthography, and copying errors. Concerning the use of palaeography in the study of the text and textual history of the Bible, he suggested that the question of the skill of the scribes and quality of the manuscripts may provide insights that could, for instance, help build theories about the textual history of the Bible, using these manuscripts to formulate hypotheses about the scribes' concerns about the form of literary compositions. Tigchelaar highlighted some research perspectives such as knowing more about the purpose and function of the copied (biblical) manuscripts—a question also central for the MBH project which hosted the conference.

Ursula Schattner-Rieser (Insbrück University), in her talk *Paul Kahle and the Research on non-Tiberian* (*pre-Masoretic*) *Hebrew*, reminded us that Kahle was the first to use non-Hebrew sources that predated the medieval Masoretic text. Kahle argued that the first Masoretes (*Soferim*) established the consonant text using existing old manuscripts and corrected their *textus receptus* after them with their own rules, by eliminating variations and replacing them with a new standard. The Masoretes would have then ensured that all significant deviations from the model manuscript disappeared. Only minor differences existed after the establishment of *Musterkodices* (model codices) by Masoretes. Besides textual differences, Kahle was particularly interested in phonological and morphological variants in the Isaiah scroll from Qumran. According to Schattner-Rieser, Kahle was perhaps right in his arguments for an artificial correction regarding the so-called *waw*-consecutive. The imperfect tense construct derived from an old prefixed preterite verb originated, according to Bauer's comparative historical study of the Semitic verb, from Akkadian. In Origen's *Secunda*, there is no such thing as a strong *waw*. The conjunction is always *ou*-, like *oua* in Samaritan Hebrew and in the Yemenite pronunciation. Bauer had already described the prefixed preterite *yaqtul* as 'timeless' and the lack of distinction between the short and long imperfect forms should not have caused difficulties in understanding the text. Those familiar with this usage in Biblical Hebrew or other Semitic languages can easily recognise the preterite meaning of these imperfect forms, whether they are formally distinct or not. That the narrative refers to the past is usually clearly defined by the context, or the situation, and by adverbs. There was no misunderstanding, as proved by the Aramaic Targums which generally rendered the preterite *yaqtul* in general as past tense.

8 See the works produced by the ERC project 'The Hands that Wrote the Bible. Digital Paleography and Scribal Culture of the Dead Sea Scrolls' (PI M. Popović).

The paper *The Distribution of Morphological and Orthographic Features in Selected Dead Sea Scrolls: A Quantitative Linguistic Inquiry* by Johan de Joode (Leuven University), prepared together with Eibert Tigchelaar, Dirk Speelman, and Pierre Van Hecke, echoed Weil's studies on quantitative linguistics published in the 1980s. Here, quantitative linguistics was applied to the Dead Sea manuscripts. Emanuel Tov had suggested eighteen linguistic features which can serve as indicators of a Qumran scribal practice found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. De Joode's contribution critically assessed Tov's hypothesis by analysing the statistical frequencies of these linguistic features. A dimensionality reduction technique known as 'correspondence regression' was used to visualise the number of 'traditions' present in the manuscripts. Advanced 3D visualisation techniques suggest that a) there is indeed a contrast between MT and non-MT manuscripts, b) there are multiple documents that fall 'between' these two extremes, and c) there are considerable variations within MT manuscripts and non-MT parchments, particularly parchments in the non-MT group which cluster significantly. The fact that there is a non-MT-like group is not surprising given the binary features defined by Tov. The data do not support the hypothesis of a single practice.

The second session of day one featured presentations of the achievements of the project MBH. Christiane De Olivera Rodrigues (Aix-Marseille University) spoke of the 'Weil Fund': of the ongoing process of cataloguing the Weil holdings by TDMAM, and of the difficulty of gathering archives, notes, and private documents. More than a half of the Weil private library has been integrated into the main catalogue.[9] Maria Gurrado (IRHT–CNRS) presented the Graphoskop software (latest version 2.0), a plug-in for IMAGE J, developed for MBH in 2021.[10] This tool can help to find, for instance, discriminating elements between two scripts that are very similar in type and *ductus*.[11]

The first session of day two was dedicated to 'Biblical Editions', another important aspect of the work of Kahle and Weil. It began with the paper of Michael Segal (Hebrew University, via Zoom) *The Hebrew University Bible Project Edition of the XII Prophets* based on the famous Aleppo Codex. The critical apparatus is very rich, encompassing traditions such as Greek. The discussion underlined the very long-term process of such an edition: the project had been initiated by Moshe Goshen-Gottstein decades ago.

9 Currently 500 items at <https://www.frantiq.fr/>.

10 Available under Resources at the MBH project website (see n. 4 above).

11 É. Attia, M. Gurrado, and A. Mailloux, 'Les caractères discrets de l'écriture: paléographie quantitative à l'âge du numérique', *Memini. Travaux et documents*, 26 (24 décembre 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4000/memini.1697>.

Elvira Martin-Contreras (CSIC, Madrid), in her talk *The Biblical Editions of the Spanish School of Madrid: The Cairo Codex of the Prophets and the Manuscript BH MSS1 from the Complutensian University Library*, recalled that Kahle was linked to the original project of the edition of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, which the Spanish School of Madrid started to publish in 1979 under the editorial leadership of Federico Pérez Castro. The friendship between these two scholars played an important role in the origins of this editorial project. Their correspondence also gives us an idea of the preliminaries to the edition. The first volume, the Minor Prophets, and the Preface justifying the edition and explaining its structure and character were published in 1979, and the last of the seven volumes containing the biblical books in 1987. In 1992, Volume VIII, an alphabetical index to the Masora Parva and Masora Magna annotations, was published. Between 1995 and 1997, other complementary studies were published: the analytical indices of the Masora Magna, of the Masora Parva, and of the occurrences of *let* cases. This edition was 'a real innovation in the field of biblical publications'[12] for several reasons. It was the first printed edition of the earliest dated biblical manuscript, and it was the first edition to contain the biblical text and its Masora Parva and Masora Magna annotations only, reproducing the codex as exactly as possible, with no modification or emendation. It was the first edition to reproduce both the Masora Parva and Masora Magna of a whole manuscript, and to give the biblical references in parentheses in an apparatus below the biblical text. It was also the first edition to add an apparatus with explanatory notes giving additional information for understanding the Masoretic notes.

Ronald Hendel (Berkeley University, via Zoom) spoke on *Kahle on the History of the Pentateuchal Text: Reception and Reappraisal*. He cautioned to be cautious when referring to other scholars' theories. As an example, he showed how what is sometimes quoted as Kahle theory of 'pristine texts' for the Hebrew Pentateuch actually does not exist: Kahle's views on the early textual history of the Hebrew Pentateuch are often misunderstood, in part due to his terse formulations. Talmon harmonized Kahle's views on the Old Greek version(s)—and his disagreements with Lagarde—with his views on the early Hebrew text(s). On the latter, both Kahle and Lagarde accepted the genealogical (Lachmannian) model of textual history, which is arguably correct. Hence, those who advance the theory of 'pristine texts' may not quote Kahle as authority and must do so on different grounds.

Edson de Faria Francisco (Metodista di Sao Paulo University) spoke on *The Masorah of the Leningrad Codex B19a in the series of Biblia Hebraica:*

12 A. Dotan, 'The Cairo Codex of Prophets and its Spanish Edition', *Sefarad*, 46 (1986), 162–168.

Contribution to the Current Masoretic Studies, highlighting the importance of this unique witness for Masoretic studies and offering a bridge to the final conference panel dedicated to Masoretic studies and Hebrew manuscript studies.

Yossef Ofer (Bar Ilan University, via Zoom) first discussed the studies of both Kahle and Weil on the Babylonian Masorah, which is so important as it was an ancient stage of the Masorah, and explained how it could have emerged among several traditions that are difficult to trace and explore due to a scarcity of sources. His paper *The Targum of the Sin of the Golden Calf in Halakhic Sources and in the Babylonian Masorah* explored the phenomenon of untranslated verses in Exodus 32. This tradition to not translate certain verses in Exodus 32 into Aramaic was expanded by the Masoretes over the generations: from six verses to eleven, and then to sixteen verses. The explanation of this phenomenon is to be found outside the Masoretic tradition. This sheds new light on the different traditions of the Pentateuch Masorah.

In his lecture (*How*) *Can Masora be Edited? Approaches and Solutions in Scholarly Editions of the Hebrew Bible*, Viktor Golinets (Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg) discussed approaches and solutions to editing the Masorah. He showed that, in spite of the available Masorah editions being quite many, only a few manuscripts were (repeatedly) used. Besides, every edition of the Masorah had its own purpose, which determined the way in which the text was displayed. The present situation is still quite the same as when Weil began to work on his catalogue of Hebrew biblical manuscripts, and on his edition of the Masoretic notes to the Hebrew Bible in the Leningrad Codex. Apart from Breuer's edition,[13] which sought to reconstruct the orthography of a number of Hebrew words, there is no comparative edition of the Masoretic notes of a considerable number of biblical manuscripts. Hence, the possibilities of conducting a comparative study of Masoretic notes and answering specific questions about the development of the Masorah as a system are still very limited.

Javier del Barco (Complutense University of Madrid), in his paper *Cataloguing Biblical Manuscripts I: From 'Manuscrits Dates' to the BNF Project of Cataloguing Hebrew Manuscripts*, examined the context of the development of the catalogue of Hebrew manuscripts from the project SfarData[14] (for all dated manuscripts) to the MBH (for Bibles only). He underlined that the famous 'archaeological turn' and the establishment of codicology as a

13 *Jerusalem Crown: the Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Pentateuch, Prophets and Writings according to the text and Masorah of the Aleppo Codex and related manuscripts. Following the Methods of Rabbi Mordechai Breuer*, 2nd edn (Basel: Karger, 1998).

14 <https://sfardata.nli.org.il/#/startSearch_En/>.

historical discipline in the mid-1950s open the way to a series of ambitious cataloguing projects that initially focused on dated manuscripts. Following in the footsteps of the *Comité international de paléographie latine*, the *Comité de paléographie hébraïque* was founded in the 1960s, with the primary objective of cataloguing the dated Hebrew manuscripts following new methodologies which focused more on the archaeological and material study of the codices. As a result, the volumes of *Manuscrits médiévaux en caractères hébraïques portant des indications de date* have been published, a fundamental pioneering work that represented a new paradigm for the study of Hebrew manuscripts. In his presentation, del Barco sought to explore how the study of Hebrew manuscripts in the French school has evolved from the pioneering *Manuscrits médiévaux* until the more recent projects of cataloguing manuscripts at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, notably BiNaH ('Bibliothèque Nationale 'Hebraica': Hebrew manuscripts in Paris', funded by ANR).

The final talk of the conference was *Cataloguing Biblical Manuscripts II: From Weil's Cataloguing Project to the Current* Manuscripta Bibliae Hebraicae *Project*, by Élodie Attia. She reminded how Gérard Weil set up a Unit for Documenting the Hebrew Bibles and that a project for cataloguing Hebrew and Aramaic biblical manuscripts was developed in parallel with applying computer sciences to the biblical text. Reports on the activities conducted at the Research Centre he headed show an intense work of describing manuscripts (fragments, codices, scrolls) from European libraries and Russia between the late 1960s and the 1970s. His premature death prevented him from joining Collette Sirat's project *Manuscrits datés*, which was planned for 1985. The project MBH followed in some of the footsteps of Weil and Philippe Cassuto in a new technical context, but in which Weil was a pioneer. The collaboration with Javier del Barco and interoperability are opening up enriching perspectives of analyzing medieval Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible. For the moment, some 300 items have been described, of which 50 have been analyzed in more detail in order to reassess the typology of Biblical manuscripts in the Middle Ages, their forms and functions.

For the conference programme visit <https://www.cpaf.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article926/> (last accessed 15 November 2022).

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