

*Die Massora Magna*, ed. by Salmon Frensdorff, with a prolegomenon by Gérard E. Weil. New York: KTAV, 1968. Pp. x+387+xxxii. \$22.50.

Salmon Frensdorff's (1803–1880) *magnum opus*, first published in 1876, is a concordance to, and dictionary of, the longer masoretic notes which appeared in an appendix to the second Rabbinic Bible. The masoretic notes were edited by Jacob ben Ḥayyim Ibn Adoniyah and published by Daniel Bomberg at Venice in 1524–25. Ibn Adoniyah's compilation, dubbed *Massorah Finalis*, is simply an alphabetic rearrangement of the Masorah Magna and portions of the Masorah Parva, by rubric. Although these masoretic notes were often crucial for establishing the consonantal text of various MT traditions, scholars neglected to consult them. This was primarily due to a lack of familiarity with masoretic terminology, to an inadequate understanding of the often ambiguous masoretic rubrics, and to the general disorder of the masoretic notes.

Frensdorff's *Massora Magna* did much to open the closed doors of the Masorah Magna to modern scholarship. With it, one can locate the longer masoretic comments (as compiled by Ibn Adoniyah) on any word in Scripture. Most important, Frensdorff vocalized all entries, identified the book, chapter and verse from which each entry is drawn, and added copious notes which correct and elucidate many of the masoretic comments. Long out of print, this reissue is a welcome addition to any biblical scholar's library. Its usefulness is somewhat impaired by Frensdorff's constant reference to his earlier work, *Das Buch Ochlāh W'Ochlāh* (1864); perhaps the Library of Biblical Studies (to which our reissue belongs) will see fit to republish that work as well — it is an invaluable work for numerous reasons, not the least of which is Frensdorff's decipherment and translation of the masoretic rubrics.

The reader must bear in mind the following *caveat* while perusing Frensdorff's *Massora Magna*: the masoretic comments contained in it are heterogeneous in origin and character and, when taken together, conform to no known biblical text. See the recent discussions by Harry Orlinsky in his prolegomenon to C. D. Ginsburg's *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (1966) and by Y. Yeivin, *אנציקלופדיה מקראית*, Vol. 5, (1968), cols. 130–59. Despite this, Frensdorff's work remains an invaluable collection of authentic masoretic traditions reflecting a variety of masoretic texts, and an indispensable guide for the serious study of the Masorah Magna.

Professor Weil's prolegomenon, if uneven in content and somewhat wooden in syntax (it is in English translation), is always interesting. One wonders why the prolegomenon was appended to the Hebrew section, rather than the German; one is never comfortable reading English pages from right to left. Its seven sections include a brief survey of the development of medieval Hebrew grammar; a selection of talmudic passages reflecting grammatical consciousness and text-critical activity; a discussion of Levita's contribution to masoretic studies; some types of masoretic lists; an evaluation of Ibn Adoniyah's contribution to masoretic studies; biographical data on Frensdorff and an analysis of his *Massora Magna*, in that order. Some of the detail, especially the vocalized texts and tables on pages x–xvii could have been abridged, if not omitted. Since, however, texts were included, a table identifying all sigla and abbreviations

(Hebrew and English) should have been appended. Thus, e. g., on p. xiv, MML and MP BHK<sub>4</sub> are not explained; scholars not expert in masoretic studies will find this annoying.

Weil's discussion of the mixed traditions embodied in the Masorah Parva of the Leningrad manuscript (p. xix), and of the composite nature of the Masorah Magna (p. xxii), is especially significant. His warm appreciation of Frensdorff (pp. xxv ff.) was well earned.

Some specific points:

P. v. "The controversies noted . . . make possible a dating . . . which allows us to assert that throughout the jurisdiction of the schools of Hillel and Shammai the sacred text exhibited no orthographic unity." This statement is true only if by "orthographic unity" Weil means orthographic unity with regard to the *matres lectiones*. But cf. Kiddushin 30a where it is admitted that as late as the fourth century of our era no such unity existed. Indeed, to this very day no such unity exists. The controversies adduced by Weil *do* reflect orthographic unity with regard to consonants; this is MT stabilization at its best.

On divergencies between the Talmud and the *textus receptus*, see Tosafoth to Shabbath 55b; Akiva Eger's comments in *Gillayon Ha-Shas, ad loc.*; Z. H. Chayes' gloss, *ad loc.*; Samuel Rosenfeld, *משפחת סופרים* (1883); and V. Aptowitz, *Das Schriftwort in der Rabbinischen Literatur* (1906–1915).

P. vi. "By Rabbi Akiba's period we may allow that the unification of the consonantal text is largely realized . . . Rabbi Akiba, for example, is known for his minute attention to textual detail and especially to the use of particles." But so too Rabbi Akiba's predecessors! See *Ḥagigah* 12a, bottom, and cf. Robert Gordis, "The Origin of the MT in the Light of Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Tarbiz*, 27 (1958), pp. 461 ff. (English summary, p. iv).

" . . . the words thus marked in the Hebrew text are lacking in the Septuagint . . . This is not accurate; *some* of the marked words are lacking in LXX, Peshitta, or the Samaritan text. Cf. Romain Butin, *The Ten Negudoth of the Torah*, p. 25.

P. xv, col. 1, bottom. Sigla *a*, *b*, *c*, are incorrectly aligned to the Hebrew opposite them; the descriptions of notes *b* and *c* on p. xv, col. 2, do not correspond to the table at the bottom of col. 1.

P. xxix. "The only partial attempts." Other partial attempts include Asher Worms, *מבוא המסורה*, Frankfort on the Main, 1766, pp. 21–24; and Joseph Kalman, *מבוא המסורה*, Warsaw, 1862, *passim*. Frensdorff's dictionary of abbreviations is heavily indebted to Worms.

P. xxxi, n. 1. "The only existing works." Add F. M. Cross, Jr. "The Development of the Jewish Scripts" in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, pp. 170–264, and the references cited there.

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