
This edition rewrites sections of the first edition, especially chapter 3 (“History of the Biblical Text”) and chapter 9 (“Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Editions”). Chapter 10, “Computer-Assisted Tools for Textual Criticism,” is entirely new. Added for the benefit of students is the “Brief Didactic Guide” (pp. lvii–lviii) and “Glossary” (pp. 417–23). The Qumran findings throw light not only on ancient scribal techniques but also on the shape of the biblical texts then circulating and the question of the stabilization of the text of the Hebrew Bible. The impact of Qumran on textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible means that critics may no longer presume that the Masoretic text is better or more frequently reflects the original text (Vorlage). Tov advances an “egalitarian approach” to textual witnesses. This would consider on an equal basis the readings of the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, the Samaritan text, and the Qumran texts with a view to establishing the Vorlage. This thorough research work satisfies the rigors of scholarship while remaining reasonably accessible to students.


Wenham breaks new ground in this book. He earlier wrote Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically (2004). Using reader-response and speech-act theories, and borrowing from how memorized sacred texts functioned in ancient liturgy, he now shows how praying the psalms commits the worshiper to certain virtues and values, to identifying with God’s point of view. Personal ownership of the words of a psalm embeds ethics into liturgy, making the psalms really a series of vows, or like oaths in a court of law. The central chapters of the book discuss law in the Psalter, virtues and vices, appeals for divine intervention as passionate clinging to God, and finally the ethics of psalms embedded in the New Testament. Though based on the best results of modern research on the Psalms, this book nevertheless is written to be accessible to all.

James Chukwuma Okoye, CSSp, is professor of Old Testament at Catholic Theological Union. He holds the LSS from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, and the MA and DPhil from Oxford University. He has served as Provincial Superior of the Nigerian Province of his Order and general assistant in the Generalate in Rome. He was a member of the International Theological Commission (1986–91) and one of the periti who prepared the Synod of Bishops for Africa in 1994.