Contents

Preface — XI

Part I: The Biblical Masora and its Methods

1 What Is the Masora? — 3
Vocalization and Cantillation Signs — 3
Decisions regarding Textual Accuracy — 5
From Scroll to Codex — 5
Ancient Manuscripts of the Masoretes — 7
How does a typical page of the Tiberian Masora codex look? — 10
Masora Magna and Masora Parva — 13
Secondary Stress Marks — 15
More on Masoretic notes — 16

2 Methods of Description and Classification — 19
Principles of writing Masoretic notes in scientific editions — 19
Methods of classification in Masoretic notes — 21
For further study — 33

3 Determining Orthography on the Basis of Masoretic Notes — 34
Do the ancient Tiberian biblical manuscripts reflect a uniform text of Scripture? — 34
Criticism of Breuer’s Method — 45
The orthography of the Torah — 46
Orthography of the Prophets and Writings in practice — 47
Conclusion — 48

4 The Accumulative Masora — 49
The Masoretic Collection Okhla weOkhla — 56
For further study — 58
Appendix: Effective Accumulative Masora — 60

5 Open and Closed Passages and the Writing of Songs — 61
Introduction — 61
The lack of treatment by the Tiberian Masora of the issue of passages — 62
Passages in the Babylonian Masora — 64
Maimonides’ ruling — 66
The form of open and closed passages — 68
Is it really possible to satisfy all opinions? — 71
The disagreement between Jewish communities regarding Leviticus, Chapter 7 — 72
Open and closed passages in scrolls of the Prophets and the “Five Scrolls” — 73
Passages in the Scroll of Esther — 75
The biblical Songs — three ways to write them — 76
The titles in Psalms — 82

6 Ketiv and Qere — 85
Introduction — 85
Transmission of Scripture in two parallel channels — 87
Ketiv and qere before the invention of vocalization marks — 89
The phenomenon of ketiv and qere and the addition of vocalization signs — 91
The number of qere and ketiv notes in Scripture — 92
Ways of indicating qere — 93
Hidden qere — 95
Types of qere and ketiv — 97
Qere as euphemism or respectful language — 98
Archaic and “modern” linguistic forms — 99
Variants that reflect different linguistic dialects — 100
Variants that are content-related — 100
Variant linguistic forms in syntax, morphology and phonology — 101
Forms that were created as a result of a flaw in the transmission process — 102
When and how was the difference created between the written tradition and the oral one? — 104
Conclusion — 106

7 The Masora on Scripture as an “Error Correcting Code” — 108
Introduction — 108
Between electronic transmission of data and human transmission — 109
The first mechanism: Early masoretic notes — 111
Open and closed passages in the Torah — 113
Maimonides’ way of determining the passages — 116
The Song of Haazinu and the Song at the Sea — 120
The Apparatus of the Masora — 123
Masora Magna and Masora Parva — 125
The Masora as a convergence mechanism — 127
Part II: The Masoretic Text in Time and Space

8 The Aleppo Codex and its Discovery — 131
   Introduction — 131
   The creation of the Aleppo Codex — 134
   The Peregrinations of the Keter — 135
   Damage to the Keter and Its Arrival in Israel — 136
   The extant parts of the Keter, their conservation and display to the public — 137
   Locating and reconstructing the missing parts — 138
   How much was the Keter damaged in the riots and where are the missing pages? — 139
   Photographs of the Aleppo Codex — 143
   Maimonides and the Aleppo Codex — 144
   Testimonies on the missing sections — 146
   Additional ways to reconstruct the missing parts — 149

9 The Babylonian Masora and Its Influence — 151
   Babylonian Vocalization — 152
   How the Babylonian Masora is Written — 154
   Ms. LM — A Unique Manuscript — 157
   The Influence of the Babylonian Masora on the Tiberian Masora — 161
   Evidences of Antiquity in the Babylonian Masora — 163
   Conclusion: The Relations between the Tiberian Masora and the Babylonian Masora — 163
   The General Descriptive Method of the Babylonian Masora — 164
   Conversion of the all-inclusive Description — 166

10 The Masoretic Text and its Role in the History of the Text of Scripture — 170
   Introduction — 170
   The “Masoretic Version” and its Role at the End of the Second Temple Period — 170
   The dominance of the Masoretic text after the destruction — 174
   The Silent Period (From the Third Century to the Eighth) — 175
   A Model to Explain the Processes of the Masora — 176
   Evidence on the Text of Scripture in the Middle Ages: Manuscripts and Citations of Verses — 177
   Direct Examination of Medieval Manuscripts — 182
   The Role and Influence of the Tiberian Manuscripts — 184
   Processes of Textual Unification in Later Periods — 185
The Printing Revolution — 186
The Discovery of Ancient Manuscripts and their Study — 187

11 Secondary Stress Marks (Ge’ayot) – in Manuscripts and in Printed Editions — 189
What are Ge’ayot? — 189
The Light Ga’ya — 189
The Heavy Ga’ya — 191
The Source of the System of Multiple Light Ge’ayot — 192
Indicating Ge’ayot in Modern Editions of the Hebrew Bible — 193
Additional Kinds of Ge’ayot — 194
“The Book of Differences” between Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali — 196
“The Book of Differences” as a Tool for Categorizing Scriptural Manuscripts — 199
The Distinction between Ḏamaš Qatan and Ḏamaš Gadol — 200

12 Published Editions of the Hebrew Bible – and Their Relation to the Masora and the Aleppo Codex — 203
How do contemporary editions of the Tanakh differ? Uniformity or multiple differences? — 203
The Miqraot Gedolot Edition and the Subsequent Editions — 204
The Discovery of Manuscripts Related to the “Ben Asher” Family — 209
The Hebrew University Tanakh (1943–1953) — 210
The Koren, Dotan and Breuer Editions — 211
The Three Breuer Editions — 214
Editions of the Tanakh as a Tool for Clarifying Issues of Text and Masora — 217
Conclusion — 218

Part III: The Masora in Interaction with Other Disciplines

13 The Masora and Hebrew Grammar — 221
The Masora as the Basis for Grammar — 221
Similarities and Differences in the Work of the Grammarian and the Masorete — 222
Rudiments of Grammar in the Masora — 224
The Concept of Roots and the Accumulative Masora Lists — 225
Chapters of Grammar in the Masora — 227
Quasi ‘Masoretic Notes’ from Mahberet Menahem — 229
Between Masoretes and Grammarians – Respect and Tension — 233
The Controversy of Saadya Gaon with the Masoretes — 233
Sefer Diqduqe HaTe’amim – Its Attribution and Editions — 234

Two Chapters from Diqduqe HaTe’amim — 238

Chapter Five – shewa of similarity — 238

Chapter Six – ב and ב — 239

14 The Masora and Biblical Exegesis: Is there exegesis in masoretic notes? — 241

Masoretic notes that disregard the meaning of a word — 241

Citing meanings in masoretic notes — 243

Masoretic use of distinction of meaning — 244

Exegetical use of distinctions of meaning in the Masora — 245

“Two occurrences with two meanings” — 248

The intention of the Masoretes in notes on homonyms — 251

Sevirin notes — 254

The exegetical significance of sevirin notes — 257

Scribal correction (תפים ספירים) — 259

Midrashic homilies in the Masora — 261

Conclusion — 263

15 The Masora and Halakha — 264

Introduction — 264

The text of Scripture reflected in the Talmud vs. the Masoretic text — 264

Collecting Scriptural variants reflected in rabbinic writings — 266

The responsum of R. Shelomo b. Adret (Rashba) — 268

Masora vs. Halakha today — 272

The orthography of the Torah and that of the Prophets and Writings — 272

Open and closed passages and the style of writing songs — 273

Passages in the scroll of Esther, passages in the Prophets and in the four scrolls — 275

Should the reading of two verses in the Scroll of Esther be repeated due to doubt? — 276

Index of Manuscripts — 279

Index of People — 281

Index of Terms — 285