

So...with the Old there is much less in total material for forming critical opinions but it is much more uniform than is the New and so subject to less severe alteration or suggestion.

3. The Uniformity of the Printed Text

As noted above, in the Hebrew text the uniformity of available editions is much greater than is true with the New Testament. If only the consonantal texts were considered, the unity is even greater. However the addition of the vocalic text does not jeopardize the proposition. This does not necessarily mean the OT text is a "better" text...it simply means there is a less degree of diversity in the mss.

4. The Question of Families

Families are much touted in the New Testament field although there are still scholars who ponder the legitimacy of such. If they exist in the Old Testament field, they are demonstrated with more difficulty perhaps because the total amount of material from which such concepts may be gleaned is limited. The families that do seem admissible in the Hebrew text study are all late (in the middle ages) and the result of the separated Jewish communities in the world. But the following suggestions may not be unreasonable:

The Masoretic text (BH) may represent a different text tradition than that of...

the text from which the LXX is translated as may be evidenced by the number of text differences in the products. There is good evidence that other Greek translations may show a different text from that used for the LXX, and furthermore...

The Qumran texts may indicate yet another family grouping.

In all of this is the potential for at least four Hebrew text families but it is very speculative. It is good to be aware of it but in terms of practicality the only one we really know is that of the Masoretic text. The others are surmised and theorized and may or may not have life-correspondence.

Too often, in my opinion, the suggestion of various families is simply a means of trying to justify an emendation or a suggested interpolation.