**Theological Alterations in the Text of Samuel and the Making of a Critical Edition**

While according to its classical definition, textual criticism is “the science of discovering error in texts and the art of removing it” (Housman), variations in biblical texts did not come about only due to error. Intentionally or unintentionally, in the process of transmitting biblical texts, scribes also rewrote, revised and changed the text from which they copied, for a variety of theological, ideological, and literary reasons. The HBCE edition may follow the classical definition of textual criticism in aiming to approximate the latest common ancestor of all the extant manuscripts – that is, the “earliest inferable text.” However, this edition may also serve as a superior tool (in comparison with earlier diplomatic editions) for studying the different phases of textual transmission. By incorporating an eclectic text, extensive text-critical commentary, and in some cases a two-column format, this project makes possible a better representation of the textual evidence, in order to extract from it all possible data concerning the history of the texts and their tenets. In this paper, I will discuss these issues by analyzing several neglected theological alterations in the text of Samuel. After formulating guidelines concerning their representation in a text-critical edition, I will discuss the importance of these theological alterations for the understanding of the development of ancient Israelite religion.