

The Contribution of the Modern Spanish School to Masoretic Studies¹

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RESUMEN Este artículo es una evaluación de la contribución de los investigadores que integran la escuela de masora de Madrid durante las tres últimas décadas, comenzada por la iniciativa del difunto Prof. Federico Pérez Castro de editar el texto y la masora del código de Profetas de El Cairo. Otros proyectos importantes fueron la edición de la masora del código complutense M1 y otros códigos bíblicos, fragmentos bíblicos con puntuación babilónica, fragmentos del Targum arameo con vocalización babilónica, etc. Una rica cosecha de la que sentirse orgulloso.

PALABRAS CLAVE Masora; Código de Profetas de El Cairo; Código complutense M1; Vocalización babilónica; Fragmentos babilónicos arameos.

SUMMARY *The paper is an evaluation of the contribution of the scholars constituting the Madrid school of Masora during the last three decades, initiated by the late Prof. Federico Pérez Castro's vision of editing the text and the Masora of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets. Other important projects were the edition of the Masora of the Complutensian Bible Codex M1, Hebrew Bible fragments with Babylonian vocalization, Aramaic Targum fragments with Babylonian vocalization etc. A rich harvest to be proud of.*

KEY WORDS *Masora, Cairo Codex of the Prophets; Codex Complutense M1; Hebrew Babylonian Vocalization; Babylonian Aramaic Fragments.*

Sometimes small beginnings advance gradually and grow under our eyes, and they are almost unnoticed because they are part of a reality to which we are accustomed. When growth continues, it becomes part of the general scenery, so well integrated that it goes unnoticed and no attention is drawn

1 A paper read at the 21st Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS) [held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the SBL] in Boston, MA (USA), on 24 November 2008.

to it. Then all of a sudden it pops up into consciousness and we realize that it is there in its full size and splendor. This happens in Nature all the time and there are many examples - plants, building constructions, even human beings and undertakings.

The beginnings of masoretic work and study in Spain is also a good example. It started on a low flame, but unlike the aforementioned process, it very soon, through serious planning, took the shape of an enormous undertaking of Hebrew Bible editing and masoretic study. Since it was exclusively in Spanish, it served the scholarly world in Spain, but was perhaps not conspicuous enough to the wide public of scholars abroad, to whom the language barrier was a handicap. This is why, for some time, it did not receive due recognition, but continued nevertheless to grow and develop constantly. Then, at a certain point, the whole construction shows itself in its full greatness.

The motivation and the right atmosphere for masoretic research was made possible by the "Instituto Arias Montano" in Madrid, headed, inspired and guided by the great Prof. Federico Pérez Castro, himself a renown Biblical scholar and disciple of the famous Paul Kahle. It was a very sad coincidence that a few months before these lines were written Prof. Pérez Castro passed away. Another giant that left us. The International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS) lost one of its founding members. His friend and disciple, Prof. Emilia Fernández Tejero, spoke in his memory on behalf of us all, and I add my personal feelings.

The high spirit of this important institute did not falter even when, in 1985, its name was changed into "Instituto de Filología", and again recently when it was renamed "Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas del Mediterráneo y de Oriente Antiguo". This institute, under all its names, was and still is the breeding soil of a very important and productive group of scholars, responsible, during a period of over three decades, for a harvest of about forty volumes of research in the Biblical text and the Masora. Most of these volumes appeared in the series *Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"*, founded by Pérez Castro, as partial accomplishment of his dream of a comprehensive "Madrid Polyglot" (*La Biblia Políglota Matritense*). This series comprised also other fields of textological aspects of Biblical research, but its major field were masoretic studies.

The first of the masoretic volumes in this series appeared already in 1975. This was the monumental edition of *Sefer 'Okbla we-'Okbla* according

to the Halle manuscript, edited by Prof. Fernando Díaz Esteban². This was followed twenty years later, in 1995, by Bruno Ognibeni's edition of the second part of that same Halle manuscript³.

However, it was Pérez Castro's initiative and inspiration that started the active study of the Masora in Madrid on a wide scale, which originally was meant to become part of the planned Madrid Polyglot. He was lucky to have been able to gather around him a group of very intelligent and well-trained students and collaborators on whom he could rely and to whom he could entrust the preparation of the edition of the ancient and highly prestigious Cairo codex of the books of Prophets –Biblical text, vocalization, accentuation and Masora⁴. This chef-d'œuvre, right from its inception, put the Spanish scholars on the map of masoretic studies.

Some of these scholars had already previous experience of masoretic study and carried out individual research projects. Emilia Fernández Tejero published already in 1976 her doctoral thesis *La tradición textual española de la Biblia hebrea*, which was an extensive description and analysis of the Spanish Bible codex M1⁵. This was followed a year later by a smaller study of the Spanish Bible codex M2, by María Teresa Ortega Monasterio in her Master's thesis⁶. However, this did not prevent them from participating in the major task of the Cairo codex *magnum opus*.

This Bible edition was indeed an innovation in the domain of Bible publications in what concerns the method of editing. This is the first time that a Biblical text was published with the Masora alone and nothing else. This is also the first time that the Masora, both *parva* and *magna*, appears deciphered, explained and annotated along with a one-manuscript text, namely the text and Masora of the Cairo codex. This is certainly an important innovation which

2 F. DÍAZ ESTEBAN, *Sefer 'Oklah we-'Oklah* (Madrid 1975). This edition followed an earlier one by S. FRENSDORFF, *Das Buch Ochlah W'ochlah* (Hannover 1864) based on the Paris manuscript.

3 B. OGNIBENI, *La seconda parte del Sefer 'Oklah We'Oklah, Edizione del ms. Halle Universitätsbibliothek Y b 4º 10, ff. 68-124* (Madrid – Fribourg 1995).

4 *El Códice de Profetas de El Cairo*, edición de su texto y masoras dirigida por F. PÉREZ CASTRO (Madrid 1979-1992).

5 The full title is: *La tradición textual española de la Biblia hebrea: el manuscrito 118-Z-42 (M1) de la Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid 1976).

6 *Estudio masorético interno de un manuscrito hebreo bíblico español: codice nº 2 de la Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid 1977).

goes to the credit of the Spanish group headed by Prof. Pérez Castro, and especially to Emilia Fernández Tejero, who managed to persuade her mentor Pérez Castro to abandon his original grandiose plan in favour of a relatively small scale program of publishing “only” the Hebrew text of the Cairo codex and its Masoras⁷.

The responsible leading scholars of the group were our friends: Prof. Emilia Fernández Tejero, Vice-President of the IOMS organization, and Prof. María Teresa Ortega Monasterio, Member of its Steering Committee. Other participants in this Spanish group were Dr. Maria Josefa Azcárraga Servert, Dr. Carmen Muñoz Abad, Mr. Eugenio Carrero Rodríguez and also Prof. Luis Girón Blanc. Evidently a substantial group of experts in Biblical text and Masora, for whom the editorial laboratory of the Cairo codex served as a training field and a stepping stone for further research and study.

The outcome is a magnificent edition as can be conceived today. Between 1979 and 1992 seven volumes have appeared, with the whole text and Masora of the Prophets, and, in addition, also an Index volume⁸. It was my privilege to review this edition favorably in 1986 in the Pérez Castro *Festschrift*⁹.

In the next years three additional volumes were published with specific elaboration of the Masora: in 1995 the Masora *magna* of the Prophets was edited by Emilia Fernández Tejero¹⁰; that same year the *let* notes of the Masora *parva* were edited by María Teresa Ortega Monasterio¹¹; and in 1997 the rest of the Masora *parva* was edited by Maria Josefa Azcárraga Servert¹².

The massive work on the Cairo codex brought in its wake two principal changes in the combined effort, changes which I consider to be the out-

7 E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO – N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, “Paul E. Kahle and Federico Pérez Castro: The Origins of the Madrid School of Biblical Text Criticism”: *Sefarad* 68 (2008) 13.

8 *El Códice de Profetas de El Cairo VIII: Índice alfabético de sus masoras* (Madrid 1992).

9 A. DOTAN, “The Cairo Codex of Prophets and its Spanish Edition”, en: F. DIAZ ESTEBAN – A. SAÉNZ-BADILLOS (eds.), *Volumen en Homenaje al Prof. Pérez Castro = Sefarad* 46 (1986) 161-175. At that time the volume of Ezekiel, the last to appear (1988), had not been published yet and consequently was not included in my review.

10 E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO, *La Masora Magna del Códice de Profetas de El Cairo* (Madrid 1995).

11 M. T. ORTEGA MONASTERIO, *La Masora Parva del Códice de Profetas de El Cairo. Casos let* (Madrid 1995).

12 M. J. AZCÁRRAGA SERVERT, *La Masora Parva del Códice de Profetas de El Cairo. Índice analítico* (Madrid 1997).

come and conclusion of the experience accumulated: a) large research tasks were no longer undertaken by groups but were rather divided between individual scholars, b) the concept prevailed that in Spanish research more attention should be given to Spanish Bible codices of Sephardi tradition than to the ancient prestigious Eastern master codices - Leningrad, Aleppo, Cairo etc., of which critical editions have already been, or are in the process of being taken care of. In any case, these codices will always continue to serve as basis for comparison.

Consequently, even as the work on the Cairo edition went on, some members of the group undertook, in addition, personal projects of research. Thus Emilia Fernández Tejero published in 1979 a systematic comparison between Norzi's readings in his *Minḥat Šay* and the readings of the main Spanish Bible codices¹³. A similar comparison of Mēnaḥem de Lonzano's *ʿŌr Tōrah* with Spanish codices was published right afterwards, in 1980, by María Teresa Ortega Monasterio, as her doctoral thesis¹⁴.

Norzi's *Minḥat Šay* remained an object of research in the following years and several articles by Emilia Fernández Tejero appeared on the small treatises of Norzi on the *begad kefat* and *qameš ḥaṭûf* issues¹⁵, and on the *ma'arik*¹⁶. A full translation and annotation of some parts of the text of *Minḥat Šay* into Spanish was undertaken by María Josefa Azcárraga Servert, first the Minor Prophets¹⁷ and then Isaiah¹⁸. So we see that, along with the major collective undertaking, individual research projects by members of the group have been going on and were being published.

Several years later, after the Cairo project was completed, the systematic publication of the Masora of the Spanish codex M1 was the next collective enterprise, but no longer as a group task but by individual scholars. The work was divided between four of the well experienced scholars of the Cairo proj-

13 E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO, *Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el Minḥat Šay de Y. S. de Norzi* (Madrid 1979).

14 M. T. ORTEGA MONASTERIO, *Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el ʿŌr Torah de Mēnaḥem de Lonzano* (Madrid 1980).

15 E. FERNÁNDEZ TEJERO, "Los tratados de Y. S. de Norzi sobre las *begad kefat* y el *qameš ḥaṭûf*": *Sefarad* 39 (1979) 225-236.

16 EAD., "El tratado de Y. S. de Norzi sobre el *ma'arik*": *Henoah* 8 (1986) 365-392.

17 M. J. AZCÁRRAGA SERVERT, *Minḥat Šay de Y. S. de Norzi: Profetas Menores* (Madrid 1987).

18 EAD., *Minḥat Šay de Y. S. de Norzi: Isaías* (Madrid 1993).

ect, and appeared in the renown series *Textos y Estudios “Cardenal Cisneros” de la Biblia Políglota Matritense* under the direction of Emilia Fernández Tejero. This time the Masora alone was the center of study. It was decided to publish the Masora alone –*magna* and *parva*– deciphered, analysed and displayed in the order of the text, and then indexed alphabetically by the order of the Hebrew roots. This arrangement proved very efficient, because in a relatively short period of four years, between 2001 and 2004, the Masora of the whole Pentateuch appeared in five volumes: Genesis by Emilia Fernández Tejero, Exodus by María Teresa Ortega Monasterio, Leviticus and Numbers by María Josefa Azcárraga Servert, Deuteronomy by María Guadalupe Seijas de los Ríos-Zarzosa¹⁹. A sixth volume, comprising the Masora *finalis* and other materials of the whole codex M1, was published by Elvira Martín Contreras²⁰.

Here again the Spanish school proved itself to be in a pioneering position. It contributed to masoretic studies patterns of publication. After the example of the Cairo project, which constitutes a pattern of a unique text and Masora alone as a team work, there came a pattern of a unique Masora elaborated and published separately by individual scholars.

The two patterns are not just a contribution to the study of the specific Masoras of the two codices –Cairo and M1– but constitute a methodological contribution to scholars preparing to publish masoretic texts and enables them to find their way. Spain did not only make these two contributions but also paved the way and set examples for modern masoretic science.

So far the achievements of the Spanish school (or should we say: the Madrid school) as far as the Tiberian tradition is concerned. However, this school has to its credit also two major undertakings in the domain of the Babylonian tradition and vocalization.

In the series *Biblia babilónica* many Biblical fragments of Hebrew text with Babylonian vocalization were published. Between 1976 and 1987 six volumes appeared holding Babylonian texts of the following books: Proverbs, Minor Prophets, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Three Poetical books. Three of these volumes were edited by Amparo Alba Cecilia²¹, one by Ángeles Navarro

19 *Las masoras del libro de Génesis/Éxodo/Levítico/Números/Deuteronomio - Códice M1 de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid 2004/2002/2004/2001/2002).

20 *Apéndices masoréticos, Códice M1 de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid* (Madrid 2004).

21 *Biblia babilónica: Ezequiel* (Madrid 1980); *Isaías* (Madrid 1980); *Jeremías* (Madrid 1987).

Peiro²², one by her together with Federico Pérez Castro²³ and the third one, with her collaboration, by Alejandro Díez Macho²⁴.

A second series of texts with Babylonian vocalization are texts of the Aramaic Targum, of which six volumes appeared between 1987 and 1998. Three of these of the *Targum Jonatán* of the Former Prophets were edited by Emiliano Martínez Borobio - the books of Samuel, Joshua and Judges, Kings²⁵. The other three volumes of the Latter Prophets –the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel– were edited by Josep Ribera Florit²⁶. It was with great sorrow that we learned from the recent number of *Sefarad* of the passing away of Prof. Ribera²⁷, member of IOMS and participant of many of our International Congresses. His friend and colleague, Prof. Emilia Fernández Tejero, spoke in his memory in the name of IOMS. His loss will be felt among us.

To conclude my survey I should emphasize that, because of time limitations, I could mention today only publications of full size volumes. It goes without saying that, during all these years, very many articles in matters masoretic have been published by members of the group in periodicals, especially in *Sefarad* and in *Masoretic Studies*, the organ of the International Organization of Masoretic Studies (IOMS). Also one should not overlook the two magnificent volumes of *Estudios Masoréticos*, both dedicated to Prof. Harry M. Orlinsky, the founder and first President of IOMS. The first one appeared in 1983 as a *Festschrift* on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, and was edited by Emilia Fernández Tejero²⁸. The second volume appeared ten years later, in 1993, as a Memorial Volume to him, edited by Emilia Fernández Tejero and María Teresa Ortega Monasterio²⁹. Both volumes, although belonging to

22 *Biblia babilónica: Proverbios* (Madrid 1976).

23 Á. NAVARRO PEIRO – F. PÉREZ CASTRO, *Biblia babilónica: Profetas menores* (Madrid 1977).

24 A. DÍEZ MACHO (con la colaboración de Ángeles Navarro Peiro), *Biblia babilónica: fragmentos de Salmos, Job y Proverbios* (Madrid 1987).

25 *Targum Jonatán de los Profetas Primeros en tradición babilónica* I: *Josué-Jueces* (Madrid 1989); II: *I-II Samuel* (Madrid 1987); III: *Reyes* (Madrid 1998).

26 *Targum Jonatán de los Profetas Posteriores en tradición babilónica: Isaías* (Madrid 1987); *Jeremías* (Madrid 1992); *Ezequiel* (Madrid 1997).

27 *Sefarad* 68 (2008) 243-244, *Obituario* by E. MARTÍNEZ BOROBIO.

28 *Estudios Masoréticos (V Congreso de la IOMS). Dedicados a Harry M. Orlinsky* (Madrid 1983).

29 *Estudios Masoréticos (X Congreso de la IOMS). En memoria de Harry M. Orlinsky* (Madrid 1993)

the series *Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros"*, constitute also part of the organ of IOMS - *Masoretic Studies*.

Summing up this whole material, it becomes obvious that the contribution of the modern Spanish School of Madrid to masoretic studies cannot be overestimated. It is today the largest masoretic research group in the world and has the largest rate of research to its credit. Through the fruitful activity of this group, masoretic studies were made accessible to speakers of Spanish. Consequently, the mastery of Spanish, in addition to Hebrew, has become today a necessity, almost a prerequisite for those who want to keep up with modern masoretic studies.