

INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
MASSORETICO-CRITICAL EDITION  
OF THE  
HEBREW BIBLE

BY  
CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG, L. L. D.

with a  
**Prolegomenon**  
by  
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**The Masoretic Text:  
A Critical Evaluation**

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PROLEGOMENON:  
The Masoretic Text:  
A Critical Evaluation

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\*In this edition see pocket in back of book.

## PROLEGOMENON: The Masoretic Text: A Critical Evaluation

The ways of scholarship, no less than those that the author of Proverbs 30.18-19 had found too wonderful to fathom, are passing strange. Who would have thought in 1897, when C. D. Ginsburg's monumental *Introduction to the Masoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* appeared, that within about a quarter of a century a new discipline in biblical research would come into being, in the guise of archeology, that would push out the classical approach to the study of the text of the Bible? And no less marvelous, who would have imagined in the Twenties that about a quarter of a century later new archeological discoveries, in the guise of the Dead Sea Scrolls, would help to restore something of that classical approach? And so it has come to pass that Ginsburg's *Introduction*, standard in its field for several decades until it lapsed into neglect and was permitted to run out of print, is now experiencing revival.

Toward the end of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth century, biblical studies generally dealt with philology, that is, with the grammatical and textual analysis of the Bible.

Also, the biblical scholar tended to study in the greatest possible detail each section and each chapter, and often each verse, of each biblical Book, with the view to determining their authorship and their relative, or absolute, date of composition. Since extrabiblical data were then available in but rather meager quantity and quality, it was chiefly the biblical writings themselves that were closely analyzed. This was the period when the great introductions to the Bible were composed, e.g., those by J. Wellhausen (—F. Bleek) and S. R. Driver; when the standard grammars, dictionaries, and encyclopedias were worked up, e.g., the grammars of F. E. König and Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, the dictionaries of Brown-Driver-Briggs and Gesenius-Buhl, and the encyclopedias of J. Hastings and Cheyne-Black; nor should C. Brockelmann's comprehensive *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* go unmentioned.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of this heyday of philology and textual criticism, the massive *Introduction* of Christian David Ginsburg (1831 - 1914) made its debut, marking the climax of a flourishing period of masoretic research. Wolf Heidenheim (1757-1832) had compiled his instructive little book of 132 pages on משפטי הטעמים (Rödelheim, 1808), and had edited the Pentateuch מאור עינים (5 vols., Rödelheim, 1818-21; מדויק בתכלית הדיוק ומסודר בשלימות הסדר), which included on every page the עין הקורא of Jekuthiel Ha-Naqdan ("the Punctuator"; 13th century); Abraham Geiger (1810-74) had achieved his important study of *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel*, etc. (Breslau, 1857); Simḥah Pinsker (1801-64) had published his epoch-making מבוא אל הנקוד האשורי או הבבלי *Einleitung in das Babylonisch-Hebräische Punktationssystem*, etc. (Vienna, 1863; together with Abraham ibn Ezra's ספר יסוד מספר *Grammatik der hebräischen Zahlwörter* of XLIV pages), not to mention his revolutionary לקוטי קדמוניות לקורות *Zur Geschichte des Karäismus und der karäischen Literatur* three years earlier; following on his edition of דרכי הנקוד והנגינות *Fragmente aus der Punkta-*

*tions- und Accentlebre der hebräischen Sprache* (Hannover, 5607/1847; attributed to Moses ben Yom-Ṭob Ha-Naqdan, English Masorete and grammarian of the 12th century), Solomon Frensdorff (1803-80) had edited two basic works, *Das Buch Ochlab W'ochlab (Massora)* (Hannover, 1864) and *Die Massora Magna: I. Massoretisches Wörterbuch* (Hannover und Leipzig, 1876); Joseph N. Derenbourg (1811-95) had published the *Manuel du Lecteur, d'un Auteur Inconnu*, etc. (Paris, 1871; reprinted from Series VI of *Journal Asiatique*, 16 [1870], 309-433; see L. Lipschütz, *Textus*, 4 [1964], pp. 2, 27. On the title of the *Manuel*, מחברת התיגאן "Treatise on the Crown" (i.e., the Bible), see, e.g., Baer-Strack, *Diqduqe Ha-Ṭ'e'anim*, Einleitung, XX, §4; *טעמי כ"א ספרים*, p. xiv and n.27; or F. Buhl, *Canon and Text of the Old Testament* [Edinburgh, 1892], 98); the excellent *Prolegomena Critica in Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum* (Lipsiae, 1873) by Hermann L. Strack (1848-1922) had appeared, as well as his edition of *Prophetarum Posteriorum Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus* (St. Petersburg, 1876) in photographic reproduction; Seligman Baer (1825-97)—he and Ginsburg were the most active and important "Masorettes" in our time — had analyzed in 1869, in vol. 1 of *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des Alten Testament* (ed. A. Merx), pp. 55-67, 194-207, "Die Metheg-Setzung nach ihren überlieferten Gesetzen dargestellt." In the same year his *Liber Genesis* appeared, the first fruits of his projected *Textum Masoreticum* of the whole Bible (see further below). And in 1879 he published (in association with Strack) ספר דקדוקי הטעמים לרבי אהרן בן משה בן אשר עם מסורות עתיקות אחרות להבין יסודות המקרא ודרכי ישר לשונו, מסודר בשלמות בפעם ראשונה על פי העתקות... (Leipzig, 1879); W. Wickes (dates unknown to me) had published *טעמי אמ"ת, A Treatise on the Accentuation of the Three So-called Poetical Books of the Old Testament: Psalms, Proverbs, and Job* (Oxford, 1881) and *טעמי כ"א ספרים, A Treatise on the Accentuation of the Twenty-one So-called Prose Books of the Old*

*Testament* (Oxford, 1887); Samuel Rosenfeld (dates unknown to me) had published his useful משפחת ספרים (Wilna, 1883); and Ludwig Blau (1861-1936), precocious scholar, had published his *Masoretische Untersuchungen* (Strassburg, 1891) and *Zur Einleitung in die Heilige Schrift* (Budapest, 1894), as well as "Masoretic Studies" in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, O.S., 8 (1896), 343-59; 9 (1897), 122-44, 471-90, where he dealt with the number of letters and words in the Bible and with the division into verses.<sup>3</sup>

For Ginsburg, the *Introduction* was the culmination of much prior work of his own—even though some of his results would not be published for some years to come. In 1867 he had published *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita, being an Exposition of the Masoretic Notes on the Hebrew Bible, or the Ancient Critical Apparatus of the Old Testament in Hebrew, with an English Translation and Critical and Explanatory Notes* (London), two years after putting out *Jacob ben Chayim ibn Adonijah's Introduction to the Hebrew Bible, Hebrew and English; with Explanatory Notes* (London, 1865), both works of great significance for the correct understanding of how the modern, so-called masoretic Bible editions have come into being.

About 1895 Ginsburg published an 88-page preliminary *Essay on the Massorah*. He began with the blunt statement, "For the past seven years I have been engaged in a critical re-cension of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures . . . Now, although almost every Introduction to the Bible speaks about the Massorah, and although the *textus receptus* of the Hebrew Scriptures is technically called 'the MASSORETIC Text,' yet I venture to say, without intending to give offence, but without fear of contradiction, that with the exception of a few Jews and one or two Christians, all those who have edited the Hebrew text, or written upon its Massorah in their respective Introductions, could neither master nor describe the entire domain of this ancient critical apparatus." This *Essay* was to reach much greater proportions in the *Introduction* as chapter

XI, "The Massorah; its Rise and Development" (pp. 287-468).

The two works which have given Ginsburg lasting fame, in addition to the *Introduction*, are his edition of the Hebrew Bible and his edition of *The Massorah*. In 1894 there appeared in two volumes, under the sponsorship of the Trinitarian Bible Society, his עשרים וארבעה ספרי הקדש/מדויקים היטב על פי המסורה / ועל פי דפוסים ראשונים / עם חלופים והגהות / מן / כתבי יד עתיקים ותרגומים ישנים / מאת / דוד גינצבורג / לונדון / בשנת / ת' ר' נ' ד' לפ"ק / 1894 / בראשית-מלכים, ישעיה-דברי / הימים / על ידי חברת מוציאי לאור תורת יהודה תמימה of the *Massoretico-Critical Text of the Hebrew Bible* was reproduced in one volume in 1906 by the Society for the Circulation of Uncorrupted Versions of the Word of God.<sup>4</sup> While only reproducing essentially the text published in 1524-25 by Jacob ben Chayim, Ginsburg made available very considerable new data from old manuscripts and other early printed editions, providing the knowing reader with a critical apparatus of some significance.<sup>4</sup>

The same, essentially Jacob ben Chayim text served subsequently as the basis for Ginsburg's four-volume edition of the Bible published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The Pentateuch appeared in 1908,<sup>5</sup> and the *Prophetæ Priores* and the *Prophetæ Posteriores* in 1911 (with the assistance of R. Kilgour); *The Writings* were put out in 1926, twelve years after Ginsburg's death, by H.E. Holmes, "under the oversight of the Rev. Professor A. S. Geden."<sup>6</sup>

Ginsburg's four-volume edition of *The Massorah. Compiled from Manuscripts, Alphabetically and Lexically Arranged*, imperial folio (London, 1881-1905), is a truly monumental work; a pity that the fifth and last volume, which would have constituted part 2 of vol. 4, never appeared. Ginsburg gathered together masoretic notes from numerous manuscripts and early printed editions of the Bible, rearranged them in alphabetical order, and translated them into English, frequently introducing annotations of his own; in addition, he made available other masoretic tractates. It is no diminu-

tion of Ginsburg's massive contribution that there are now available many more masoretic notes, and that it is even possible to distribute some of them, up to a point, among the schools of Ben Asher, Ben Naftali, and other Masoretes in Palestine and Babylonia.

There were several useful by-products of Ginsburg's intensive researches. In 1897 there appeared *A Series of Fifteen Facsimiles of Manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible with Descriptions*; and in the following year he issued an enlarged *Series of XVIII. Facsimiles*, etc., adding three facsimiles (XVI-XVIII) to the fifteen reproduced previously. (Incidentally, the photography is excellent, and it is a pleasure to work directly from the reproductions; see the nice review by I. Harris in *JQR*, 10 [1898], 190-4.) In 1899 Ginsburg published in the Chwolson Volume לחם חמדות לדניאל איש חמדות / *Recueil des travaux rédigés en mémoire du Jubilé Scientifique de M. Daniel Chwolson* [Prof. at the University of St. Petersburg, 1846-96], Berlin, on pp. 149-88, a fine statement "On the Relationship of the so-called Codex Babylonicus of A.D. 916 to the Eastern Recension of the Hebrew Text." Thus Ginsburg recognized that ". . . the simple fact that this Codex has the Babylonian system of punctuation can no longer be adduced by itself as proof that the consonantal text is also that of the Babylonians . . ." (p. 150); indeed, ". . . there are one hundred and twenty-eight passages in which the Babylonians deviate from the Palestinians. Of these the St. Petersburg Codex has thirty-three only which are peculiar to this Codex. Twenty-two others it has simply in common with Palestinian MSS. and early printed editions. Eight of its readings in passages where these variations are recorded neither coincide with the Babylonians nor with the Palestinians; whilst in no fewer than sixty-five instances this Codex most undoubtedly follows the Palestinian text. In some instances the Codex exhibits the Palestinian readings where even the Palestinian Standard MSS. themselves and the early printed editions have the Babylonian readings . . ." (p. 188). In short, as we shall see below, this

old manuscript, just like all other manuscripts and printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, without a single exception, is a mixed text.<sup>7</sup>

While Ginsburg was working on the Masorah and producing his critical edition of the masoretic text, Seligman Baer, with the encouragement and assistance of Franz Delitzsch, was busy putting out his version of the masoretic text, *Textum Masoreticum Accuratissime Expressit, e fontibus Masorae Varias Illustravit, Notis Criticis Confirmavit* — each Book with valuable "Additamenta Critica et Masoretica" (Leipzig, 1869-95; only the last four Books of the Pentateuch, Exodus-Deuteronomy, failed to appear, due to Baer's death). Ginsburg and Baer each claimed that only his edition truly represented the correct masoretic text; thus Ginsburg (*Introduction*, Preface, p. V), "When compiling the notes to the Hebrew Bible, I at first gave the results of my collation without regard to the work of others who also profess to edit the Hebrew Text according to the Massorah. It was, however, pointed out to me that as sundry parts of Dr. Baer's edition of the text had been accepted by students as exhibiting the Masoretic recension, and since my edition differs in many respects from that of Dr. Baer, it was my duty to specify the authorities when my readings are in conflict with his . . ." And in his chapter (X) on "The Differences between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali" (241-86) he had some specific criticism to make of Baer's approach to matters masoretic; thus, "As regards the separate Treatise called in some MSS. *Dikdukē Ha-Teamim* which has come down to us in several Codices and in the name of Ben-Asher, its text in the different MSS. and in the *editio princeps* is as hopelessly irreconcilable as that of the official Lists . . . As far as my collation of the numerous MSS. goes I can safely state that I have not found a single MS. which uniformly follows the rules about the vowel-points and accents propounded in the name of Ben-Asher in the Treatise which Drs. Baer and Strack have compiled and have named '*The Dikdukē Ha-Teamim of Ben Asher*' . . . If,

therefore, Codices which in their Massoretic Appendices exhibit Rubrics ascribed to Ben-Asher, do not follow his rules in the text, it shows that either the rules do not belong to Ben-Asher or that they were not generally accepted and that the opinions of other Massoretic Schools were more popular. And . . . It is most uncritical to correct the definite statements in the official Lists which tabulate the precise nature of the differences between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali by the uncertain utterances in these highly artificial Rubrics. The reverse process is far more critical. Any views expressed in the conglomerate Treatise which do not harmonise with the official Lists must not be taken as proceeding from Ben-Asher" (pp. 278-86). (In this connection it is good to learn that Dr. Aharon Dothan of Tel-Aviv University, who is well aware of these fundamental pitfalls, has announced a new, critical edition of *Dikduqe Ha-Te'amim*, to be published by Israel's Hebrew Language Academy; see *Tarbiz*, 34 [1965], 138, n. 13.) I shall return below to the full significance of Ginsburg's strictures.

Baer and his supporters replied in kind. Already in 1879 — long before *The Massorah* had begun to appear — Baer-Strack commented in their *Dikduqe Ha-Te'amim* (Einleitung, p. V), "*Ch. D. Ginsburg* druckt gegenwärtig ein grosses Werk 'The Massorah,' welches dem Prospect zufolge in vier Folio-bänden enthalten soll . . . Endlich hat der mitunterzeichnete S. Baer schon vor Jahren den ganzen Text der Massora nach Handschriften berichtet und besser geordnet. Seine Arbeit wird in der durch den russisch-türkischen Krieg aufgehaltene, jetzt aber wieder in Angriff genommenen neuen Ausgabe der Rabbinischen Bibel (מקרא גדול), welche die Firma Witwe und Gebr. Romm in Wilna edirt. abgedruckt werden." Baer himself published a detailed critical review of vols. 1 and 2 of *The Massorah* in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 40 (1886), 743-56, with a "Nachschrift" on vol. 3 on pp. 756-8; it was on the basis of these and other critiques that Richard Gottheil has given what may be re-

garded as the consensus of scholarly opinion in the matter (Jewish Encyclopedia, II [1902], s. Baer, Seligman (Sekel), 433a-434b): "In general Baer's text has been accepted as representing the [sic!] Masoretic tradition; even though exception may be taken to his view on individual points or to his too extensive generalization from insufficient manuscript evidence. Christian Ginsburg . . . has criticized a number of these faults with some severity. He points out, among other things, that Baer has indicated the open and closed sections in the Prophets and the Hagiographa, a thing not usually done in Masoretic manuscripts . . . that he has introduced a number of anti-Masoretic pauses . . . that his division of the Sedarim is faulty . . . that he has introduced the dagesh into the first letter of words when the preceding word ends with the same letter . . . as well as the dagesh which follows upon a guttural with silent shewa and a *ḥatef-pataḥ* under the first of two similar letters . . . all of which are not warranted by the best manuscripts. The Masoretic notes at the end of Baer's edition are also criticized . . . especially the lists of various readings . . . Many of these faults were due to Baer's inability to consult manuscripts in the large European collections; yet, in spite of this, his edition will remain for some time to come the [sic!] standard Masoretic text." (I shall return below to the utterly gratuitous and misleading use of the definite article "the" in reference to Baer's, or anyone else's, "Masoretic text.")

Paul E. Kahle, *The Cairo Genizah* (London, 1947; *The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy*, 1941), pp. 41 ff., 60 ff., has subjected both Ginsburg and Baer to most trenchant (and even personal) criticism; ironically, however, his criticism applies fully to much of his own work on the so-called masoretic text (e.g., manuscript B19a of *Biblia Hebraica*'), reminding one of the pot that insisted on calling the kettle black; in chap. VIII of his "Problems of the Masora" (pp. 347-56) Sperber has had a few things to say about "The Ms. B19A of the Public Library in Leningrad (according to the

Biblia Hebraica ed. Kittel-Kahle)." L. Blau wrote a very fair review of "Dr. Ginsburg's Edition of the Hebrew Bible [and Introduction]" in *JQR*, O.S., 12 (1900), 217-54; I note one of his statements (p. 217, n. 2), "Baer does not even mention the main defect: — the omission of the sources of these Massoretic Notes."

Let us go back a bit and review the history of the printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. When printing was invented, it was hailed in the Jewish community as a God-given gift to man wherewith to spread the Sacred Scriptures. From 1477, when the book of Psalms was published, to 1521, when the second quarto edition of the Bomberg Bible appeared (Venice, in one vol.), no less than twenty-two printed texts of the Hebrew Bible — eight of them containing the entire Bible — had seen the light of day. Some of these were more important than others, e.g., the first edition of the entire Bible (Soncino, 1488), the Complutensian Polyglot (Alcalá, 1514-17; 6 vols.), the first edition of the Bomberg Rabbinic Bible, ed. Felix Pratensis (Venice, 1516-17, 4 vols.; 1517-18, one vol.), and the first edition of the Bomberg Bible in quarto (Venice, 1516-17, 4 vols.; 1517-18, one vol.), and the first edition of the Bomberg Bible in quarto (Venice, 1516-17, one vol.; 1517, 2 vols.). None of these, however, attained the significance of the second edition of the Bomberg Rabbinic Bible that was edited by Jacob ben Chayim (Venice, 1524-26; 4 vols.). In concluding his most informative chapter (XIII) on the "History of the Printed Text of the Hebrew Bible" (pp. 779-976), which constitutes a detailed analysis of the first twenty-four such texts, Ginsburg has noted (p. 976) that "All subsequent editions are in so far Massoretic as they follow the Standard edition of Jacob b. Chayim. Every departure from it on the part of editors who call their texts Massoretic has to be explained and justified on the authority of the Massorah and MSS. which exhibit the Massoretic recension of the text."<sup>8</sup>

Of course Ginsburg was fully correct in the first of these two assertions. (I shall deal below with the second assertion.) Thus the well-known Bibles of Johannes Buxtorf (the Elder), both the handbook edition (Basle, 1611) and the Rabbinic Bible in four folio volumes (Basle, 1618-19; IV, 2 consists of the Masorah), exhibited a somewhat different text from that of Ben Chayim only because he had made use also of the text of the Complutensian Polyglot. Buxtorf's text was used by Joseph ben Abraham Athias (died 1700) — and his meticulous proofreader, John Leusden — for his beautiful edition of the Bible (Amsterdam, 1661; 2nd ed., 1667), upon which, in turn, Daniel Ernest Jablonski (1660-1741) based his text of the Bible (Berlin, 1699; 4 vols.); and the latter served Johann Heinrich Michaelis (1668-1738) well when he worked up — with the aid of nineteen printed editions and five Erfurt manuscripts (including Erfurt 3; see below) — his own critical edition of the Bible (Halae Magdeburgicae, 1720; frequently reprinted).<sup>9</sup>

The most popular edition of them all, even now a pleasure to use, was that of Everard van der Hooght (Amsterdam, 1705; 2 vols.), essentially because of its attractive, clear-cut type; it was little more than a reprint of the Buxtorf-Athias-Leusden Bible. Van der Hooght was frequently reprinted not only in its own right but also in the form of editions by Benjamin Kennicott (1718-83; the famous *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, 2 vols., Oxford, 1776, 1780), August Hahn (1792-1863; *Biblia Hebraica secundum editiones . . . Leusden . . . Simonis aliorumque imprimis Everardi van der Hooght . . . addidit Augustus Hahn*, Lipsiae, 1831; frequently reprinted), and Meir Halevi Letteris (1800-71; 2 vols., Vienna, 1852). In the United States, van der Hooght's text — unvocalized! — constituted the first Hebrew Bible published (Philadelphia, 1814; 2 vols.), and it served Isaac Leeser in association with his English translation of the Bible (Phila., 1849); as put by Gottheil ("Bible Editions," in *Jew. Enc.*, III, 154a-162a), ". . . the Van der



Hooght was considered to be a sort of 'textus receptus' . . . " <sup>10</sup>

The Letteris Bible became a world-wide phenomenon in the form prepared for the British and Foreign Bible Society and published in 1866." Norman H. Snaith, in his article on "The Ben Asher Text" (in *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project*, 2 [1962], 8-13), has now drawn attention to the fact that "Actually this 1866 Letteris Bible seems to be based to a marked extent on MS Erfurt 3 [=Or fol 1213 in Berlin's Preussischen Staatsbibliothek], readings of which are to be found in the Michaelis 1720 Bible. Whether Letteris actually consulted this MS I do not know, but he often has the same reading where the MS varies from printed editions. This MS is now known as Berlin MS Or fol 121 and is kept in the Westdeutsche Bibliothek in Marburg. It is important because there is to be found in its margins the text of *Okblah we-Okblah*, an ancient collection of Massoretic notes, apparently the only such study to which the famous Jacob ben Hayyim had access. Since it was held in the last century that the true Massoretic text of Ben Asher was to be found in the Second Rabbinic Bible of 1524-5, printed by Bomberg in Venice and edited by Jacob ben Ḥayyim, it could then be said that the Letteris Bible was a good, sound text. It is closely allied to the text of Jacob ben Ḥayyim because of its closeness to MS Erfurt 3."

Rudolf Kittel, too, made available "the" masoretic text of the Bible. His edition of *Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart, 1905-6; 2nd ed. 1912) provided the reader with essentially the text of the second Rabbinic Bible; cf. p. VI of the Prolegomena, "Ceterum praeter exceptiones sub 2 [pp. IV-VI] enumeratas et sub 4-6 [pp. VI-VIII] enumerandas textus masoreticus Bibliorum secundum principem editionem JACOBI BEN CHAJJIM (anni 1524/5) in apparatu littera B (*Bomberg*) significatam exscribi potuit. Bibliis enim Hebraicis a GINSBURG secundum B (cf *Introd.*, p. III) editis — quorum magnas et varias virtutes gratissimis animis omnes aestimant — etiam obiter percursis codicem B denuo consulendum esse apparuit . . ."

Max L. Margolis (1866-1932), it is known, denied final authority to all extant "authoritative" editions of the masoretic Bible. (It was common knowledge that Margolis wanted very much to produce for the Jewish Publication Society the definitive edition of the masoretic text of the Bible, one that would go well with the new English version that the Society was then sponsoring [1917] with Margolis as its editor-in-chief.) In his learned and stimulating essay on "The Scope and Methodology of Biblical Philology" (*JQR*, N. S., 1 [1910], 5-41), Margolis touched on this perennial problem in the sections "Definition of the Masoretic Text" and "How the Masoretic Text is to be Reconstructed" (pp. 19-21): ". . . Equally the reconstruction of the Biblical text, not yet the original but the Masoretic form thereof", awaits consummation at the hands of a master trained in the school of philology. And much even then will remain doubtful . . ."; with n. 84 (on p. 40) reading: "The efforts of Baer and Ginsburg (not to mention their predecessors) notwithstanding."

Several Bibles designated as "masoretic" have appeared since the days of World War I. In 1936 the third edition of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* appeared, with much fanfare; for was not its "masoretic" text unique and definite by virtue of the fact that it was supposed to represent the pure text achieved by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, the great Masorete of the tenth century? The manuscript upon which B(iblia) H(ebraica)<sup>3</sup> was based was the well-known Leningrad Codex designated B 19a of the early eleventh century (=Ginsburg's Codex A.D.1009; cf. the *Introduction*, Index of Manuscripts, p. 1005a). More about this edition below.

The less said about the so-called "Jerusalem Bible" the better. In 1953 the Magnes Press of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem issued תורה נביאים וכתובים הוצאת ירושלים, מוגהים לפי המסורה עפ"י בן-אשר, על יסוד כתב היד שהתקין משה — דוד קאסוטו ז"ל, והגיהו אליהו שמואל הרטום, ירושלים, תשי"ג — *Hebrew Bible: Jerusalem Edition, Corrected by M. D. Cassuto on the basis of the Masora of Ben Asher*. Strange as it may

seem, this highly publicized edition — it is even now advertised as *המכפס המסורתי והמדויק ביותר בעולם* — is nothing more than a photographic reproduction of Ginsburg's Bible published in 1908 but without the very valuable footnotes (and without the little circles over these words in the text which drew attention to these footnotes)! And Ginsburg's text — reference to which was suppressed in the Jerusalem edition — was "corrected" on the basis of sundry notes compiled by Cassuto in the margin of his copy of a Letteris Bible. There were other shortcomings; see the notice by N. H. Snaith in *Book List* (of the Society for Old Testament Study), 1954 (= pp. 564-5 in *Eleven Years of Bible Bibliography*, ed. H. H. Rowley, 1957). After reading the exchange in *Vetus Testamentum*, 3 (1953), 416-20 and 4 (1954), 109-10, one can appreciate Snaith's opening sentence, "This edition of the Hebrew Bible is tragedy almost unrelieved." This Bible edition should be withdrawn from the market and be permitted to rest in peace. (See B. J. Roberts, "The Hebrew Bible since 1937," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 15 [1964], 253-64.)

In the same year (1953) there had appeared in Jerusalem *The Hebrew Bible with English Translation edited by M. Friedlander, Sanctioned by the Rabbinate* (תורה נביאים וכתובים) (עם תרגום לאנגלית ערוך ע"י מ. פרידלנדר ומאושר ע"י הרבנות). This edition has no scientific value whatever; and it is difficult to comprehend exactly what it was that was "authorized" (מאושר), and by what real authority such sanction was given.

In 1958 the British and Foreign Bible Society published a new masoretic text of the Bible, edited by N. H. Snaith: *ספר/תורה נביאים וכתובים/מדויק היטב על פי המסורה/הוגה* Norman Henry Snaith על ידי/ London. The edition was based on the first hand of a Sephardic manuscript (British Museum Or 2626-27-28) completed in Lisbon in 1483; another manuscript in the same Museum (Or 2375), a Yemenite manuscript written during 1460-80 and covering only the Ketubim, was found by the editor to be as accurate and trustworthy as Or 2626-27-28; and with the aid of certain readings

in Jedidiah Solomon Norzi's *Minḥat Shai* (seventeenth century) — readings which went back to the first hand of much older Sephardic manuscripts — and in the *Or Torah* of Menahem di Lonzano (late seventeenth century). In Snaith's judgment, "the Ben Asher text was . . . to be found [not only] in the Aelppo Codex [but also] . . . in the first hand of the best Sephardi MSS, and that Norzi had access to it in 1626 C.E." (p. 13 of his above-mentioned article on "The Ben Asher Text."). In a brief preliminary notice of his "New Edition of the Hebrew Bible" (*Vetus Testamentum*, 7 [1957], 207-8), the editor asserted, ". . . in every way I have tried to follow the Masoretic tradition." But I do not comprehend the expression "the (Masoretic tradition)." Was there ever any? As an example of *a* masoretic text, Snaith's is as good as any other; but none can lay claim to being *the* masoretic text (על פי המסורה).

To accompany "Yehoash's Yiddish Translation of the Bible" (see my article in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 60 [1941], 173-7), a masoretic Hebrew text was worked up by Rabbi Chaim M. Brecher and published in 1941 (2 vols., New York). The text (see the הקדמת הרב המגיה on p. 8 at the end of vol. 1) was based upon Jacob ben Chayim's Rabbinic Bible, the editions of Heidenheim, Baer, Letteris, Kittel, etc.

The most recent edition of the Bible that may be regarded as masoretic — the claim is made specifically not in the volume itself but in a four-page brochure — is that produced in 5722/1962 by Qoren Publishers in Jerusalem: *תורה נביאים וכתובים הוצאת קורן ירושלים*. D. Goldschmidt, A. M. Haberman, and M. Medan arrived at the text on the basis of a close scrutiny of previous editions, both manuscript and printed, and masoretic lists; the Torah was based on Heidenheim's edition. In the beautiful folio edition of the Torah, published in 1959, the simple and proud statement is made: *התנ"ך הראשון המסודר ומודפס בנקודות וטעמים בארץ ישראל* ("The first Bible worked up and printed with vowels and accents in the

Land of Israel"). Page שעט at end of the whole Bible reads הגהת מהדורה זו נעשתה בעיון רב ובבדיקה מדוקדקת, עד כמה שידם מגעת, על יסוד חוות דעתם של בעלי המסורה ושל המדקקים והמפרשים ועל פי מה שנמצא ברוב כתבי היד והדפוסים המקובלים; כבני סמכא, ולא כהעתקה משועבדת לדפוס או לכתב יד מסוים; and this is followed (pp. (שעט-שעיג by a list of חילופי נוסחאות... שיש בהם שינוי של ממש לגבי הנוסח המודפס בפנים... שמקורם מוסמך, כגון עדויות מפורשות של המסורה ושל גדולי המפרשים והמדקקים (ת"י, רש"י, ראב"ע, רד"ק, מנחת שי, רו"ה, ועוד) או הנוסח שברוב כתבי יד והדפוסים הראשונים. On the superiority of the Qoren Bible in the matter of Kethib-Qere, see below.

It is too early to include here specific reference to the Hebrew Bible projected by the Hebrew University. In a "Brief Report on the Hebrew University Bible Project" (*Textus*, I [1960], 210-211), it is stated that "The aim of the Project is to edit the Massoretic text according to the most authentic MS of the Ben Asher school, viz. the Aleppo Codex, and to provide this text with critical apparatuses . . ." Yet serious misgivings may already be felt on this score alone, in that it is becoming increasingly doubtful just how authentically Ben Asher this Codex really is — apart from the extremely important question, to which I shall return below: What is so definitive and authoritative about an authentic Ben Asher manuscript?

In a sober discussion of "The Aleppo Codex and the Ben Asher Tradition" (pp. 59-111 in *Textus*, I [1960]), S. L. Loewinger ("responsible . . . for Massorah studies" in connection with the Hebrew University Bible Project; see *ibid.*, p. 211 bottom) is careful to conclude (p. 94): ". . . For the present, this MS is superior to all the MSS which we have mentioned. This superiority cannot as yet serve as complete evidence that this MS was in fact written by Aaron by Moses ben Asher. It might be the work of an earlier punctuator or an exact copy made on the basis of his model MS . . ." Aharon Dothan, in a recent important article, "Was the Aleppo Codex Actually

Vocalized by Aharon ben Asher?" (*Tarbiz*, 34 [1965/5725], 136-155), raised two questions: "Do the vocalization and the Massora of the *Aleppo Codex* correspond systematically to each other, or are they inconsistent to the point that there is no reasonable justification to look upon them as being written by the very hand of Aharon ben Asher? Do the vocalization and the Massora of the Codex correlate with what we know of Ben Asher's method from other sources?" (*ibid.*, Summaries, p. II).

As a result of his close study, based largely on a considerable number of photographic reproductions, the data offered in Loewinger's article, and the masoretic rules which originally stood at the beginning of the Aleppo Codex (the *Diqduqé Ha-Ṭe'amim*), Dothan was able to conclude that "the method of the *Aleppo Codex* differs from that of *Diqduqé HaṬe'amim* (MS Leningrad B 19a is closer to it in some respects) and that the marginal Massora is contradicted by the vocalization of the biblical text. Moreover, the vocalization is very inconsistent especially as regards the markings of *hatefs* and *ga'yas*. In some places, readings which are Ben Naftali's *par excellence* are also found. All these factors taken together do not permit us in any manner whatsoever to ascribe the vocalization to the master Massorite Aharon ben Asher, as the colophon wishes to do . . . The paleographical evidence brought by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein (*Tarbiz* XXXIII) as to the authenticity of the colophon at the end of the Codex — the identity of the handwriting of the scribe Shelomo ben Būyā'ā—is also contradicted here on both paleographical and other counts: the arrangement of the lines in the section following the poetics of 'Ha'azinu' in the codex of the scribe Ben Būyā'ā differs from the arrangement found in the *Aleppo Codex* (Cf. photograph)."

One has the feeling that he is reading here, all over again, a criticism of the work of Jacob ben Chayim in the sixteenth century and of Baer and Ginsburg in the late nineteenth century. In short, we are right back to where we had started,

working with manuscripts that are late and inadequate and self-contradictory; and it is improper and misleading, at this late date, to attribute to such manuscripts — Aleppo, B 19a, Erfurt 3, et al. — authority that they simply do not merit. But more on this below

We are now ready to deal with the crux of the whole matter, something that the numerous editors of "masoretic" editions of the Bible have overlooked, namely: There never was, and there never can be, a single fixed masoretic text of the Bible! It is utter futility and pursuit of a mirage to go seeking to recover what never was.

What scholars have done is to confuse the fixing of the Canon of the Bible with the fixing of the Hebrew text of the Bible. The Bible was fixed so far as the three main Divisions (Torah, Prophets, Writings) and the Books in them were concerned. Even if only twenty-two Books were canonized shortly after the mid-first century and the other two Books, Koheleth and Esther, recognized only subsequently—as argued persuasively by S. Zeitlin, "An Historical Study of the Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures" (in *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 3 [1931-32], 121-58) —the fact is that the Canon of the Bible was closed by the time that the Mishnah was codified, not to be reopened and enlarged, or reduced, thereafter.

But the order of the individual Books in the last Division was never really fixed. Thus there are three different sequences of the Five Scrolls, depending on whether Nisan is treated as the first month of the year (Song of Songs — Passover; Ruth-Shabu'ot; Lamentations — Tishah be-Ab; Koheleth—Succot; and Esther—Purim) or Tishri (whence Koheleth, Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Lamentations), or whether chronology, traditionally reckoned, is the factor (Ruth—period of the Judges; Song of Songs—Solomon as a young man; Koheleth

—Solomon as an old man; Lamentations—destruction of the First Temple; and Esther—Persian Period); and there are some "lapses" from these sequences (e.g., when Esther heads the list). Who is to say which is the original order? Indeed, there is no reason to believe that there ever was an "original" order of the Megillot. The Writings, in general, also, show a lack of fixed order; some of the data are given in Ginsburg's *Introduction*, chap. I, "The Order of the Books," pp. 1-8; also pp. 802, 868-9.

As a matter of fact, there is some problem with the order even within the second division, the Prophets. Everyone knows that the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b) has the order: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah; and several manuscripts actually have this order. Most manuscripts and the printed editions in general have the order: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (see Ginsburg, pp. 4-6). Which is the original? Different Jewish communities in different (or even contemporaneous) periods decided the order of the Books for themselves, and no single Jewish community can claim exclusive authority in the matter. But since the accident of history had the first important printed editions of the Bible follow manuscripts which had the order Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., that will probably remain the order henceforth for all "masoretic" texts—even though there is nothing masoretic about this order.

In this connection it is of more than passing interest to note that it may well be that the Christian, essentially fourfold division of the Bible (Torah, Historical Writings, Wisdom Books, and Prophets) and the Christian names of the pentateuchal Books (Genesis, Exodus, etc.) are actually Jewish in origin. Old Jewish tradition knew the name of the first of the pentateuchal Books to be ספר מעשה בראשית (on יצירת העולם see W. Bacher, *ZAW*, 15 [1895], 308), as well as בראשית, which is the pre-Christian term *Genesis* that Philo used; again, Philo's (pre-Christian) Ἐξαγωγή (also Ἐξόδος) = *Exodus* corresponding to ספר יציאת מצרים (alongside שמות (וואלהן) שמות); ספר תורת כהנים (alongside ויקרא) is the equivalent of

Λευιτικόν *Leviticus*; the expression חומש הפקודים (alongside ספר וידבר or במדבר) belongs with the term Ἀριθμοί *Numbers*; and the title *Deuteronomy* corresponds to ספר משנה תורה (אלה הדברים). These are patently (if only because of chronological considerations) terms that the Jewish community did not take over from the Christians. As for the Christian fourfold division of the Bible, it is hardly likely that the Church would have taken an original threefold division, one in which the Prophets followed immediately upon the all-important Torah, and transformed it into a fourfold division, one in which the all-important Prophets were relegated to the fourth division; and why should the Christians have bothered to divide the Bible into four instead of three main divisions? It would seem not unreasonable to believe that there were two "original" orders (as well as titles of the Five Books of Moses), both Jewish—perhaps one Judean and the other Alexandrian (as reflected in the Septuagint); the former continued as the Jewish tradition, the latter as the Christian. But this whole matter, interesting and important as it is, may not be pursued here."

So far as the Hebrew text of the Bible is concerned—the consonantal (unvocalized) text—that too was never fixed for all Jewry for all time. During the Second Jewish Commonwealth, numerous scrolls of the individual Books of the Bible circulated in the learned Jewish circles of Judea, Egypt, Syria-Babylonia, and other regions. And in the rabbinic literature of the first several centuries there are numerous references to the existence of biblical texts with faulty readings. Not only that, the rabbinic literature itself, in quotations from the Bible, exhibits more frequently than is generally realized readings that differ from those preserved in our so-called "masoretic" texts, readings that are not due to faulty memory and that crop up in Hebrew manuscripts and/or biblical quotations in *Mechilta*, *Sifra*, *Sifre*, the *Gemara*, the grammatical work of *ibn Janah*, etc. Thus, e.g., Num. 34.2 reads in our printed "masoretic" editions, וְצוֹ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם,

בְּאֵיִם) אֶל־הָאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן (זאת הארץ אשר תפל לכם בְּנַחֲלָה אָרֶץ כְּנָעַן (לְבַבְלִיתִּיהָ). The *Sifre* (ed. M. Friedmann, Wien, 1864), p.1, line 17, reads אֶל אָרֶץ כְּנָעַן. That this is not simply an "easy" (even unintentional) correction of ungrammatical כְּנָעַן אֶל־הָאָרֶץ is clear from the fact that 4 Kennicott manuscripts and the reading designated *Sebir* (indicating that this was a recognized variant reading) likewise read אֶל־הָאָרֶץ כְּנָעַן. How is one to decide—leaving aside the question as to which of the two readings is correct and/or original (for the older reading may already have been the corrupt one)—which of the two is the correct masoretic reading? On what decisive evidence would the argument be based in favor of the one and against the other?

Again, in B. T. Berakot 54b we read (וַיְהִי בְּנֶסֶם) מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (הֵם בְּמִוְרַד בֵּית חוֹרֶן וַיְהוּהוּ הַשְּׁלִיךְ עֲלֵיהֶם אֲבָבִים . . . נְדָלוֹת). The "masoretic" text in our printed editions, at Josh. 10.11, is simply . . . מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The reading מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is attested by the Septuagint (see M. L. Margolis, *The Book of Joshua in Greek* [Paris, 1931], Part II, p. 177) and by 2 de Rossi manuscripts. Clearly, then, מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is a most legitimate variant—and perhaps even the original—reading. On what grounds would an editor decide that מִפְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is the "masoretic" reading and that מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל is not? None of the Aleppo Codex, Leningrad B 19a, Erfurt 3, etc., or any of the printed editions, can have any decisive merit in determining here what is masoretic and what is not.

The preserved text of II Ki. 3.15 reads (וַעֲתָה קְחֵרְלִי מִנֶּגֶן וְהָיָה כְּנָגוֹן הַמִּנְגֵּן וְהָיָה עָלָיו יַד יְהוָה . . . וְהָיָה עָלָיו). In his excellent grammatical work *ספר הרקמה* (ed. M. Wilensky, 2 vols. [Berlin, 1928-30]), I, p. 67, line 10, *ibn Janah* quotes this verse (וְהָיָה עָלָיו יַד יְהוָה). That this is a genuine variant, and not a slip of memory, is evident from the fact that more than a score of Kennicott and de Rossi manuscripts likewise read רוּחַ. Not only that, the *Targum* too (ed. A. Sperber, 1959), וְשָׂרַת עֲלוּהֵי רוּחַ נְבוּאָה מִן, derives from רוּחַ; it is not uncharacteristic of BH<sup>1</sup> that both parts of its critical apparatus pass over this important

datum in silence. Indeed, who is to say, after a full study of the expression (ותהי עליו) יד/רוח יהוה, that the so-called "variant" reading רוח is not only "masoretic" but even original, with יד, *the* universally accepted "masoretic" reading, being secondary and merely a variant reading — though still also *a* masoretic reading?

Or what will the editor of "the masoretic text of the Bible" do with this clear statement in Berakot 61a: אמר ר' (נחמן) מנוח עם הארץ היה דכתיב וַיֵּלֶךְ מְנוּחַ אַחֲרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ. מתקיף לה ר' (נחמן) בר יצחק, אלא מעתה גבי אלקנה, דכתיב וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה אַחֲרֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ, וגבי אלישע דכתיב וַיֵּקַם וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֵיהָ. . . . "Rabbi Nahman said, 'Manoah was a boor,' since it is written (in Scripture, Jud. 13.11), 'And Manoah walked behind his wife.' But Rabbi Nahman son of Isaac objected: in that case one would have to say the same of Elkanah, since it is written (in Scripture), 'And Elkanah walked behind his wife,' and of Elisha, since it is written (in Scripture, II Ki. 4.30), 'And he (Elisha) arose and walked behind her' . . ." Already the Tosafot commented: אלא מעתה גבי אלקנה דכתיב וילך אלקנה אחרי, אשתו שבוש הוא, שאין פסוק זה בכל המקרא ולא גרסינן ליה, "Except that the expression . . . as it is written (in Scripture), 'And Elkanah walked behind his wife,' is in error, for there is no such passage in the whole of Scripture; and it should be deleted."

But apart from the fact that this is hardly the kind of error which the two talmudic sages would commit — after all, this was not simply a slip of the memory; they would both be guilty, in this case, of having actually created in the Bible a passage that did not exist!—there is another simple fact, long recognized, that the Septuagint of Samuel at this point, as elsewhere in the Book, not only fails to coincide with our preserved, so-called masoretic text, but is often clearly superior to it. Thus at I Sam. 1.21-23 it is clearly stated that Elkanah made the annual pilgrimage to Shiloh while his wife Hannah remained at home with the baby; only after she had weaned Samuel did she go to Shiloh to leave the boy in the service of

the Lord (vv. 23-28). But after Hannah's moving "magnificat" of God in 2.1-10, we read most unexpectedly in v. 11a, וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה הַרְמָתָה עַל-בֵּיתוֹ, "Then Elkanah went to Ramah, to his home" — "unexpectedly" because Elkanah had not been mentioned at all in connection with Hannah's latest pilgrimage to Shiloh. The Septuagint, in place of "masoretic" וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה וַיֵּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שָׁם לַיהוָה at the end of chap.1 (v.28b) and וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה הַרְמָתָה עַל-בֵּיתוֹ at 2.11a, reads at 2.11a, "and she left him there before the Lord and she went to Ramah" (*καὶ κατέλιπον αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ἐνώπιον κυρίου καὶ ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀρμαθαίμ*). Scholars (e.g., S.R. Driver, *Notes on . . . Samuel*, ad loc.) generally have preferred the Hebrew text underlying the Septuagint to the preserved Hebrew text. But we can go farther now, due to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scroll fragments of Samuel. Even from the bit published so far, covering parts of I Sam. 1.22b-2.6 and 2.16-25 (F.M. Cross, Jr., *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, No. 132, 1953, pp. 15-26), it is clear that in this third version of the Hebrew text of Samuel the role of Elkanah was greater than indicated in the preserved "masoretic" Hebrew text, and specifically so at this very point; cf. pp. 19-20 and nn. 6, 10. There can be no doubt, in the light of the preserved Hebrew text, the Septuagint, and the Samuel fragments, that Rabbi Nahman bar Isaac (died 356) still knew in the fourth century of the — quite original! — reading וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶלְקָנָה הַרְמָתָה עַל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיֵּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שָׁם לַיהוָה. And since the Gemara justifies this reading, how could an editor of "the masoretic text of the Bible" justify exclusion of these four words?

In fine, any such contention as "But we are editing as 'masoretic' only the Hebrew text of the Masoretes (or, of Ben Asher)" immediately falls to the ground of its own accord. There never was and there can never be "*the* masoretic text" or "*the* text of the Masoretes." All that, at best, we might hope to achieve, in theory, is "*a* masoretic text," or "*a* text of the Masoretes," that is to say, *a* text worked up by Ben Asher, or by Ben Naftali, or by someone in the Babylonian tradition,

or a text worked up with the aid of the masoretic notes of an individual scribe or of a school of scribes. But as matters stand, we cannot even achieve a clear-cut text of the Ben Asher school, or of the Ben Naftali school, or of a Babylonian school, or a text based on a single masoretic list; indeed, it is not at all certain that any such ever existed. All that an editor can claim with justification is that he has reproduced the text of a single manuscript, be it Aleppo (Hebrew University Bible Project), or Leningrad B 19a (BH<sup>3</sup>), or British Museum Or 2626-27-28 (Snaith), and the like; and the editor should tell the reader forthrightly—as he has not been wont to do—exactly at what points he has departed from the manuscript, and the reasons for departing. At the same time, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that none of these manuscripts or of the printed editions based on them has any greater merit or “masoretic” authority than most of the many other editions of the Bible, than, say, the van der Hooght, Hahn, Letteris, Baer, Rabbinic and Ginsburg Bibles.

An excellent justification of this viewpoint may be gained from the manner in which the various just-mentioned editions of the Bible—each of them claiming the last word in masoretic authority — treated the important aspects of masoretic activity which the Kethib-Qere system constitutes.

It is now scarcely possible to deny that the system of Kethib-Qere readings had its origin in variant readings; by the same token, the theory that the Qere readings are but corrections (really a euphemism for “emendations”) of the Kethib readings has no real justification.<sup>14</sup>

If one reads Num. 23.13 (... לְךָ נָא אֲתִי) and II Chron. 25.17 (לְךָ נִתְרָאָה פְּנִים) in the texts of van der Hooght, Hahn, Baer (lacking in Numbers), Ginsburg, the Rabbinic Bible (*Mikra'ot Gedolot*; ed. Vilna-Romm on Numbers; ed. Warsaw on the entire Bible), BH<sup>3</sup> (= essentially Jacob ben Chayim), Snaith, and Qoren, he will find the reading לך, without any variant reading indicated (except that Snaith at Num. notes: 'חסר ה). In Jud. 19.13 (לְךָ וְנִקְרָבָה), however, the texts of

Ginsburg, BH<sup>3</sup>, and Snaith break with the other editions: whereas all the latter give לך only, the former three record a Kethib-Qere, the K pointed לך (by Ginsburg and BH<sup>3</sup>; Snaith unvocalized לך), the Q לְכָה. The “masoretic” text of BH<sup>3</sup> goes farther than any of the other editions: it records לְכָה as the Qere not only in Judges but also in Numbers and II Chronicles, and vocalizes the Kethib in the Judges passage as לְךָ. (In the Numbers passage the critical apparatus reads “Q לְכָה” with the K left unvocalized, and in the Judges and Chronicles passages the critical apparatus says nothing whatever about our word. If Leningrad B 19a did not really offer the editor of BH<sup>3</sup> these capricious data, this leaves unanswered the very important question: when is BH<sup>3</sup> not really B 19a, and why?)

From sundry sources it is now known that the earliest orthography of our word was לך, which in time gave way to the spelling לכה; see the argument and references in my article on “The Import of the Kethib-Qere and the Masoretic Note on לְכָה, Judges 19.13” (*JQR*, 31 [1940-41], 59 ff.). Accordingly, the spelling of verbal-interjectional “go; come let us . . .” — perhaps aided by the desire to distinguish more readily from prepositional לך “to you” — became normally לכה (some thirty cases in all), with only three instances of the older spelling לך. But even in the case of thrice-occurring לך, the original spelling began to give way at the hands of some scribes to the more usual לְכָה; and once לך became in one or more manuscripts, or groups of manuscripts, לכה, it is not surprising that a Kethib-Qere arose in some scribal circles, exactly as happened in the case of K ואת Q ואתה, K והייתה Q והיית, K שת Q שתה. K לכן Q לְכָנָה, and the like.<sup>15</sup>

In the case of לך in Judg. 19.13, the older spelling was preserved in those manuscripts that served as the basis of most printed editions of the Bible; no לכה had crept in there, and so no K-Q variants were known or introduced. So it is not surprising that David Qimḥi (died 1235), unaware





תחתו, List 128 will not have included it since it is found more than once in the Bible—four times to be exact. But on II Sam. 2.23, which is the first of the four passages in which the K form occurs, Jedidiah Solomon Norzi's masoretic work, *Minhat Shai*, reads as follows, תחתו תחתיו ק' ומסורת כ"י, תחתו ד' חסר וסימנהו... i.e., according to the tradition of the Masorah, Q תחתיו is found written in the Bible 4 times defectively, without the *yodb*. Both *per se* and in the light of the above, it is clear that the Masoretes did not have in mind any such word as תחתו differing morphologically from תחתיו — for they would not refer to a form תחתו by identifying it with the form תחתיו written defectively. All that they had in mind, and all that they stated, was that the form תחתיו was written 4 times defectively, without the *yodb*, though of course pronounced the same as the plena form, i.e. תחתיו=תחתו in morphology and pronunciation.

Now, as to when such alleged forms as עָלוּ, אָלוּ, תָּחוּ, and the other 150 or so cases of K-Q of the same kind first came into existence, even if incorrectly and without proper authority, it would appear that they originated after the time of David Qimḥi, who died in 1235. In common with such earlier grammarians as ibn Janah (died 1040),<sup>20</sup> and ibn Ezra (died 1167),<sup>21</sup> Qimḥi knows no form תָּחוּ; cf., e.g., his statement in *Sefer Ha-Shorashim*, p. 410, תחת... יחובר עם... when joined with suffixes it is in the plural... all of them in the plural... The earliest reference to such a form, so far as I am aware, is to be found in the early sixteenth century, in the masoretic work of Elijah Levita, *Massoreth Ha-Massoreth* (ed. C. D. Ginsburg, Introduction III, pp. 102 ff., pp. 182 f. and n. 4), who arrived at this form through an erroneous comprehension of the import of the caption of List 128 in *Ochlah W'ochlah*. While not referring to K תחתו itself, since the 56 words that he discusses occur but once each written defectively, whereas תחתו occurs 4 times as such, the fact that he pointed Kethibs of this kind as י- (Levita did not

recognize *scriptio plena* and *defectiva* as a factor in the K-Q system), and the fact that the strictly analogous עָלוּ (occurring but once among the 56 words in List 128) is pointed עָלוּ, and the fact that the Kethib was considered by him an integral part of the sacred text, all resulted in gratuitously assumed תָּחוּ coming to be regarded by later, and modern, grammarians and lexicographers as an original and genuine alternate of תָּחוּ. Yet in fairness to Levita, it should be pointed out that he himself considered the K as anomalous in the context and the Q as a substitution for it, on the authority, direct or indirect, of the various authors of the Bible. Consequently, Levita himself probably did not consider forms like תָּחוּ and עָלוּ to be as authoritative as תָּחוּ and עָלוּ. And that may be why he made no mention at all in his edition of and commentary on Moses Qimḥi's little grammatical treatise, *מהלך שביילי הדעת*, of the form אָלוּ (אָלוּ occurs three times as a K) as a variant of the אָלוּ listed by Qimḥi (see at the end of the grammar). In his own grammatical work, *ספר הבחור*, Levita did not concern himself with prepositional forms.

In summary: none of the "masoretic" editions of the Bible published to date has genuinely masoretic authority for hundreds of the Kethib-Qere that they offer the reader."

The vast majority of the scholars who have attempted to work up "the" masoretic text of the Bible have scarcely bothered with the system of Ben Naftali; they have reproduced what has come down to them, by way of manuscripts and/or printed editions, and these happened to be generally the product of the school of Ben Asher. A few scholars, e.g., Ginsburg and Baer, did pay attention to Ben Naftali, even if they usually preferred Ben Asher's readings; Ginsburg has a chapter on this in his *Introduction* (X: "The Differences between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali," pp. 241-86) and other refe-

rences (see Index IV, p. 1016), and Baer included in his "Appendices Criticae et Masoreticae" a very useful section on חלופי נקוד ... בין בן אשר ובין בן נפתלי / *Loci ... a Ben-Ascher et Ben-Naphtali diverse punctis signati* in every biblical Book that he edited. More recently, L. Lipschütz published *Ben Ascher-Ben Naftali. Der Bibeltext der tiberischen Masoreten. Eine Abhandlung des Mischael b. Uzziel, veröffentlicht und untersucht* (Bonner Orientalische Studien, Heft 25; Stuttgart, 1937); and see now especially his edition of "Mishael ben Uzziel's Treatise on the Differences between Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali" as Supplement in *Textus*, 2 (1962), pp. א-נח; with the valuable analysis in 4 (1964), 1-29.

But the question asks itself: What is there inherently in the masoretic work of the Ben Asher school that gives it greater authority than that of the Ben Naftali school? Why should the vowels, the dagesh, the maqqef, the raphe, the metheg-ga'ya, the accents, the ḥataf, and the like, as used by Ben Asher's school be more acceptable to an editor of "the" masoretic text than their use by Ben Naftali's school? (Had the matter been left to Saadia Gaon to decide, this tenth century scholar would have ruled vigorously in favor of Ben Naftali as against Ben Asher; see the data in Lipschütz, *Textus*, 4 [1964], 9 and nn. 1-3.) Surely Maimonides, authority that he was in matters of halacha and philosophy, was in no position to deal adequately with the problems of the rise of the Masorah and the achievement of a masoretic text; so that if this notable halachist and philosopher is said to have designated a certain manuscript, said to have derived from the school of Ben Asher, as one upon which everyone could depend, even if that manuscript could be identified with full confidence, it would still have to be treated the same as every other manuscript of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, it is not easy to identify the codex in question; despite the confident and even dogmatic statements made to the contrary, Aharon Dothan has advanced cogent arguments against the popular view that it was the Aleppo Codex that Maimonides

saw and used and praised (*Tarbiz*, 34 [1964-65], 147 ff.). In addition, Dothan has shown that the Aleppo manuscript is not pure Ben Asher at all, containing as it does some readings which are characteristically Ben Naftali.

Let us cite some specific cases in point. According to Baer, *Liber Chronicum* (חלופי נקוד בספר ... בין בן אשר ובין בן נפתלי, p. 131), at I Chron. 15.2, Ben Asher vocalizes וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ, Ben Naftali וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ; Ginsburg's text reads וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ, with the note "so Ben Asher; Ben Naftali וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ, with the ga'ya" (כן ב"א, ב"נ וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ געיא); BH<sup>3</sup> reads וְלִשְׁרֵתוֹ; Miqra'ot Gedolot, Snaith, and Qoren agree with Ginsburg (without, of course, his rafeh sign over ת). Regardless of which reading is genuinely Ben Asher and which Ben Naftali, on what basis is that of Ben Asher more truly "masoretic" than that of Ben Naftali? What are the criteria that an editor would employ, and with what justification? Again, in I Chron. 16.12, what is more "masoretic" about Ben Asher's וּמִשְׁפַּטֵּי פִיהוּ (מִפְתִּיּוֹ וּמִשְׁפַּטֵּי פִיהוּ)—the reading employed also in Baer, Ginsburg (with the note: ם"א ומשפטי ובלא מקף וכן ד"ב, ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט, ד"י"ב, ודי"ד, other editions ומשפטי, and without the maqqef; and similarly the 1488 Soncino Bible, the 1491-93 Naples Bible, the 1494 Brescia Bible, the 1511-17 Pesaro Bible, the 1517 Felix Pratensis Bible, and the 1521 Bomberg Bible), Miqra'ot Gedolot, BH<sup>3</sup>, Snaith, and Qoren—than about Ben Naftali's וּמִשְׁפַּטֵּי פִיהוּ? In II Chron. 2.13, according to Baer (p. 132), Ben Asher reads בְּזִהְב־יִבְכָּסָף, and Ben Naftali בְּזִהְב־יִבְכָּסָף. But Baer and Qoren point בְּזִהְב־יִבְכָּסָף (note extra telisha), BH<sup>3</sup> and Snaith point בְּזִהְב־יִבְכָּסָף (note metheg on ז!), leaving only Ginsburg with Ben Asher's reading (with addition of the rafeh sign: בְּזִהְב־יִבְכָּסָף) and Miqra'ot Gedolot with Ben Naftali's—to which may be added the note in Ginsburg: ם"א בזהב וכן ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט, ד"י"ב, ודי"ד, i.e., other edd. בזהב; and similarly all the Bibles mentioned by Ginsburg at I Chron. 16.12 above, except the 1488 Soncino Bible. Again then, how is a scholarly editor to decide which pointing, that of Ben Asher or that of Ben Naftali or that of the other edi-

tions, is the true "masoretic" reading? Why should Ben Naftali be regarded as less "masoretic" than Ben Asher, and why should either of them be accorded greater "masoretic" authority than either of the two readings presented in Baer, BH<sup>a</sup>, Snaith, and Qoren?

Or take the Hebrew form for Issachar. Ginsburg (*Introduction*, pp. 250-55 and notes) has brought together considerable data which offer no less than six possible "masoretic" readings of the word: יִשָּׂכָר (with dagesh in first *sin*: Yissachar), יִשְׂכָר (without dagesh in first *sin*: Yisachar), יִשְׂכָר (first *sin* silent), יִשְׂכָר (both *sins* vocalized), יִשְׂשָׁכָר, and יִשְׂשָׁכָר (first sibilant *shin* rather than *sin*). I do not know—regardless of which is the original reading—how those who claim to be editing the masoretic text determined the correct "masoretic" reading here.<sup>26</sup>

It would be all too easy to go on in this vein; there are literally thousands of readings in the Hebrew text of the Bible involving the elements that go to make up the masoretic text that no one can point to and say: this is, or this is not, "the" masoretic reading. For there never was any such thing as "the masoretic text" in existence.

A word is in order here about the differences in pronunciation among the schools of Ben Asher, Ben Naftali, Babylonia, etc. I regard it as fundamentally wrong to look upon any of the בעלי המסורה as innovators in phonology, as though one Masorete after another invented a pronunciation of Hebrew. All the Masorettes, from first to last, were essentially preservers and recorders of the pronunciation of Hebrew as they heard it.<sup>27</sup> If the Ben Ashers vocalized וְלִשְׂרָתוֹ, and the Ben Naftalis וְלִשְׂרָתוֹ, then those were the pronunciations current in their circles. If the Ben Ashers vocalized לִירְאָה, בִּירְאָה, לִישְׂרָאֵל, בִּישְׂרָאֵל, etc., as against the Ben Naftalis' לִירְאָה, בִּירְאָה, לִישְׂרָאֵל, בִּישְׂרָאֵל, etc. (see the data in Ginsburg, *Introduction*, 267-8 and n. 1; Lipschütz, *Textus*, 2 [1962], ד, and 4 [1964],

18 and nn. 16-17), it was simply because words with initial – י when prefixed with בּ or ל were pronounced – בִּי / לִי in one region and – בִּי / לִי in another. The same is true of several verbal forms of אכל, e.g., Ben Asher תֹּאכְלֶנָּה / י vs. Ben Naftali תֹּאכְלֶנָּה / י (see the data in Ginsburg, 255-64; Lipschutz, ג, and 17, nn. 7-9) and of גרש, e.g., Ben Asher אָנְרִשְׁנוּ vs. Ben Naftali אָנְרִשְׁנוּ (see Ginsburg, 264-7; Lipschütz, ג, and 17, nn. 10-12). To the same category belong the hundreds of instances of the kind אֲשַׁתְּחֶנָּה–אֲשַׁתְּחֶנָּה, יִאֲנֶה–יִאֲנֶה, הִנְחֶמְדִּים–הִנְחֶמְדִּים, עוֹלָלִים–עוֹלָלִים (these instances taken at random from Baer, *Liber Psalmorum*, 136 ff., (חלופי נקוד . . . בין בן אשר ובין בן נפתלי); or Ben Asher's (I Ki 10.5// II Chron. 9.4) as against Ben Naftali's . . . וּמֵעַמְד (I Ki 10.5// II Chron. 9.4) as against Ben Naftali's וּמֵעַמְד (Ginsburg, BH<sup>a</sup>, Snaith, Qoren; at I Ki. 8.33, 35, 44, 48) and וּמֵעַמְדוֹ (Ginsburg, BH<sup>a</sup> Snaith, Qoren; at 8.33, 47) and וּמֵעַמְדוֹ (Ginsburg, Snaith, Qoren; at 8.66) to Ben Asher's וּמֵעַמְדוֹ (Baer), וּמֵעַמְדוֹ (Baer), and וּמֵעַמְדוֹ (Baer, BH<sup>a</sup>).<sup>28</sup> In all these instances, one pronunciation was employed in some circles, the other in other circles; and all these pronunciations are equally traditional and correct and "masoretic," and provide no authority to anyone to exclude the one in favor of the other.<sup>29</sup>

With all this in mind, one can appreciate the full significance of the following statements in Lipschütz's article on the *hillufim* between Ben Asher and Ben Naftali (*Textus*, 4 [1964], 3f., 12f.), "Although Mishael [ben Uzziel] reports fully on the differences and congruences of BA and BN, he does not mention anywhere whose reading deserves priority. Today we know positively that he was not the first to compile such a list of differences. Already the learned Karaite author Levi ben al-Hassan [early eleventh century] . . . had drawn up a list of *hillufim* . . . [and] speaks very highly of both Masorettes . . . and their versions of the Bible . . . but neither he drops a hint as to which of the two should be given preference.

“At first, apparently only the Massoretic scholars, especially among the Karaites, took interest in these differences. For some time BA and BN obviously enjoyed equal authority and reputation. Thus, an anonymous author, most probably of the 11th century, in discussing the controversy between BA and BN on the placing of the *dagesh* in כַּפֿ”ת after the word ויהי concludes: ‘And the reader should conform to one of these two opinions.’ Another unidentified author of that time, but beyond all doubt a Karaite . . . states that Jews everywhere adopted the Bible codices of BA and BN, and that Massoretic scholars went from Tiberias to Babylon and other countries . . .

“But gradually the majority of Hebrew grammarians and scholars gave preference to the readings of BA . . . Maimonides accepted as authoritative a copy of the Bible that had been vocalized, collated and provided with Massorah by BA [— but see Dothan’s *caveats* in his *Tarbiz* article quoted above! —] . . . Maimonides made his statement with regard to the marking of the open and closed sections in the Torah. As this did not constitute a matter of dispute between our Massorettes, we should not be surprised that he does not mention the name of BN at all. But . . . Maimonides’ reliance on that MS raised the prestige of BA and not only in matters with which he had been directly concerned. Simultaneously, it caused the decline of the BN tradition. As far as we know, David Qimḥi (died 1235) . . . was the first who, in reporting on the differences between the two Massorettes, decided in favour of BA. Now a widespread demand was felt to get acquainted with the readings of BA and . . . BN. More than thirty different lists of *hillufim* originating from the 14th and 15th century are known. These lists have a very limited value. They differ from each other substantially, and the later a list the more *hillufim* it shows. The Bible MSS that contain such lists are not in agreement either with the readings of BA or with those of BN quoted in their attached lists. Any variation in punctuation and accentuation that a MS showed, automati-

cally was ascribed to BN because people were aware only of differences between BA and BN. But today we know . . . that there lived a considerable number of Massorettes in Tiberias . . . (pp. 3-4)

“Due to the efforts of the Tiberian Massorettes their system of punctuation had displaced all the others by the end of the 9th century. But by this no absolutely uniform text of the Bible was yet established. These Tiberian Massorettes among themselves continued to hold different views on many issues . . . About the beginning of the eleventh century the readings of many Massorettes, such as . . . were almost displaced. There were left mainly the systems of BA and BN. These two Massorettes agreed in many things, and the differences between them were only of minor significance. Both enjoyed great esteem and held the same high reputation. Although the readings of BN showed more system, in both vocalization and the rules of accentuation, BA in the end achieved greater recognition . . . The final decision in favour of BA came only at the end of the 12th century . . .” (pp. 12-13).

While it is impossible *a priori* to achieve “the masoretic text” when none ever obtained, it would seem possible in theory to produce a Hebrew text of the Bible with the claim that it is derived from “a masoretic text,” that is, that it is based on some such manuscript as Codex Petropolitanus, or British Museum Orient. 4445, or British Museum Or 2626-27-28, or Erfurt 3, or Leningrad B 19a, or the Aleppo Codex, and the like. But in that case, the text of the manuscript that is reproduced should either be left wholly unchanged or else every single change that is introduced, no matter how slight, should be indicated clearly, and justified— as is done, e.g., when the Septuagint is edited on the basis of Codex Vaticanus, or Codex Alexandrinus, etc. At the same time, however, it should not be claimed that the text published is that of Ben Asher, or of Ben Naftali, or of Babylonian provenance, or the like, not only because none of these is *a priori* any more au-

thoritative or "masoretic" than any other but also because no such text is in existence; the Aleppo Codex, Leningrad B 19a, Erfurt 3, et al., are full of Ben Naftali readings.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, it may well be that all these manuscripts exhibit a "mixed" text not because any of them were "pure" to begin with, until "contaminated" by foreign readings, but because they were "mixed" (from our point of view) already at the outset.<sup>32</sup> After all, what do we know about the masoretic appendage to the purely consonantal text (apart from the rabbinic and other earlier references, especially Jerome, to the inverted *nun*, the Fifteen Extraordinary Points, the Tiqqune Soferim, the Suspended Letters, and the like) in the various Jewish centers of Western Asia up to about the ninth-tenth centuries?

Furthermore, if a masoretic list is attached to the text, then the reader should be advised clearly not only as to which list it is but also that there are several different lists with variant and various comments, sometimes quite contradictory, and that no one list is *a priori* more authoritative or "masoretic" than another; not only that, but also that we no longer are able to match a list to the text on which it was based.<sup>33</sup> From the very outset there were different lists compiled by different scholars on the basis of different manuscripts; it is no longer possible to reconstruct the time and place and circumstances of this process.

In fine, any editor of the Hebrew text of the Bible who claims that his edition is based upon and carefully and diligently corrected according to *המסורה* "the Massorah" is employing an expression that is utterly without meaning; he has, in reality, simply reproduced a form of the preserved, or traditional, or received Hebrew text (*textus receptus*),<sup>34</sup> a form whose provenance — especially in the period preceding the invention of printing — is generally unknown to us.

There is much, very much work to be done in the specialized area of masoretic research. The happy thought to re-

issue Ginsburg's *Introduction*, and thus make readily available once again to scholars the enormous material compiled and elucidated in this classic, will surely stimulate the renewed study of the Masorah in its several aspects.

June 1, 1965  
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## NOTES

1. Cf. H. M. Orlinsky, "Old Testament Studies," chapter II in *Religion*, ed. P. Ramsey (in series *Humanistic Scholarship in America: The Princeton Studies*; Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1965), pp. 51-109 and Index.

2. Useful data may be found, e.g., in F. Buhl, *Canon and Text of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, 1892); the article on "Masorah" by C. Leviaš in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, VIII (1904), 365a-371b; P. Kahle, §§6-9 of "Lehre von den Schriftzeichen" (pp. 71-162) in vol. I of H. Bauer-P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments* (Halle, 1918); E. Ehrentreu, *Untersuchungen über die Massora, ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und ihren Geist* (=Heft 6 in *Beiträge zur semitischen Philologie und Linguistik*, ed. G. Bergsträsser; Hannover, 1925); S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 2nd ed. (New York, 5722/1962), e.g., 28 ff., 38ff., 43 ff.; and, of course, the chapter on "The Masorah" in Ginsburg's *Introduction* (287-468). There has now come to hand *Textus*, 4 (1964), with a fine discussion of masoretic matters by Lazar Lipschütz (pp. 1-29). Of particular interest is the fuller appreciation of Menahem di Lonzano (author *Or Torab*; Venice, 1618) and especially of Jedidiah Solomon Norzi, author of the masoretic commentary on the Bible, *Minḥat Shai* (completed 1626, but not printed until 1742): ". . . Norzi's authority was accepted by everyone, Jews and non-Jews alike . . . the work of Norzi must be regarded as a most valuable contribution to the exploration of the Massorah. But . . . its importance has been over-rated by some modern scholars, such as Dérenbourg, Strack and Snaith" (pp. 13-15).

3. The full English title of the reprint is *Biblia Hebraica, Masoretico-Critical Text of the Hebrew Bible, carefully revised according to the Massorah and the early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible with the Variations and marginal Annotations of the ancient Manuscripts and Targums*. It is of interest that in this missionary work the "Christian" part of Ginsburg's name did not appear in Hebrew; and the date of publication included the Jewish reckoning (according to the traditional date of Creation) as well as the Christian-secular.

4. It has long been known that Jacob ben Chayim himself proceeded "According to the eclectic method. But we are at a complete

loss, when searching for the underlying principles" (A. Sperber, "Problems of the Masora," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 17 [1942-43], chap. IX, "The Biblia Rabbinica, Venice 1524/5" and chap. X, "Jacob ben Chayim as Editor," pp. 350-77. This study as a whole can be used only with great reserve). Scholars who have been quick to criticize Ginsburg's reliance on Jacob ben Chayim have failed to note that Ginsburg himself had pointed out several serious shortcomings in ben Chayim's procedure as editor; see *Introduction*, 958-60, 963-74.

5. חמשה חומשי תורה / מדויקים היטב / על פי המסרה ועל פי דפוטים ראשונים / עם חלופים והנהות / מן כתבי יד עתיקים ותרנומים ישנים / מאח כ' ד' גינצבורג / לונדון / בשנת תרס"ט לפ"ק 1908. *Pentateuchus. Diligenter Revisus juxta Massorah atque Editiones principes cum variis lectionibus e MSS. atque antiquis versionibus collectis*. The "Advertisement" on p. IV reads: "The text presented in this book is that of the first edition of Jacob ben Chayim's Massoretic Recension, printed by Bomberg at Venice in 1524-5. No changes have been made in it beyond the correction of obvious errors as indicated by the MSS. collated. But at the foot of each page are placed all the variations from that text, including its accents, which are to be found in a larger number of ancient MSS. and early printed editions than were ever before collated so minutely and fully."

6. See Alfred S. Geden and R. Kilgour, *Introduction to the Ginsburg Edition of the Hebrew Old Testament* (=Bible House Paper No. XIII of British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1928); also the very critical review by L. Blau in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 31 (1930), 216-22.

7. See Sperber's analysis of the Masora Parva in Codex Petropolitanus in chap. VII of "Problems of the Masora" (pp. 334-46); and Lipschütz has noted (*Textus*, 4 [1964], 6), with reference to the detailed studies by H. Yalon and F. P. Castro, "that the close agreement of Cod. L(=B 19a) with Mishael (ben Uzziel)'s list was achieved, to some extent, by erasures, addition and alterations . . ."

8. R. Gottheil, (depending apparently on Ginsburg) offers a useful chart on the "Pedigree of Hebrew Bible" in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, III, 161; more recently, Lazarus Goldschmidt discussed *The Earliest Editions of the Hebrew Bible*, etc. (New York, 1950. "Limited to 330 Copies Only"). Stanley Rypins has made available interesting data in *The Book of Thirty Centuries* (New York, 1951), e.g., in chap. VII, "The Printed Bible" (pp. 174 ff.; the Notes on 332 ff.),

which is headed by a quotation from Thomas More: "Though an angel should write, still 't is devils must print;" B. J. Roberts, "The Hebrew Bible since 1937," *JTS*, 15 (1964), 253-64.

A general warning is in place here: not all scholars who have written on this aspect of the subject have really bothered to check their data carefully at the source when they could and should have done so; too often errors have been repeated and new ones created.

9. On the Hebrew Bibles edited by Jablonski, H. Opitius (Kiel, 1709), and Michaelis, Wickes wrote (טעמי אמ"ת, 1881, p. ix), "The three . . . edd. are all much more correct, as far as the accents are concerned, than our common edd. Modern editors (excepting of course Heidenheim and Baer [to whom Wickes was uncritically partial, as against Ginsburg]) have one and all gone on perpetuating the errors of the Van der Hooght text, without taking the trouble of enquiring whether more correct texts were not available." The Michaelis edition, Wickes noted (*ibid.*), "is valuable to the student because of the various accentual readings, taken from the Erfurt MSS."

10. The 1884 edition of van der Hooght-Hahn had the "Key to the Massoretic Notes, Titles, and Index . . . translated from the Latin of A. Hahn, with many additions and corrections," by Alexander Meyrowitz, A.M., Prof. of the Hebrew Language and Literature in the University of New York.

11. The title of the 1870 (Vienna) edition was: ספר תורה נביאים וכתובים/מדויק היטב על פי המסורה/הוגה בעיון נמרץ/על ידי/—החכם המובהק מהור"ר/מאיר הלוי לעטעריס/שנת התר"ל ליצירה *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, Hebrew and English.*

12. Thus, too, the term Pentateuch (alongside *νόμος* — תורה) corresponds to חומשי תורה; and the term Hagiographa (alongside Writings — כתובים) may well correspond to the expression used in antiquity for Books of the Third Division — so that both "Writings" and "Hagiographa" are originally Jewish titles of the Third Division. Or cf. *ἑθνη* — *Lamentations* with קינור (איכה) alongside. The best collection of data on "Die Namen der Heiligen Schrift" may be found in L. Blau's *Zur Einleitung in die Heilige Schrift* (Budapest, 1894), Part I, pp. 1-47.

A good case has been made recently for an Alexandrian as against a Judean order for two of the Ten Commandments: the latter is the traditional "You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery," with the Alexandrian order being the reverse. Both orders are equally Jewish and well known already during the last centuries of the Second Temple. Who is to decide which order is the original? Cf. D. Flusser, *Textus*, 4 (1964), 220-4.

13. Ibn Ezra, it is true, comments, כמו והנבואה, עורך הנביא, הנבואה נבואת עורך הנביא. והטעם אל הארץ ארץ כנען. However, one has but to look at II Chron. 15.8 to realize that the text there is hardly original precisely at this point, and, consequently, offers ibn Ezra no real support. Our verse is patently clumsy and has suffered conflation.

14. See, e.g., Chapter V of my "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job": "The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint of Job: the Text and the Script," § B The Kethib and the Qere (in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 36 [1965], 37-47); "The Origin of the Kethib-Qere System: A New Approach" (*Supplement to Vetus Testamentum*, 7 [1960], 184-192); and "Problems of Kethib-Qere" (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 60 [1940], 30-45). I. Yeivin has discussed "The Vocalization of Qere-Kethiv in A (leppo Codex)" and related material in *Textus*, 2 (1962), 146-9.

15. Contrary to all students of the Masorah and editors of the "masoretic" text, the Kethib forms are all simply orthographic (*defective*) variants of the Qere, i.e., they are to be vocalized exactly as the Qere: וְהָיִיתָ (just like the *scriptio defectiva* Q וְהָיִיתָ), —not וְהָיִיתָ, —וְהָיִיתָ, etc. Thus, e.g., where no K-Q variants were involved, we have בָּךְ in the Psalms (18.30) version of David's Hymn of Triumph as against בְּכָה in the Samuel (II: 22.30) version; וְגִלְיָהּ (1 Chron. 17.25) alongside וְגִלְיָהּ (II Sam. 7.27); וְהָיִיתָ (I Chron. 19.12) along with וְהָיִיתָ (II Sam. 10.11); וְנָתַתָּה (I Ki. 8.39) together with וְנָתַתָּה (II Chron. 6.30); and so on. What is involved in all these instances is merely variation in orthography, in no way, as scholars have erroneously assumed, in morphology. For the data and argument, see "The Import . . .," pp. 60 f. And see the statement by Raphael Chayim Bazila (18th cent.), " . . . Qere and Kethiv involve the letters, and not the accents and vowel signs" (*apud* I. Yeivin, *Textus*, 2 [1962], 147 and n.1).

In reference to the Qoren Bible, one of its Editors, Dr. A. M. Haberman, has advised me (in a letter dated 12 Iyyar 5725 = May 14, 1965): בענין קרי וכתובי נהגנו כך: אם על ידי כתיב שונה מן המקובל . . . לא נשתנה הקרי, הדפסנו אותו בפנים מבלי להביא קרי בצד . . . Hence תַּחֲמוּ, אֵלוּ, יָדוּ, לָךְ, etc.

16. נ"ו מלין חסר י' במצע' תיבות' וקרי' וכל חד לי'.

17. In II Ki. 4.34, with reference to Elijah, (ויצל וישׁכב על-כפיו וישׁם פיו על-פיו ועיניו על-עיניו וכפיו על-) כפיו in List 128 — as though a reading כפיו were possible here in context (וכפיו על-). Yet BH<sup>v</sup> vocalizes the Kethib as כפיו (וכפיו על-).







## PREFACE.

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The present Edition of the Hebrew Bible, to which this Volume is an Introduction, differs from all others in the following particulars:

### THE TEXT.

1. The Text itself is based upon that of the *First* Edition of Jacob ben Chayim's Massoretic Recension, printed by Bomberg, at Venice, in the year 1524-5. Existing Hebrew Bibles, which profess to follow Jacob ben Chayim's text, have admitted in the course of years many unwarranted variations from it and many errors.

2. No variations, however strongly supported by Hebrew Manuscripts and Ancient Versions, are introduced into the Text itself, which has been compiled strictly in accordance with the Massorah collected from the Manuscripts.

3. All variations are relegated entirely to the margin.

4. While the modern divisions of chapters and verses are noted for the sake of convenience, the text is arranged according to the ancient chapters and

sectional divisions of the Massorah and the MSS., which are thus restored.

5. It uniformly reproduces the *Dageshed* and *Raphed* letters, which are found in all the best Massoretic Manuscripts, but which have been omitted in all the current printed editions of the Hebrew Bible.

6. The ancient Massoretic chapters, called *Sedarim*, are also indicated throughout in the margin against their respective places.

#### THE MARGIN.

7. It is well known that in the printed Texts the variations called *Kethiv* and *Keri* are marked by the word in the Text (*Kethiv*) having the vowel-points belonging to the word in the margin (*Keri*). This produces hybrid forms, which are a grammatical enigma to the Hebrew student. But in this Edition the words in the Text thus affected (*Kethiv*) are left *unpointed*, and in the margin the two readings are for the first time given with their respective vowel-points.

8. The margin contains the various readings of the different Standard codices which are *quoted in the Massorah itself*, but which have long since perished.

9. It gives the various readings found in the Manuscripts and Ancient Versions.

10. It gives the readings of the Eastern and Western Schools against those words which are affected by them; lists of which are preserved, and given in the Model Codices and in certain special Manuscripts.

11. It also gives, against the affected words, the variations between *Ben-Asher* and *Ben-Naphtali*, hitherto not indicated in the margin. These had been consigned to the end of the large Editions of the Bible which contain the Massorah of Jacob ben Chayim.

12. It gives, in some instances, readings of the Ancient Versions which are *not* supported by Manuscript authority.

13. It gives, for the first time, the class of various readings called *Sevirin* against every word affected by them. These *Sevirin* in many Manuscripts are given as the substantive textual reading, or as of equal importance with the official *Keri*. These readings have been collected from numerous Manuscripts.

When compiling the notes to the Hebrew Bible, I at first gave the results of my collation without regard to the work of others who also profess to edit the Hebrew Text according to the Massorah. It was, however, pointed out to me that as sundry parts of Dr. Baer's edition of the text had been accepted by students as exhibiting the Massoretic recension, and since my edition differs in many respects from that of Dr. Baer, it was my duty to specify the authorities when my readings are in conflict with his. I acted upon this advice which accounts for the Notes in my edition of the Text being more extensive in the Prophets and the Hagiographa than in the Pentateuch. To remedy this inequality I have revised the notes to the Pentateuch in order to bring them into harmony with those of

## PREFACE.

the second and third Divisions of the Hebrew Bible. A specimen of the revised notes I give in Appendix IV.

In addition to my having read the proofs of the Hebrew Bible four times, they have also been twice read by the learned Dr. Mandelkern of Leipzig and once by the Rev. George Margoliouth of the Oriental Printed Books and MSS. Department in the British Museum. Mr. Margoliouth, moreover, revised and verified the references to the Ancient Versions of the Prophets and the Hagiographa, and it is to his careful revision that I am indebted for their accuracy, as well as for some valuable suggestions. The results of his revision of the notes on the Pentateuch I hope to embody in my revised notes.

That in spite of our united readings, some errors should still have been overlooked, those who have ever printed Hebrew with the vowel-points and the accents will easily understand and readily forgive. Some of these errors I have already detected, and some have been pointed out to me. These have duly been corrected in the stereotyped plates. The absolute correctness of such a text can only be secured in the process of time, and by the kindly aid of students. But whether pointed out in a friendly or in a hostile way, I shall be most grateful for such criticism.

To my friend the Rev. Dr. Bullinger, the learned secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society I am entirely indebted for the elaborate Indices as well as for his help in reading the proofs.

## PREFACE.

I cannot conclude this Preface without expressing my deep gratitude to the officials of the British Museum for the ready help I have received from them in the course of my work. But for the special privileges accorded to me by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson K.C.B., L.C.D., L.L.D. the Principal Librarian; Richard Garnett C.B., L.L.D., Keeper of Printed Books; and Robert K. Douglas, Keeper of Oriental Printed Books and MSS., I could not possibly have finished this Introduction and my other works within the span of life allotted to me.

*Christian D. Ginsburg.*

*Holmlea, Virginia Water, Surrey*

*November 5 1896.*