

Concordia Theological Monthly



D E C E M B E R ♦ 1 9 5 8

Aids to Bible Study

The Hebrew Old Testament

By FREDERICK W. DANKER

EDITORIAL NOTE. The first article in this series appeared in the March 1958 and the second in the July 1958 issue.

IT is regrettable that Hebrew is gradually fading out of the academic picture. Seminaries are decreasing their requirements in this area, and its study is being left more and more to the elective inclinations of the student. To the remnant in Israel, however, this chapter in *Aids to Bible Study* is dedicated in the hope that it may encourage some to return to Zion and exhilarate others as they stand on the ramparts and catch the vision of fresh and exciting interpretive possibilities in their Hebrew texts.

Frequent reference will be made in these pages to the third edition of *Biblia Hebraica* (BH). This edition, through the combined editorial efforts of Alt and Eissfeldt, brings the labors of Rudolf Kittel, who died in 1929, up to date. Published by the Württ. Bibelanstalt of Stuttgart (c. 1937), this sturdily bound volume should see many years of serviceable use. The type is exceptionally easy on the eyes. The advantage of Kittel's third edition, hereafter referred to as BH, is that it goes beyond the thirteenth and fourteenth century MSS represented in Jacob ben Chayyim's edition, published in Venice, 1524—25, by Daniel Bomberg. Jacob ben Chayyim's text has been virtually the O. T. Textus Receptus and was used in Kittel's first two editions. The third edition, however, is based on Codex Leningradensis, a copy made in A. D. 1008 from manuscripts written by Aaron ben Moshe ben Asher (BH, pp. vi ff. [xxvi ff.]).¹

Since its major revision in the third edition, *Biblia Hebraica* has undergone frequent correction and improvement. The seventh edition added not only a translation of the prolegomena into English but also a third critical apparatus to the books of Isaiah and Habakkuk in order to accommodate a selection of Qumran readings

¹ In "The Hebrew Ben Asher Bible Manuscripts," *Vetus Testamentum* I (1951), 161—167, Paul Kahle meets J. L. Teicher's objections (*Journal of Jewish Studies* II [1950], 17—25) that the Leningrad MS is not a copy of a Ben Asher manuscript.

bound separately earlier in *Variae lectiones*, edited by O. Eissfeldt (Stuttgart, 1951). References in the following pages to the introductory matter in BH follow the pagination first of the third to the sixth edition and then, in brackets, of the seventh through the tenth.

Other modern critical editions include those of C. D. Ginsburg (*The Old Testament, Diligently Revised According to the Massorah and the Early Editions, with the Various Readings from Manuscripts and the Ancient Versions* [4 vols., London, 1926]) and of Baer-Delitzsch (Leipzig, 1869, etc.). Ginsburg's edition is a massive collection of Massoretic material and minute variations, but its critical value is considerably depreciated by methodological defects. S. Baer and Franz Delitzsch published the O. T. in installments, omitting Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Their attempt to produce a text that never really had an historical existence is severely criticized by P. Kahle for its subjective approaches,² and its chief value now is historical.

At the present time the British and Foreign Bible Society is working on a new edition, to replace M. Letteris' edition, which has been reprinted by the Society since 1866. N. H. Snaith of Leeds is the editor and hopes to reproduce as far as possible the Ben Asher text. A defect of Kittel's third edition, it has been claimed, is its too great dependence on one manuscript. Snaith's work is developed on a broader manuscript base.³

PART I THE MASSORETES AND THE MASSORAH

The present consonantal text of the Hebrew Scriptures is an outgrowth of a concern in Judaism for an authoritative text. The new role of the Torah after the destruction of the temple and the peculiar exegetical methods advocated by Rabbi Akiba and his school encouraged uniformity and elimination of all variant

² *Massoreten des Ostens* (Leipzig, 1913), p. xiii.

³ For general orientation on the matters treated in this chapter see Aage Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Copenhagen, 1952) I, 42—65; Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, c. 1948), pp. 71—101; Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (trans. Peter R. Ackroyd [New York, 1957]), pp. 9—32. The standard, and the fountain-head for most of the information in these books, is C. D. Ginsburg's *Introduction to the Massoretico-critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London, 1897). B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff, 1951), brings the discussion reasonably up to date.

textual traditions. In fixing the text they attempted to go beyond the popular text forms to the more ancient tradition.

The scholars responsible for this attempt at textual conservation were first known as the *sopherim*,⁴ that is, the scribes, the writers or secretaries. According to the Rabbinic literature, Ezra holds the place of honor in this notable guild. Through careful copying of the text and oral transmission of traditional text forms and pronunciation of words these scholars paved the way for the experts on tradition known as the Massoretes.

Near the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian era the history of Judaism as well as its literary activity experienced profound changes. This is the period when the Talmud reached completion. It is a time of theological consolidation. All that the scribes and rabbis have done on the sacred text is now carefully collected. Since the scholars responsible for this conservation effort were concerned not so much for originality as for maintenance of a tradition, they are known as the Massoretes, a title derived from a late Hebrew word translated "tradition."

In keeping with the nature of the subject there is a lively dispute among scholars concerning the exact formation of the Hebrew word underlying this translation. Some insist that the object of the Massoretes' research, namely, the tradition, is properly called מְסוֹרָה. Others with equal vehemence maintain that the older and better attested form is מְסוֹרָה.

In Ezek. 20:37 the word מְסוֹרָה is found and appears to be derived from the verb אָסַר, "to bind," but the apparatus in BH suggests substituting מְסַפֵּר with LXX and one of the manuscripts of the Old Latin. In any event, a post-Biblical root מָסַר, "to hand down," certainly underlies the late Hebrew word מְסוֹרָה or מְסוֹרָה. The preference in these pages for the latter (*Massorah*) should not be construed as ignoring the debate on this question in Roberts' concise treatment.⁵

The principal feature which distinguishes the Massoretes from

⁴ The original sense of the root סָפַר, from which the word סוֹפְרִים is derived, means "to count." Thus the Talmud states: "The early [scholars] were called *soferim* because they used to count all the letters of the Torah," Kid-dushin 30 a in *The Babylonian Talmud Seder Nashim Kiddushin* (trans. H. Freedman [London, 1936]), p. 144.

⁵ Op. cit., p. 41, n. 2.

their scribal predecessors is, as indicated, their codification of what the scribal tradition had already transmitted. They add nothing. They only conserve. It would be erroneous, however, to conclude that there was a closely knit guild of scholars called Massoretes who worked in a single continuing tradition. Actually scholars were at work, endeavoring to codify what the scribes had left them, in various parts of dispersed Judaism. Roughly, however, the Massoretes may be divided into two groups, the East and the West, the Babylonian and the Palestinian. The latter group ultimately surpassed its rival and presented Judaism with its recognized text form, known as the Massoretic Text, commonly abbreviated MT.⁶

The writing labors of the Massoretes involve consideration of two principal areas. The first of these is the text itself. The Massoretes are not concerned to correct, as the scribes had done, but only to conserve. Hence the invention of an elaborate pointing system which, without touching the sacred consonants, was designed to conserve the traditional reading of the text. Concern for faithful reproduction of what lay before them in their textual tradition is reflected in some of the textual peculiarities, such as the suspension of certain letters, which will be treated in the following pages. The second area is the territory outside the text proper. It is here that the codified tradition, or Massorah, is to be found.

The Massorah

The Massorah consists of annotations which literally hedge in the text. They are usually classified as follows: 1. The initial Massorah, surrounding the first word of a book. 2. The marginal Massorah. This is of two types. The small, usually termed *massorah parva*, is located in the side margins. The large (*massorah magna*) fills in the top and bottom of the page. 3. The final Massorah, *massorah finalis*. This is a classification in alphabetic order of the Massoretic tradition and is located at the end of Massoretic manuscripts.⁷ It is not to be confused with the final Massorah terminating individual books.

⁶ For detailed bibliographies on the Massoretic text see Otto Eissfeldt, *Einführung in das Alte Testament* (2d ed., Tübingen, 1956), p. 832 and B. J. Roberts, op. cit., pp. 286—299.

⁷ On the subject of the Massorah see Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 423 ff. *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita, Being an Exposition of the Mas-*

One of the most elaborate collections of the Massorah is C. D. Ginsburg's *The Massorah*, in four huge volumes (London, 1880 to 1905). The first two volumes present the Hebrew text of the Massorah; Volume III is a supplement; and Volume IV presents an English translation of the material through the letter *Yodb*. The work was never completed. Though P. Kahle has some harsh words for this work, being chiefly annoyed by the uncritical massing of material without concern for manuscript evaluation,⁸ the work is nevertheless a major production and with its Volume IV does help the novice (should he have the good fortune of finding accessible this extremely scarce work) as no other work in the area of Massoretic studies can pretend to do. For advanced work on the Massorah the student will of course check carefully all the material presented by Ginsburg.

Of more modest proportions is S. Frensdorff's *Das Buch Ochlabb W'ochlab* (Hannover, 1864), a publication of an old Massoretic work, so entitled from its first two entries, אָכְלָב (1 Sam. 1:9) and וְאֶכְלָבִי (Gen. 27:19). Various phenomena noted in the Massorah are here found neatly grouped together under numbered paragraphs, together with an index of Scripture passages. Thus on page 99 of this book, under par. 106, it is stated that וְ is found twice when it should be read as אָ (with an Aleph). The passages are then cited, 1 Sam. 2:16 and 20:2. Both notations appear in BH.

Printed texts of the Hebrew Bible have at various times incorporated the Massorah in varying degrees of completeness. The second edition of Daniel Bomberg's Rabbinic Bible, edited by Jacob b. Chayyim (Venice, 1524—25), was the first to print large portions of the Massorah. The Sixth Rabbinic Bible, edited by John Buxtorf (Basel, 1618), is one of the more accessible republications of R. Chayyim's work. A companion volume *Tiberias sive Commentarius Masorethicus Triplex Historicus, Didacticus, Criticus*, first published in 1620 (Basel) by the elder Buxtorf, was revised by his son and, according to the title page, carefully re-edited by a relative, John Jacob Buxtorf (Basel, 1665). As the title indicates, the work includes a history of the Massorah, a key

soretic Notes on the Hebrew Bible, edited with a translation by Christian D. Ginsburg (London, 1867), explains the origin and import of the Massorah and comments on its signs and abbreviations.

⁸ Op. cit., pp. xiv ff.

to its contents, and a critique of readings found in various copies of the Massorah. C. D. Ginsburg's edition, as observed earlier, includes much Massoretic material. The edition of the Hebrew Bible produced by Baer and Delitzsch (Leipzig, 1869—95) is much scantier by comparison. Kittel's third edition of *Biblia Hebraica* aims to make accessible to the average student, at a moderate price, a fairly representative survey of Massoretic data, as found in the Leningrad MS. Only the *massorah parva*, edited by Paul Kahle, has been printed. The *massorah magna* is to be added later (see BH, p. v [xxviii]). When using the Massorah, one must give attention to the various sources of the tradition. There is no such thing as *the* Massorah. Numerical inconsistencies, incomplete and contradictory codifications, are to be expected when employing and comparing two or more MSS of the traditions of the Massorah.⁹

As in the case of Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, it has been our experience that few users of the printed Massoretic text are familiar with the meanings of the many signs and notations employed. In the case of BH this is perhaps encouraged by the Latin index to the Massorah.

It is true that many of the notations in the margins of BH concern themselves with trivial minutiae, but buried in these marginal notes coming from a long tradition are countless items of interest, and with only little pains, the average student may not only develop a finer appreciation of the zeal that dominated these concerned students of the Word but also pick up valuable philological and lexicographical data.

The *Index siglorum et abbreviationum masorae parvae* (pp. xxxiv to xxxix [xlvi—liii]) is the key to the mysteries of the marginalia in BH. With slight effort the door will open. Special attention should be given to the third paragraph, p. xxxiv [xlvi] which discusses numerical notation, inasmuch as the margins are in the main concerned with philological statistics. Many of the dotted letters in the margins will then be readily recognized as numerals. Once this Hebrew method of numerical notation is grasped, the facts in the margins are quickly assessed.

⁹ See Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 426 ff., on the conflicting data in the Massorah.

The reader may have perceived with some disappointment and chagrin that most writers on introductory matters to the MT give only a slight orientation on the marginal notations. One or two examples are usually presented, but these are, in the nature of the case, quite simple and hardly representative of the gamut of Massoretic notation. The following paragraphs therefore present a detailed explanation of all the Massoretic notations in the margin of BH for Gen. 1:1-6, in the hope that the student may have a broader appreciation of what he may expect to find in these marginalia and may know how to proceed in evaluating the data presented.

Genesis 1:1-6

The first thing to note is a small circle (o) called a *circellus* (see the Prolegomena, BH, p. iii [xxvi]). Almost every line of text contains one or more of these *circelli*. These circelli in their sequence mark the marginal notations.

In Gen. 1:1 the student will note two circelli above the word בְּרֵאשִׁית. These indicate that two notations are made in the margin. The first of these is a ה̇. The dot indicates that the numeral five is here represented. It is of interest to note, then, that the word בְּרֵאשִׁית appears in this form but five times. The next notation ג̇ ראש פסוק indicates that this expression בְּרֵאשִׁית appears "three" (ג̇) out of these five times "at the beginning of a verse" (ראש (פסוק)). The next circellus appears between the two words: בְּרֵא אֱלֹהִים. This means that the syntactical combination is discussed in the margin. In this case the Massorah states that בְּרֵא אֱלֹהִים appears only three times. The reason for this notation becomes apparent when it is recalled that the more usual form is בְּרֵא יְהוָה.

Since the notations often take up more space than is available beside the single line of text to which they refer, a second line is used, as here, for the Massorah, but there is no difficulty in associating it with the relevant Hebrew text. The first letter כּ, a notation indicating that an expression is not found elsewhere, calls attention to the fact that the combination אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ appears only here in Scripture. Otherwise אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ is found, as in Deut. 4:26.¹⁰ The form, וְהָאָרֶץ, clearly appears five times, and each time "at the beginning of a verse."

¹⁰ The Massoretic notation in the margin at the Deuteronomy passage should be noted. The combination אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ is read 13 times.

According to the notation on **נְבִהִי**, the word appears only here in this form. The student may perhaps recall Jer. 4:23 and think that the latter passage has been overlooked, but it must be remembered that the introduction of the elaborate Massoretic pointing would increase the error potential. To safeguard not only the traditional text, but also the hedges put around it, the Massorettes noted the slightest variations, including the zaqeph qaton in this instance.

The notation on **וְחִשְׁבָּה**, v. 2, suggests interesting grammatical considerations. The scribes note that the form employed here appears only once elsewhere. The reason for this notation is clear when a related form **וְחִשְׁבָּה** is seen in Prov. 10:19 and 11:24. The latter is of course the participle of **חִשְׁבָּה**. A glance in Mandelkern under **חִשְׁבָּה** reveals Job 38:19 as the one other passage implied in the margin. The combination **וְרִיחַ אֱלֹהִים** appears only twice, according to the **בְּ מְרִקְחָתָהּ**; is a hapax legomenon. The notation next to the third line of Hebrew text alerts the scribe not to drop the phrase specified on the assumption that it is a duplication. This is the one place that it appears in this form.

The Massorah to **וַיִּבְדֵּל**, v. 4, states that the form appears three times in this hiphil form and once, in connection with Aaron's priestly duties, in the niphil form **וַיִּבְדֵּל**. Mandelkern reveals that the two other hiphil forms are found in Gen. 1:7 and 1 Chron. 25:1 and that the niphil form referred to by the Massorettes is read in 1 Chron. 23:13. A check of the critical apparatus on Ezra 10:16 in BH suggests the reason for the Massorettes' concern here in the Genesis passage. The form **לְאֹרֶךְ**, v. 5, appears seven times.

In the fifth line the Massorah states that the form **וְלִחְשֵׁךְ** is used only here and that in one other place the phrase **קָץ שָׁם לַחֲשֵׁךְ** appears (Job 28:3 according to Mandelkern). The phrase **יָוֵם אֶתְדִּי** appears only here.

In v. 6 the scribes note that the phrase **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים** occurs 29 times, undoubtedly to alert the copyist not to be misled by the more usual use of **וַיֹּאמֶר** with **יְהוָה**. A further notation **וּבְטַע בְּעֵינֵי**

For a list of these other passages see Ginsburg, *The Massorah*, IV, 148, par. 1,286. Apparently the phrase was read by some manuscripts, contrary to the tradition, in other places. The LXX (Deut. 8:19) attests one of these contraband readings. BH makes no reference to the latter.

states that the combination appears with this accentuation (בטע, namely, with munach and zaqeph qaton) only three times, and in this section. Vv. 20 and 26 contain the other two instances. The probable reason for the latter notation, as Ginsburg points out, is to safeguard the reading against conformation to the other seven instances in which the munach is followed by rebhia: Gen. 1:9, 11, 14, 24, 29; 9:12; 17:19.¹¹

Throughout the Hebrew Bible the meticulous concerns of the Massoretes are evident. The Massorah has codified many of these phenomena, and most books on Old Testament Introduction discuss, in varying detail, the more significant classifications. Pfeiffer, who plows at length with Ginsburg's work, has one of the more lucid and comprehensive discussions in this area (*Introduction*, pp. 79 to 97).

Suspended Letters

The lengths to which the Massoretes went in their passionate concern for the preservation of a textual tradition is clear, for example, from the unusual position of certain letters (Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 334 ff.). The Massorah at Ps. 80:14 states that the peculiarity (the raised Ayin) in the writing of the text is one of four to be noted in the Hebrew Bible. The others are Job 38:13, 15 and Judg. 18:30. The first three offer a raised or suspended Ayin, the last a suspended Nun (not clearly identified in BH). According to the Talmud, the suspended Ayin indicates the middle letter of the Psalter. Quite possibly a tradition concerning a variant is here documented. In the Job passages the latter appears almost certainly the case, since the omission of the Ayin forms the word ׀שׁיך ("poor"). A slight transposition and substitution of Aleph for Ayin would also form ׀אשׁיך ("chiefs"). The latter would fit very well in the context, but has no manuscript support to my knowledge.

Inverted Nun

Of a similar nature is the inverted nun (written ׀ instead of ׀), found nine times in MSS of the Hebrew text: Num. 10:35; 10:36; Ps. 106:21-26, 40 (Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 341—345). Pfeiffer mentions a tenth occurrence noted by the Massorah at Gen. 11:32.¹²

¹¹ Ginsburg, *The Massorah*, IV, 105, par. 858.

¹² Op. cit., p. 83.

According to Ginsburg, the inversions denote transpositions of the text. However, as Roberts notes, the witness of the Rabbis is not consistent, and one Jehudah ha-Nasi refused to admit any dislocations in the Sacred Scriptures and insisted that the marks (which are to be confined, he says, to the two cases in Numbers 10) form a separate book. His father, Simon b. Gamaliel, on the other hand, espoused the less conservative view.¹³

Puncta Extraordinaria

In fifteen passages the Massoretic text contains dots placed over certain words and letters. These dots are called *puncta extraordinaria*. They mark passages which the Massorettes, according to Ginsburg (*Introduction*, pp. 318—334), considered textually, grammatically, or exegetically questionable. Num. 3:39 provides a typical example in the word אֶת־יְהוֹנָדָאֵ. The editor of BH obligingly suggests the reason. The scribes had evidently encountered manuscripts which did not include Aaron's name. They did the best they could with the text, but marked it with these dots. The Massorettes then preserved this bit of textual tradition, even though they may not have been aware of the reasons underlying the diacritical marking. The other passages are Gen. 16:5; 18:9; 19:33; 33:4; 37:12; Num. 9:10; 21:30; 29:15; Deut. 29:28; 2 Sam. 19:20; Is. 44:9; Ezek. 41:20; 46:22; Ps. 26:3.

Sebir

In about 350 places, according to Ginsburg (*Introduction*, pp. 187—196), the MSS of the O. T. reflect suspicions as to the correctness of a given reading. The word or form which would normally be expected is introduced in the margin by קִבִּיר (fr. the Aramaic קִבֵּר, "think, suppose").

In the margin at Gen. 19:23 the Massorettes note that יֵצֵא is viewed with suspicion on three occasions, and in its place the form יֵצֵאה is read. The critical apparatus refers to Gen. 15:17, where הַשָּׁמַיִם appears as a feminine, instead of as a masculine as in the transmitted text of 19:23. At Gen. 49:13 no Massoretic reference to a textual problem is made, but BH, as the abbreviation

¹³ Op. cit., p. 34.

"Seb" in the critical apparatus indicates, alerts the student to the fact that in this passage עַל equals עַד.

Kethibb and Qere

The Massoretes were extremely loath to undertake emendations of the text, but called attention to probable corruptions by suggesting in their notes what they considered the correct reading. These readings are accompanied by a ק or קר, i. e., *qere*, that which is to be called or read in place of that which is written.¹⁴ The latter is termed the *kethibb*. Thus in the margin at Joshua 8:11 we read בִּינִי with a ק beneath it. This means that in place of בִּינִי the form בִּינִי is to be read. The vowel pointings for the *qere* form are given under the *kethibb*.

Certain words are known as *perpetual qeres*. Thus הוּא is read הִיא throughout the Pentateuch. For the tetragrammaton יהוה' אֲדֹנָי is always to be read. Likewise the perpetual *qere* for the *kethibb* יְרוּשָׁלַם is יְרוּשָׁלַם; for יֵשׁעָר the perpetual *qere* is יֵשׁעָר.

Tiqune Sopherim and Itture Sopherim

Though most of the Massoretic tradition documents a conservative approach, there appears to be evidence of textual alteration here and there in the transmission of the Biblical text. These alterations are of two kinds. The first consist of תְּקוּנֵי סוֹפְרִים, or "corrections of the scribes," designed in the main to safeguard the divine majesty. Thus in Gen. 18:22 the student will note in the apparatus the abbreviation "Tiq soph." The original reading, as alleged by tradition, was not: "And Abraham remained standing before the Lord," but "The Lord remained standing before Abraham." Since the word "to stand before another" can also mean "to serve" (cf. Gen. 41:46; 1 Kings 1:2), it was felt that the term was unworthy of the Deity and the text was altered accordingly. So in Num. 11:15 Moses is made to refer to his own wretchedness rather than to that of Yahweh.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 183—186.

¹⁵ Cf. Würthwein, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 f. W. E. Barnes, who treats all the *Tiqune Sopherim* in "Ancient Corrections in the Text of the Old Testament (*Tikkun Sopherim*)," *Journal of Theological Studies*, I (1900), pp. 387—414, concludes that the Massoretes have preserved not attempted corrections but homiletical and exegetical comments. The remaining *Tiqunin* are: Num. 12:12; 1 Sam. 3:13; 2 Sam. 16:12; 20:1; Jer. 2:11; Ezek. 8:17; Hos. 4:7; Hab. 1:12;

In a few cases the traditional text appears to suggest that somewhere along the line scribes nodded at their work. These oversights, or what are termed "omissions of the scribes," עטורי ספרים, are treated as follows. When it appears that the traditional text is defective in a word, the Massoretes introduce into the text the vowel points of the word they feel is missing. They do not, however, dare to emend the consonantal text. In the margin they then cite the omitted word and state that it is to be "read, though not written," קרי ולא כתיב. Thus in 2 Sam. 8:3 the last part of the verse consists of a shewa and a qamets. The margin states that פרת is to be read with the pointing suggested in the text. In 2 Sam. 16:23 a chireq̄h is noted under a maqqeph. The margin states that איש is to be read.

When it appears that the traditional text includes material that inadvertently intruded itself, the Massoretes note that the expression in question is indeed written but is not to be read. The vowel points are therefore omitted in the Biblical text but the consonants retained. A patent instance is the dittography of the consonantal ידרר in Jer. 51:3 (see also Ezek. 48:16).

Statistics

Other indications of the painstaking labors of the scribes and Massoretes appear here and there in the Massorah. The margin at Lev. 8:8 states that this verse is the middle verse of the Torah. According to the note at Lev. 10:16 דרש is the middle word in the Torah, and at 11:42 we are assured that the ך in גהון is its middle letter.¹⁶ The apparatus assists in the identification by noting that in this latter case many manuscripts write the ך extra large. In a similar vein the ץ in שׁמע (Deut. 6:4) is written as one of the *litterae maiusculae*.

Statistics will also be found at the end of each book. At the end of the Pentateuch the following information is given in BH.

Zech. 2:12; Mal. 1:12; Ps. 106:20; Job 7:20; 32:3; Lam. 3:20. Most of these are discussed in BH. See also Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 347—363.

¹⁶ *The Talmud*, op. cit., pp. 144 f. (Kiddushin 30 a) reads: "Thus, they [the scholars] said, the *waw* in *gabon* [Lev. 11:42] marks half the letters of the Torah; *darosh darash* [Lev. 10:16] half the words; *we-hitbgalah* [Lev. 13:33], half the verses. *The boar out of the wood (mi-ya'ar) doth ravage it: the 'ayin of ya'ar* [Ps. 80:14] marks half of the Psalms. *But He, being full of compassion, forgiveth their iniquity*, half of the verses." This passage is an excellent testimony to the variations in the scribal tradition.

The total number of verses in the book of Deuteronomy is 955. The verses in the Torah number 5,845; the words 97,856 and the letters 400,945.

Divisions of the Hebrew Text

Since the MT is replete with notations relative to the division of the text, a brief survey of the history of the divisions of the Hebrew Bible may prove helpful.

The chapter divisions in the MT are an inheritance from the Latin Vulgate. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1228), is credited with the division about 1204 or 1205. The first to note the chapter numbers in the margin of the Hebrew text was R. Solomon ben Ismael, c. A. D. 1330. The Complutensian Polyglot, 1517, was the first printed edition of the entire Hebrew Bible to follow this procedure. In Arias Montanus' edition, 1571, the chapter numbers were placed directly into the text.¹⁷

The divisions into verses are much older and, according to Pfeiffer, probably originated in the practice of translating portions of Scripture into Aramaic as they were read from the Hebrew text. These verse divisions varied considerably for centuries, until finally, in the tenth century, the text was edited in the current verse division by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher. The two dots (soph pasuq) marking the end of a verse appear to have come into use after A. D. 500.¹⁸ Rabbi Isaak Nathan employed these verse divisions in his concordance published in Venice about 1448. The verse enumeration first appears in Bomberg's edition of the Hebrew Bible, 1547. In this edition every fifth verse is indicated by a Hebrew letter used numerically. The small Hebrew Psalter published by Froben (Basel, 1563) is the first printed text of some portion of the Hebrew Bible to contain Arabic numerals against each verse (Ginsburg, *Introduction*, p. 107). The reason for some of the divergent verse enumeration in printed texts of the MT and modern English versions may be seen in this edition of the Psalter. According to the Massorah, the titles of the Psalms are integral parts of the text and, depending on length and content, may be counted as a first or even as a first and second verse.

¹⁷ On chapter divisions in the O. T. see Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 25—31.

¹⁸ Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Froben, however, did not follow the Massoretic custom. This is the reason why in Psalm 60, for example, he counts only twelve verses to the MT's fourteen. To Arias Montanus' Antwerp Polyglot, 1571, falls the distinction of being the first edition of the complete Hebrew Bible to mark the verses with Arabic numerals. The addition of the sign of the cross at each numeral limited the sale of the book.¹⁹

The earliest division of the Hebrew text into larger sections is pre-Talmudic. These sections are called פִּרְשִׁיּוֹת, i. e., Parashas, and are to be distinguished from the later liturgical sections to be discussed shortly. The earlier divisions were of two kinds, the פְּתוּחָה, or "open" paragraph, and the סְתוּמָה, or "closed" paragraph. The open Parashas were so termed because they were begun on a new line, leaving an open space of an incomplete line, or a whole line (if the preceding verse ended at the end of a line), before the beginning of the paragraph. The closed Parashas began with only a single blank space between the new paragraph and the preceding. The ancient spacing is no longer followed, but the divisions are preserved by the use of the letters פ for open paragraphs and ס for closed paragraphs. The Pentateuch is composed of 669 of these Parashas. A careful study of these divisions suggests that in most cases the scribes had a keen appreciation of the literary structure and rarely, as in Ex. 6:28, did violence to the thought.

A second division into larger sections was made for synagogal use. According to the Babylonian Talmud (*Megillah* 29b and 31b), the Pentateuch was read in Palestine over a three-year period in weekly sections called Sedarim (fr. סֵדֶר, order, arrangement).²⁰ The Babylonian one-year cycle was divided into fifty-four (or fifty-three) weekly sections, called Parashas. In BH the ס indicates the beginning of a Seder. The beginning of a Parash is noted by the word פֶּרֶשׁ in the margin. The numerals at the end of a Parash (see, e. g., Gen. 6:8 קָטֹו) total the number of verses in the section. In some instances the larger divisions coincide with the smaller divisions. When this happens the MSS

¹⁹ On the entire subject of verse division in the Old Testament see Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 68—108.

²⁰ On the Sedarim see Ginsburg, *Introduction*, pp. 32—65.

and some printed editions use פפפ for coincidence with "open" Parashas, פפפ for coincidence with closed Parashas.

PART II

THE CRITICAL APPARATUS IN KITTEL'S BIBLIA HEBRAICA

The critical apparatus in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* has not itself escaped criticism,²¹ but it contains the distilled essence of so much learned commentary that no student of the Sacred Scriptures who has had some training in the Hebrew language can afford to neglect it.

There are two sections to the apparatus. The upper part uses Greek letters to refer to the textual problems treated. The lower part uses the English alphabet. As the editor notes in his prolegomena (p. iii), the upper portion includes more variants and less important information, introduced by letters of the Greek alphabet to correspond with notations in the Hebrew text for easy reference. The lower portion contains textual alterations and other more significant information. These textual problems are signaled by the use of the Latin alphabet.

The MT and the RSV

As a commentary on controversial readings reflected in the versions, especially in the RSV, the apparatus in BH is decidedly helpful. Thus an analysis of the evidence presented in the apparatus covering Judg. 18:30 conveys a more accurate picture of the situation described by the RSV in its own comment on the passage. The question is, should "Moses" or "Manasseh" be read? The editor notes that the MT reads מְנַשֶּׁה and that most of the MSS and editions of the Hebrew text do likewise. But he says that מְנַשֶּׁה is to be read with the Septuagint, the Itala codex Lugdunensis, the Vulgate (cf. the Syriac Hexapla). Evidently copyists loyal

²¹ See, e. g., H. M. Orlinsky, "Studies in the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll, IV" in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 43 (1953), 329 ff., and his "Notes on the Present State of the Textual Criticism of the Judean Biblical Cave Scrolls," in the W. A. Irwin *Festschrift*, 1956. (Cited by Orlinsky in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 27 [1956], p. 196, n. 8.) See other reviews by P. L. Hedley in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 32 (1931), 302 ff.; P. Katz, *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 63 (1938), cols. 32—34, on the megilloth in BH, with special reference to the treatment of the Greek readings.

to the name of Moses attempted to preserve Moses' name from horrible associations with idolatrous practices.

The purely conjectural character of the RSV's "I first have declared it to Zion," in Is. 41:27 can be seen from the critical apparatus in BH. The editor suggests that הַיְזַרְתִּיהָ be read for הִזְיָהּ הַיְזַרְתִּיהָ. In general, the Hebrew emendation behind the conjectural renderings in RSV can readily be ascertained from the apparatus in BH. Thus in connection with Is. 44:7 it is suggested that the passage be clarified by substituting the words מְשׁוּמֵי עַם-עוֹלָם וְאַתְיֹת מִי הַשְּׁמִיעַ מְעוֹלָם אוֹתֵיית for מְשׁוּמֵי עַם-עוֹלָם וְאַתְיֹת, not without apparent paleographical justification.

In those instances in which the RSV does not indicate the reason for a rendering divergent from the AV, Kittel's apparatus will usually reflect the considerations that prompted the translators to depart from the MT. Thus the RSV renders 1 Kings 13:12: "And their father said to them, 'Which way did he go?' And his sons *showed him* [it. ours] the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone." The AV, it will be noted, reads: "For his sons *had seen* [it. ours] what way the man of God went, which came from Judah." The apparatus in BH readily reveals that the hiphil form וַיִּרְאֶהוּ, read by the LXX and the Old Latin, was preferred by the Committee.

Again, in Ps. 8:1 (8:2 MT) the RSV follows the LXX (BH, οὐτὸ ἐπαύθη) in part, without noting a departure from the traditional text. The MT reads the difficult imperative form תִּנְהָ. The LXX appears to have followed a passive form תִּנְהָ (not listed by BH), which suggests a more fluent sense.

According to the AV, Nahum 3:8 states that Nineveh has a wall that extends from the sea. The RSV, however, indicates that the sea is Nineveh's wall. Clearly the RSV follows a different Hebrew reading without alerting the reader to the fact. Kittel's apparatus supplies that reading, and it is clear that with a slight change in pointing (מִיִּם for מִיִּם) the RSV has attempted to preserve what appears to be a designed parallelism in Nahum's text.²²

²² In fairness to the RSV it should be noted that the preface to this version clearly states that in those instances where different vowels are assumed, without

Problems of Harmony

Problems in harmony of the Biblical text are also reflected in the critical apparatus. Thus in the apparatus referring to 1 Chron. 18:4 it is pointed out that the parallel passage in 2 Sam. 8:4 reads seven hundred, and not seven thousand as in the Chronicler's record. The 2 Samuel passage perhaps reflects an attempt to arrive at a figure more in line with sane military statistics. In connection with 1 Chron. 21:12 the editor notes that 2 Sam. 24:13 reads seven years of famine instead of the three years expressed in the Chronicler's text. No completely satisfactory explanation of this discrepancy in the transmitted texts has as yet been given.

In the event the Massorah is overlooked the apparatus in BH will alert the student to the *kethibb* and *qere* readings. Thus in Deut. 28:27 the editor suggests that the *kethibb* be retained. It appears that later copyists attempted to avoid the implication of sexual aberrations connected with עפל and substituted a less noxious word, suggesting the symptoms of dysentery.

One could with little effort produce many more examples and illustrations of the type of material available in a critical edition of the Hebrew Bible. But enough avenues of exploration are here outlined to help make the study of the Hebrew text of the Sacred Scriptures truly an adventure. The history of the transmission of that text is long and fascinating. Preserved in all these minutiae is a dedicated concern for the perpetuation of a spiritual heritage, a profound sense of obligation to the future, and a deeply seated conviction that nowhere else in the world's literature are there words so worthy of the best that man can offer of his time and intellect.

alteration of the consonantal text, no statement of departure from the MT is made in the notes. The question of the advisability of this procedure cannot concern us here.