A DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE
ANTIQUITY
OF THE
HEBREW-LANGUAGE,
LETTERS,
VOWEL-POINTS,
AND
ACCENTS.

By JOHN GILL, D.D.

Imo vero censeo, nullius mortalis, licet in Hebraeis litteris
docte versati, tantum esse acumen, peritiam, perspicaciam,
ut prophetae nostro (Jesaiæ) longe pluribus locis reddere po-
tuerit genuinum suum senum; nii lection antiqua synagogica
per traditionem in scholis Hebræorum suifet conservata, ut
eam nunc Majoris punctulis expressam habemus: quo-
rum proinde studium et laborem nemo pro merito deprædicet.
Quod enim in hoc viridario deliciari possimus, ipsis debemus,
viris perinde doctis et acri judicio præditis.

Vitringa, Praefat. ad Comment. in

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M. DCC. LXVII.
Hebrew language. History.
THE following Dissertation has long lain by me; nor was it written at first with any design to publish it to the world; but was written at leisure-hours for my own amusement, and by way of essay to try how far back the antiquity of the things treated of in it could be carried. And what has prevailed upon me now to let it go into the world, and take its fate in it, are the confidence which some late writers on the opposite side have expressed, their contempt of others that differ from them, and the air of triumph they have assumed, as if victory was proclaimed on their side, and the controversy at
an end, which is far from being the case; and what seeming advantages are obtained, are chiefly owing to the indolence and sloth of men, who read only on one side of the question, and such who write one after another, and take things upon trust, without examining into them themselves, either through want of ability, or through unwillingness to be at any pains about it.

I confess, it has given me offence to observe the Jews called by such opprobrious names, as villains, wilful corrupters of the Hebrew text, &c. It must be owned indeed, that they are very ignorant of divine things, and therefore the more to be pitied; and many of them are, no doubt, very immoral persons; but have we not such of both sorts among ourselves? yet, as bad as the Jews are, the worst among them, I believe, would sooner die than wilfully corrupt any part of the Hebrew Bible. We should not bear false
witness against our neighbours, let them be as bad as they may in other things. I have never, as yet, seen nor read any thing, that has convinced me that they have wilfully corrupted any one passage in the sacred text*, no not that celebrated one in *Ps. xxii. 16. Their copiers indeed may have made mistakes in transcribing, which are common to all writings; and the Jews meeting with a various reading, they may have preferred one to another, which made most for their own sentiments; nor is this to be wondered at, nor are they to be blamed for it. It lies upon us to rectify the mistake, and confirm the true reading.

It does not appear, that there ever was any period of time, in which the Jews would or could have corrupted the Hebrew text; not before the coming of Christ, for then they could have no disposition nor temptation to it; and to

* See a good Defence of the Jews by F. Simon against Leo Caltrius, Morinus and Vossius in his Disquirit. Critic. c. ix. and x.
attempt it would have been to have risqued the credit of the prophecies in it; nor could they be sure of any advantage by it: and after the coming of Christ, it was not in their power to do it without detection. There were the twelve apostles of Christ, who were with him from the beginning of his ministry, and the seventy disciples preachers of his gospel, besides many thousands of Jews in Jerusalem, who in a short time believed in him; and can it be supposed that all these were without an Hebrew Bible? and particularly that learned man, the apostle Paul, brought up at the feet of a learned Rabbi, Gamaliel; and who out of those writings convinced so many that Jesus was the Christ, and who speaks of the Jews as having the privilege of the oracles of God committed to them Rom. iii. 1, 2. nor does he charge them, nor does he give the least intimation of their being chargeable, with the corruption of them; nor does Christ,
Christ, nor do any of the apostles ever charge them with any thing of this kind. And besides, there were multitudes of the Jews in all parts of the world at this time, where the apostles met with them and converted many of them to Christ, who, they and their fathers, had lived in a state of dispersion many years; and can it be thought, they should be without copies of the Hebrew Bible, whatever use they may be supposed to have made of the Greek version? so that it does not seem credible, that the Jews should have it in their power, had they an inclination to it, to corrupt the text without detection. And here I cannot forbear transcribing a passage from Jerom, who observes, in answer to those who say the Hebrew books were corrupted by the Jews, what Origin said, "that Christ and his apostles, who re-proved the Jews for other crimes, are quite silent about this, the Comment, in Esaiah, c. 6. fol. 14. G."
"greatest of all." Jerom adds "if they should say, that they were cor-
rupted after the coming of the Lord, the Saviour, and the preaching of the apostles; I cannot forbear laugh-
ing, that the Saviour, the evange-
lists and apostles should so produce testimonies that the Jews afterwards should corrupt." To all which may be added, that the Jews are a people always tenacious of their own writings, and of preserving them pure and incorrupt: an instance of this we have in their Targums or paraphrases, which they had in their own hands hundreds of years, before it appears they were known by Christians; in which interval, it lay in their power to make what alterations in them they pleased; and had they been addicted to such practices, it is marvellous they did not; since they could not but ob-
serve, there were many things in them, that Christians were capable of impro-
ving against them, should they come into
into their hands, as in fact they have done; and yet they never dared to make any alterations in them: and had they done any thing of this kind, it is most reasonable to believe, they would have altered the passages relating to the Messiah; and yet those, and which are many, stand full against them. Indeed, according to Origen, as some think, the Targums were known very early, and improved against the Jews in favour of Jesus being the true Messiah, agreeable to the sense of the prophets; since he makes mention of a dispute between Jason, an Hebrew-Christian, supposed to be the same as in Acts xvii. 5. and Papiscus, a Jew; in which, he says, the Christian shewed from Jewish writings, that the prophecies concerning Christ agreed with Jesus; and what else, says Dr. Allix, could he mean by Jewish writings, but the Targums?

Contra Celsum, l. 4. p. 199.

Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church, &c. p. 376.
though it is possible the writings of the Old Testament may be meant, by which the apostle Paul also proved that Jesus was the Christ. However, if the Targums are meant, they do not afterwards appear to have been known by Christian writers for some hundreds of years.

It may be said, perhaps, that the Jews are self-condemned, and that it may be proved out of their own mouths and writings, that they have in some places wilfully corrupted the Hebrew text; as the thirteen places they own they changed, on the account of Ptolemy king of Egypt; and also what they call Tikkun Sopherim, the ordination of the scribes, and Ittur Sopherim, the ablation of the scribes: as to the first of these, it is true, that they say, when Ptolemy king of Egypt desired to have their law, and seventy men sent to translate it, that they

they made alterations in the copy they sent; but then it should be observed, that they do not say they made any alteration in their own copies, only in that they sent to him; and which appears also to be a mere fable of the Talmudists, and that in fact no such alterations were made: but the story was invented, partly to bring into disgrace the Greek version of the Seventy, as if it was made after a corrupt copy; and partly to make the minds of their own people easy, who disapproved of that work, and kept a fast on occasion of it. My reason for this is, because the Greek version does not correspond with the pretended alterations. There are but two places out of the thirteen, which agree with them; the one is in Gen. ii. 2. which the Seventy translate, and on the sixth day God ended his work; the other is in Numb. xvi. 15. which they render I have not taken the desire of any one of them, instead of one aʃ:

Schulchan Aruch, par. i. c. 580. f. 3.
as from them; neither of which seem to arise from a bad copy before them, but from some other cause. The first of them is not peculiar to the Septuagint, it is the same in the Samaritan Pentateuch; and the latter plainly arises from the similarity of the letters Daleth and Resh. There is a third, Exod. xii. 40. in which there is some agreement, but not exact. Besides, neither Philo the Jew, nor Josephus, though they wrote very particularly of this affair of Ptolemy, yet make not the least mention of these alterations, in the copy sent to him, nor in the translation of it. They observe, there never was any change made in the sacred writings, from the time of the writing of them to the age in which they lived. Philo says*, the Jews, "for the space of more than two thousand years, never changed one word of what was written by Moses, "but would rather die a thousand times,

times, than receive any thing contrary to his laws and customs.” Josephus observes, “it is plain, in fact, what credit we give to our writings, for that so long a space of time has run out, yet no one ever dared, neither to add, nor to take away, nor to change any thing.” And Walton himself, I observe, reckons this story about the alterations for the sake of King Ptolemy, to be a Rabbinical fable; and, as such, Jerome had got a hint of it from one of his Rabbins.

The Tikkun Sopherim, or ordination of the scribes, is supposed to be the order of Ezra, as it is said in the Mosaic or Exod. xxxiv. 11. and on Numb. xii. 12. and of his colleagues; though some think it is no other than the order or instruction of the inspired writers themselves. It respects eighteen passages in the Bible, so expressed:

fed, as that some smatterers in knowledge might gather from the context, that something else is intended than what is written; and so suspect a corruption in the text, and take upon them to alter it. Now this ordination of the scribes, as it is called, is so far from implying a corruption itself, and from encouraging an attempt to make an alteration in the text, that it is just the reverse; it is an ordination that the text should be read no otherwise than it is; and would have it remarked, that the words so read, and which are the words of the inspired writer, contain an Euphemy in them, what is decent and becoming the majesty of God; when, if they were read, as the context might be thought to require they should be read, they would express what is derogatory to the glory of the Divine Being. Thus, in the first of the places, this ordination respects, Gen. xviii. 22. Abraham stood yet before the Lord; it
might seem to some from the context, that the Lord descended to stand before Abraham; but as this might be thought derogatory to the glory of God, the inspired writer chose to express it as he has done; and the design of what is called the ordination of the scribes, is to establish it, and to admonish that none should dare to alter it; and so it was to prevent an alteration, and not to make one; they made no change at all, far be it from them, as Elias Levita says. As for the Ittur Sopherim, or ablation of the scribes, that is only the removal of a superfluous Vau in five places; not that it was in the text, and removed from it by them, but what the common people pronounced in reading, as if it was there; which reading the scribes forbid, to secure and preserve the integrity of the text; and which

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b In Tifbi, p. 270.

prohibition of it to the common people, is called a taking it away; though in reality it never was in the text, only pronounced by the vulgar.

There is a passage in the Talmud, produced by some, as a proof that the Jews studiously corrupted the scriptures, and allowed of it, when an end was to be answered by it; which is this, "it is better that one letter be rooted out of the law, than that the name of God should be prophaned openly;" but their sense is not that any letter should be taken, or that it was lawful to take any letter out of any word in the law, to alter the sense of it, in order to serve that, or any other purpose; but that a lesser command should give way to a greater: as for instance, that the law concerning not putting children to death for the sins of their parents, and of not suffering bodies hanged on a tree to remain.

\[ \text{P T. Bab. Yevamot, fol. 79. 1.} \quad \text{4 Vid. Morin.}\]
\[ \text{de Sincer. Heb. l. 1. Exercitat. l. c. 2.} \]
remain so in the night, should give way to a greater command concerning sanctifying the name of God publicly; as in the case of Saul’s sons being given to the Gibeonites to be put to death, and whose bodies continued hanging a considerable time, which is the case under consideration in the Talmudic passage referred to; and the sense is, that it was better that the law in Deut. xxiv. 16. should be violated, rather than the name of God should be profaned; which would have been the case, if the sons of Saul had not been given up to the Gibeonites to be put to death for their father’s sins, because of the oath of Joshua and the princes of Israel to them. The falsifications charged upon the Jews by Justin and Origen respect not the Hebrew text, but the Septuagint version; and even, with respect to that, Trypho, the Jew, rejects the charge brought by Justin as incredible; whether,
ther, says he; they have detracted from the scripture, God knows; it seems incredible.

It has been very confidently affirmed, that there is no mention made of the Hebrew vowel-points and accents, neither in the Misnab nor in the Talmud: and this is said by some learned men, who, one would think, were capable of looking into those writings themselves, and not take things upon trust, and write after other authors, without seeing with their own eyes, and examining for themselves, whether these things be so or no; in this they are very culpable, and their mistakes are quite inexcusable. But to hear some men prate about the Talmud, a book, perhaps, which they never saw; and about the Masorah and Masoretic notes, one of which, as short as they be, they could never read, is quite intolerable. These men are like such the apostle speaks of, on another

Justin. Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 297. 299.
another account, who understand, neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. What is this Masorab? who are these Masoretes? and what have they done, that such an outrageous clamour is raised against them? to me, they seem to be an innocent sort of men; who, if they have done no good, have done no hurt. Did they invent the vowel-points, and add them to the text, against which there is so much wrath and fury vented? to assert this is the height of folly; for if they were the authors of the points, the inventors of the art of pointing, and reduced it to certain rules agreeable to the nature of the language; and were expert in that art, as, no doubt, they were, why did not they point the Bible regularly, and according to the art of pointing at once? why did they leave

Leave so many anomalies or irregular punctuations? and if, upon a survey of their work, they observed the irregularities they had committed, why did not they mend their work, by casting out the irregular points and putting regular ones in the text itself, and not point to them in the margin? or there direct to the true reading? is it usual for authors to animadvert on their own work in such a manner? if they make mistakes in their work at first, is it usual in an after edition, and following editions, to continue such mistakes in the body of the work, and put the corrections of them in the margin? The Mafiores, had they been the inventors of the vowel-points, would never have put them to a word in the text, to which they were not proper, but what better agree with a word placed by them in the margin; had they invented them, they would have put proper ones to the word in the text; or
or have removed that, and put the word in the margin in its room, with which they agree, see Gen. viii. 17. and xiv. 3. and it may be observed, that their critical art and notes are not only frequently exercised and made upon the points, but even upon the points without consonants, and upon consonants without points; which would not have become them, had they been the inventors of them; see an instance of each in Jer. xxxi. 38. and li. 3. The truth of the matter, with respect to the Masoretes, is, that the pointing of the Bible was not their work; they considered it as of a divine original, and therefore dared not to make any alteration in it; but only observed, where there was an unusual punctuation, that it might be taken notice of; and that so they found it, and so they left it; and that those who came after them might not dare to attempt an alteration. Punctuation was made before their time, as their work.
work itself shews; and Walton, an opposer of the antiquity of the points, has this observation; "The Masoretic notes about words irregularly pointed, and the numbers of them, necessarily suppose that pointing was made long before." Have these Masoretes employed their time and study, in counting the verses and letters of the Bible, and how many verses and letters there are in such a book; and where exactly is the middle of it; where a word is deficient or lacks a letter; or where it is full and has them all; or where one is redundant and has too many; where one letter is larger and another lesser than usual, and another suspended; suppose now this is all trifling, and of no manner of importance, yet who or what are injured by it? the mispending of their time in such trifles, is a loss not to others, but to themselves; and, as a learned man remarks,

* Prolegem. 8. s. 12.  * Chappelow's Commentary on Job ix. 34. See also on ch. xi. 14.
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remarks, "how trifling soever this " scrupulous exactness of the Maso-
" retes (with respect to the letters in 
" the Hebrew text) may appear, yet it 
" suggests to us one observation, that 
" the Jews were religiously careful to 
" preserve the true literal text of 
" scripture; and consequently, not-
" withstanding their enmity and ob-
" stinate aversion to Christianity, they 
" are not to be charged with this ad-
" ditional crime of having corrupted 
" the Bible:" and after all, have not 
the Christians had their Masoretic al-
fo", who, with like diligence and 
faithfulness, have numbered all the 
verses, both of the Greek version of 
the Old Testament and of the books 
of the New? and have they been 
blamed for it? Jerom' numbered the 
verses of the book of Proverbs, and 
says they were 915, exactly as the 
Masorab. Some words, through length

* Vid. Croii Observ. in Nov. Test. c. i. & c. 10. 
\* Quest. seu Trad. Heb. lib. Reg. 3. fol. 8o. 1. Tom. 3.
of time, became obscene and offensive to chaste ears, at least were thought so*; hence the *Majoretes* placed other words in the margin, which, perhaps, is the boldest thing they ever did, and of which the *Karaite Jews* complain; but then they never attempted to remove the other words from the text, and put in theirs in their room; they only placed them where they did, that, when the passages were read in public, or in families, the reader might be supplied with words that signified the same, only more pure and chaste, and less offensive; at least which were thought so; and which were left to their own option to read them or not. The passages are *Deut.* xxviii. 27, 30. *1 Sam.* v. 6, 9. *1 Is.* xiii. 16. *Zech.* xiv. 2. *2 Kings* vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. *1 Is.* xxxvi. 12. and it would not be improper, if, in the margin of our Bibles over-against the last, and others that have the same word, an-

other English word or words were put to be read less offensive. And, by the way, from the change of words proposed in those passages, may be drawn an argument in favour of the antiquity of the Masoretes. For this part of their work must be done, whilst the Hebrew language was a living language, when only the difference of words offensive or not offensive to the ear could be discerned, and a change of them necessary: and certain it is, these notes were made before the Talmud, for mention is made of them in it: yea, these variations are followed by the ancient Targums, by Onkelos, and the Jerusalem on Deut. xxviii. 27. 30. and not only by Pseudo-Jonathan on 1 Sam. v. 6. 9. 2 Kings vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. but by the true Jonathan on Is. xiii. 16. and xxxvi. 12. and Zech. xiv. 2. who and Onkelos are supposed to live in the first century. As for the word Sebirim, some-

T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 25. 2.
sometimes used by the Masoretes in their notes; this only respects the conjectures of some persons, who thought a word should be otherwise read or pointed; but it is what the Masoretes object to, and say of such persons, that they are mistaken; and this they observe, that no one may presume to make any alteration upon such conjectures: and are they to be blamed for this? and besides these things, what have they done, except transmitting, from age to age, the marginal or various readings, which had been observed by collating copies, or which arose from their own observations, by comparing different copies that lay before them; and from delivering them down to posterity, they obtained the name of Masoretes; and can this be thought to be culpable in them? they left the text as they found it; nor did they offer of themselves to insert a various reading, different from the commonly received copy, but placed such readings
readings in the margin, that others might make what use of them they pleased; or rather they took this method, to prevent the insertion of them into the text, suggesting, that so they found them, and there it was proper to continue them: and is a Bible with such readings the worse for them? is a Greek Testament to be disesteemed, for having the various readings in it collected from different copies? or are our English Bibles with the marginal readings in them, placed by the translators themselves, with references to other scriptures, the less valuable on that account? nay, are they not the more valued for them? and it may be observed, that these Keres or marginal readings of the Hebrew text, are followed in many places, by some of the best translators of the Bible, both ancient and modern. Aquila and Symmachus, the best of the antient Greek interpreters, almost always follow them. Jerom

Jerom had knowledge of them, and testifies to Aquila's following them, in a particular instance. His words are, "Afferemoth in Jer. (xxxii. 40.) for which, in a Hebrew copy it is writ-
"ten Sedemoth, which Aquila inter-
"prets suburbana." And which rea-
ding is preferred by Jerom⁴, as is the marginal reading of v. 38. And if he was the author of the Vulgate Latin version, that agrees with the marginal readings of the Masoretes in several places; see Josb. iii. 16. and xv. 47. 2 Sam. viii. 3. 2 Kings xix. 31. all which shew the antiquity of these readings. So modern interpreters, Junius and Tremellius, our own trans-
slators, and the Dutch⁵, often follow them, as do various interpreters, both Papists and Protestants. Nay, some of these readings and notes are confirmed by the inspired writers of the New Testament. Thus, for instance, in

Ps. xvi. 10. the word rendered holy one, is written with a yod, as if it was plural; but the Masoretic note on it is, that the yod is redundant, and so the word is to be considered as of the singular number; and this is confirmed by two inspired writers, the apostles Peter and Paul, Acts ii. 27. and xiii. 35. Again, in Prov. iii. 34. the Cetib or textual writing is, לֶעַנְיָנָי the poor; but the Keri or marginal reading פַּנְיָנָי the humble or lowly, which is followed by our translators of the text, and is confirmed by two apostles, James and Peter, Jam. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5. And what have the Masoretes done in this respect, but what the learned Dr. Kennicott is now doing, or getting done in the several libraries in Europe; that is, collating the several copies, and collecting from them the various readings; and which, if I understand his design aright, is not to form, upon his own judgment, a new copy of the Hebrew text; but to
do with the present copy in common use, what others have done with the New Testament; let it stand as it is, with the various readings thrown into the margin as they may be collected, and leave them to every one's judgement, with some critical rules to form it, to make use of them as they please: and when this learned gentleman has finished his large Masoretic work, he will be the greatest Masorete that ever any age produced; since not only eight hundred and forty-eight various readings, as Elias has reckoned those of the Masoretes to be, but as many thousands, and more will now appear. I say not this, to depreciate his laborious undertaking, far be it from me; he has my good wishes for the finishing of it, and what little assistance otherwise I can give him in it. For I am not so great an enthusiast, for the integrity of the present printed Hebrew copy, as to imagine, that it is entirely

Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.
thoroughly clear of the mistakes of transcribers in all places: to imagine this, is to suppose a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence attending the copiers of it, and that constant and universal; and if but one copier was under such an influence, it would be very extraordinary indeed; if his copy should be lighted on at the first printing of the Hebrew Bible; and besides the first Hebrew Bible that was printed, was not printed from one copy, but from various copies collated; nor is there more reason to believe, that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, which is more ancient, should be preserved from the escapes of librarians, than the Greek of the New Testament, which it is too notorious are many: nor is suffering such escapes any contradiction to the Promise and Providence of God, respecting the preservation of the Sacred Writings, since all of any moment is preserved in the several copies; so that what is omitted,
or stands wrong in one copy, may be supplied and set right by another, which is a sufficient vindication of Divine Providence; and this may serve to excite the diligence and industry of learned men, in collating the several copies for such a purpose; and besides, the Providence of God remarkably appears, in that the escapes suffered to be made do not affect any doctrine of faith, or any moral practice, as has been observed and owned by many: and after all, if from the present collation of manuscripts, there should be published, what may be thought a more correct and perfect copy of the Hebrew text, we shall be beholden to the Jews for it, against whom the clamour rises so high: for by whom were the manuscripts written, now collating, but by Jews for the truth

truth of this, I appeal to the learned collator himself; and who, if I mistake not, in his printed Dissertations always represents the several Hebrew copies, whether more or less perfect, as the work of Jewish transcribers; and indeed the thing speaks for itself: for from the times of Jerom to the age of printing, there were scarce any, if any at all among Christians, capable of transcribing an Hebrew copy; that interval was a time of barbarous ignorance, as with respect to arts and sciences, so with respect to languages, especially the Hebrew. To know a little Greek, in those barbarous times, was enough to make a man suspected of theresy; and to study Hebrew, was almost sufficient to proclaim him an heretic at once: the study of which lay much neglected, until it was revived by Reuchlin and others, a little before, and about the time of the Reformation. There might, in the above space of time, rise up now and then one.
One, who had some knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, as Raymond in the thirteenth century, the author of Pugio Fidei; and friar Bacon, who wrote an Hebrew grammar in the latter end of the same century, and which perhaps was the first, at least one of the first Hebrew grammars written by a Christian; though since, we have had a multitude of them: for almost every smatterer in the Hebrew language thinks himself qualified to write a grammar of it. However, there is no reason to believe, as I can understand, that any of our Hebrew manuscripts were written by Christians, but all by Jews, I mean such as were written before the age of printing; for what have been written since, can be of no account.

I observe there is much talk about the Masoretic Bible, and about Masoretic authority. As to the Masoretic Bible, I could never learn there ever was such an one, either in manuscript, or
or in print, that could with any propriety be so called. Is a Bible with points to be called Masoretic? it must be with great impropriety, since the Masoretes, as has been observed, were not the authors of pointing: are any called so, because they have various readings, and other notes in the margin? as well may a Greek Testament, with various readings and notes in the margin have such a name. Let it be shewn, if it can, that there ever was in manuscript, or in print, a copy of the Hebrew text, in all things conformable to the Masoretic notes and readings in the margin, or in which these are inserted in the body of the text, call them corrections, emendations, various readings, or what you please; but if these cannot be shewn, then whatsoever Bible, that does not conform in the text to the Masorah in the margin, with much greater propriety may be called Anti-masoretic than Masoretic. As to authority, the c
Masoretes never claimed any; their Keri is no command to read so or so; nor even a direction how to read, and much less a correction of the text, as if it was faulty; it is only a suggestion, that so it is read in some copies; for the word for which א stands in the margin of some Bibles, is not the imperative י נ Kere read, but י נ; and is either the same with י נ something read, or with י נ a reading, i.e. a various reading. And if the Masoretes ever pretended to any authority, as they have not, it is not regarded; for notwithstanding their antiquity, their readings, and what is agreeable to their notes and observations, are not admitted into the text, but are obliged to keep their place in the margin; and where then is their authority? thus, for instance, in defiance of Masoretic authority, as it is called, and notwithstanding the Masoretic note in the margin, the second yod is continued in מְדִיבֵה Ps. xvi. 10. and in defiance
of the punctuation of the word, which is different from all other places, where the word is manifestly plural, as in Ps. lli. 9. lxxix. 2. cxxxii. 9. and cxlv. 10. 2 Chron. vi. 41. in all which places Segol is put under Da-lath; but here Sheva, as it is in other words, in which the yod is redundant also, and the word to be read singular, as Debareca, 1 Kings viii. 26. and xviii. 36. Dameca, 2 Sam. i. 16. Yadeca, 1 Kings xxii. 34. Prov. iii. 27. Abdeca, 1 Kings i. 27. Ragleca, Eccl. v. 1. with others: and in defiance of the Talmud also. There are but two places ¹ I have met with in the Talmud, where the text is quoted; and in both of them the word is without the yod; so that if these, especially the first, had any authority, the yod would not continue in that word.

The different schemes men have formed, for reading Hebrew without the antient points, shew the necessity of

¹ T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. et Yoma, fol. 87a 1.
of them, and the puzzle they are at without them; but what need men rack their brains to find out a scheme of reading that language, when there is one so suitable, ready at hand for them, consisting of vowel-points, which for their figure and position cannot be equalled by any; which are so contrived, that they take up scarce any, or very little more room, than the words do without them; which neither increase the number of letters in a word, nor make it longer, nor give it any unsightly appearance? whereas, for instance, Masclet's scheme, besides the augmentation of letters, makes the word look very awkward: and if it was thought the present vowel-points were too numerous, and too great an incumbrance to words, one would think, men might content themselves with reducing their number, and not throw them all away: but the great offence taken at them is, that they tie down to a certain determinate sense of the
the word, and that they cannot bear, but choose to be at liberty to fix what sense upon it they please.

Great complaint is made of the ignorance of the Masoretes in pointing; and an instance is given of it, in their pointing the word Cyrus, as to be read Coresb, or Choresb, though indeed they had no hand in it; but admitting they had, and whoever had, there does not appear to be any just blame for it. It is true, it may be thought so, if the Greek pronunciation of the word must be the rule of punctuation; but the original name is not Greek, but Persic; and which, in that language, signifies the sun. So Ctesias \(^1\) and Plutarch \(^2\) say: whether Cyrus had his name from the sun being seen at his feet, while sleeping, which he three times endeavoured to catch with his hands, but it slipped from him; and which, according to the Magi,

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\(^1\) In Persicis ad Calcem Herodot. Ed. Gronov. p. 687.
\(^2\) In Artaxerxe, p. 1012.
gi, portended a reign of thirty years, is not certain: now the word for the sun, in the Persian language, is Chor or Cor, the same with Or, Job xxxi. 26. and it is now called Corshad: hence, the god of the Persians is called Ormazdes, and sometimes Hormuzd, and Ormusd; this shews the propriety of the first point put to the word, a Cholem and not a Shurek; and it may be observed, there is a similar word used for the sun in other eastern languages, and is pronounced Cheres, Job ix. 6. to which may be added, that the oriental versions, both Syriac and Arabic, read the word for Cyrus in all places in the Bible, with o, e, and Shin, according to the Bible-pronunciation. It was usual with the Persians, to give men names taken from the sun, as Carshena, Estb. i. 14. and Orshes in Curtius: as for the

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the Greek pronunciation of the word, it is not unusual with the Greeks to pronounce a *Cholem* by an *Ypsilon*, as *Tzor*, *Lod*, *Beerot*, by *Tyrus*, *Lydda*, *Berytus*. In like manner may the punctuation of *Darius* be vindicated, which is *Darjavesch*, *Dan.* v. 31. in much agreement with which, this name is *Δαριαίως* *Dareiaios* with *Ctefas*, and is a word consisting of four parts, and signifies a great, vast, vehement fire; and *Esch*, fire, is well known to be the deity of the *Persians*, which was taken into the names of their kings and great personages, as was usual in the eastern nations. So *Vaštbi*, the wife of *Abasuerus*, or *Va-εσβτί*, a great fire, *Esβ*. i. 9. *Ze-rešb*, or *Zebar-esb*, the wife of *Haman*, ch. v. 10. the brightness of fire; and it appears in *Ašyages*, a king of the *Mèdes*. *Strabo* says*, some people called *Darius*, *Darieces*. *Câfaubon* thinks,

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*† In Persicæ, ut supra, p. 64 r. 643. † Hiller. ut supra, p. 635. † Geograph. l. 16. p. 548. † Comment. in ib. p. 217.*
thinks, that Strabo wrote Δαριαιας, Dariaoues, which is near the Hebrew punctuation.

I have sent the following Dissertation into the world, not to revive the controversy about the things treated on in it, nor with any expectation of putting an end to it; no doubt, but some will be nibbling at it: and tho' I may be very unfit to engage further in this controversy, through weight of years upon me, and through the duties of my office, and other work upon my hands, some third person may perhaps arise, to defend what may be thought defensible in it. Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honour, to animadvert upon what I have written, I am sure of being treated with candour and decency; but should I be attacked by sciolists, I expect nothing but petulance, supercilious airs, silly sneers and opprobrious language; and who will be righteously treated with neglect and contempt.

To
To conclude; if what I have written should merit the attention of men of learning, and cause them to think again, though ever so little; and be a means of directing such, who are enquiring after these things; and of engaging such who may hereafter write on these subjects, to think more closely, to write with more care, caution and candour, and with less virulence, haughtiness and arrogance, than have appeared in some writings of late upon them, my end will be in a great measure answered.

E R R A T A.

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A DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE
HEBREW LANGUAGE,
LETTERS, VOWEL-POINTS, AND ACCENTS.

CHAP. I.

Of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language.

ACCORDING to the Targum of Onkelos, on Gen. ii. 7. when God breathed into man the breath of life, that became in man a speaking spirit, or soul; or, as Jonathan paraphrases it, the soul in the body of man became a speaking spirit; that is, man was endued with a natural faculty of speech; so that he may be defined as well ab oratione, a speaking animal, as a ratione,
a reasonable one; for speech is proper and peculiar to men: when it is said, man is endued, as all men are, with a natural faculty of speaking, it is not to be understood, as if he was endued with a faculty of speaking some particular language; but with a power and capacity of speaking any language he hears, or is taught; I say hears, because unless a man has the sense of hearing, he cannot express any articulate sounds, or words: hence such persons as are totally deaf from their birth, are always dumb, and can never speak any language. Adam first heard the Lord God speaking, before he uttered a word himself, as it seems from the sacred history. The language Adam spake, and which, perhaps, he received not the whole instantaneously, but gradually; in which he improved, as circumstances, and the necessity of things required, and which was continued in his posterity: this very probably is that which remained to the confusion of the tongues at Babel, and the dispersion of the people from thence. But of this more hereafter.
Some have fancied, that if children, as soon as born, were brought up in a solitary place, where they could not hear any language spoken, that at the usual time children begin to speak, they would speak the first and primitive language that was spoken in the world. Psammitichus, king of Egypt, made trial of this by putting two children, newly born, under the care of a shepherd; charging him, that not a word should be uttered in their presence; and that they should be brought up in a cottage by themselves; and that goats should be had to them at proper times to suckle them; and commanded him to observe the first word spoken by them, when they left off their inarticulate sounds. Accordingly, at two years end, the shepherd opening the door of the cottage, both the children with their hands stretched out cried bec, bec. This he took no notice of at first, but it being frequently repeated, he told his lord of it, who ordered the children to be brought to him; and when Psammitichus heard them pronounce the word, he enquired what people used it, and upon enquiry found that the Phrygians called
called bread by that name; upon this it was allowed that the Phrygians were a more ancient people than the Egyptians, between whom there had been a long contest about antiquity. This is the account given by *Herodotus*; but the *Scholiast of Aristophanes* says, that it was at three year’s end the king ordered a man to go in silently to them, when he heard them pronounce the above word. And *Suidas* relates, that at the same term of time, the king ordered one of his friends to go in silently, who heard and reported the same; and all of them observe, that the story is differently related by others; as that the children were delivered to a nurse or nurses, who had their tongues cut out, that they might not speak before them; and so says *Tertullian*: yet they all agree in the word spoken by the children. But, as *Suidas* observes, if the former account is true, as it seems most probable, that they were nourished by goats, and not women; it is no wonder, that often hearing the bleating of the goats, *be-ec, be-ec*, they should imitate

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* Euterpe five, l. 2. c. 2, 3.
* In *Nubes*, p. 850.
* *Voce Bomastion.*
* Ad *Nationes*, l. 1. c. 8.
I.5. imitate the sound, and say after them bec, which in the Phrygian language signified bread; and so food is expressed in Hebrew by a word of a similar sound אֲבֵגָּא, Ezek. xxv. 7. Dan. i. 8. and xi. 26. and might as well be urged in favour of the antiquity of that language; but this proves nothing.

It may seem needless to enquire what was the first language that was spoken, and indeed it must be so, if what some say is true, that it is not now in being, but was blended with other languages, and lost in the confusion at Babel; and also if the Oriental languages, the Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic, are but one language; which is more probable, as Ravius* thinks, and so may go under the general name of the Eastern language; and it must be acknowledged there is a very great similarity between them, as not only appears from Ravius, but from the Pentaglot Lexicon of Schindler, and especially from the Harmonic Grammars and Lexicons of Hottinger and Castell; and yet I cannot but be of opinion, that the Hebrew language stands dis-

* A Discourse of the Oriental Tongues, p. 38, 39.
ftinguished by its simplicity and dignity. The celebrated Albert Schultens reckons the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, as sister-dialects of the primæval language; which I am content they should be accounted, allowing the Hebrew to be the pure dialect, which the others are a deviation from, and not so pure: though I should rather choose to call them daughters, than sisters of the Hebrew tongue; since, as Jerom says, the Hebrew tongue is the mother of all languages, at least of the oriental ones. And these daughters are very helpful and assisting to her their mother in her declining state, and now reduced as to purity to the narrow limits of the sacred scriptures; for I cannot prevail upon myself to agree that she should be stripped of her maternal title, dignity, and honour; since she has the best claim to be the primitive language, as will be seen hereafter. Dr. Hunt, though he is of the same mind with Schultens, that the above languages are sisters, having

— Comment. in Soph. c. 3. fol. 100. A.
having the same parent, the Eastern language, yet seems to allow the Hebrew to be the elder sister. And Schultens¹ himself asserts, that the primæval language, which was from the beginning of the world spoken by our first parents, and the antediluvian patriarchs, and after the flood to the dispersion, is the same which was afterwards called Hebrew, from Heber; from whom it passed through Peleg and Abraham to the nation of the Hebrews, and so the mother-language; but how it could be both mother and sister, is not easy to say.

That there was but one language spoken by men, from Adam to the flood in the times of Noab, and from thence to the confusion and dispersion at Babel, seems manifest from Gen. xi. 1. and the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech; and which is confirmed by the testimonies of several heathen writers, as by Sibylla in Josephus², by Abydenus¹, and others; and which continued in that interval without any, or little variation: the longevity of the patriarchs

patriarchs much contributed to this, for Adam himself lived to the 10th century, and the flood was in the 17th. Methuselah, who died a little before the flood, lived upwards of two hundred years in the days of Adam, and 600 years contemporary with Noah, and who doubtless spoke the same language that Adam did; yea Lamech, the father of Noah, was born 50 years or more before the death of Adam; so that the language of Adam to the days of Noah is easily accounted for as the same: if any variation, it must be in the offspring of those of the patriarchs who removed from them, and settled in different parts of the world, but of this there is no proof; the separation of Cain and his posterity on account of religion, does not appear to have produced any alteration in language; but the same language was spoken by one as another, as is evident by the names of persons in the line of Cain, and of places inhabited by them to the time of the flood; when, no doubt, the same language was spoken by Noah, from whom his sons received it, and was continued unto the dispersion, which before that was but one; and it is the
the opinion of the Persian priests or Magi, that the time will come when the earth will be of one language again; and if so, it is probable it will be the primitive one, but what that was, is the thing to be enquired into. The Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos on the place, add, by way of explanation, "and they spoke in the holy tongue, in which the world was created at the beginning," meaning the Hebrew language, usually called the holy tongue; and this is the sense of Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and the Jewish writers in general; and of many Christians. But most nations have put in a claim for the superior antiquity of their nation and language, the Europeans not excepted. Curioius Becanus pleaded for the Teutonic language, or that which is spoken in lower Germany and Brabant, to be the original one, and attempted to derive the Hebrew from it; but it has been thought he was not serious in it, only did it to shew his acumen, and the luxuriance of his fancy and imagination; the eastern nations have a much better pretext to antiquity, and most, if not all of them, have put

put in their claim for it. There was a long
contest between the Egyptians and Phrygians
about this matter, as before observed. The
Armenians have urged in their favour, that
the ark rested on one of the mountains in
their country, where Noab and his posterity
continued some time, and left their language
there. The Arabs pretend, that their
language was spoken by Adam before his
fall, and then changed into Syriac, and
was restored upon his repentance, but again
degenerated, and was in danger of being
loft, but was preserved by the elder Jor-
bam, who escaped with Noab in the ark,
and propagated it among his posterity.
The Chinese make great pretensions to the
primitive language, and many things are
urged in their favour, as the antiquity of
their nation, their early acquaintance with
arts and sciences, the singularity, sim-
plicity, and modesty of their tongue:
A countryman of ours, in the last century,
published a treatise, called "An historical
e ssay, endeavouring a probability that the
language of China is the primitive lan-
guage, by J. Webb, Esq; London, 1669,
8vo."

* See the Universal History, Vol. 1. p. 346, 347.
But as when many candidates put up for a place, they are generally reduced to a few, and, if possible to two; the same method must be taken here; for the contest lies between the Syriac or Chaldee, and the Hebrew.

The Chaldee or Syriac language has its patrons for the antiquity of it; not only Theodoret, who was by birth a Syrian, and Amyra the Maronite, who are not to be wondered at, and others who have made it their favourite study; but even the Arabic writers, the more judicious of them, give it not only the preference to their own language in point of antiquity, but even make it as early as Adam. Elmacinus says¹, there are historians (Arabic ones) who affirm, that Adam and his posterity spoke the Syriac language until the confusion of tongues; and so Abulpharagius says², "of our doctors, Basilius and Ephraim assert, that unto Eber the language of men was one, and that that was Syriac, and in which God spoke to Adam;" and it must be allowed, that there are many things plausibly said

¹ Apud Hottinger. Smegma l. i. c. 3. p. 229. ² Hist. Dynast. Dyn. i. p. 16.
said in favour of this language being primitive: it must be owned that the Chaldean nation was a very ancient one, Jen. v. 15, and that the Syriac language was spoken very early, as by Laban; but not earlier than the Hebrew, which was spoken at the same time by Jacob; the one called the heap of stones which was a witness between them Jegor-sabadutba in the Syro-Chaldean language, and the other Galeed in Hebrew, which both signify the same thing: what is commonly urged is as follows:

1. That the names of a man and woman are as much alike, if not more so, in the Chaldee or Syriac language, as in the Hebrew; a man is called Gabra and a woman Gabretha, which is equally as near as Ysh and Yshab produced to prove the antiquity of the Hebrew, Gen. ii. 23. But neither in the Chaldee of Onkelos, nor in the Syriac version of that place, is it Gabretha, but Ittetba in the one, and Antetba in the other. Theodoret instances in the names Adam, Cain, Abel, Noah, as proper to the Syriac language; but the derivation

* In Gen. quæst. 59.
Abraham

Myricae Prefat. ad Gram. Syro-Chald. 4

Abram, according to the Jewish chronology, must be 48 years of age, and consequently possessed of the pure and primitive language, be it what it may; and since it does not appear that either he or any of his posterity, as Isaac and Jacob, used the Chaldee language, but the Hebrew only, it seems to follow, that not the Chaldee, but the Hebrew, must be the language spoken by him, and so the primitive one.

4. It is said, the Hebrews sprung from the Chaldeans, Judith v. 5. and so their language must be later than theirs; this is founded on Abram's being of Ur of the Chaldees, from whence he came; but it does not follow, that because he was born and lived in that country before the confusion of Babel, that therefore he spoke the language used in that country afterwards, since he was soon called out of it; and it appears that he spoke not the Chaldee or Syriac language, but the Hebrew, as before observed.

5. It is urged, as highly probable, that the language the second Adam spake, the first

† Seder Olam, ib.  Myricus, at supra.  Ibid.
first Adam did; now Christ and his Apostles, and the people of the Jews in their times, spoke in the Syriac language, as appears from Matt. xxvii. 46. Mark v. 41. and vii. 34. but according to some learned men, as Masius¹, and Fabricius Boderianus, this was not the ancient language of the Syrians and Chaldeans, but a new language, which had its first rise in the Babylonish captivity, and was a mixture of Chaldee and Hebrew; tho' rather the mixture began in the times of the Seleucidae, the Syrian kings, who entered into and distressed Judea; and therefore no argument can be taken from it in favour of the Syriac being the primitive language. I proceed now to propose the arguments that are, or may be used in favour of the Hebrew language being the primitive one; and the

First, may be taken from the alphabet of the tongue itself, which appears to be the first alphabet of all the eastern languages. The Chaldee or Syriac, Phœnician or Samaritan, have their alphabets manifestly from it; the names, the number, and order of their letters, and even the form and ducts of them

¹ Prefat. ad Gram. Syr.
them seem to be taken from thence, and to be corrupt deviations from it; and the Arabic language, tho' the order of its alphabet is somewhat disturbed, yet the names of most of the letters are plainly from the Hebrew; and so indeed is the greater part of the names of letters in the Greek alphabet, from whence the Romans have taken theirs, and other European nations. Hermannus Hugo* observes, that it is agreed among all, that from the names of the Hebrew characters, the letters of all nations have their names; now that language, whose alphabet appears to be the first, and to give rise to the alphabets of other tongues, bids fairest to be the first and primitive language: let it be observed that the Hebrew alphabet, as it now is, is exactly the same as it was in the days of David and Solomon, so early it can be traced; for it is to be seen in the 119th Psalm, and in others, and in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, as well as in the book of Lamentations, written before or at the beginning of the Babylonish captivity.

Secondly,

* De prima scribendi orig. c. 7. p. 65.
Secondly, Another argument for the antiquity of the Hebrew language, may be formed from the perfection and purity of it. Abraham de Balmis says of it, that "it is perfect in its letters and in its points. Our language, says he, is the most perfect language, and in its writing the most perfect of all writings of all languages; there is nothing wanting, and there is nothing redundant in it, according to the laws and rules of things perfect and complete." It consists of words which most fully and effectually express the nature of the things signified by 'em; its roots, which are of a certain number, are, for the most part, of three letters only, and it has no exotic or strange words used in it. Whoever compares it with the Syriac or Chaldee, will easily perceive the difference as to the purity of 'em, and that the Chaldee is derived from the Hebrew, and is later than that; for as Scaliger long ago observed מְלָכָּה Melech must be before ולָכָּא Malca, the latter being derived from the former; and the same may be observed in a multitude of other instances: now that which

which is perfect, pure, and undervived, must be before that which is imperfect, corrupt, and derived; or, as the philosopher expresses it, that which is vicious and corrupt must be later than that which is incorrupt.

Thirdly, The Paronomasia which Adam used when he called his wife woman, may be thought to be a good proof of the antiquity of the Hebrew language; since it will agree with that language only, she shall be called Isbab, woman, because she was taken, meifh, out of man, Gen. ii. 23. which paronomasia does not appear neither in the Syriac version, nor in the Chaldee paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathban, in which tho' Gabra is used of a man, yet never Gabreta of a woman, not even in places where men and women are spoken of together; see the Syriac version and Chaldee paraphrase of Exod. xxxv. 22. Deut. ii. 34. and many other places; and the reason for it is plain, the word is expressive of power and might, and so not so proper to be used of the weaker sex. The Syriac or Chaldee language will not admit of such an allusion as

v Arifot. de Republica, l. 3. c. 1.
as is in the text; for on the one hand, as Gabra is used for a man, and not Gabretha for a woman, so on the other hand, Itta, Ittetha, and Intetha or Antetha, are used for a woman, but never Itt for a man. Now as we prove that the additions to the book of Daniel were written in Greek, from the paronomasia in ch. xiii. 55. 59. so this seems to prove that the language Adam spoke in to his wife must be the Hebrew language, and consequently is the primitive one.

Fourthly, The names of persons and places before the confusion at Babel, are in the Hebrew language, and are plainly derived from words in it; as Adam from הָדָם, Adamab, earth, out of which he was formed, as is generally thought. Eve, from חַיָה, Chayah, to live, because the mother of all living; Cain from ער, to get, obtain, possess, being gotten from the Lord; Abel, from בּו, Hebel, vanity, as his life was; and Seth, from עָבֹת, Sheth, put, appointed, because put, set, or appointed another seed in the room of Abel; and so all the names of the Antediluvian patriarchs.

* Vid. Berehit Rabba s. 18. fol. 15. 2. 
* Vid. Sepher Cosri, par. 1. c. 68.
archs down to Noah and his sons, and their names also, with all those before the confusion and dispersion at Babel; and likewise the names of places, as of the garden of Eden, from delight, pleasure, it being a very pleasant place; and the land of Nod from to wander about; Cain being an exile and wanderer in it: now these being the names of persons and places before the confusion of tongues, clearly shew what language was spoken before that time, namely, the Hebrew, which therefore seems to be the primitive one.

Fifthly. It is notorious that the law and the prophets, or the books of the old testament, were written in the Hebrew tongue. The law was written in it on two tables of stone by the finger of God himself, and the sacred books were written in the same language, under divine inspiration. Now it is reasonable to conclude, that the same language God wrote and inspired the prophets to write in, he himself spoke in to Adam, and inspired him with it, or however gave him a faculty of speaking it, and which he did speak, and therefore may be concluded to be the first and primitive tongue.
It now remains only to be enquired into, why this language is called Hebrew. It is supposed by some to have its name from Eber, the father of Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided, and from whom the Hebræos sprung and have their name; and which opinion has been most generally received. Others think it has its name from אבָר, Abar, to pass over, from Abraham's passing over the river Euphrates into the land of Canaan; this notion Aben Ezra makes mention of on Exod. xxii. 2, and has been espoused by Theodoret among the ancients, and indeed according to Origen the word Hebræus signifies paffer over, and so Jerom; and by Scaliger and Arias Montanus among the moderns, in which they have been followed by many. The matter is not of very great consequence, but I must confess I am most inclined to the former; for as Austin observes, before the confusion language was one; and common to all, and needed no name to distinguish it; it was enough to call it the speech of man, or the human language; but when there was

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*b Suidas in voc. Ebræus.*

*c Theodoret. in Gen.*

Qu. 60.  
*d Epist. ad Thomp. et ad Ubertum.*

*e Canaan c. 9. 10.*

*f De Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 11.*
was a confusion of tongues, and so more than one, it became necessary to distinguish them by names; and what name more proper for the first language than that of Hebrew, from Eber, the last man in whose days it was alone and common to all? for in his son's days the earth was divided into different nations, speaking different languages. Moreover, Shem is said to be the Father of all the children of Eber, Gen. iv. 21. or as Jonathan paraphrases it, of all the children of the Hebrews, or of Hebrew children: respect is had, as the learned Rivet observes, to the blessing of Shem, in opposition to the curse of Ham, Gen. ix. 25. 26. Now as Canaan sprung from Ham, and was the father of the Canaanites, so Eber sprung from Shem and was the father of the Hebrews; and as afterwards they were called the children of Israel, and Israelites from Israel, and the children of Judah and Jews from Judah; so the children of Eber or Hebrews from him, and with equal propriety the language they spoke may be called Hebrew from him; and their country likewise, as in Gen. xl. 15. for it does not seem probable that the

\[ \text{In Gen. Exercit. 66. p. 319.} \]
land of Canaan should be called the land of the Hebrews, as it is there, so early as in the youth of Joseph, from a single family being passengers, travellers, and strangers in it, which are characters not very respectable and honourable, nor distinguishing; but rather from Eber, who, and his immediate offspring, might inhabit it, it being that part assigned and divided to 'em at the division of the earth, Deut. xxxii. 8. out of which they might be driven by the Canaanites, see Gen. xiii. 7. and xiv. 1, 4. therefore it was an act of justice to dispossess them and replace the children of Eber in it: and this may also serve to account for the names of places in pure Hebrew in old Canaan, by which they were called, when Joshua made a conquest of it, as well as in the time of Abraham, since it was the land of Eber before it was the land of Canaan; if Melchizedek was Shem, as the Jews in general believe, he was king of a city in it, and Eber his first born had a right unto it, claim'd by Chedarlomer, a descendant of his, who attempted the rescue of it from the Canaanites, who had usurped a power over it, at least over some

*See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 327.*
some part of it; and it is easy to observe, that in the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 24. as the Assyrians are called Ashur, from their original progenitor, so the Hebrews have the name of Eber from him; and so the word Eber there is rendered Hebrews by the Septuagint and other translators; and as they, so their language, may be called from him. As to what is objected, that Eber and Abraham were Chaldeans, and spoke the Chaldee language, this has been reply’d to already; and whereas it is observed, that from the time of Eber to Abraham, no one is ever called an Hebrew from him; it is not to be wondered at, since Eber lived to the time of Abraham, and even to the time of Jacob, according to both the Jewish and Scripture-chronology.

The foundation of the other opinion, that the Hebrews and their language have their name from Abraham’s passing over the Euphrates to the land of Canaan, is the Septuagint version of Gen. xiv. 13, which instead of Abraham the Hebrew, reads τω περατη the transitor or passer over; tho'
tho' perhaps no more is meant by that version, than that he was, as Juvenal ex-
presses it, natus ad Euphratem, born near the river Perat, for that is its name in He-
brew; but whatever may be said for Abra-
ham's being called an Hebrew from such a
circumstance, it can scarcely be thought
that a whole nation should be denominated
from such an action of a remote ancestor,
when they themselves passed not over the
same river; besides there were multitudes
who passed over the Euphrates besides A-
brham, who yet never were so called; as
Canaan and his posterity must pass over it,
when they removed from Shinar to the
land afterwards called by their name; and
indeed Erpenius is of opinion that the Ca-
naanites were first called Hebrews, or pas-
sers over, by the Chaldeans, because they
passed over the river Jordan into the country
which lay between that and the Medi-
terranean sea, afterwards called from them the
land of Canaan; and that Abram had not
his name from his passage into it, but from
his dwelling there, and learning their lan-
guage; hence his posterity were called He-
brews, and the Hebrew language the lan-
guage

Satyr. i. v. 104. 1 Ut supra.
language of Canaan, Is. xix. 18. and the same writer thinks, that if the Hebrews were only those of the family of Jacob, they would not have been so well known to the Egyptians in the time of Joseph as they were: but to all this it may be reply'd, that the Canaanites were ever called Hebrews, does not appear from any writers, sacred or profane; nor is it probable that the pure and primitive language, that is the Hebrew, as has been shewn, should be left with and continued in the race of Canaan; and still more improbable, that Abraham should learn it of them, who was possessed of the first and primitive language before the confusion of tongues, as has been observed, and before he came into the land of Canaan; besides he seems to be called Abraham the Hebrew, Gen. xiv. 13. to distinguish him from Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner, who were Canaanites, confederates with him; nor is the Hebrew language called the language of Canaan, because first spoken by the Canaanites, but because the people of Israel spoke it, who for a long time had inhabited the land.

*Vid. Gloss in T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 109. 2. & Abarbinel. in Il. xix. 18.*
which bore that name; nor need it seem strange, that the name of Hebrew should be so well known in Potiphar's family, and to the Egyptians in Joseph's time, when he himself told them, no doubt, that he was an Hebrew, as he told the chief butler, Gen. xxxix. 17. and xli. 12. and especially if what has been before observed concerning the land of the Hebrews, can be established, Gen. xl. 15. as being inhabited by Eber and his sons, before the Canaanites possessed it.

There are other etymologies of the name of the Hebrews and their language, which scarce deserve any notice; as that they have their name from Abraham; so Artapanus⁵, an heathen writer, says the Jews are called Hebrews from Abraham, but there are but few that have embraced this notion; others say, they are so called from Eber-banaar, which signifies beyond or the other side of the river, that is, of the Euphrates, where Abraham and his father Terah dwelt, and from whence Abraham is said to be taken; but there were many besides them, even whole nations who dwelt beyond that river, who were never called Hebrews, nor

nor can any good reason be given, why these and their posterity and their language should be called Hebrew from thence, tho' many, both Jews and Christians, have imbibed this notion. Eusebius, tho' he thinks the Hebrews had their name from Eber, yet as the word signifies a passer over, not from one country to the other, but from the vanity of the things of this present world, to the study of divine things, and in which they rested not, but passed on in search of more recondite knowledge: perhaps, after all, the true original of the name may be taken from the place of Abraham's birth, who is first called the Hebrew, or rather the Ibrite, Gen. xiv. 13. the place of his birth was Ur of the Chaldees, as Aben Ezra rightly judges, since it is expressly said to be the land of his brother Haran's nativity, and therefore most probably his also; now Ur of the Chaldees is called Ibra Zeira, and so Abraham might have this epithet from the place of his nativity, the Ibrite, to distinguish him, as before observed, from the

† Evangel. repar. l. 9. c 6. p. 520.  
Comment. in Gen. xi 28.  
T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. & Gloss. in Ib.
the Amorites, among whom he then dwelt, and whence his posterity frequently afterwards have the name of Ḫabir or Ibrītes, Gen. xxxix. 14. 17. and xl. 15. and xliii.

32. One thing more I would just observe, that whether the Hebrews and their language are so called either from Eber, the father of Peleg, or from Abar, to pass over, or from Eber, beyond, or the other side of the river, or from Ibra the native place of Abraham; tho' custom has prevailed to write the word with an aspiration, Hebrew and Hebrews, it should be written without one, Ebrew and Ebrews, as words beginning with y usually are, as Amminadib, Immanuel, &c.
CHAP. II.

Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Letters.

It has been a controversy among learned men, for a century or two past, whether the modern letters used by the Jews, and in which their sacred books are now extant, are the same in which the law and the prophets were originally written. This is denied by some, and it has been affirmed, that the original letters of the Hebrews, and in which the books of the Old Testament before the times of Ezra were written, were what are called Samaritan; and that Ezra, after the return of the Jews from the captivity in Babylon, changed these letters for the Merubbab, or square ones since in use; and in them wrote all the sacred books then in being, and gave the ancient letters to the Samaritans; and this notion has been embraced upon the testimonies of Eusebius and Jerom; the foundation of which appears to be a tradition of the Jews, and that far from being generally received by them. The former of these in his
chronicle at A. M. 4740, writes, that "it is affirmed, that Ezra, by the strength of his memory, compiled or put together the divine scriptures, and that they (the Jews) might not be mixed with the Samaritans, changed the Jewish letters."

Now this passage of Eusebius, as Marchius observes, is not to be found in Scaliger's editions of his chronicle, neither in the original Greek, nor in the Latin version; and the illustrious Spanheim has fully proved, that it is spurious, and added to the text by some modern hand; and admitting it to be genuine, it smells rank of a Jewish tale, particularly that Ezra compiled the scriptures memoriter; and it is no difficult thing to account for it, from whence Eusebius had it, if he had it at all; for since he was bishop of Caesarea, where both Jews and Samaritans lived, he might receive this notion from the one or from the other; from the Samaritans, as Buxtorff conjectures, who were continually boasting of their language and letters, in which, they say, the law was given, a copy of which they pretend to have, written by Phinehas the
the son of Eleazar; or rather he might have this account from the Jews that resided there. Jerom, who lived a little after Eusebius, and who might take what he writes from him, or rather from some of the Jewish Rabbins he had for his preceptors and instructors, for he had four of them at different times, is more confident, and says, "certumque est, &c. it is certain that Ezra the scribe, and teacher of the law, after Jerusalem was taken and the temple rebuilt under Zerubbabel, found other letters, which we now use, when to that time the characters of the Samaritans and Hebrews were the same;" but how could Jeram be certain of this, who lived near a thousand years after the supposed fact? do Ezra or Nehemiah give the least hint of such a change of letters, tho' they relate things of much less consequence than this? or do any of the other prophets suggest any thing of this kind? not the least syllable. Do Josephus or Philo the Jew say any thing about it? not one word, but the reverse, as will be seen hereafter: from whence and from whom then could Jerom be assured of it? from no
no other than his Jews and their traditions; from whom it is certain he received many things, as his treatise called Questiones seu Traditiones Hebraicae, on various parts of scripture shew; which are all or most of them to be found in the Talmud, and other writings of the Jews, and particularly this.

The Jerusalem Talmud was printed about the year 230, long enough before Jerom, for him to have knowledge of it at least from his instructors. The Babylonian Talmud was compiling in his time, tho' not finished before the year 500; but the traditions it consists of were well known before, being handed down from one to another, and with which Jerom's Jews could furnish him, and did. But what puts this matter out of all question, is a fragment of Origen's, published by Montfaucon*, who also speaks of letters used by Ezra after the captivity, different from the more antient ones, and plainly declares from whom he had it, and opens to us the true source of this notion: "in some accurate copies, he says, it (the word Jebovah) is written ten in antient Hebrew letters, but not in those now in use, φασι γάρ, for they say, that

* Præliminar. in Hexapla Origen, p. 86.
"(that is, the Jews) that Ezra used others 
"after the captivity:" so that it clearly ap-
ppears to be a Jewish tradition; and it is 
not improbable, that Jerom had what he 
calls certain, from this passage of Origen, 
as well as from Eusebius, supposing the 
passage in him to be genuine; and in which 
he might be confirmed by his Rabbins; so 
that all that has been said about this mat-
ter comes from the same fountain, a Jewish 
tradition. And the tradition respecting it 
in the Jerusalem Talmud* is as follows: "it 
is a tradition; R. Jose says, Ezra was 
fit to have the law given by his hand, 
but that the age of Moses prevented it; 
yet tho' it was not given by his hand, 
the writing and the language were; 
the writing was written in the Syriac 
tongue and interpreted in the Syriac 
tongue, Ezra iv. 7. and they could not 
read the writing, Dan. v. 8. from hence 
it is learnt, that it was given on the same 
day. R. Nathan says, the law was 
given in breaking, (in rude, rough, and 
broken letters, supposed to be meant of 
the Samaritan) and agrees with R. Jose; 
but Rabbi (i.e. Judah Hakkodesh) says 

* T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 7r. 2, 3.
the law was given in the Assyrian character (the square letter) and when they sinned, it was turned into breaking, (into a rough, and broken character) and when they were worthy, in the days of Ezra, it was turned to them again in the Assyrian character, according to Zach. ix. 12. It is a Tradition; R. Simeon ben Eleazer says, on the account of R. Eleazer ben Par'a, who also says, on the account of Eliezer Hammodai, the law was written in the Assyrian character." As it stands in the Babylonian Talmud, it is thus expressed: "Mar Zutra, or as others Mar Uba, says, at first the law was given to Israel in the writing beyond the river, (or the Samaritan and the holy tongue) and again it was given to them, in the days of Ezra, in the Assyrian writing, and Syriac tongue; they chose for the Israelites the Assyrian writing and the holy tongue, and left to the Ideots the writing beyond the river, and the Syriac tongue. Who are the Ideots? R. Chajda says, the Cuthites (i.e. the Samaritans): what is the writing beyond the river?"
"river? R. Chasda says, the Libonæan writing;" which the Gloss explains of great letters, such as are written in amulets and on door-posts. Now tho' this account is far from being clear and plain, as to what is the sense of these Rabbins; yet admit it to be the sense of R. Jose, and of Mar Zutra or Ukba, that the law was written in Samaritan characters; to which if you add R. Natban, as agreeing with them, there are but three on that side of the question; whereas there are four who affirm it to be written in the Assyrian, or square character, namely, R. Judah the saint, R. Simeon, and the two Eleazers; and as for R. Judah, he was of so much account with the Jews, as to weigh down all others; the decision of any matter in debate was, for the most part, according to him; and it is to the latter sentiment that the Jews now universally agree. There is but one, R. Joseph Albo, on the other side of the question, unless Nachmanides can be thought to be, which yet is doubtful. Now this seems to be the whole and sole foundation of the above notion, which has prevailed so long among Christian writers.

² Vid. Buxtorf. de literis Heb. l. 20. 52, 53, 54.
I cannot but remark the foible of some learned men, that if any thing against a received opinion is produced from the Talmud, and other Jewish writings, it is at once condemned as a Jewish dotage, dream and fable; but if it accords with a favourite hypothesis, how greedily is it caught at? how tenaciously is it held? It is amazing that so many learned men should give into the change of the Jewish letters by Ezra. It is not likely that the law should be given to the Israelites, and the sacred books be written in Samaritan letters, that is, in the old Phœnician characters, which belonged to the race of Canaan; and if they were, that the people of the Jews could be prevailed upon to part with them, in which their holy books were written; and if they were written in them, as then, besides the Pentateuch, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, the Psalms of David, and books of Solomon, and the Prophets before the captivity, must be written in the same character; and if so, it is strange that not one copy of either of these should be heard of, seen, or known; nor is it probable that the books of the Old Testament should be written in two dif-
different characters; those before the captivity in Samaritan letters, and those after it in the square letters, as they must be according to this hypothesis. It is not to be believed, that Ezra would attempt such a change of himself without an order from God, which nowhere appears, when such a charge against innovations stands in Deut. iv. 2. nor does it seem possible that he should be able effectually to do it; it could never be in his power to call in all the copies of the sacred books, which the Israelites had carried into the several parts of the world, thro' their captivities; nor is it probable that the Samaritans, if possessed of the square character, which is grand and majestic, should ever be prevailed upon to part with it, for a character so ugly, so ill-shaped and deformed as the Samaritan is; nor was it in the power of Ezra to oblige them to it: to which may be added, that surely it can't be thought that those ugly and ill-shaped letters were formed by the finger of God, and the law written by him in them, the contrary to which is now universally affirmed by the Jews; and yet with what confidence has this been asserted, and those of a different sentiment treated with most
most abusive language, unbecoming men of learning, by such as Scaliger, Drusius, and Vossius, as if they were men but half learned, half divines, mere fools, sceptics, &c. but of late I observe this confidence abates, and learned men begin to think that it is far from being a determined point, what were the original characters of the Hebrews. The learned authors of the Universal History have taken the side of those who are against the Samaritan characters, and are for the square letters being the original Hebrew, and have given their reasons for it; and I hope to make it appear, at least probable, that the Jews always had and retained their letters and characters, and also the Samaritans theirs; and that there has been no commutation of letters between them: and to begin

With the Jews; though we cannot come to any certainty of their ancient letters and characters, yet there is a probability that they were the same in which their sacred writings are now extant; and this is all I shall attempt to shew.

It has been observed that the Hebrew alphabet is the first of the oriental languages,
guages, from whence the rest have received theirs; but in name only, not in signification; for the signification of the names of the letters in the alphabet only correspond with the figures of the square letter; indeed though the Hebrew alphabet is observed in order no less than twenty times in the Old Testament, Psal. xxv, xxxvii, cx, cxii, cxix. eight times, cxiv. Prov. xxxi. Lamentations six times, yet not the name of one letter is given; but in the Septuagint version of the Lamentations, made three hundred years before Christ, the names of all of them are given just as they now are. The Greeks had the names of their letters very early, not only before the writing of the New Testament, in which mention is made of some of them, as of Iota, Alpha, and Omega; and in Josephus of Theta, and Tau; but Herodotus, who wrote his history between four and five hundred years before the birth of Christ, observes, that the Persian names end in a letter which in the Doric dialect is called San, and in the Ionic dialect Sigma. Plato †, as early, makes

* Antiqu. 1. i. c. 6.  † Clio, five i. i. c. 139.

Clio, five i. i. c. 139.  † in Cratylus, p. 271, 284, 286, 289, 292, 297, Ed. Ficin.
mention of the names of several of the letters of the Greek alphabet; and Homer, some hundreds of years before them, has the names of the whole Greek alphabet; for his works, both his Iliad and his Odyssey, the several books of them, have their titles from thence, and are called by their names; unless it should be thought, as it is by some, that the titles are added by some ancient Grammarians; which names are chiefly taken from an Eastern alphabet: and as the Greeks are generally supposed to have their letters, at least most of them, from the Phænicians, they doubtless had the names of them along with them; and Diodorus Siculus expressly says, that as Cadmus brought the letters from Phænicia into Greece, so he gave to every one their names, as well as formed their characters; and as the Phænician, or old Samaritan alphabet consisted of letters of the same name, though of a different character from the Hebrew, it may reasonably be supposed that the names are derived from thence, as the language is but a dialect of the Hebrew, with a little variation and deflexion from it; so that the Hebrews had these names.

† Bibliothec. lib. 3. p. 200.
names originally; and it cannot be thought otherwise but that when their letters were first invented, and marks made for them, but names were given unto them; and Capellus * himself is quite clear and express in this matter: "before the age of Cadmus the Phœnician, he says i.e. 1450 years before the birth of Christ, the Hebrew letters had their own names, and indeed the same with those by which they are now called, as is plain by comparing the Greek alphabet with the Hebrew;" and a little after he says, the same names of Hebrew letters are as they were three thousand years ago: now the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, though adopted by others, only correspond in their signification with the figure of the square letters now in use: thus according to various writers¹, *Aleph the first letter, signifies an ox, and its figure resembles the head and horns of one, and as that, gives the lead to the rest; *Beth, an house, and it represents one, its foundation, wall.

wall, and roof, which with the Hebrews was flat; ג Gimel a camel, and it has the figure of its long neck and bunch on its back; ד Daleth a door, and it describes the lintel and post of one; what it signifies and represents is not easy to say:

י Vau, an hook, and it resembles one;

ז Zajin, signifies armour, and has the figure of a dart, spear, or club; ח Cheth a beast, and its position is like that of a quadruped;

ט Teth, folding or involving, as is the form of it;

י Jod, an hand, the small part of it the finger, it represents;

ך Caph, the hollow of the hand, or a curvature, as its figure is;

ל Lamed, a goad, and it is like one;

מ Mem, a spot as is impressed on the hollow of the hand;

ן Nun, a son, child, or infant, and it is thought to resemble one sitting;

ס Samech, a support, the pedestal of a column, to which it is not unlike;

א Ain, an eye, and it is the figure of one open;

פ Pe, a mouth, an open one;

צ Tzadde, a fork, and such is its figure;

ק Kopb, a revolution, a semicircle, with a descending line, or a monkey, having the tail of one;

ר Resh, the head, the hinder part of one it resembles;

ש Schin, a tooth, and is the figure of three teeth;

ת Thau
Thau, a mark, sign, or border, being the boundary of the alphabet. Now the figures of the letters of the alphabet, neither in the Samaritan characters, nor in any other but the square, will answer to the significations of these names.

As the Hebrew language was the first and primitive language, and was spoken by Adam, as has been shewn, it is probable the letters were first invented by him, as some have thought*; since as man is not only a speaking, but a social animal, it can hardly be imagined that Adam should live so many years, and not consider the advantage of letters to his posterity, and attempt to form such for their use; nor could arts and sciences, which no doubt were found out in his time, be well cultivated without the use of letters. It is certain some of the arts and sciences were in use before the flood, Gen. iv. 21. and very probably astronomy, as it must be, if there

there is any truth in the history of the pillars erected by the posterity of Seth, which must make writing necessary, as Huygens observes: besides, it is not reasonable to suppose that Adam himself should be without the knowledge of the sciences, since the very first sight of the heavenly luminaries would lead him into a contemplation of them, and to make future observations upon them; and by observing their motions, appearance, and disappearance, their revolutions, and the distinctions they made of days, months, and years, and of the seasons, of summer and winter; he must obtain by degrees a considerable knowledge of this science. Some have thought that the knowledge of all things natural, both terrestrial, as plants, &c. and celestial, was of God infused into him, and implanted in his nature; and in whatsoever way he had it, it may be reasonably concluded that he would communicate it to his posterity, which seems to require the use of letters; and Scaliger made no doubt of it that the art of printing was known by him; though

d Cosmoeorof. fol. 10. p. 56. * Vid. Lydiat. de-
sens. tract. de ann. form. c. 3. p. 26. f Apud Lydiat. ib.
p. 125.
though that is not very probable, yet he
might have the knowledge of letters, and
of the use of them; indeed the Indian
Brachmans, and the ancient Druids and
Pythagoras taught their doctrines without
the use of letters; but it was not through
want of them, nor through mere neglect
of them, but because they had some pec-
culiar ends to answer thereby: now if let-
ters were invented by Adam, it seems most
reasonable that as his language, so his let-
ters were continued to the times of Noah,
and were communicated in the times of
Eben through the families of Eber and Ab-
bram to the people of Israel; and though
the precise character cannot be determined,
it is most probable, it was the square cha-
racter, as being the most expressive, per-
fected, and elegant. The Jewish writers
are quite clear in this matter, that not only
the letters but even the points and accents
as they now are, were known to Adam,
being taught him of God; as the author
of the book of Cosri, and his commen-
tator R. Judah Muscatus.

If the pillars set up by the sons of Seth
could

\* Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. dier. 1. 2. c. 30. \* Cæsar.
Comment. l. 6. c. 13. \* Alex. ab. Alex. ut supra. \* Cosri
par. 4. l. 25. \* Comment. in ib. fol. 229. i.
could be depended on as genuine, there would be proof not only of the arts and sciences, particularly astronomy, being known and taught, but of letters, and their use in their days; and to Seth himself the invention of letters has been ascribed. Josephus says, the pillars erected by his posterity continued to his time; but it is not likely that these pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone, should survive the flood; and the account he has given of the place where they stood, is very dark and intricate; he calls it the land of Syria, but whether he means Syria, or a place in the land of Egypt, or Seirath near Gilgal, Judg. iii. 26. each of which is guessed at, cannot be determined; nor does he give us the least hint what kind of characters were upon them; and indeed had the pillars been really in being, it can scarcely be thought that the characters could be legible, or that even conjectures could be made of what they were. In Syria and Mesopotamia are said to be some ancient books of the Zabians, which they pretend to be the patriarch Seth’s; and the Arabia writers

\begin{itemize}
\item Vid. Suidam in voce Σηθ.
\item Vid. Marlotham Canon. secul. 1. p. 3.
\item + Prideaux, Præf. ad Marmor, Arundel. & Vossian de ætate mundi, c. 10. p. 37.
\end{itemize}
writers say 1, that Seth was the inventor of writing letters, and shewed them in the Hebrew tongue. If the account that is given of Cainan, the grandson of Seth, could be credited, it would not only prove the use of letters in those early times, but that the Hebrew letters were then used; the account is what is said to be sent by Alexander the Great, when in India, to his master Aristotle, and is as follows: "When I came to such a place in India, says he, the natives told me that they had with them the sepulchre of an ancient king that ruled over all the world, whose name was Cainan, the son of Enos, who foreseeing that God would bring a flood upon the earth, wrote his prophecy of it on tables of stone, and they are here; the writing is Hebrew writing."

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, delivered out the prophecy referred to by the apostle Jude, ver. 14, 15. but whether it was written is not certain; it is not improbable it might be: the Jews make mention of a writing of his in their ancient book

1 ELMACINUS apud HETTINGER. Smegma, p. 228. 7 JU- CHAIN, fol. 3. 2. fo BEN GORION, i. 2. c. 18. p. 131. 
book of Zobar, and in the Targum of Jonathan on Gen. v. 24, he is called the great scribe; and several of the christian fathers speak of a book of his as authentic, as Tertullian and others; and the Arabic writers tell us of pyramids and pillars erected by him, on which he engraved the arts and the instruments of them; and some writers ascribe the invention of letters and writing of books to him; but what characters he wrote and engraved in are not said: others have pretended to give the alphabets of Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Noah; but the characters they give neither agree with the Hebrew nor with the Samaritan, and are mere figments, and are no more to be depended on than in what the prophecy of Ham the son of Noah was written, out of which Pherecydes the Syrian, is said to take his allegories. If Abraham the ancestor of the Jewish nation was the inventor of letters, as some say, the Hebrew characters might bid

bid fair to be the first; nay, Suidas says they were the sacred letters he invented; and to him is sometimes ascribed the cabalistic book of the Jews called Jetzirah.

Some of the Jewish Rabbins say, that the grains of manna which fell from heaven about the tents of the Israelites in the wilderness were figured with the character of the Hebrew letter Vau very perfectly expressed; and that that is the principal reason why the wondering Israelites said one to another מנה מ Man bu, which according to them is to say, what means this vau? the reason of which figure they suppose to be, because the manna was only to be gathered on the six days of the week, which that letter numerically signifies: this is to be, treated as a mere fable, nor have I met with it in any writer but Gaffarellus; all the advantage I make of it is this, that those Rabbins who relate this, believed that the square letters were in use before the giving of the law, for so early was the original descent of the manna; and indeed if the Israelites did not under-

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[ In voce Ἀφαζέω, vid. Herman. Hugo. ut supra, p. 41.  

* Coφri par 4. c. 27. Juchasin fol. 52. 2.  

b Unheard of Curiosities, par. 4. c. 12. p. 352. ]
stand letters before the giving of the law, of what use could the writing of it be unto them? and to what purpose was it written and brought unto them.

It is not only the opinion of some Christian writers that the Hebrews received their letters first from Moses thro' the giving of the law unto them, but even Eupolemus, an heathen writer, as quoted both by Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius, affirms that Moses first delivered letters to the Jews, which is received by many; however this be, it is certain, the law was written in letters engraved by God himself, and given to Moses for the Israelites; and it is most probable, as has been already observed, that those letters were not the ill-shaped letters of the Samaritans, the same with those of the old Phoenicians or Canaanites, but the noble, majestic square letters, in which the books of the law and prophets are now extant.

E 2

Philo

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Philo the Jew, says, the law was anciently written in the Chaldee language, that is, in the Hebrew language, properly so called; for, as Jerom observes, Philo thought the Hebrew and Chaldee were the same language; and nothing is more common with the Jews, than to say the writing in which the law was given, is the Assyrian language and writing, by which they mean the modern Hebrew letters, in distinction from the Samaritan, as appears by what has been quoted out of the Talmud, and which they expressly say is what they now write in. This they call the Assyrian tongue and writing, from the word Assher, which signifies happy and blessed, being happy and blessed above all languages; or because they had it from their ancestor Abraham, who came out of Assyria; and as they carried it into Assyria, when led captive thither, so it came out of Assyria with them, when they came from thence; and that the tables of the law were written in it, is generally agreed on, by them,
them. *Jacob says*, the whole world acknowledge that the tables and book of the law, which were in the ark, were written in the *Assyrian* character, by which they mean the square character; that is, the whole *Jewish* nation, a few, only excepted, not more than two or three. If the mediums of proof made use of by the *Jews* could be admitted as valid, as they cannot, it would put the matter out of all doubt, that the square letters were as early as the law: they observe, that the hooks of the pillars in *Exod.* xxvii. 10. are called *Vaus*, and as the pillars were not changed, so the *Vaus* were not changed; from whence they conclude the *Vaus* were made like hooks, and that in the days of *Moses* the *Vaus* were like those now in use; and what is true of one letter is true of the rest; and that their letters were never changed, and which they also conclude from *Esth.* viii. 9. They have likewise a notion that the letters of the law were perforated, so that the figures of the letters could be seen on both sides,

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wherefore they observe ☐ Mem clausum and ☐ Samech which were in the tables, stood miraculously for they being near or like to a circle or an O, they had nothing to adhere to, or subsist by, but must fall, unless supported by a miracle. Now though these notions cannot be allowed of, they serve to shew the sense of the Jews, that the square letters were then in being, since these observations will not agree with the said letters in the Samaritan alphabet; nay, they say that the forms of letters, vowels and accents were written by God on the tables, as we now have them.

It was usual in ancient time to inscribe things on rocks and mountains, in order to perpetuate them to posterity, to which Job may allude, ch. xix. 24. thus Semiramis engraved her image and an hundred shield-bearers by her at the bottom of a rock, and wrote upon the rock in Syriac letters, as Diodorus Siculus relates; so the Arabians, Phænicians, and Egyptians, and others, before the use of paper, engraved their sentiments on rocks and stones.
Themistocles cut letters upon stones which the Ionians, coming the day after to Artemision, read, as Herodotus reports; and it was usual with the Danes to write the acts and deeds of their ancestors in verse, and engrave them in their own language on rocks and stones. In a journal made about forty years ago, from grand Cairo to mount Sinai, a translation of which is published by Dr. Clayton, late bishop of Clogher, it is related, that those who made it came to some hills near mount Sinai, called the written mountains; on which with others they passed for an hour together, were engraved ancient unknown characters, cut into the hard marble rock, twelve or fourteen feet distant from the ground; and though they had several in company acquainted with the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, &c. none of them had any knowledge of those characters. The bishop thought it probable that these were the ancient Hebrew characters, which the Israelites having learned to write after the giving of the law on mount Sinai, di-

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\[ \text{Urania, five, 1 8.c. 22. vide Melpomene, five 1. 4. c. 87.} \]
\[ \text{Salmuth. in Pancirol. par. 2. p. 256.} \]
\[ \text{Journal \&c. p. 45, 46. Ed. 2.} \]
ved themselves with practising it during their forty years abode in the wilderness; and he was of opinion that the ancient Hebrew characters might be recovered by them; wherefore he proposed to the Society of Antiquarians in London, to send a proper person thither for that end, and offered to bear a proportion in the expence of it; and could those characters be recovered, and an alphabet formed out of them, it would doubtless determine what was the ancient figure of the Hebrew letters. About an hundred years before the above journal was begun, Petrus a Valle and Thomas a Novaria transcribed several of them, which the former had in his possession, and shewed them to some Jews, to whom some of the letters seemed to be like to those of the Hebrew now in use, others like the Samaritan, and others agreed with neither; but the sense of them none could understand. Now these letters were no doubt of one and the same alphabet, form and figure originally, and if many of them are of the square form, or like those Hebrew letters now in use, and those the greater part of them, as it should

*p Antiq. Eccl. oriental. p. 147.*
should seem by their being mentioned first; I should think they were all when first written of the same form; and that such of them as are now broken and disjointed, are those said to be like to the Samaritan letters, which are rough and deformed; hence the Jews call them רוע, a fracture, broken, and uneven; and such that agreed with neither, those that are greatly effaced by time; and I am the more strengthened in this supposition by the relation of Cosmas Ægyptius, who travelled into those parts in the sixth century, more than twelve hundred years ago; who testifies, that he himself saw many stones in the wilderness engraved by the Hebrews in Hebrew letters, in memory of their journey in it; his account, as Montfaucon relates it is, that in the wilderness of Sinai, and in all the mansions of the Hebrews, you may see stones fallen from the mountains, all engraved with Hebrew letters, as, says he, I testify, who travelled that way. Now I imagine that this man in that age could have no other notion of Hebrew letters than of those then in use with

with the Jews; and he adds, some Jews who read these inscriptions told us, they signified so and so—such a journey—out of such a tribe—in such a year—in such a month—i.e., such and such things were done. Now the letters which these Jews were conversant with, and capable of reading and interpreting, seem more likely to be the Hebrew letters, which they then used, than the Samaritan, which it is not reasonable to suppose they would give themselves the trouble of learning, having nothing to do with the Samaritans, but at enmity with them.

The plate of gold on the forehead of the high-priest, on which was engraven holiness to the Lord, the Jews dispute about it, whether this was in more lines than one, and what letters were in a line, but it was never a question with them in what character it was written. Jerom says indeed, that the word Jehovah was in his time found written in antient letters, in some Greek volumes; but it should be observed, that Jerom speaks not of Jewish or Hebrew copies, but of Greek volumes,

* T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1.  
† Prefat. in lib. Reg. fol. 5. L.
meaning the Greek versions of Apuleius and Theodore of Origen's Hexapla, and of ancient Hebrew letters in the said Greek versions, where the word yebad was written in Hebrew characters thus, חבג, which the Greeks not understanding, and being deceived with the similarity of the characters to some of theirs, read it from the left to the right, as they were wont to do, whereas the word was to be read no other than yebad, and was written neither in Greek nor in Samaritan characters, but in Hebrew letters, as sometimes figured, or however as formed by some Greek writers not expert in the Hebrew tongue.

PraeLIBMINAR. ad Hexapla Origen. c. 2. P. 22.
et ὉἸἹ, that is Aquila, and Theodotion so read; and he further observes, that so formerly they wrote the letters of the name tetragrammaton or Jebovah, which they read Pipi, because of the similitude of the letters; and Jerom* himself is as express for it as can be, he says the name of four letters is written with these, Jod  יוד, He י, Vau ו, He י, which some not understanding, because of the likeness of the characters, when they found it in Greek copies, used to read it Pipi; and elsewhere, he says, the name of God, on the plate of gold, was written in Hebrew letters, those above-mentioned; hence, because as R. Asariah* understands him, he affirmed that these were engraved in the Assyrian character, he conjectures that Jerom had seen the plate of gold at Rome, which R. Eliezer ben Jose, saw there, and that Jerom was of the mind that the present Hebrew letters, were then used by the Jews; and indeed it is not probable that this plate should be engraved in the Samaritan, that is in the letters

ters of the old Phænicians or Canaanites, the race of Canaan, whom the Jews, when this order about the plate was given to Mosés, were going to drive out of their land. It must be owned that Origen has the following words in a fragment of his; "with the Jews the name of the four letters (Jebovah) is ineffable, which was engraved on the golden plate of the high-priest, and with the Greeks is pronounced Lord (νυπιος); but in correct Hebrew copies it is written (that is, with its four letters Jebovah, which may be believed; but when he adds, it was written) in antient letters, but not in those now in use." If he means the Samaritan letters, as it is supposed he does, this depends on a Jewish tale he next relates, which has been already considered.

That the Pentateuch written by Mosés was written in the square characters or letters now in use with the Jews, seems clear by comparing Gen. x. 3, 4. with 1 Chron. i. 6. where the persons called Riphatb and Dodanim by Mosés, are by the author of the book of Chronicles in some copies called Diphatb and Rodanim; and who is called Hemdan in Gen.

* Apud Montfaucon. ut supra, p. 86.
Gen. xxxvi. 26. is Hemram in 1. Chron. i. 41.
and Hadar in Gen. xxxvi. 39. is Hadad in 1
Chron. i. 50. The author of the book of
Chronicles, thro' the similarity of the let-
ters י and י Resh and Daleth, puts one for
another, and still signify the same persons;
sō Ribalb in Numb. xxxiv. 11. and as it is
read in the 2d book of Kings, and prophe-
cy of Jeremiah, is in Ezek. vi. 14. called
Diblath; on which Jerom remarks, that
the near likeness of the Hebrew letters י and
י Daleth and Resh, which are distinguished
by a small apex, it may be called Debla-
tha, or Reblatha; and so Theodotion reads
it Deblatha in Jer. xxxix. 5. and this will
account for the same man being called
Now this can't be owing to the mistakes of
late transcribers, since the same difference
is observed in the Septuagint version of these
places, at least in most of them, and were
to from the beginning, from the writers
themselves; and those letters being much
more similar in the Hebrew than in the Sa-
maritan alphabet, the Samaritan Daleth
having a hook at the back of it thus ג
which strikes the eye at once, and easily
distinguishes it from ג Resh, shews that Mo-
jes,
ses, in all probability, wrote in the former and not in the latter; so likewise differences of names in the same books plainly arise from the similarity of the letters Jod and Vau in the Hebrew square characters, when there is no such similarity in the Samaritan character נ and נ, as to occasion such differences, thus Alvan in Gen. xxxvi. 23. is Alian 1 Chron. i. 40. Vaakan Gen. xxxvi. 27. is Jaakan 1 Chron. i. 42. Zepho Gen. xxxvi. 11. is Zephi 1 Chron. i. 36. Shepbo in Gen. xxxvi. 23. is Shephi 1 Chron. i. 40. Alvah Gen. xxxvi. 40. is Aliab 1 Chron. i. 51. Pau Gen. xxxvi. 39. is Pai 1 Chron. i. 50. Heman Gen. 22. is Homam 1 Chron. i. 39. Kimchi on 1 Chron. i. 6, 7. takes notice of the difference of these several words, as read in Genesis and Chronicles, and attributes it to the similarity of letters; and observes, that let them be read as they may, they are the same names, and so Ben Melech after him.

Aben Ezra has helped us to another proof of the Pentateuch being written in the square character; he observes, "that the word נז in Exod. i. 16. is irregular according to the grammar, and should be נז for He radical is changed into Tau, according
ding to usual construction, as in Gen. i. 30. but so it is, because these letters are near alike in writing, there being only the duct of a point between them, which is in the letter He, but in pronunciation and name they differ; for at first it is called He, and when the point is protracted it is called Tau; and this is a sign or proof that the writing we now use is Hebrew:” and as the Pentateuch was originally written in this character, so it continued until the Samaritan Pentateuch was written, which plainly appears to be copied from it, by its having the interpolations of Ezra’s copy in it, which it would not have had, had it been more antient than that; and if it was first brought to the Samaritans, as is probable, by Manasseh, when he fled to them, it was in the square character first introduced among them, as Dr. Prideaux owns, who otherwise is an advocate for the Samaritan letter being the antient Hebrew character. That this was the case, appears from the difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan Pentateuch, occasioned by the sameness of the letters in the square character, the same with that now in use with the Jews.

\[ Connection, \text{part 1, p. 416, 417.}\]
Jews, as has been observed by many learned men, particularly in Reš and Daleth, see Gen. x. 4. and xlix. 10. which shews that the Pentateuch was originally in the modern Hebrew characters, and which is superior in point of antiquity to the Samaritan, which is copied from it; and to the same cause, in many instances, is owing the difference between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint version, namely the similarity of the Hebrew letters, as Jerom frequently observes; for that was made out of the Chaldee tongue, as Philo the Jew affirms, that is the Hebrew according to him; and Justin Martyr asserts, that Moses, under a divine inspiration, wrote his history in Hebrew letters, (he does not say in Samaritan, tho' he himself was a Samaritan) and that out of their antient books written in Hebrew letters, the Septuagint or 70 elders made their translation, which books in Hebrew letters were then preserved by the Jews in their synagogues. Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had only at first the Hebrew bible in Hebrew letters, transcribed and sent him; but not being able to

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* Ad Græcos, p. 13.
read and understand it, he sent for men out of Judea to translate it into Greek; and Tertullian asserts, that in the Serapeum, or library of Ptolemy, the translation was to be seen in his time, with the Hebrew letters themselves, from which the translation was made; and certain it is, as the authors of the Universal History have observed, that the Septuagint version is of higher antiquity than any of those shekels which are said to have the Samaritan characters on them, the eldest of which did not precede the settlement of the high-priesthood in the Asmonean family, that is not much above 150 years before Christ; and yet this is the main argument advanced in defence of the Samaritan letters being the antient Hebrew characters; of the validity of which, and the genuineness of the Samaritan shekels, more hereafter.

The argument in favour of the Pentateuch being written in the square character, taken from the similarity of Daleth and Resh, occasioning different readings of words, may be used with respect to the second book of Samuel, as written in the same character,

1 Epiph. de ponder. 2 Apologet. c. 18. b Ut supra, p. 301, 304, 305.
racter, the penmen of which seem to be Gad and Nathan, see 1 Chron. xxix. 19. in which the king of Zobab is called Hadadezer, 2 Sam. viii. 3. but the writer of the book of Chronicles, generally supposed to be Ezra, putting Resh for Daleth, thro' the likeness of the letters, calls him Hadadrezzer, 1 Chron. xviii. 3. and so one of David's worthies is called Shammah the Harodite, 2 Sam. xxiii. 25. but in 1 Chron. xi. 27. Shammoth the Harorite; where may be observed another difference, arising from the same cause, the likeness of the letters ן and ב the same man being called Shammah in one place, and Shammoth in the other; and that it cannot be owing to the mistakes of late transcribers, since the same difference is to be observed in the Septuagint version of both places; besides there is another difference in the name. Hadodite in Sam. is written with a ב Cheth, and the Harodite in Chronicles with an ה He, which two letters are also very similar in the square character; whereas, neither the ה He and τ Tau, nor the ב Cheth and ה He are at all alike in the Samaritan character. So that the same that is called Hiddai 2 Sam. xxiii. 30. is Hurai or Churai, 1 Chron. xi. 32.
xi. 32. and another is called the Gadite 2
Sam. 23. 36. and Haggeri, or the Hagge-
rite, 1 Chron. xi. 38. so thro' the likeness
of Yod and Vau in the square character,
which have none in the Samaritan, as be-
fore observed, the king of Tyre is called
Hiram, 1 Kings. v. 1, 2. and Huram 2
Chron. ii. 3. 11.

Aben Chabib or R. Moses Schem Tob, a
Jew, who lived about the year 1480, was
shewn in the kingdom of Valentia in Spain,
a sepulchral monument of a general of A-
maziab king of Judah, on the top of a
mountain; which, tho' much effaced, he
was just able to read a verse or two in
rhyme and metre, at the end of which
was נְבֵן יָשָׁר; from whence he concluded
that such kind of verse was in use with his
ancestors, when in their own land: and he
might have concluded also the antiquity of
the Hebrew letters, as Buxtorff* observes,
could this inscription be thought genuine;
but it is hard to conceive how a general of
Amaziah, king of Judah, should be bur-
ried in Spain: and of like credit must be
accounted the grave of Adoniram, the tax-
gatherer

* R. Azariah, Imre Binah, c. 60. fol. 182.  
De liter. 
Heb. i. 27. & de prosod. metric. ad calc. Heb. Gram.
gatherer for Solomon and Rehoboam, in the same country, and found at the same time; and could the account be credited which Benjamin of Tudela gives of the cave of Machpelah, where he says there are six graves, of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca and Leah, opposite to one another, on which are written "this is the grave of Abraham," and so on the grave of Isaac, and on the rest, it would prove the very early antiquity of such letters; but these are not to be depended on.

The Hebrews have five letters, which they call double letters, or final ones, because the figure of them is different at the end of a word, from what it is at the beginning of one, or in the middle of one; and these are Mem, Nun, Tzade, Pe, and Caph, commonly called Manatpach; these must be of very antient use, they are mentioned in Bereshith Rabba, and in both the Talmuds; in the one they are said to be used by the seers or prophets, and in the other to be an Halacah or tradition of Moses from Sinai; yea, by an antient writer they are said to be known by Abraham,

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2 Itiner. p. 48, 49.  
3 Paralh. 1. fol. 1. 4.  
4 T. Bab. Sabbath, fol. 104. 1.  
5 T. Hierol. Megillah, fol. 71. 4.  
6 Pirke Eliczer c. 48.
and indeed they seem to be as early as the other letters in the alphabet. Hence Abraham de Balm is makes the Hebrew alphabet consist of twenty-seven letters; and Jerom speaks of these five final letters as of as early, and equal use with the twenty-two letters, and so Epiphanius; and Irenaeus, before them, is thought, by Dr. Grabe to refer to a final Hebrew letter, when he says, "that God, in Hebrew, is called Baruch (blessed) which consists of two letters, and a half;" Dr. Grabe's note upon it is, that ̀ is taken for half of the letter ̀; but in that he is mistaken, for the word has not that letter, nor has that letter a final, but ̀, and the final of that does not shorten, but lengthen the letter. Now if these final letters were of Moses and the prophets, then the law and the prophets must be written in the Hebrew characters now in use, and not in the Samaritan characters, for the Samaritans have no final letters; and particularly the book of the prophet Isaiah, which was written 200 years or more before the supposed change of letters by Ezra, must be written not in the Samaritan

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ritan character, according to that notion, but in the modern Hebrew; since the Mem final, contrary to common usage, appears in the middle of the word לשרבה If. ix. 6. which has occasioned much speculation and enquiry, both among the Jews and christians, which could not appear if written in the Samaritan character; in which, as before observed, are no final letters; and that it was so read in the antient Hebrew copies, is clear from both Talmuds*, where it is written and reasoned upon, and the Jerusalem Talmud was finished A. D. 230. Jerom w owns the reading of it, and offers a reason for it, and observes that the Mem clausum, in the middle of the word לשרבה is so written for the sake of a mystery, to shew the exclusion of the Jews from the kingdom of Christ; even that same Jerom makes this remark, who says, it is certain that Ezra changed the Jewish letters; but if Isaiah wrote in the Samaritan character, as that change supposes, it would spoil the remark he has made; in this he contradicts himself. This is an observation of Wasmuth's; but I suspect that Wasmuth's.T. Hierof. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 4. T. Bab. ib. fol. 94. 1. Apud Wasmuth. Vindic. Heb. par. 1. p. 44.
muth has mistaken Hieronymus de sancta fide, a later writer, who wrote a book against the Jews, for Hieronymus the antient father; since I can find no such treatise as is referred to by him in Jerom's works, either genuine or ascribed to him.

The book of Daniel, if written by himself, as it seems plainly to be, must be written before the pretended change of letters by Ezra; the Jews in the Talmud * indeed say it was written by the men of the great synagogue, that is the synagogue of Ezra; but the reason given for it is frivolous, as in the Glos upon the place, that prophecy was not suffered to be written without the land (of Israel); for did not Moses write the Pentateuch without the land? and was not Ezekiel ordered by God to write among the captives at the river Chebar, Exek. i. 3. and xxiv. 2.? Josephus * is express for it, that Daniel wrote his own prophecies, and left them to be read, and this is clear from the book itself, ch. xii. 4. and from the words of Christ in Matt. xxiv. 15. now since this book was written partly in Hebrew, and partly in Chaldee,

* T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. Antiqu. l. 10.
 c. 11. l. 7.
Chaldee, I ask, in what letter it is most probable it was written, whether in two different characters? which seems not at all probable, and whether in one character; what most probably that was, whether the Samaritan or the square letter? it should seem more probable to be the latter, according to the hypothesis of those who are for the change of letters by Ezra, who suppose that was the character used in Chaldea and Babylon, where Daniel lived; and I should think it more probable for another reason, because it was better known to the Jews, for whose use chiefly that book was written: and particularly it deserves consideration, in what letter or character the hand-writing Belshazzar saw on the wall was written, which the Chaldeans could not read, only Daniel the Jew. It is certain the words in Daniel v. 25. are Chaldee, and had they been written in their own characters, which were the same since called Samaritan, as will be shewn in the following chapter; the Chaldeans, no doubt, could have read them, though they might not have understood the meaning of them: now tho’ we can’t be certain of the character, yet it is probable it was the square character
character then and now in use with the Jews, to which Daniel was accustomed before he came to Babylon, and therefore could easily read the hand-writing, tho' without doubt it was by divine inspiration that he gave the interpretation of it. *Josephus ben Gorion* is quite clear in this; the letters, he says, were the holy tongue, that is, Hebrew, but the writing or words were the Syriac tongue, or the Chaldee; and indeed if these words had been in a different character from that which Daniel wrote, it is much he had not given them in it.

Bianconi*, the last that wrote on the antiquity of the Hebrew letters, is of opinion that the Chaldeans used the same characters with the Hebrews. He supposes their language to be the same, which he argues from the relation of Abraham and Nabor being brethren, and from the Hebrews descending from the one, and from the other the Chaldeans; hence *Josephus* calls the Chaldeans their kindred; tho’ perhaps the latter rather sprung from Arphæsad; he

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*a* Hist. Heb. l. i. c. 5. p. 25.  
*b* Contr. Apion. l. i. s. 13.
he urges the conversation which passed between Abraham's servant and Nabor's family, when he was sent thither to take a wife for Isaac, and what passed between the men of Haran, Nabor's city, and Jacob, and between him and Rachel and Laban, in which there appear'd to be no difficulty of understanding one another. All which is true, and yet the language might not be exactly the same; the Chaldee being a dialect of the Hebrew, might be understood by the Hebrews, especially in those earlier and purer times, when the deviation from the Hebrew might not be so great as afterwards; and yet it is certain that Jacob and Laban used a different language, at the time of their covenanting together, and gave different names to the heap which was the witness between them, tho' to the same sense. This learned writer indeed thinks that the Chaldean name of it was given by anticipation, and that it was called so by Laban's sons afterwards, which being known to Moses, he inserted it: but be it so, that will prove the difference of that language in the times of Moses at least, and which, in the times of Hezekiah, appears to be still more different from the Hebrew,
since the common people among the Jews understood it not, 2 Kings xviii. 26. and in the times of the captivity, some of the Hebrews, carried captive, were taught the Chaldean tongue, Dan. i. 4. and the difference between that and the Hebrew may be seen in the books of Daniel and Ezra, yea, it is called a language not known nor understood by the Jews, Jer. v. 15. now from the sameness of language, as this writer supposes, he proceeds to argue the sameness of character, which however probable it may be thought to be, it is not conclusive. The Syriac and Chaldee are nearer to each other, than either to the Hebrew, and yet their characters are very different, at least as we now have them. But what this learned writer seems chiefly to depend upon, and what he thinks to be greatly to his purpose is, the instance of Cyrus being able to read the prophecies in Isaiah, concerning himself, according to Josephus; which he imagines he could not have done, if the Chaldee and Hebrew characters were not the same. He supposes he understood the Chaldee language, and could read that, having been some time in the court of Darius; but

*Antiq. I. 11. c. 1. f. 2.*
but that is not quite certain, since at his taking of Babylon it does not appear that the Chaldee tongue was much known in his army; for he then gave orders, according to *Xenophon*⁴, to those who understood the Syrian or Chaldee language to proclaim that such of the inhabitants that were found in the streets, should be slain, but those that kept within doors should be safe; and it was immediately after this, even in the first year of his reign with *Darius*, that he gave liberty to the Jews to return to their own land, when he had knowledge of the prophecy of *Isaiah* concerning himself; and besides, why may he not be thought to know the Hebrew character also as well as the Chaldee, supposing them different? he was a very enterprising prince and had conquered many nations, and might be master of many languages, as *Mithridates* king of *Pontus* was, and especially of the Hebrew, if what is said by an *Arabic* writer⁵ is true, that he married the sister of *Zerubbabel*, and his mother also is said to be a Jewess; and after all, the whole depends upon the testimony of *Josephus*,

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⁴ *Cyropoeia*, 1. 7. c. 23.  
⁵ *Abulpharag*. *Hist. Dynafr. dyn. 5. p. 82.  
Jēphus, that he did read the prophecy of Isaiah, who produces no authority for it; and if he did read it, it might be through an interpreter, or as translated for him, supposing him ignorant of the Hebrew language and its character: and it can hardly be thought that when the same Jōsephus says † that Alexander was shewn the prophecy in Daniel concerning himself, that he understood Hebrew, or the language in which it was written, but that it was read and interpreted to him. There is a passage I confess in Jōsephus ‡, which makes the Hebrew and Syriac character very similar; for according to him, Dēme-trius the librarian of Ptolemy Philadelphus told the king when he acquainted him with the Jewish writings, that their character was very much like to the Syriac letters, and were pronounced like to them; but according to Aryanus †, and whose words are also preserved in Eusebius, Dēmetrius said very much the contrary; that the Jews, as the Egyptians, had a peculiar character, and a peculiar pronunciation; some think they used the Syriac, but it is not

not so, says he, it is in another form and manner.

Thus have I traced the Hebrew letters and characters from the beginning of them to the times of Ezra, when the supposed change took place; what I undertook to shew was no more than that it is probable that the ancient letters of the Jews, and which they have always retained, are the square letters, as they are commonly called, or those in which the sacred scriptures are now extant; and I think I have made it appear to be probable. I lay no stress on the pillars of Seth, nor the tables of Cainan, and the writing of Enoch, nor the letters of the law, and the fancies of the Jews about them and the manna, nor upon any inscription on sepulchral monuments; but I think it is probable, that as the first language men spoke and was after the confusion of tongues called the Hebrew language, to distinguish it from others, if there were letters before that confusion, as it seems reasonable to suppose there were, they were such as were proper and peculiar to it, and it is probable that they afterwards continued in it; and whereas the alphabet of the Hebrew language appears
pears to be the first of the oriental languages, from whence the rest have the names, order, and number of their letters, it is probable, yea it seems more than probable, that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were those of the square kind, since to them only the names of the letters in their signification correspond: it is probable that the law of the ten commands, was written and given in those characters, and not in the Samaritan; it is more probable the letters on the written mountains, supposed to be written by the Israelites in the wilderness, when encamped, and on their travels there, were of the same kind, rather than of the Samaritan, or any other; it is probable, that the letters on the plate of gold the high priest wore on his forehead were the same as now in use, and that Moses wrote his Pentateuch, in the same character; that Isaiah also wrote his prophecies in the same; and that the book of Daniel, and particularly the hand-writing that terrified Belshazzar, were written in the same; nor is there any just reason to believe that the Jews ever had any other sort of letters, nor that Ezra changed their ancient ones for those; for, as has been already observed,
observed, he never would have done it without a divine command, which it does not appear he had; and if he would have done it, and had had ever such an inclination to it, he never could have done it; nor is it credible that the Jews in Babylon so forgot their language, and their letters, as to make such a change necessary, which is suggested*. Can it be thought that the men who remembered the first temple in its glory, and wept at laying the foundation of the second, Ezra iii. 12. should forget their language and the alphabet of it, when the greater part were only fifty-two years there? for the seventy years are to be reckoned from the fourth of Jeboiakim, eighteen years before the destruction of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and their being carried captive by him into Babylon; where they lived together in bodies, did not mix with the Chaldeans, nor intermarry with them, and conversed together in their own language, had their sacred books in it to read, held a correspondence with Jeremiah by letters, at the first of the captivity, and had the ministry and sermons of Ezekiel to attend upon in it Ezek. i. 1, and iii. 15, and xxx. 30, 33.

* Eliae Praefat. Methurgeman.
nor is it true that their language was corrupted in Babylon; the captives that returned spoke the language of the Jews purely, only the children of some few, whose fathers had married wives, not in Babylon, but women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, after the return from the captivity, who spoke half in the language of those people, for which Nehemiah reproved them; and this shews it was not a general thing: and certain it is that the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi wrote in pure Hebrew, as it was in the days of Moses; the same roots, prefixes, suffixes, idioms, constructions, and terminations, are to be observed in them as in the Pentateuch of Moses. Upon the whole, the Jews certainly spoke the Hebrew language after their return from the captivity, and some when they came back to Persia again, in Nehemiah's time; nor had he forgot it, nor disused it, for walking before Susa, the chief city of Persia, as Josephus relates, he overheard some strangers lately come from Jerusalem discoursing together in the Hebrew tongue, and understanding them, he asked

* Antiqu. l. xi. c. 5. l. 6.
asked the questions as in Neb. i. 2. he himself wrote in Hebrew, as did Ezra, not only his own book, but the books of Chronicles, as is supposed; yea, some of the Psalms were written after the return from the captivity, as Ps. cxvii. cxviii. and even as late as the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, and all in pure Hebrew. Daniel in the captivity wrote in Hebrew, excepting what concerned the Chaldeans; and so did Ezekiel. The book of Esther, supposed to be written by Mordecai, was written in pure Hebrew; and if Abasuerus was Xerxes, it must be written many years after the captivity; and in his time, Ps. lxxviii. is by some thought to be written. It is the nature and glory of the Hebrew language to have been always constant and invariable, and so it is probable its letters were; the Jews glory in their sacred writings, that no innovation was ever made in them. Josephus says, "it is manifest in fact in what veneration and credit we have our letters or books; for though so many ages are past, (as almost 3000 years, as he says) yet no man has dared to add any thing to them, nor to take any thing from

Cont. Apion. 1. 1. f 8.
"from them, nor to change them:" it is plain from hence, that this historian knew nothing of the change of the letters of the sacred writings made by Ezra, which must be an innovation in them. Philo the Jew, says "our law only is firm, unmoveable, unshaken, sealed as it were with the seals of nature; it remains firmly from the time it was written, until now; and it is to be hoped it will remain immortal throughout all ages, as long as do the sun and moon, the whole heaven, and the world." The eighth article of the Jewish creed runs thus: *"I believe with a perfect faith, i.e. sincerely, that the whole law which is now in our hands, is that which was given to Moses our master, on whom be peace, without any change and alteration;" but we have a greater testimony than these, of the unalterableness of the law, and even of the letters in which it was written, the words of Christ in Matt. v. 18. for verily I say unto you, 'till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;

* De vita Mosis l. 2. 656. * Seder Tephillah, fol. 86. 2; Abarbinel. Pærfat. in Jer.
fulfilled; which though it is not to be understood of the bare letter \( \text{Yod} \), which as it is sometimes redundant, so in some places wanting, as in 1 Sam. xxi. 2. 2 Sam. xvi. 23. and xxi. 8. Nebemiah xii. 46. and though it is a proverbial expression, signifying the unchangeableness and unalterableness of the law, with respect to the least precept in it; yet it is founded upon, and is an allusion to the writing of the law, and the letters of it; not to any copy of it in any language whatever; but to the original writing of it, and its letters, in which it had continued unto his time, and in which the \( \text{Iota} \) or \( \text{Yod} \) is the least of the letters; and therefore could have no respect to the Samaritan copy of the law, in which language it is not the least letter, but a very large one; which has besides the stroke above, three large prongs, descending from it, each of which is as large again as the Hebrew \( \text{Yod} \); which is so small, that Irenæus\(^1\) calls it half a letter; and to which our Lord manifestly refers: and this makes it at least highly probable, that the law was originally written not in the Samaritan, but in the square Hebrew letters.

\(^1\)Adv. Hæref. I. 2. c. 41.
letters, which had unalterably remained unto the times of Christ: all which make it greatly probable, that the Jews only had one sort of letters, which always remained with them, and are what are extant to this day.

Bianconi*, the learned writer before-mentioned, is quite clear in it, that the Hebrew letters were never changed by Ezra, nor by any public authority; and which he judges improbable, since neither he nor Josephus make mention of any such change; and from the great numbers of Jews left in the land at the captivity, and the return of multitudes from it; and from Ezra's coming to them with a large number also, and that sixty or eighty years after the return of the first; and from the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, and from the shekels in the times of the Maccabees, which supposing such a change would have been not in the Samaritan, but in the square character; and from the unlikelihood of a conquered people taking the characters of an enemy's language, and quitting their own, and that after they had been many years delivered from them.

He supposes, that the Hebrews, Chaldeans, Phænicians, and Samaritans, had all the same characters originally, and that there was a change made among the Jews long after the times of Ezra, from the ancient character to the square one; and that it began in the shekels, in the time of the Maccabees, in which he observed a mixture of the ancient and modern characters, and supposes, that by little and little the change was made, from frequent transcribing the Bible, and daily writing; and that the modern letters were gradually formed from use, and the swift manner of writing, and for the convenience of it: but it does not seem probable that a character should be mended through swiftness of writing, and that such a grand, majestic, regular, and well-formed character, as the square letter is, should be produced in that way; but rather that the ill-shaped, ragged, rough, and deformed Samaritan character, should spring from thence; and which seems to be the fact, but not so late as the times of the Maccabees; but as early as the division and dispersion of the nations, in the times of Peleg; so Gaffarellus * observes.

* Unheard-of Curiosities, c. 13. f. 6. p. 40
serves, that the Samaritan characters are corrupted from the Hebrew; and he adds, this is so certain a truth, as that it is a point of infinite perverseness to offer to doubt of it. According to Dr. Bernard's table of alphabets, called Orbis eruditi Literatura a charactere Samaritico deducita, it has been thought, that the letters of all nations must have sprung from the Samaritan character; but this seems to depend much on fancy and imagination; and I am inclined to think, that all are deducible from the Hebrew square character, the Assyrian first, then the Phænician, from that the Greek, and so on; according to Hermannus Hugo, the Hebrew letters (the present ones) were the first; next sprung from them the Chaldaean letters, which he says are scarce extant; then the Assyrian, or Babylonian, and the Syriac, or Aramaean, and from the Syriac, the Samaritan.

The principal argument by which the hypothesis opposed, is supported, is taken from some coins or shekels, said to be dug up in Judea, with these words on them, Jerusalem the holy, and the shekel of Israel, the letters of which, it is asserted,
settled, agree, in form, with the Samaritan. Now as the Samaritans, because of their aversion to the Jews, and the ten tribes after their separation from the other two, had nothing to do with Jerusalem, nor any esteem for it, neither of them can be thought to strike these pieces; and it is inferred from hence, that they must have belonged to the Jews before the captivity, and to the Israelites before the separation of the ten tribes; and consequently the Samaritan letters, supposed to be the same with those on the coins, were the ancient Hebrew characters, and in which the books of the Old Testament were written; and this argument is thought to be unanswerable: but it should be observed, that the letters on the most unexceptionable of these coins differ considerably from those in the Samaritan Pentateuch, and seem to resemble, in some instances, the Hebrew almost as much as the Samaritan; and besides the oldest of them do not precede the settlement of the high-priesthood in the Asmonæan family, and were not much above one hundred and fifty years before the æra of Christ, and some of them are later;
later; to which may be added, there are coins, both silver and brass, with inscriptions in the square character, which according to them are much more ancient than the other, and so prove the superior antiquity of the square character to that of the Samaritan. Rab. Azariah says, that he saw among some ancient coins at Mantua, a silver coin which had on one side of it the form of a man's head, and round about it, King Solomon, in the holy tongue, and square writing, and on the other side the form of the temple, and round about it written the temple of Solomon; and Hottinger affirms, he saw one of the same sort in the collection of the Elector Palatine. The Jews in their Talmud, speak of a Jerusalem coin, which had David and Solomon on one side, and the words, Jerusalem, the holy city, on the other side; and of a coin of Abraham's, having on one side, the Hebrew words for an old man and an old woman, and on the other side, those, for a young man and a young woman; and the learned Christopher Wagensiel

* Prazfat. ad Cippi Heb. p. 41.  
* T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 97, 2. vid. Wafer. de Num. antiqu. l. 2. c. 5.
Wagenseil assures us, he had both these coins in his own possession, of which he gives the figures with the words on them, in the square letters; besides Abrabam, the Jews * speak of three more, that coined money, Joshua, David, and Mordecai; the coin of Joshua had on one side a bullock, and on the other, an unicorn. See Deut. xxxiii. 17. that of David's had a staff and scrip on one side, and a tower on the other; that of Mordecai's had sackcloth and ashes on one side, and a crown of glory on the other; elsewhere † it is said, it had Mordecai on one side, and Esther on the other: there was also a coin of Moses; I myself have seen a coin of his, having on one side, his face, with his ears horned, like rams horns, and underneath is the word מָטָשׁ, in square characters, and on the other side, the first commandment, in the same character, לָיָיוֹ הַחַיָּה לְלֹא and thou shalt have no other God before me; and which exactly agrees with one Mr. Selden * had in his possession, found among some rubbish at Shene in Surrey.

Surry. It will be said, these coins are spurious; the same may be, and is said of those that have the Samaritan characters on them; nor is there any reason to believe that those shekels or coins which have on them, Jerusalem the holy, and the shekel of Israel, are any of them indisputably genuine. Ottius and Reland, who have applied themselves closely to the study of those coins, have as good as confessed it; and Spanheim, by what he has said, appears to be in a very great doubt about it. The celebrated Charles Patin, so famous for his skill in coins and medals, and who had free access to the cabinets of all the princes in Europe, declared many years ago to the learned Christopher Wagenfeil* with great assurance, that he never found in those collections, an Hebrew coin, but what was manifestly spurious: wherefore these coins are not to be depended on, nor can any sufficient argument be drawn from them in favour of any hypothesis. Moreover, it has been said; that the ancient Hebrew or Samaritan characters, were given to the Cuthites or Samaritans, and

left with them out of hatred to them, and
that the square letters in the times of Ex-
ra were chosen, taken, and retained by
the Jews for their use; but then how
comes it to pass that the Samaritan charac-
ters were re-assumed and inscribed on the
coins three hundred years after, namely,
on those of Simon the high priest, of Jo-
athan his brother, and of John Hyrcanus,
his son, as the coins published by Mr.
Swinton shew * and by John Hyrcanus,
the last of these, Samaria was destroyed,
the temple in Gerizzim demolished, after
it had stood two hundred years, and the
Samaritans made tributary to the Jews;
and it is observably, that upon the coin of
Hyrcanus, on one side are Samaritan let-
ters, and on the other Greek letters, and
which was usual with the Carthbaginians,
Syrians, and Sidonians; and there is an in-
fstance of it in a coin of Demetrius: * and by
the way, this furnishes us with an answer
to a question of Bianconi †, who asks, why
the Maccabees did not put Greek letters on
their money, a well known custom in
that

that age, and common to all the east, for it seems he never saw any; and adds, that Jewish coins with two sorts of letters were never seen. But to proceed; from the different letters on the coin of Hyrcanus, from the one, it can no more be inferred, that Samaritan letters were in use among the Jews, than that from the other, Greek letters were; and though I profess no skill in coins, I should think that the reason of those different characters were designed by Hyrcanus as an insult on both people, and as a triumph over them, and to perpetuate the fame of his conquests both over the Samaritans and the Greeks, or Syro Macedonians: however, it appears, that from these coins no argument can be taken to support the hypothesis, that the ancient Hebrew characters were the Samaritan; and indeed it is entirely inconsistent with it; for how does it appear that those letters were left to the Samaritans, and others taken by the Jews? and it is also clear that there is no necessity to give into the notion of a twofold character in use with the Jews, the one sacred, in which their holy books were written, namely, the
the square character; and the other common, used in coins and civil affairs, as the Samaritan; to which some Jews and Christians seem to have been led by the above coins; for though the Egyptians had their sacred characters and their common ones, and so had the Greeks yet not the Jews, whose priests had no juggling tricks to play, as the priests of Egypt and Greece had; and though some later Jews have given into the notion of a double character, as in use formerly, yet it is not mentioned in their ancient writings, as if they had one for the sanctuary and sacred uses, and another for common use; the only place I have met with, that seems to favour it, is the Targum of Jonathan, on Gen. xxxii. 2. " and he called the name of the place in the language of the holy house, " Mabanaim," which is not to be rendered the language of the house of the sanctuary, or the temple, as by some, since that is usually called, מַבָּנָא or בִּית מַבָּנָא, as in Gen. xxviii. 17, 22. and not בִּית פַּלְמִיָּה as here;

here; but the language of the holy house, or family, the people of God, that is, the Hebrew tongue; to which may be added, an ancient writer among the christians, Irenæus*, who says, that "the ancient and first letters of the Hebrews, and called sacerdotal, are ten in number;" but that he means to distinguish them from any other letters or characters, used by the Hebrews, does not appear; besides, he speaks only of ten, and what he means is not easy to say; however, by them he cannot mean the Samaritan letters, because among these letters he reckons the Yod, which he calls half a letter, which cannot agree with the Samaritan Yod, but does with that of the square character.

* Adv. Hæref. 1. 2. c. 41.
Concerning the Original of the Samaritans, their Language and Letters.

HAVING, in the preceding Chapter, shewn that it is probable that the Hebrews always had the same letters, without any material change or alteration, and which have been retained by them, and are in use to this day; I shall endeavour, in this chapter, to make it appear as probable, that the Samaritans always had distinct letters from the Jews, and retained them; so that there never was any commutation of letters between them: and in order to set this in as clear a light as I can, it may be proper to enquire into the original of letters, and particularly of the Samaritans.

It is highly probable that there were letters before the flood, as already hinted, and so before the confusion of tongues, which, as the first language they belonged to, were pure and uncorrupt, and the original of others; which first letters were the Hebrew, that being
being the first tongue, as Hermannus Hugo observes; nor, as he adds, did the figures of letters begin to differ before the diversity of languages at Babel. But my enquiry is, concerning the first letters after the division of tongues; and these are claimed by various nations: some say they were the invention of the Egyptians, others of the Phœnicians, and others of the Chaldaens. Many ascribe the invention of letters to the Egyptians, to the Thoth, Taaautus, the Mercury of the Egyptians, as Sanchoniatho, Gellius, and others, as some in Plato; but Pliny says the Phœnicians bear away the glory of it; and if fame is to be credited, as Lucan expresses it, they were the first that dared to mark words by figures. Suidas ascribes the invention of letters to them, and so does Mela; but Vossius, in his observations on him, is of opinion, that by letters he means numbers, and that Arithmetic and Astronomy were the invention of the Phœnicians,
nicians, which need the assistance of numbers; and perhaps the true reason why letters have been thought to be found out by them is, because they first brought them into Greece; but as Dr. Cumberland remarks, the Chaldeans and Assyrians will not grant them this honour, but contend for an earlier invention of them, and that the inventors lived among them, and not in Phænicia, nor in Egypt; and Pliny is of opinion, that the Assyrian letters were always, or that the Assyrians always had letters; which he confirms by the testimonies of Epigenes, Berosus and Critodemus, who say, they had observations of the stars inscribed on bricks, for a long course of years past; as they might have from the beginning of their nation, or nearly, and which was very early: it was in their country the confusion of tongues was made; and their language comes near to the Hebrew, the first and pure language, from which theirs is a deviation; and so their letters might be taken from theirs, though greatly corrupted. Elias observes that the Syrian language is nearest to the holy, or Hebrew language, of all languages; and quotes

1 Sanchoniatho, p. 191.  m Ut supra, l. 7. c. 56. * Prae-

st. ad Methurgeman.
Aben Ezra as of opinion that the Syrian language is no other than the holy tongue corrupted; which corruption Elias thinks took place after Abraham departed from Chaldea, though perhaps it might be sooner; so Ephrem Syrus, who well understood that language, says*, that the Syrian language has an affinity with the Hebrew, and in some respects nearer reaches the sense of the scriptures; and R. David Ganz † observes, that those who were nearest to the place where the confusion was made, were purer and nearer to the holy tongue, as the Syrians and Arabians; the Assyrian, Chaldee, and Syrian language and letters were the same; and they are of great affinity, if not the same, with the old Phænician, now called the Samaritan, as will be seen hereafter; and the ducts of their letters may well be thought to be had from the Hebrew; but as the Assyrians are the first the heathen writers had knowledge of, to them they impute the original of letters, as many do*. Diodorus Siculus ‡ relates, that some say the Syrians (that is, the Assyrians)

Syrians) were the inventors of letters; and Eusebius also observes the same, that some say, the Syrians first devised letters; and he seems willing to allow it, provided that by Syrians are meant Hebrews; but no doubt those writers intended the Syrians or Assyrians, commonly so called: some, in Clemens of Alexandria, join the Assyrians and Phenicians together, as the inventors of letters; but the real fact seems to be as follows:

The Phenicians received their letters from the Assyrians or Syrians, and not from the Hebrews, as some have thought; not from Abram the ancestor of them, who, according to Suidas, invented the holy letters and language, the knowledge of which he says, the Hebrews had, as being his disciples and posterity: that he invented the letters and language, may be doubted; but that he spoke, it is not be questioned, since he was forty-eight years of age, when the confusion of tongues was made, as before observed, and therefore spoke the pure language; yea, Elias Levita says, it was clear to him that language was confounded immediately after he went from

\[ \text{[101]} \]

\[ \text{Prepar. Evangel. ut supra.} \quad \text{Stromat. I. I. p. 307.} \]
\[ \text{In voce Aggaap.} \quad \text{Prefat. ad Methurgeman.} \]
from Chaldea, and that he and his ancestors spoke the holy tongue as received from Adam, to Noah, which may be admitted; but it cannot by any means be admitted, that when he came among the Canaanites, that he either learned the primitive or Hebrew language from them, as some have fancied, which they neither had, nor he needed, since he spoke it before; or that he taught it them. Eupolemus and Artapanus, who say, that Abraham taught the Phœnicians Astronomy, yet don't pretend that he taught them letters; nor is there any foundation for the one or the other, since he chose not to have such a free conversation and society with them as these required, who would not so much as bury his dead with them, nor suffer his son to intermarry with them; and the like precaution Isaac his son took with respect to Jacob, who for some years was out of the land, and when he returned, was but a sojourner in it, as his fathers had been; and after a while went down with his posterity into Egypt, where they abode at least two hundred years; and when they came from

* Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. 1. 9. c 17, 18.
from thence, and after forty years travel in
the wilderness, and entered the land of Ca-
naan, the inhabitants were either destroyed
by them, or they fled before them, and
even at the report of their coming*; and so
had no time to learn a language of them,
or receive letters from them. Cadmus, the
Phænician, whom Isocrates † calls the Si-
donian, is generally supposed to go from Phæ-
nicia to Greece, in the times of Joshua,
whither he carried letters, and therefore
must be possessed of them before Joshua
entered Canaan; he is said to come to
Rhodes in Greece, and at Lindus to offer to
Lindia Minerva a brass pot with Phænici-
an letters on it; and the huge serpents,
who, upon his coming thither, are said ‡ to
waste that country, seem to be no other
than the Hivites, the same with the Cadmo-
nites, Gen. xv. 19. which the word Hivites
signifies, whom Cadmus brought with him
thither. Others of the Phænicians or Ca-
naanites fled into Africa, particularly the
Girgasites, as is asserted in the Jerusalem

* Targum. in Cant. 3. 5. † Helenæ Laudat. in fine.
‡ Diodor. Sic. l. 5. p. 329. ¹ T. Bab. Sanhedrin,
fol. 91. 1.
Talmud*, and is confirmed by Procopius*, who says they came into Numidia, where they had a garrison in the place where in his time was the city of Tingis (now called Tangier), where they erected two pillars of white stone, then in being, A. D. 540, which he himself saw and read, on which in Phænician letters were written, "we are they that fled from the face of Jesus, (or Joshua) the robber, the son of Nave (or Nun)." Suidas* says, it was written, we are the Canaanites; which is a full proof they had letters before the times of Joshua, and did not learn them of the Israelites when they came into Canaan; besides, it is clear from the scriptures also, that they had letters before that time, as appears from the names of some cities among them, particularly Debir, which in the Persian language, as Kimchi* from the Rabbins says, signifies a book; and which place was also called Kirjath-sannah, and Kirjath-sepher, which signify, that it was a city where either there was an academy for the instruction

struction of persons, or a library of books, or where the archives of the country were kept, a city of Archives, as the Targum, which supposes letters; and the Septuagint render it a city of letters, Josh. xv. 49. from all which it seems plain, that the Phœnicians or Canaanites did not receive letters from the Hebrews, but rather from the Assyrians or Syrians.

The Assyrians or Syrians, though they may be distinguished, the one having their name from Ashur, a son of Shem, and the other from Aram, a younger son of his, Gen. x. 22. hence they are called in Strabo, Aramaeans or Arimei; and in the times of Abaz king of Judah there were both a king of Assyria, and a king of Syria, yet these two names are often confounded, and indifferently used by the ancients, as if the same people, Syria being commonly thought to be a contraction of Assyria; so Lucian of Samosata in Syria, calls himself an Assyrian, and on the other hand, Tatian the Assyrian, is called by Clemens of Alexandria, a Syrian; these countries being contiguous, yea, the one a part of the other,

other, they may very well be called the one and the other; the Syrians, according to Suidas*, have their name from the Assyrians; hence Isidore* says, whom the ancients called Assyrians we call Syrians; so Justin⁴ remarks, that the Assyrians, who were afterwards called Syrians, held the empire three hundred years; and the same people who, according to Herodotus⁵, were by the Greeks called Syrians, are by the Barbarians called Assyrians, among whom were the Chaldeans; and Strabo observes⁶, that Semiramis and Ninus were called Syrians, by the one Babylon the royal city was built, and by the other Nineveh, the metropolis of Assyria; and that the same language was used both without and within the Euphrates, that is, by the Syrians strictly so called, and by the Babylonians or Chaldeans; and it need not seem strange that the Phœnicians should receive their letters from these people, since they were their neighbours, and lived so near them. Herodotus⁷ speaks of them as springing out of Syria, and dwelling in Syria, and of Phæ-

* In voce Aσυρια. ⁴ Orig. l. 9. c. 2. ⁵ A Trogo l. 1. c. 2. ⁶ Polymnia, five, l. 7. c. 63. ⁷ Geograph. l. 2. p. 58. ⁸ Clio, five, l. 1. c. 105. & Euterpe, five, l. 2. c. 116.
Phæncians and Syrians as together in Palestine. Phæncia is often described as included in Syria, and as a part of it; so Diodorus Siculus, speaking of Cæle-Syria, adds, in which Phæncia is comprehended; and Strabo says, some divide all Syria into Cæle-Syrians and Phæncians; and Clemens of Alexandria calls Phæncia, Phæncia of the Syrians; and Isidore observes, that Syria has in it, the provinces Comagene, Phæncia, and Palestine; so Pliny: Philo* the Jew asserts, that Phæncia, Cæle-Syria, and Palestine, went by the common name of Canaan in the times of Moses; and the Phæncians and Assyrians are reckoned as one by Macrobius; with all which agree some passages of scripture; the woman of Canaan, in Mat. xv. 22. is called a Syro-Phæncian in Mark vii. 26. so the disciples are said to sail into Syria, and land at Tyre the chief city in Phæncia, Acts xxii. 3. and as their country was much the same, so their manners; hence the proverb, "the Syrians against the

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* Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 104. & l. 4. c. 89. † Bibliothec. l. 18. p. 591. ‡ Geograph. l. 16. p. 515. § Admon. ad Graec. p. 25. ¶ Orig. l. 14. c. 3. ′ Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12. ″ De vita Mosis l. i. p. 627. † Saturnal. l. i. c. 21. † Vid. Suidam in voce συρια. & Reinef. de Ling. Punic. p. 11.
the Phœnicians," signifying, their being a-
like as to temper and behaviour; their re-
ligion and deities were the same; the rites
of Adonis were common to them both;
Adad, the god of the Assyrians, is the same
with the Adodus of the Phœnicians; so
that, all things considered, it may well be
thought they had the same language and
letters, or nearly the same. Annius of Vi-
terbo affirms, that the ancient Assyrian
and Phœnician letters were the same, who
certainly was a man of learning, for the
times he lived in, and very inquisitive, how-
ever culpable he might be in publishing some
fragments as genuine, thought to be spuri-
ous; on which account perhaps he has been
a little too severely treated by critics, as Dr.
Clayton late bishop of Clogher has observed;
and who is of opinion, that his fragment
of Berosus, so much complained of, ought
not to be entirely rejected as spurious; and
the same writer says, that the first Phœ-
nix, from whom the Phœnicians had their
name, and the first Cadmus from whom the

9 Macrobi. Saturnal. i. i. c. 24. * Sanchoniatho apud
Euseb. Præpar. Evang. i. 2. p. 38. & Comment. in Xeno-
Bible, p. 19—22. c Annii Comment. in Manethon. Sup-
plement. p. 97.
the Greeks had their letters, sprung from Syria; which Phœnix, who is said by him to reign in Sidon, according to Sanchoniatho, was no other than Canaan the son of Ham; for he says, that "one of these (the Phœnicians) Isiris was the inventor of three letters, the brother of Chna (or Canaan) who was first called Phœnix."

The old Canaanitica or Phœnician language, and also the Punic, were the same; hence Augstus says, that the country-people living near him, who were a colony of the Phœnicians, when asked who they were, used to answer, in the Punic language, Chanani, Canaanites. Now, though this language was near the Hebrew language, so that the Hebrews and Canaanites could converse together as to understand one another, which appears from Abraham's conversation with them, Gen. xiv. 18—24, and xxiii. 3—16, and from the conversation of the Hebrew spies with Rabab the Canaanite, Josh. ii. 9—21. and from the names the Canaanites imposed on their cities before they came into the hands of

of the Hebrews, as is evident from the books of Joshua and Judges, unless those names were given them by Eber and his sons, who dwelt here before the Canaanites, as Dr. Lightfoot suggests; yet the language was not altogether the same, it differed much, and especially in after-times, and particularly in their colonies, where it had the name of the Punic. Austin having remarked, that the Hebrews call Messeb, observes, that "the word agrees with the Punic language, as very many Hebrew words, and almost all do;" which may be true of proper names in particular, but not of words in general. St. Jerome, who understood the Hebrew language better than Austin, affirms, that the Canaanitic or Punic language was bordering near unto the Hebrew, and in a great part near unto it; he does not say, as Fuller observes, in the greatest part, nor almost in every part, and still less in every part, but in a great part; and so Origen asserts, that

the Hebrew language differs both from the Syrian and the Phænicians. Jerom in one place says, that the Canaanitish or Punic language is a middle language between the Egyptian and the Hebrew. Salmafius suggests as if some thought that the Punic and Egyptian languages were the same; which can by no means be admitted.

It seems most probable what Jerom elsewhere observes, that the Canaanitish or Phænicians language is the Syrian, or nearly that; and Assin affirms, that the Hebrew, Punic, and Syrian languages are very near akin; and most of the words which he makes mention of as Punic, are plainly Chaldee or Syriac; so mammon, he says, is the word for gain, in the Punic language, and is the Syriac word used for riches in the time of Christ, Luke xvi. 9. hence with the Phænicians is the name of a man Abdamamon, which signifies a servant of mammon, riches wealth, or gain. see Mat. vi. 24: so he says blood, in the Punic language is called Edom; now in

the Hebrew tongue it is Dam; but in the Chaldee or Syriac tongue, it is, דאָל, or דאָל, which are frequently used in the Chaldee paraphrases: he also observes Baal in the Punic tongue, signifies Lord, and Samen heaven, and both together, Lord of heaven, which with Sanchoniatho a Phænician writer, is a deity of the Phænicians; and so Balsamen in the Pænulus of Plautus h, is manifestly of a Chaldee or Syriac termination: the above Phænician writer i speaks of a sort of intelligible animals, whom he calls Zophasemin, and which Philo Byblius, who translated his work out of the Phænician language into Greek, interprets seers, or contemplators of the heavens, which word also, is plainly in the Chaldee or Syriac dialect; and Kircher k affirms, that he had in his possession a fragment of Sanchoniatho, written in the Aramaean or Syrian language. The Maltese, or the inhabitants of the island called Melita, Acts xxviii. 1. a colony of the Phænicians as Diodorus Siculus l affirms,

firms; have in their language a great deal of the old Phænician or Punic unto this day; and it is observable, that their numerals from two to eleven, end in a, and from twenty to an hundred, in inm; which are exactly the terminations of the same numbers in the Chaldee or Syriac dialect. The Carthaginians were another colony of the Phænicians, and the old name of the city of Carthage was Cartheda; which, as Solinus a says, in the Phænician language, signifies the new city, being composed of קרה Kartha a city, and נגא new, which are both Chaldee words. There was a city in Canaan, or old Phænicia, called Hadattab, or Hazor-Hadattab, New Hazor, Josh. xv. 25. and another city there is called Kerioth: another name of Carthage we meet with in Plautus b, appears to be of Phænician original, Chadreranac, the chambers, lodging, or seat of Anak, that is, the Anakim, such as were in old Canaan; though, according to Dr. Hyde p, the word signifies, as he conjectures, the new city also: and Bochart q has observed

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observed many words in the Punic of Plautus, which are in the Syrian dialect; and there are several words in different authors said to be Punic or Phœnician, which are manifestly Chaldee or Syriac. Plutarch says, 'the Phœnicians call an ox Tor, which is the word used in Chaldee for it. Jonah's gourd, according to Jerom, was called Elkera in the Syriac and Punic language, as if they were the same. Sanctius observes, that in Spain a garden is called by a Punic name Carmen, which signifies a vineyard, though set with other trees; which Punic word, he makes no doubt (as he need not) comes from the Hebrew word Cerem, a vineyard, and which in the Chaldee language in the plural number is Cermin; and Charmis is the name of a city given by the Phœnicians, because of the multitude of vines about it. Isidore, says the Phœnicians call a new village Magar; the word is used by Plautus in his Pænulus, where it signifies a place in Carthage, some public building there,
there, and it is the same with the Syriac word Magar, which signifies an habitation; so Anna in Virgil, the sister of Dido, or Elisa, who were both Phœnicians, and daughters of Pygmalion king of Tyre, is the Syriac name for Hannah. See Luke ii. 36. Gades or Cadiz, corruptly called Cales, which belongs to Spain, the Phœnicians called Gadir or Gadir, which in the Punic language signifies an hedge, as is observed by many, and so it does in Chaldee; the reason of which name is, because that place was hedged about on all sides by the sea: the Syriac word Korban, used by the Jews in Christ's time for an oath, Mark vii. 11, is said by Theophras-tus* to signify the same in the Punic language; and Lachman is used by Athenæus* for bread, which the Syrians do call, and which in Syria is the best bread; and by the Syrians and Syria, he means Phœnicians and Phœnicia, where it seems it was so called, and is manifestly a Chaldee word; as is the word Nabla, the name of a musical in-

strument, said by him * to be an invention of the Phænicians; as Sambuca is of the Syrians, called the Phænician lyre, the same with the Chaldee Sabbêca, Dan. iii. 5. there rendered sackbut. Pausanias † uses this as a proof that Cadmus was not an Egyptian, but a Phænician; because Minerva is not called by the Egyptian word Sais, but by the Phænician word Siga, which comes from the Chaldee or Syriac word and to increase or be increased; from all which it appears, that the Chaldee or Syrian language and the Phænician are nearly the same, and so the letters may be supposed to be.

Let it be further observed, that the Greeks had their letters from the Phænicians, at least sixteen or seventeen of them, which Cadmus, some say Linus ‡; brought out of Phænicia into Greece; which, without mentioning their number, is asserted by Herodotus †*; who says, they were called Cadmeian and Phænician letters, and that he saw some of them at Thebes in Bœotia, engraved on some Tripods there, and that they were

* Ib. l. 4. c. 23. p. 175. † Βœotica, five, l. 9. p. 560.  
‡ Plin. l. 7. c. 7. c. 56. Irenæus adv. Hæres. l. 1. c. 12.  
† Suidas in voce Λυσ.  
* Terpœchore, five, c. 58. 59.
were greatly like the Ionic letters; the same says Diodorus Siculus of the original and names of those letters, and relates that the brass pot Cadmus offered to Minerva Lindia, had an inscription of Phænician letters on it: the Greeks therefore, themselves, acknowledge, that they had their letters from the Phænicians, as the above writers affirm, and so Euphorus, Zenodotus, and others; hence Josephus observes, that they glory in it, that they received them from them; so that this is a matter out of question: and Bianconi is of opinion, that the ancient Greeks used the very letters of the Phænicians; and indeed this seems to be the meaning of Herodotus, in the place before referred to; and Dictys Cretensis is said to have written his history of the Trojan wars, in the Greek language, but in Phænician letters; and so Linus and Orpheus wrote in the letters of the Pelasgi, the same with the Phænician, as says * Diodorus; and the Greeks formerly wrote as the Phænicians did, from

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the right to the left, for in this form was
the name of Agamemnon written, on his
statue at Olympia; and thus wrote the
Etrusci, who had their letters from the
Greeks, whose ancient language was the
Aramaean or Syrian; which way of writing by the Greeks, was gradually by little
and little diffused, and issued in a form like
that of the ploughing of oxen, called
εὐσφορνον, in which manner the laws of
Solon were written, as appears from Suidas and Harpocratian; that is alternately, from
the right to the left. Now as the Greeks re-
ceived their letters from the Phœnicians,
and there is a similarity of the letters of
the one to those of the other, as it is rea-
sonable to suppose there should, and as He-
rodotus, upon his own sight, affirms there
was, as before observed, nay, were the
same; so there is a great likeness between
the Greek and the present Samaritan let-
ters; as the Samaritans wrote from the
right hand towards the left, if the position
of the Samaritan letters be inverted for that
pur-

a Paufan. Eliac. i. five l. 5. p. 338. † Vid. Dickin-
son. Delphi Phœnic. c. 10. & Reinesium de lingua; Pu-
rica, c. 12. l. 30. † Reineuf. ib. c. 2. l. 16. c In
voce vocos. d In Ozzan.°
purpose, as Mr. Bedford remarks, the letters will appear to be the same; or, however, very much alike: the use to be made of this will soon and easily be perceived; for, as Bochart reasons, this being the case, it follows that the Samaritan characters are the very same which were used in Phænicia in the times of Cadmus; and it is acknowledged by many learned men, that the letters or characters of the ancient Canaanites, that is, the Phæncians, were either the same with, or very like to the Samaritan characters, or that the old Phænician letters, and the Samaritan are very similar, and nearly the same, so that they may be reckoned the same; and whereas the Phænicians received their letters from the Assyrians, or Chaldeans, it follows that the Samaritan letters being so like the Phænician, must be the same, or near the same, with the old Assyrian and Chaldean characters; and that the people who are properly called Samaritans, had both their language and their letters from the Chaldeans or Syrians, will

4 highly

appear probable from the original of them, next to be considered.

It is amazing to me, that some learned men should make the ten tribes of Israel that revolted under Jeroboam, the original of the Samaritans. Samaria indeed was built in the times of Omri, a successor of his, and not before, and by him, between whom and Jeroboam, reigned Nadab, Baasha, Elab and Zimri, and this city also became the metropolis of the ten tribes, and was inhabited only by Israelites, tho' never from hence were called Samaritans, but Israel or Ephraim; nor had they any more connexion with the people after called Samaritans than with the Scythians and Tartars; for it was not till after the Israelites were carried captive into Assyria, that those, after called Samaritans, were sent as a colony from thence to re-people Samaria, which was entirely stripped of its inhabitants by the king of Assyria; nor does it appear that those who were left in the land of Israel had any society with this new colony, or mixed with 'em, either in civil or religious things, but returned, at least, many of them, to the pure worship of God, and joined with the tribe,
tribe of Judah, and put themselves under the government of the kings of it, and went with that tribe captive into Babylon. Nor is it clear that either those of the ten tribes, or those of the two tribes, had anything to do with these Samaritans, for three hundred years after their first settlement in Samaria, nor they with them; even until they were joined by some renegade Jews in the times of Manasseh the priest, for whom a temple was built in Gerizim by Sanballat; the only instance is of the priest sent from Assyria to teach them the worship of the God of the land, which they very coolly and hypocritically received, still continuing in the idolatry they brought with them, and in which they continued to the times of Ezra, 2 Kings, xvii. 27, 28, 29, 33, 44. on which account the Israelites that were left in the land were obliged to keep at a distance from them, even when they first came among them, for had they joined them, it may reasonably be thought, there would have been a priest, who, though of Jeroboam's religion, could have instructed them as well as the priest sent from among the captives in Assyria, who also must have been
been of the same sort: now, either there were no priests left in the land, or, if there were, they had not joined the Samaritans, and though they had officiated in Jeroboam's idolatry, did not choose to join them in theirs; and certain it is, that in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Jews would have nothing to do with the Samaritans, especially in religious things, Ezra iv. 1, 2, 3. Nehemiah ii. 20. and though under the influence of Sanballat their governor, they received the renegado Jews with his son-in-law Manasseb at the head of them, it does not appear that they cordially embraced them, since in any time of trouble the Jews were in, [they did not care to own they had any connexion with them; so in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, by whom the Jews were greatly distressed, they wrote unto him, and desired they might not be considered as of the same religion with the Jews, and be involved with them in the same distress; since, though their ancestors had been forced into a compliance with some parts of their worship, yet they assured him they were different from them, both in their manners or customs, and in their original;
original; and, whereas they had built an altar on mount Gerizim, not dedicated to any deity, they desired it might, for the future be called the temple of the Grecian Jupiter; though, at other times, when the circumstances of the Jews were more favourable, then they claimed kindness with them, and derived their descent from Joseph, and his sons Manassiah, and Ephraim, as they did from Jacob in the times of Christ; and yet then the Jews had no dealings with them, John iv. 9, 12, and they are manifestly distinguished by our Lord himself from the Jews, and from the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt. x. 5, 6. John iv. 22. What is said in favour of the Samaritans by Jewish writers, as by Maimonides, and by Obadiah Bartenora, must be understood as expressing the opinion their ancestors had of them, after they embraced the Jewish religion; in which they thought they were hearty and sincere, and so gave credit to them, until the wise men of Israel, as they say, made a strict enquiry about 'em, and

and found that they worshipped the image of a dove; after which they reckoned them as other idolatrous heathens, and would have nothing to do with them, as is asserted by them in those very passages where the character is given of them, as strict observers of the written law.

A late writer suggests, that Jeroboam not only coined a new religion by the help of his priests, but a new language and letters, to keep the people close unto him, which language he supposes to be the Samaritan; but this is said without any proof, or shadow of probability; and with equal probability is what Genebrard, from a Jewish writer, asserts, and which perhaps may better suit the hypothesis of a change of letters, than where it is commonly placed; that "the Jews in Reoboam's time, that they might not join with the schismatic Israelites, in any use of sacred things, contrived the form of letters which are now used, i.e. the square letters, changing their former figures, and

and left those which have been since called the Samaritan letters; but, the Samaritans had their original language and letters elsewere; and from whence they had them, may be concluded from the account given of them in 2 Kings xvii. 24, 30, 31. where the places from whence they came are expressly named, and the idolatry they brought with them fully described, and in which they continued; and by considering which, it will appear, that they were originally Chaldeans or Phœnicians, and had the same religion, language, and letters they had; some of them were brought from Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire, and perhaps the greater part, since they are first mentioned; and who, no doubt, brought with them their language and letters, the Chaldean, as they did their idolatry; for they made Succoth benoth, or the tabernacles of the daughters, or booths of Venus, as Selden thinks it may be rendered; and which may have respect to the apartments in the temple of Mylitta, or Venus in Babylon, the like to which those

* De Dis Syr. Syntagm. 2. c. 7. p. 713.
those people made in Samaria, in which women, once in their lives, prostituted themselves to whomsoever asked them, in honour of Venus; of which filthy practice, Herodotus makes mention; and from the Babylonians the Phænicians had the same custom, their women prostituted themselves before their idols, and dedicated their gain to them, being strongly persuaded they would be propitious to them, and they should enjoy prosperity, as Athanasius affirms; and Valerius Maximus relates, that they had a temple called the temple of Sicca Venus, which is near in sound to succoth Benoth, where their matrons, before marriage prostituted their bodies for gain; and there was a Phænician colony, three days journey from Carthage, called Sicca Veneria; to which may be added, that it was a custom with the Cyprians, another colony of the Phænicians, for virgins before marriage to prostitute themselves, and give their gain to Venus; by all which, it is plain from whom these Samaritans received their impiety and impurity: others of these people

people were brought from Cutbath, or Cutba, a city in Ereæ, a province of Babylon, where it is said Abraham lived; the Samaritans are commonly called Cutbim, or Cutbites in Jewish writings; and so these were of the same country with the former, and had the same language and letters in all probability; the idol they made for themselves was Nergal, which is part of the name of two of the princes of Babylon, it being usual with great personages in the east to take their idols into their names. See Jer. xxxix. 3. this name according to Hillerus, signifies the fountain of light, and denotes the sun the Babylonians worshipped: the next that were brought to Samaria by the king of Assyria were brought from Ava the same with Ava, Is. xxxvii. 17. and perhaps the same with the Avim, Deut. ii. 23. a people that formerly dwelt in Phœnicia, or on the borders of it, from whence might be a colony of them in the country of Assyria or Babylon; in the Septuagint version of v. 31. they are called Hivites, which were one of the seven nations of Canaan.

Canaan, or of old Phœnicia, the remains of which had settled in those parts; these had for their idols, Nibbaz and Tartak, which according to Hillerus, signify the one the remote one feeth, that is, the sun which beholds all things, and the other a chain, denoting either the fixed stars chained to their places, or the Satellites of the planets fixed to their orbs, worshipped by the Chaldeans and Assyrians: the next came from Hamath, a city in Syria, on the northern borders of the land of Canaan, Numb. xxxiv. 8. their idol is called Askima, which, as Hillerus says, was with the Arabs, the name of a lion, the symbol of the sun; which might be worshipped by these men, under this name, as the sun was the chief object of the worship of the Assyrians and Phœnicians, as Macrobius observes: the last of this colony of the Samaritans, were men that came from Sepharvaim, which was either the Sipharab of Ptolemy, in Mesopotamia, or that which was near Babylon. Abydenus makes mention

* Onomastic. sacr. p. 605.  
* Ib. p. 609.  
* Suctual. l. 4. c. 21, 42.  
* Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.  
tion of, or rather, as Vitringa thinks, a city in Syro-Phœnicia, or a province in which Abydenus places Heliopolis, namely Cæle-Syria; and it is certain the idolatry these men were guilty of, is the same with that of the old Canaanites or Phœnicians, who burnt their children in the fire to Molech, Lev. xviii. 21. as these did to Anammelech and Adrammelech, the same with Molech, as the word Melech with which they end, shews, which signifies king, as Molech does: that the Phœnicians sacrificed their children to Saturn or Molech, is observed by Pliny, Eusebius, and Athanasius; hence these words of Eunnius, "poeni sunt soliti, suos sacrificare puellos," as did the Carthaginians, a colony of the Phœnicians, which is affirmed by Porphyry, Justin, Curtius, Pseudo-Justin Festus, Diodorus Siculus, and others; from all which it clearly appears, that the Samaritans sprung from the Assyrians or Chaldeans, and the Phœnicians; and sometimes they would call themselves Sidonians.

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nians, from Sidon, a chief city in Phænicia; so that they may well be thought to bring with them to Samaria, the language and letters of the Assyrians and Phænicians: and certain it is, that the Samaritans used the Syrian tongue and letters, *Ezra* iv. 7. the same with the Chaldee, *Dan.* i. 4, and 2. 4. more than two hundred years after they came to Samaria; for their epistle to the king of Persia was written, in that language and letters; and according to *Josephus*; the Syrians, Phænicians, Ammonites, and Moabites, joined the Samaritans in it; and with great propriety did they use them in writing to a king of Persia, since the Persians and Syrians, for the most part, used the same letters and characters, as *Epiphanius* affirms. *Jerome* is clear in it, that the old Canaanites or old Phænician language is the same with the Syrian; and that the Samaritan language approaches nearer to the Chaldee or Syriac, than to the Hebrew, is affirmed by *Bochart*; and whoever has but dipped into

*Joseph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8, s. 6, & l. 12. c. 5. f. 5.*
*Antiqu. l. 11. c. 2. f. 1.*
*Contr. Hæres. l. 2.*
*hæref. 66.*
*Comment. in *H.* xix. fol. 29.*
*Epist. Vellio, col. 260.*
Into the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, will easily perceive it is in the Chaldee dialect, here and there an Hebrew word; and it is not to be wondered at, that they should get into their language, when some of the Jews had mixed themselves with them; and Walton* owns the same, that the dialect of the Samaritan version is of the same kindred with the Chaldee language, though it has some few words proper and peculiar to itself; and so F. Simon* says, that the Samaritan version is written in the Syro-Chaldean language, not impure, which shews the antiquity of it. There are three dialects of the Syriac language, as Abulpharagius7, an Arabic writer relates; the Aramaean, the most elegant of all, which the inhabitants of Roha, Harran, and outer Syria used; that of Palestine, which was spoken by the inhabitants of Damascus, mount Libanus, and interior Syria; and the Chaldee Nabatbean dialect, the most unpolished of all, used by those who dwelt on the mountains of the Assyrians, and in the villages of Erac or Babylon; which latter very probably, was spoken by the Samaritans.

What were the antient Syrian or Assyrian letters can only be concluded from the old Phænician, which appears to be the same with the modern Samaritan; for, since the Phænicians received their letters from the Syrians, or Assyrians, they must be nearly the same. The usual Syriac characters, in which are written the versions of the Old and New Testament, are comparatively of a late date and use, being introduced by the christians of Antioch; who, in imitation of Daniel and Ezra, had used the Hebrew character, but changed it for those now in use, because they would have nothing in common with the Nazarenes or Ebionites: the more unusual, and more ancient character is the Estrangelo, used only now for capitals, and frontispieces and titles of books, which is rough and unpolished, and bears a resemblance to the old Phænician or Samaritan; and Mr. Castell is express for it, that the Estrangelo is the Chaldee character; for that the Assyrians and Chaldeans ever used the square character of the Hebrews cannot be proved.

proved, since we have no writings of theirs extant; for what Chaldee books we have, were written by Jews, either in, or after the Babylonish captivity; as by Daniel, and Ezra, who wrote Chaldee in the square character, because it was what their sacred books were written in, they had been used to, and the people also, for whose use they wrote; and in after times, the Chaldee paraphrases were written by Jews; and so both Talmuds, though less pure; and it seems this character was used by the Syrian christians, in imitation of the Jews, before their change of characters already mentioned; but after the Chaldee monarchy ceased, no books were written by any of that people in their own language. Berosus the Chaldean, and others, wrote in Greek. Theophilus of Antioch indeed says, that Berosus shewed the Greeks Chaldee letters; but whether by them he means their learning, laws, and history, or the characters of their letters, is not certain; if the letters, it does not appear what they were: hence Hottinger concluded

cluded that the ancient character of the
Assyrians and Chaldeans is unseen, and un-
known, and that nothing certain is had
concerning it; some, he says, think it is
the Samaritan, which is right, others,
the Ethiopic; but he himself was in sus-
pence, and hoped, that in some time would
be published by Golius, some Chaldee writ-
ings, in the ancient tongue and character;
but whether any ever were published, I
never heard. The Jews say, that after
the hand-writing of the angel upon the
wall, and the publication of the Hebrew
characters by Ezra, the Chaldeans left their
own characters, and used them; but this
seems to be said without any good founda-
tion.

Now, since both the Samaritan language
and letters differ from the Hebrew, being
the old Phænician and Assyrian; it was ne-
cessary that, when the Pentateuch of Mo-
jes was brought among them, it should
be copied, and put into Samaritan letters,
that they might read it; as it was, and that
from a copy in the square character, as
the


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the variations shew, before observed; and it was necessary also, that there should be a version of it in their own language, that they might the better understand it, and which also has been done; and upon the whole, I think it plainly appears, that they always retained their own language and letters, which were the Assyrian and old Phœnician, to the times of Manasseh their high priest, and ages after, as the Hebrews retained their language and letters also, the square ones; so that there seems to be no foundation for any such change of letters being made by Ezra, as has been contended for.
Put the vowel-points and accents together, because, according to the doctrine of them, they have a dependence on each other; the points are often changed according to the position of the accents, and therefore the one must be as early as the other; and as Elias Levita himself observes, "there is no syllable without a point, and there is no word without an accent." About the antiquity of these there has been a controversy for a century or two past, and which is not yet decided; nor do I expect it will be by this essay of mine; all that I propose is, to try how far back, or how high, in point of antiquity, these things can be traced and carried.

There have been divers opinions concerning them. Some think they are of a divine original; and others, that they are of human invention. Some suppose that they were

* Sepher Tob Taam, five, de accent. c. 4.
were first invented by Ben Abser and Ben Naphtali, about the year 1037; others, that they were devised by the Jews of Tiberias, 500 years after Christ at least, or however were invented after the Talmud was finished; others ascribe them to Ezra and the men of the great synagoge; who they suppose, at least revived and restored them, and fixed them to the consonants, which before were only delivered and used in a traditionary way; and others are of opinion, they were given to Moses on mount Sinai, as to the power of them in pronouncing and reading, though not as to the make and figures of them in writing, but were propagated by tradition to the times of Ezra; whilst others believe they were ab origine, and were invented by Adam together with the letters, or however that they were coeval with the letters, and in use as soon as they were: which account is most probable, may appear by tracing them step by step, from one period of

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*f* Elias Levita, praefat. 3.  
*g* Ben Chayim praefat. Bibl. in principio & multi script. Jud.  
**h** Cosfr par. 4. l. 25. Muscaetus in ib. fol. 229. l. Meor Enayim. c. 59.
of time to another; and to begin with the lowest of them,

A.D. 1037.

In this year, according to R. Gedaliah* and David Ganz†, flourished two famous Jews, Ben Ašer, and Ben Naphtali, to whom some have ascribed the invention of the vowel-points; and so early, however, it is owned that they existed, even 700 years ago and more: but that these were the inventors of them is not probable, since in the following century lived many eminent Jewish doctors, *Jarchi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra*, who often make mention of the points, but never as a novel invention; which, had these been the authors of, it can hardly be thought, but that they would have made mention of them as such, and commended them for it. Kimchi* observes against those that read *Adoni* my lord, and *ammeça* with thee, in Ps. cx. 1, 3. instead of *Adonai* my lord, and *ammeça* thy people, "that from the rising of the sun to the setting of it, (i.e. throughout the world)"

* Shalshalat Hakabala fol. 28. 2.  
† Tzemach David par. 1. fol. 37. 1.  
‡ Apud Pocok. Porta Moris miscell. not. p. 58.
you will find, in all copies, Nun with "chirek; and Ain with pathach:" so that in his time pointed bibles were in common and general use. Besides, he charges Jerom with an error on account of the points, and therefore must believe they were in his time. The author of the book of Cofri, even if R. Judah Hallevi was the author of it, lived about 1140, or as others, 1089; and he speaks of punctuation as a divine thing, as the effect of divine wisdom, and does not appear to have the least notion of its being of human invention, and much less the invention of the present age or preceding century; nay R. Judah Chijug, said to be the first grammarian and the chief of them, he found the Bible pointed and accented, as Elias Leviya says; and he was coeval with Ben Apher, and wrote a book of the double letters, and another of pointing, as if it was of long time and generally received, and was become an art; he makes not the least mention of Ben Apher being concerned in it; and so R.耶拿，another grammarian, a little after him, is silent concerning this matter; and

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1 Par. 3. c. 32.  
Vid. Buxtorf.  
de Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 329.
and Aben Ezra speaks* of Ben Labrat, who was before 'em both, as having found with pathach in Ps. ix. 6. in an antient pointed copy; so that there was an antient pointed Bible before these men were in being: and what puts it out of all doubt that these men could not be the inventors of the points is, as Elias Levita observes, that their dissensions and disputes were about the points and accents, and about words before pointed, and not then pointed; wherefore it is not reasonable to suppose that they would disagree and dispute about what they themselves had invented; so that it most evidently appears, that the points must be in use before their time.

A. D. 927.

About this time lived Saadiab Gaon, who wrote a book concerning pointing, which Jarchi, on Ps. xlv. 9. makes mention of, and says he saw it; the points therefore must be before his time; for it cannot be thought that he should write a book concerning an art, and the rules of it, which did not exist: the accents also must then be in use, since, as Gaon was for dividing

* Comment. in Ps. 9. 6.  
* Praefat. 3.
Jebovah from righteousness in Jer. xxiii. 6. making the latter to be the name of the Messiah, and the former the name of God, who called him so. Aben Ezra replies to him, that he mistook or perverted the author of the accents, and made him guilty of an error, who put Tarcha (or Tiphca) on אֶלְהָי; and again, whereas the word Jebovah is repeated in Exod. xxxiv. 6. Gaon observes that the first name is to be connected with פְּרֵח, proclaimed; but Aben Ezra replies, if it should be so, why did not the author of the accents connect it? but says he, it is right to repeat the name, as Abraham Abraham, Jacob Jacob, Moses Moses. Now it would have been absurd in Aben Ezra to have charged Gaon with a mistake or perversion of the accents, if they were not in being in the times of Gaon: he lived many years before Ben Abser and Ben Naphtali; this proves that they were not the inventors of them; and Aben Ezra himself lived in the next century to them, and he speaks of the accents not as a novel invention, but of as early use as the men of Ezra's great synagogue; and

Comment. in Exod. 18. 3. 9 Ib. in Exod 34. 6.
If the book of Cosri, before-mentioned, was not only compiled from loose sheets and put together by R. Judah Hallevi, as some think; but that the dialogue itself was had between a Jew, whose name, some say, was Isaac Sangari, and a Persian king; whose name was Chosroes, and which R. Judah says, was 400 years before his time, so he suggests in the beginning of the book; and whereas he flourished about the year 1140, this book must be compos'd, or this dialogue held, about the year 740. Now in this work the points and accents are much spoken of, in which the author commends the excellence and elegance of the Hebrew tongue on account of them; gives many of the names of both, and declares the usefulness of them; asserts that they were received by tradition from Moses; that they are the production of admirable wisdom, and would never have been received had they not come from a prophet, or one divinely assisted; and he does not give the least hint of their being of an human, and much less of a modern in-

* Cosri, par. 2. f. 80. & par. 3. f. 31, 32.
invention; yea, expressly ascribes the seven kings or vowel-points, as Aben Ezra also calls them, to Ezra and the men of his synagogue, and which he supposes they received by tradition from Moses.

A. D. 600.

Those who ascribe the invention of the points to the Jews of Tiberias, suppose that this was after the year 500, when the Babylonian Talmud was finished. Their reason for it is, because, as they affirm, no mention is made of them in that work, and therefore the invention of them must be later than that; but of this more hereafter. However, according to this hypothesis, one would think they must have been invented and in use by the time above given; though indeed those who espouse this hypothesis, are at a very great uncertainty about the exact time of this invention. The first person that broached this notion was Elias Levita, a German Jew, who lived in the 16th century, contrary to the sentiments and belief of his whole nation; who either suppose the points were from Ezra, and the men of the great synagogue, or from Moses at mount Sinai, or from Adam who had them.
them from God himself. This man asserted, that after the finishing of the Talmud, which he places in the year 436, after the desolation of the second temple, arose the men of Tiberias; wise and great men, expert in the scripture, and in purity and in eloquence of language excelled all the Jews in those times; and after them did not arise any like them, and that these were the authors of the points: this is said without offering the least proof of it, and by one that lived near a thousand years after; it is strange that he only should be in this secret; that no history, Jewish nor Christian, should make mention of it for such a course of years: it is not probable that there were such a set of men at Tiberias about the time suggested, since a great destruction of the Jews was made at it, in the year 352, by Gallus, at the command of Constantius; and since promotion to doctorship ceased in the land of Israel with Hillel the prince, who flourished about the year 340, as the Jewish chronological observers observe: and since the flourishing university of the Jews was at Babylon at the

* Prefat. 3. ad Maforet.  
* Shalshalet Hakabala

fol. 25a 2. Gian 2. Tz mach David, fol. 33. 1.
the time of this pretended invention, very unlikely it is, that it should be done without their knowledge, advice, and assistance, and without either approbation of it, or opposition to it by any of them, for ought appears; and that it should be universally received by the Jews at once everywhere, and not one Momus to find fault, this is very extraordinary; yea, that it should be received by the Karaite Jews themselves, enemies to tradition and innovation, as will be seen hereafter. It is strange that, according to this scheme, as many persons must be employed in this work, that there should be but one sort of pointing; that they should all take the same method, throughout the whole Bible, without any variation, except some anomalies, and which are to be observed in letters as well as in points; and that this should be always continued with the Jews, and never any other scheme proposed and attempted; and that it should not be known who began it and when. And indeed we are left at a very great uncertainty about the place where this wonderful affair was transacted; Elias, the relator of it, should he be pressed...
hard, seems to have found a subterfuge to retreat unto, and therefore he tells us that Tiberias is Moesia*; but where that is he says not, but leaves us to seek for it where we can, and take a wild goat's chace into Asia Minor, to Pontus, or Bithynia, or Paphlagonia, where Moesia or Mysia is said to be; but never famous for Jewish doctors, nor have any been heard of in it: the Tiberias of the scripture, and of Josephus, and of the Jewish writers in general, was a city in Palestine, situate on the lake of Genesaret; famous in their writings for the last sitting of the Sanbedrim in it, for a very considerable university there, for the residence of R. Judah, the saint, in it, where it is probable he compiled the Mishnah, and of many others of their celebrated doctors, in the 2d and 3d centuries; and where it is certain the Jerusalem Talmud was finished, in the 3d century; after which the university in it began to decrease, and we hear but now and then of a doctor in that place, the universities in Babylon bearing away all the glory; there-

*Stræfat. 3. ad Masoret. he seems to have taken this name of Tiberias from Ben Chayim in Masor. Mag. Lit. 71 fol. 31. 2. or from David Kimchi, in Micol. fol. 108. 2.
therefore it is not probable, that this business of pointing the Bible was done by the men of Tiberias in later times: and if it was, it is strange that none of them should declare themselves the authors of the points, or that they had an hand in the invention of them, or were assisting in that work, since it would have gained them immortal honour, it being allowed to be an ingenious and useful work; and especially since the Jews are proud boasters and lovers of fame and reputation: strange, very strange it is, that not one of the men concerned in this work can be named; nor any time fixed when it was done by them, whether 100 years after the finishing of the Talmud, or 200, or 300 or 400; neither of which it seems the espousters of this notion chuse to fix upon, neither on particular men, nor on a particular time, lest they should be entangled. The only man I have met with, that has ventured to fix the date of the invention of the points, is Poffevenus the jesuit, who in his great wisdom has pitched on the year 478, when the points began to be in use; and for some

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\[ a \] Apud Herman. Hugonem de prima scribendi orig. c. 27. p. 168.
years before the finishing of the Talmud, according to the most early account of it; whereby he has destroyed the hypothesis on which this notion is built. It is incredible that men under a judicial blindness, and the curse of God, ignorant of divine things, should form a scheme which so well ascertains the sense of the scriptures; that they should hit on such an invention, and publish it, so subversive of their own religion, and so serviceable to christianity and its doctrines, and which in no one instance opposes it; and that after they had seen, as they must in the age they are supposed to invent them, what use the christians had made of various passages of scripture against Judaism, and in favour of christianity; and yet should point and accentuate those very passages against themselves, and for the christians: take one instance in the room of many as to accents, in Gen. xlix. 10. how gladly now would they have the Athnach removed from גָּרָה יֵש to רָע and then read the words, as they have attempted to do, the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between

*Vid. Menasseh. ben Israel. Consilia. in Gen. Quæst. 65, f. 3.*
between his feet for ever; for Shiloh shall come: but the accents are against them, and forbid this reading; of what use they are in Jer. xxiii. 6. has been already observed: nor is it credible, that the accents should be invented by the Jews about the time supposed; since one use of them was to lead and direct in music, and that the use of accents should in prose and verse be different, as they be in metrical and prose-writings of the Bible, when at the time supposed, metre was disused, and the metre of the Hebrews lost and unknown. He that can believe such a romantic story as all this is, need not be squeamish to believe the most arrant lye and notorious fable, to be met with in the whole Talmud; a greater I know not; a louder lye I believe was never told by a Jew, nor by any other, that ever met with the least degree of credit in the world; it is amazing it should be believed by any: some Protestants at first received it, through their too great credulity, and through their high esteem for the above-mentioned Elias, by whom they were taught the Hebrew language, of the usefulness of which they were sensible. Many of the Papists greedily caught at it,
and commended the *Protestants* for receiving it; who might hope, in the issue, to avail themselves of it, since it would appear from hence, that the sense of scripture the *Protestants* had given into, depended on the invention of men, even of some Jews, long since the time of Christianity; and they might hope that on this account, they would reject the points, and then, as words would be subject to various senses without them, and some contrary to each other, they would at last be convinced of the necessity of one infallible interpreter of scripture. Morinus, a papist, and a very principal opposer of the points, in a book, highly commended by some *Protestant* writers, speaks out plainly; he says, "the reason why God would have the scriptures written in the ambiguous manner they are, (i.e. without points) is, because it was his will that every man should be subject to the judgment of the church, and not interpret the scriptures in his own way; for seeing the reading of the scriptures is so difficult, and so liable to various ambiguities, (i.e. a mere nose of wax,

*De Heb. & Græc. Text. Sinceritate, l. 1. Exercitât, 6. c. 2. n. 8. p. 198, 199.*
"wax, to be turned any way); from the
very nature of the thing, he observes, it
is plain, that it was not the will of God,
that every one should rashly and irrever-
ently take upon him to explain it, nor
to suffer the common people to expound
it at their pleasure, but, that in those,
as in other things respecting religion,
his will is, that the people should de-
depend upon the priests."

A. D. 500.

About this time the Babylonian Talmud was finished; according to Scaligero*, in 508; in which it is said no mention is made of the points and accents: but, upon enquiry, it will be found to be otherwise; for though the Talmudists do not mention the names, nor express the figures of the vowel-points, they manifestly suppose them; which shew they were in being in their times; as when they say, read not so, but so, it is plain they have no reference to the consonants, which are the same one way as another; they must have respect to the difference of the vowel-points,

* De Emend. Temp. l£7. 323.
points, the doctrine of which is the foundation of their remarks, and therefore must be known by them: so the Karaites charge the Rabbins with perverting the commands of God by their Al-tikra's, read not so, but so, not changing the consonants but the vowels and accents; for having said that the copies of theirs and the Rabbins, with respect to punctuation were the same; they observe, that otherwise in the places where they change the vowels and accents, and say, do not read so, but so, they would not have said, do not read, but absolutely would have pointed according to their pleasure; but that it is suggested they dared not do; which, the Karaites add, is a proof, that before the finishing of the Talmud, from the days of old, the law was pointed and accented; thus when they say, with respect to Ps. 1. 23. do not read שין but שין, they mean do not read Shin with a point on the right hand, but with a point on the left; so quoting Prov. xix. 23. they direct, do not read שביר but יבר that is, do not read the word with the point on the left hand.

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hand of Sbin, when it would signify satisfied, as the common punctuation reads; but with the point on the right hand of it, and then it signifies seven; and so proves what it is quoted for, as they think, that that man that lies seven nights without a dream, is an evil man, and so read what follows; be shall not be visited, be is an evil man: and so in Is. ii. 22. Ula says, don't read but Bema, that is, to serve his own purpose, don't read as if it was Bamab, (i.e. pointed with a Patach and Segol) which would signify wherein, but Bamab, (i.e. with two Kametzes) and so signifies an high place; likewise in Is. liv. 3. it is said, don't read בנו (i.e. with a Kametz) thy children, but בנו (i.e. with a vau, and cholem) thy builders; so quoting Ezekiel, xlviii. 25. it is observed, don't read שמח, Shammah there (i.e. with two Kametzes) but שמח, Shemab, his name, (as if with Shevah, and Kametz) and this form does not suppose any corruption of the text, nor even a various reading; but is a kind of allegorical sport of these Rabbins among themselves as F. Simon * calls it; when to shew their acumen, observe,

* T. Bab. Sotah fol. 4. 2.  
* T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1.  
* T. Bab. Bathra, fol. 75. 2.  
* Disquis. Crit, c. 3. p. 17.
observe, what different senses may be put upon a word by its being differently pointed, which they propose to consider, as if it was thus, or thus pointed; but then this supposes the points to have been in being or they could not divert themselves after this manner: and it should be observed, that this phrase is used chiefly in giving allegorical expositions, and is not by way of authority and command, as enjoining such a reading; but by way of concession; or supposing it was read so, it would yield a commodious sense, especially if allegorical: nor can I see how this phrase could be used in writing by giving instances as above, without expressing the very marks and figures of the points as put to the words in debate; or otherwise they must act like delirious men indeed; nor can I see how the ridiculous story, concerning Joab's slaying of his master for teaching him to read wrong could be related in the 'Talmud' without the vowel-points being put to the word in it, which is told thus; after Joab had cut off every male in Edom, 1 Kings.

1 Kings xi. 15, 16. When he came before David, he said to him, what is the reason that thou hast so done? (i. e. that thou hast not destroyed the females, as the gloss is) he replied, because it is written (Deut. xxv. 19.) thou shalt blot out יִרְאֶה of Amaleck; David said unto him, but behold we read יִרְאֶה; Joab answered, I was taught to read it יִרְאֶה: he went and asked his master, saying, how didst thou teach me to read, he told him יִרְאֶה; he drew his sword to kill him. Now where is the difference? they all say the same thing, David, Joab, and his master, as the bare letters of the word without the vowel-points are given. What sense can be made of this story, thus told? No doubt but in the Talmud, as originally written, the several vowel-points were put to this word; as said to be read by Joab, it was zacar, male, with two Kaf-metzes; as by David and Joab’s master, it was zacar, remembrance, with two Segols; and so in other cases, of a similar kind, the points were put, though in process of time left out, through the carelessness or sloth of transcribers; and two instances of this I have met with where the very figures
figures of the vowel-points are used; thus having quoted Numb. xiii. 31. it is directed a
don't read ָך than us (with a Shureck) but ָך than him (with a Cholem); and in another place, with respect to the passage in Deut. xxiii. 18, they say, do not read ָיה (with a Kametz) but ָיה (with a Segol); the first word, pointed as directed, signifies a whore, being feminine, the other, differently pointed, is masculine, and signifies a fornicator k. My Talmud is of the Amsterdam and Frankford edition, and I have no opportunity of consulting another; should it be said, these points are annexed to the words by the editors of this work; I ask why they are not added to the words in the other instances? no doubt the reason is, because they were originally so in the Talmud, and so I found them; and I make no question of their being put in all other instances, though omitted by copiers. To these observations I would add, the prick or point on the Vau in the word for arose, in Gen. xix. 33. is taken notice of in the Talmud1; and so are the 15 pricks on

a T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 1.  
b T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 29. 2.  
k Vid. Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott.  
col. 495.  
on several words in the bible, among which this is one and on the word for unless, in Ps. xxvii. 13. and on Deut. xxix. 29.

Now if these pricks and points were so early, which are of so little use, much more the vowel-points; and as for the accents, they are expressly mentioned: thus those words in Nehem. viii. 8. are interpreted, so they read in the law of God, this is the Scripture; distinctly, this is the Targum; and gave the sense; these are the verses pointed, as R. Nissim on that place in the Talmud interprets it, and caused them to understand the reading, these are the distinctions of the accents; and so in other places mention is made of the distinctions of the accents, and of the accents of the law, which might be shewn and pointed at by the hand, and therefore must be visible marks or figures; and which are to be understood both of vowel-points, and of accents; and so the gloss on that place interprets it, both of pointing and the elevation of the voice in singing according to

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to the accents. And the marks and figures of them, they say in the Talmud, Solomon instructed the people in; for those words are paraphrased in it, be taught the people knowledge, for he instructed them in the signs, marks, figures, or characters of the accents: and on the phrase, his locks are bushy, it is observed; from hence we learn that he (Solomon) sought out and explained every tittle, prick, or point (in the law) heaps of heaps of the constitutions or decisions of it: and in one of the above places referred to, they dispute about giving a reward to such who taught the accents; which surely could never be thought of, if the accents were not yet invented; to which may be added, that in the Talmud mention is made of some words in the Bible, "written but not read," and of others, "read but not written;" those that are written but not read are alone without the vowel-points, as in Jer. li. 3. &c. Those that are read but not written, are those whose

* T. B. Eruvim, fol. 21. 2.  
  & Nedarim, fol. 37. 1.  
  * T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.  
  Mafsechet Sopherim, c. 6. f. 7, 8.
whose vowel-points stand alone in the text, and the consonants in the margin, of which there are ten, 

Jud. xx. 13. Ruth iii. 5. 17. 2 Sam. viii. 3. and xvi. 23. and xviii. 20. 2 Kings xix. 31. 37. Jer. xxxi. 38. and l. 29. This shews that the state of the Hebrew text, with respect to these Keri and Cetib, was the same at the composition of the Talmud as now; and that the Talmudists must have been acquainted with pointed Bibles, and consequently points must have been in use before the finishing of the Talmud; and so before the pretended men of Tiberias: the ablation of the scribes is spoken of in the same tract, which forbids the reading the superfluous Vau in five places; and also the reading of the scribes, which shews how they read and pronounced some words, as Arets, Shamaim, Mitzraim; as Aretz, sometimes Aratz, and sometimes Erets, according to the diversity of the accents, as Buxtorff observes*; and Shamaim sometimes with Kametz and Patach, and sometimes with a double Kametz, because of the pause; and so Mitzraim. The note of R. Nissim on

*Tiberias, c. 8. p. 11.
the place is, because of the Atbnach, Arets is read with a Kametz, and Shamaim and Mitzraim, though they have no Aleph in them, are read as if they had.

A. D. 400.

The Masorab, or Masoreth, as it is sometimes called, which signifies tradition, is a work consisting of remarks on several things in the Bible, handed down to posterity from one to another; it does not appear to be the work of one man, nor of a set of men, and living in one age or place, who were jointly concerned in it, but of various persons, in several ages: it might be begun by the men of the great synagogue of Ezra, to whom the Jewish writers generally ascribe it; and be carried on by scribes and copiers in after ages, and at last finished by the men of Tiberias; (not the Utopian men of Tiberias, after the year 500, who lived in the 6th and 7th centuries, as pretended, but by those who lived in the 2d and 3d centuries, and in the beginning of the 4th; men of fame and note among the Jews, and whose names are given, and an account of them in the Jerusalem Talmud, of whom more hereafter; though in later
later times, some things have crept into this work, and additions made to it, in which the names of *Jarchi* and *Ben Gershom* are mentioned, and even some are the notes of *Ben Chayim* himself, the first editor of it in printed Bibles; who with much pains brought it into some form and order, and disposed of it in the manner it is in some printed copies: however, it is certain the work was in being before the *Babylonian Talmud*; for the just now mentioned editor of the *Mesorah*, in his preface which stands before Bomberg's Bible, and which *Buxtorff* also has placed before his, asserts, that in many places the Talmud contradicts the *Mesorah*; and besides it is expressly mentioned in it. Such phrases are sometimes* to be met with in it as ֲֳדָנַי לַמְּפָרִים, and לַמְּפָרִים לַמְּפָרִים; the meaning of which is, that such an exposition of a word or passage, has its foundation in the Scripture, or is according to that, and is the literal sense of it, as it is commonly read; and that such an exposition or interpretation of a word or passage, has its foundation in the

Mäföaráb, or is according to that §; and is the traditionary sense of it, as it may be read and pronounced by other vowels: yea, those men who are said to have numbered all the letters in the law, and the verses in it, and to have pointed out the letter which is exactly the middle of the penta-teuch, and in other books, are called רחניא the antients; who had lived long ago, and with whom the compilers of the Talmud were not to be named *; and are thought by the learned bishop Usher † to be the men of the great synagogue of Ezra; false therefore it is what F. Simon says ‡, from Elias Levita, that the Mäföaráb is later than the Talmud: yea, Christ himself, in his time, speaks of a traditionary set of men, who, he says, were of old time, and are called by him, αξιωματί, the antients; who delivered down peculiar senses of the law from age to age, and may be truly said to be a sort of Mäfoírétes, Matt. v. 28. the same who elsewhere are called elders, and to whom traditions are ascribed, Matt. xv. 2. Mark vii. 3, 5. though perhaps the mist-

nic doctors are rather more peculiarly intended: and certain it is, that the several parts of the work of the Masoretes ascribed to them, are made mention of in the Talmud; as not only the numbering of the letters and verses in the law before asserted; but the distinction of verses themselves is spoken of in it, and is ascribed to Moses, though by Elias Levita* made to be the work of the Masoretes; in the Talmud † it is said, "whatever verse Moses did not distinguish, we do not distinguish:" yea, we read of the distinction of verses in the Mifnab ‡, which was compiled some hundreds of years before the Talmud. The various readings which the Masoretes are said to be the authors of, even divers sorts of them are mentioned in the Talmud §; and their concern with the points and accents will be presently observed: but not only these parts of the work assigned them, but the forms of letters, greater, lesser, or suspended, marked by the Masoretes in the Bible, are observed in the Talmud.

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* Sepher Tob Taam, c. 2.
† T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 22, 1.
‡ Misn. Megillah, c. 4. § 4.
† Misn. Megillah, c. 4. § 4.
§ T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.
mud]|; yea, the Maforah itself is mention-
ed in it. In the interpretation of Neh.
vi. 8. taken notice of in the preceding
section, that part of it, and caused them to
understand the reading, as some interpret it
of the distinction of accents; others say,
these are the Maforah*, or Masoretic notes,
or as R. Niššim, on the place, explains it,
what is delivered in the Maforah: yea, not
only in the Jerusalem Talmud* mention is
made of it, but in the Misnagh itself, finish-
ed in the year 150, as a saying of R. Aki-
ba, who died in the beginning of the se-
cond century; " the Maforah is an hedge
" to the law;" the note of Bartenora on
it is, the Maforath, which the wisemen
have delivered to us, concerning words de-
fective and redundant in the law. I muft
be safe therefore in placing this work 100
years before the Babylonian Talmud, it cer-
tainly must be in being so early at least, and
much earlier; and Walton, an opposer of the
points, acknowledges* that some part of
the

|| Mafsech. Sopherim, c. 9. f. 5. 7. T. Bab. Bava Ba-
\htra, fol. 109. 2. & Glof in lb. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol.
g 0. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. * T. Bab.
Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. " Megil-
lah, fol. 74. 4. " Pirke Abot, c. 3. f. 13. a Pro-
legom. 8. f. 12.
the Masoretic notes were collected before the Talmud was finished; and thinks it probable, that though not immediately after Ezra, yet about the time of the Maccabees, when the sect of the Pharisees rose, some might begin to make those observations; and Dr. Prideaux supposes that they began a little after the time of Ezra: now the observations of the Masoretes were not only about entire words, nor about letters or consonants, but also about the points and accents: take a few instances, instead of many which might be produced, on Gen. i. 5. the note of the Masorah is, רַבּוּל is written several times with a Kametz; on Gen. xiv. 5. Chedarlaomer, one word with two Shevabs; and on Exod. xxxii. 6. it is observed the word לְיָהָר is no more found with Segol and Silluk; on Job xix. 7. נַעֲנָה is no more written with Segol and Kametz; and on Ps. lxxxiv. 11. it is remarked, that לַיָּף is twice with a Patach and Athnach. See also on Gen. xvi. 13. and xix. 2. Exod. xxvi. 5. Lev. x. 4. 19. Numb. ix. 2. Deut. xviii. 17. Josh. vi. 14. 1 Sam. x. 21. Ps. xxvii. 4. Jer. xvii. 17. and iii. 32. Dan. M 4 i. 3.

† Connect. par. 1. B. 5 p. 353.
i. 3. and iii. 21. Ezra viii. 16. and other places; wherefore the points and accents must be before the Maforetes, and not invented by them.

A. D. 385.

Jerom died in 420, being upwards of 90 years of age, and therefore must flourish about this time. He was the best versed in Jewish literature of any of the antient writers, having had no fewer than four Jews, at different times for his instructors; and that he had knowledge of the points and accents, which therefore must be in his time, I think is most clear from his writings. I do not insist upon the marks and figures of the vowel-points, which go along with the Hebrew words used by him, which I suppose are added by the editors of his works; though I confess, I cannot persuade myself that so sensible and learned a man as Jerom was, would ever say what he does, unless not only he saw the Hebrew words he mentions, with the vowel-points to them, but put them to them himself, when he wrote them; though in length of time they might be diffused in the copies transcribed from him; for how
otherwise could he say, of such and such a word, it is not written so, but so, in the Hebrew text, and yet gives the word either way with the same consonants exactly; so he gives the word מַיִן, in יִשְׂרָיֶל. and others, as will be presently observed: what is there then to distinguish them? or how could he expect to be believed, or to convince any by such a method? this was to make him appear very ridiculous; but supposing the vowels put to the words by him, these would distinguish one word from another, and make him act like himself, and like a true critic; and this being the case, it is easy to account for it, why the vowel-points and accents are not mentioned by him, there being no need of it; since they were presented to the eye of the reader, and supposed to be understood by him. However, the same Hebrew words expressed in Roman characters, I take for granted were done by himself, and this I think is owned by Walton*. I have indeed no other edition of his works, than that of Erasmus, nor an opportunity of consulting any other; now the words, as thus read, greatly agree with, and very rarely differ from

* Bibl. Polyglott. prolegom. 3. f. 47.
from the modern punctuation, and where they do, it may be owing to inadvertency, or to too great confidence in his memory, or to copiers; but be this as it may, it is certain he often speaks of the Hebrew points and accents, and of the variety of them, and that the same words are pronounced by different sounds and accents, and that Hebrew names are variously interpreted, according to the diversity of accents, and change of the vowel-letters; now, besides the notice he takes of the prick or point on the word Kumah, in Gen. xix. 34. which he calls pointing; he makes many observations on divers words, which manifestly shew his knowledge of the Hebrew points, without which he could never have made them: thus he observes, that in Ps. xc. 8. in the Hebrew it is written יַלְנוּ, alumenu, which he translates our neglects, and wonders at the Septuagint interpreters, that they should translate it our age, as if it was olamenu; and now how could he say it was written in the Hebrew, alumenu and not

not olamenu, since the word without points may be read either way, if he had not seen it himself, nor had been told that it was so pointed? nor could he say that in Exod. xiii. 18. he found it written in the Hebrew volume, carefully examining its characters, Hamusim, and not Hamifim; if the Hebrew volume he examined had no points; for this he had not from tradition, nor from use and custom of reading, but found it so written: he also observes, that the word דוער, written with the same letters, has a different signification, as it may be differently read; if Searim (i. e. with a Kametz) then it signifies estimations, but if Seorim, (i. e. with a Cholem) then it signifies barley; again he remarks, that י ר, written with the same letters, if read Re, (i. e. with a Shevah) then it is a friend, if Ro, (i. e. with a Cholem) then it is a Shepherd; a like remark he makes on the word התו, in Is. ii. 22. that if it is rendered wherein, then it must be בהמה, bameh, but if an high place or high, then it must be read בהמה bamah; so the three letters זר, when we say they signify memorial,
or remembrance, then he says \(^d\) the word is read \(zecer\), (i.e. with two \(Segols\)) but if a male, then it is read \(zacar\), (i.e. with two \(Kametz\)); again \(^e\), these three letters \(בราช\) signify according to the quality of the places, if read \(dabar\) (i.e. with two \(Kametz\)) it signifies a word, but if \(deber\), (i.e. with two \(Segols\)) then it signifies the plague; so the word \(נפש\), he observes \(^f\), that if the accent is varied, that is the point, it signifies either a \(nut\) or \(watching\); that is, if it is pointed for a verb, then it signifies to \(watch\), but if as a noun, then it signifies a \(nut\), an almond-nut. And whereas in the \(Septuagint\) version of \(Jonah\) iii. 4. it is three days instead of forty, \(Jerom\) wonders \(^g\) how they should so translate, when there is no likeness in the \(Hebrew\) words, for \(three\) and for \(forty\), neither in the letters nor in the syllable, nor in the \(accents\), that is vowels; and again he observes \(^h\), the ambiguity of the \(Hebrew\) word \(ךפש\), which is written with three letters, \(ך\) and \(ל\) and \(ו\); if, says he, it is read \(Shene\) (i.e. with a \(Shevah\) and a \(Tzere\)) it

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\(^a\) Ib. in c. 26. fol 50. H.
\(^b\) Comment. in Ecclef. fol. 43. G. Tom. 7. & in Jerem. fol. 133. C.
\(^d\) Comment. in Ecclef. fol. 43. G. Tom. 7. & in Jerem. fol. 133. C.
it signifies two, but if Shane, (i. e. with a Kametz and a Tzere) then it signifies years, and so in many other places. Jerom must have knowledge of the point placed sometimes on the right hand of the letter ו, and then called יamin, and sometimes on the left hand of it, and then called Smol, which gives it a different pronunciation, and the words a different sense: he observes 1, that from ושה, a woman is rightly called ושה, but Theodotion, he says, suggests another etymology, saying, she shall be called assumption, because taken from man; and, adds he, ושה may be interpreted assumption, according to the variety of the accents, that is, the points; his meaning is, that if the word is derived from ושה, with the point on the left hand, then it may signify assumption, since the word, so pointed, signifies to assume: again, בָּּמָא ש, he says 2, as differently accented, that is pointed, may be translated the well of the oath, or the well of satiety, or of the seventh; the reason of which is, because וָּמָא with a point on the right of ו, signifies seven, and to swear; but with the same point on the left

1 Quæst. Heb. ad Gen. fol. 65. 1.
2 in Amos, c. 8. fol. 99. B.
of the letter, it signifies fulness and satiety; the same is observed by him in another place, that it has different senses according to the variety of the accents. Now could Jerom possibly make such observations as these without the knowledge of the points? For though from some of these passages it may be gathered, that unpointed books had been used, and so some were deceived thro' the ambiguity of words without points; yet how came it to pass that he himself was not deceived? and how could he be sure of the true Hebrew reading, if he had not seen pointed Bibles, or had not been taught that they were so pointed in such and such places? to suppose otherwise is quite incredible. And it appears also, that the punctuation in his time was the same with the modern punctuation, which he follows and scarce ever departs from; take, for instance, his reading the title of the 45th Psalm, "Lamanazeah al Sofannim, libne Corah, Maschil fir je-" didoth m"; there is but one point missing, and that is the Shevab in the first word, and which is sometimes not pronounced, and

1 Comment. in L. c. 65. fol. 115. C. — Ad Principiam, fol. 34. F. Tom. 3.
and had no certain pronunciation with the antients; sometimes by a, sometimes by i, sometimes by an e, as now usually; according to the Hebrew grammarians, it has the nature of all the rest of the vowels, and is equal to them, and pronounced like them, at certain times under certain conditions §.

Three whole verses in Gen. xvi. 18, 19, 20. are exactly pronounced according to the modern punctuation*; his version of the Psalms agrees with the Hebrew text, as it now is, and as it is with the points:

besides what can he mean by saying⁰, that he then in his old age could not read the Hebrew text by candle-light, since the letters were so small, that they were enough to blind a man's eyes at noon-day? for the Hebrew letters, let them be wrote as small as they well can be, can not be lesser than the common Roman character; he must be understood surely of the small pricks or points which belonged to the Hebrew letters. How came he to put Adonai instead of Jehovah, in Exod. vi. 3. if he is the author

tor of the *vulgate Latin* version, unless he knew that the Jews put the points of Adanai to Jebovah? There is a passage in *Jerom* which is produced by some to disprove the knowledge and use of vowel-points in his time; when speaking of Eno near Salim, "it matters not, he says, whether it be called Salem or Salim, since the Hebrews very seldom make use of vowel-letters in the middle; and according to the pleasure of readers and the variety of countries, the same words are pronounced with different sounds and accents." Now *Jerom* is here to be understood either of the *Matres Lectionis*; and it, is very true that these are seldom used in the sacred books of the Hebrews, and which makes the use of vowel-points the more necessary; and if the *Matres Lectionis* were expunged upon the introduction of the points, as is suggested by some, then the points must have been before *Jerom's* time, and consequently not the invention of the men of Tiberias; since it seems the above letters were rarely used in his time as placed between consonants, as Dabar, and other

* Epist. Evagri, tom. 3. fol. 13. F.
other words observed by him shew: or else he is to be understood of vowel-points going along with letters; and these he might truly say, were very rarely used, because pointed Bibles in his time were very rare; but then he supposes such were used, tho' but seldom; and this Dr. Owen, took to be his sense; either says he, I cannot understand him, or he does positively affirm, that the Hebrew, had the use of vowels, in his epistle to Evagrius; upon which he observes, if they did it per raro, they did it, and then they had them; though, in these days to keep up their credit in teaching, they did not much use them; nor can this be spoken of, the sound of vowels; for surely, they did not seldom use the sounds of vowels, if they spoke often. And to this sense, the words of Jerom are quoted by R. Aza riah; and from whence he concludes, that the points were really in being before his time, and so they are understood by others; to say no more, as not only the vowel-points and accents are said to be the

* Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 181. 1.
invention of the men of Tiberias, after the finishing of the Talmud, but the distinction of verses also; it is certain, that Jerom, who lived a century or two before these pretended Tiberians are said to live, frequently speaks of verses in the Hebrew books, and distinguished by him into colons and commas which the accents make; and of which mention is made before him in the Jerusalem Talmud, and even in the Mifnah, as will be seen hereafter; yea, in the New Testament, Luke iv. 17. Acts viii. 32.

A. D. 370.

About this time lived Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus; he flourished in the times of Valens, Gratian, and Theodosius, and wrote a book against various heresies; and among them takes notice of those of the Nicolaitans, and their followers the Gnosticks, &c. who had a sort of deities they paid honour to, and which they called by barbarous names; and one of them was called Caulaucanb, a word taken from Is. xxviii. 13. as he observes; upon which he gives the text in Hebrew, thus, “Saulasau Saulasau,”

"Iafai, Caulaucauch, Caulaucauch, Zier-
jam, Zierjam," exactly agreeing with
the present punctuation, only the Sheva
in the last word is pronounced as an i;
which may be owing to the copier, and is
sometimes not pronounced at all, as before
observed, and when it is, it is differently:
and very nearly to the same manner of point-
ing, is his quotation of Ps. cx. 3, accord-
ing to the Hebrew text, "Merem messaar
"Laclal jeledechetha"; and so of Is. xxvi. 2,
3. the likeness is very great and much the
same. [suppose Epiphanius took these He-
brew passages from Origen's Hexapla, a work
in being in his time; and if so, this carries
the punctuation still higher; of which more
hereafter. Moreover, the first word ob-
served, was so pronounced by some here-
ticks, if not in the first, yet in the second
century.

A. D. 360.

About this time lived R. Ase, the head
of a school or academy at Sura in Babylon;
he is said to write a large book concerning

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9 Ib. 1. 3. hsr. 69. 7 b. 9. hsr. 76. vid. Mont-
saucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 130
Vid. Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. 1. 2.
pointing, and the *cabalistic* secrets in it, which book *R. Nachman*, who lived about the year 1200, says, was then in their academy. Now if this Rabbi so early wrote a book about the points, they must then, and before that time be in use, and must have been some time before in use, to be reduced to an art, and brought under certain rules, and treated on at large.

A. D. 340.

About this time lived R. *Hillell*, the prince, the last of those who was promoted to doctorship in the land of Israel, as before observed. Now R. *Zacuth* speaks of a copy of the book of 24, called the Bible, written by R. *Hillell*, by which all books were corrected in the year 956 or 984, (according to the Jewish account) and that he saw a part of it sold in Africa, and that it had been written in his time 900 years, and observes that *Kimchi* says in his grammar, that the Pentateuch was at Toletolo, or Toledo. Some, as *Schickard* and *Cuneus*, are of opinion, that this *Hillell*, was the famous

Ju- 
*Bechirat haperushim, p. 51.  
& Jus Reg. Heb. c. 2. theor. 5. f. 4.  
*De Republic. Heb. 1. 1. c. 18.
famous *Hillel* that lived before the times of *Chrift*, and flourished 100 years before the destruction of the second temple; and if so, since his copy was pointed, as will presently be seen, it would prove the points to be as early; but he is more generally thought to be *Hillel* the prince, before-mentioned; for that he should be a *Spanish Jew*, who lived about 600 years ago, as *Morinus* suggests, is not credible; since it can't be thought he was an obscure person, but of some note, from whom, for the sake of honour, the copy had its name, and especially as by it all copies were corrected; besides, the above *Jewish* chronologer, who gives the account of it, says, the copy he saw had been written 900 years before his time, and he lived about the year 1500. Now this copy had the points, as is certain from what *Kimchi* says, who lived in the 12th century; he observes, that the word שֶׁרֶם, in *Psal. cix. 10.* is written with a broad *Kamets*, and in the copy of *Hillel*, at Toledo, or Toledo, it is written concerning it in the *Majora*, that it is nowhere else with *Chateph*, i. e. with

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Exercitat. B.bl. l. 1. c. 2. p. 29.  
Comment. in *Psal. 109. 10.*
Kamets Chataph; and in another work of his, he says of the word נָמַן, in 2 Sam. xiii. Mem is with Segol, which is not usual, and is in the room of Pathach; and in the book of Hillell, which is at Toledo or Toledo, it is with Pathach; and the learned Mercer observes, that the word נָו, in Prov. xxiv. 14. is, in a M S. written with a Tzere, but in the margin it is remarked, that in Hillell it is written with a Segol. Wherefore the points must be annexed to the Bible as early as the times of Hillell, and before.

In the library at Berlin is a Hebrew MS. written by Elias the pointer, containing the Pentateuch, the 5 Megillot, with the book of Job, and some chapters out of the Prophets, with Masoratical observations in the margin; which, if what is said of it could be established, it would be full as antient as Hillell's copy: at the end of it the writer has put his name, and declares that he wrote it, and pointed it, and finished it in the year from the creation of the world 4094; and Andrew Mullerus, sometime provost at Berlin, wrote at the beginning of it.

it, that this copy was written by Elia in the island of Rhodes, A. C. 334; but La Croze* the late librarian, says, that at the end of the book there are manifest traces of letters blotted out, and others put in, and that the colour of the ink, and form of the parchment clearly shewed, that it could not then be written scarce 400 years.

There are several antient copies of the Bible pointed, but the precise age of them cannot be ascertained. The Jews in China, have a very antient Hebrew Bible in Pekin, said to be not at all differing from ours⁵; by which it should seem that it is pointed, or otherwise it would differ. A copy called Sinai, a correct copy of the Pentateuch, has the accents, as Elia Levita acknowledges⁴, who observes that the first word in Exod. xviii. 1. is with Gerashim, but in Sinai with a Rebiab; and he also gives another instance of a different accentuation, but adds, that he knew not who was the composer of it. R. Nachman⁶, who lived about the year 1200, says, he searched most diligently in all the Babylonian

lonian and Jerusalem copies, and in Hillel's, and could not find any where a Dagesh in those three guttural letters, ū عال، ّ but found it in א, in three places, Lev. xxiii. 17. Gen. xliii. 26. and Ezra viii. 18. by which it appears, that not only Hillel's copy, but the Babylonian and Jerusalem copies were pointed. Ben Melech, on Ezek. xxiv. 10. observes, that R. Jonah writes, that he found the word Harkach with a Kamets under He in the Jerusalem copy, but in the Babylonian copy, he found it with a Pathbach. There was a Jerusalem copy made mention of by several, that was a pointed one; Muscatus says, that the word הָנֵךְ, in Deut. vi. 4. is pointed with Segol and Kamets, as it is found in the correct Jerusalem copy; and so Kimchi affirms, that in the correct Jerusalem copy, the word הָנֵךְ, in Job xxix. 18. was with a Shurek for those of Nabardea, and with a Cholem for the western Jews; and seems to be the copy R. Jonah the grammarian, and Maimonides, who both lived in the 12th century, trusted to and depended on; and which the latter calls the famous Egyptian copy, which was

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1 Comment. in Cofig, par. 4. fol 230. 4. 2 Sepher Horath. rad. ל. 3 Hilchot Torah, c. 8 f. 4.
was many years at Jerusalem, and which Ben Apher spent much time in correcting, who lived there a long time, as Elias says; and by which other copies were corrected; and this Azariah consulted, and says, it was in Jerusalem from the times of the misnic doctors, and had in it the Tikkun Sopherim, the ordination of the scribes, and the Bible-sections open and shut.

A. D. 300.

The Rabbot are commentaries on the five books of Moses, written by Rabbi Bar Nachmoni, who flourished, according to Buxtorff, about this year. There are fifteen words which have unusual pricks or points upon them, observed by the Masorah and in the Talmud; ten of them in the law, four of them in the prophets, and one in the Hagiographa; those in the law, most, if not all of them, are taken notice of in these commentaries; in one of

1 Shibre Luchot & Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.  2 Meor
Enayim. c. 9. fol. 52. 2.  1 Biblioth. Heb. p. 326.
Bereshit Rabba, f. 48. fol. 43. & f. 51. fol. 46. 1.
& f. 78. fol. 68. 3. & f. 84. fol. 73. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, f. 3.
fol. 182. 2.
* Bemidbar Rabba f. 3. fol. 182. 2.
Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. vid. Aruch in voce "JPJ" & Maaric
Philip. Aquin. fol. 343. 2. who from hence concludes that
Bara put the points and accents.
of which are these words concerning them, said Ezra, if Elijah (another copy has Moses) should come and say, why hast thou written them? I will say to him, now have I pointed them; if he should say, thou hast written well, I will immediately remove the points from them. In another of them, express mention is made of the accents, Neb. viii. 8. is thus paraphrased, they read in the book of the law of God, this is the scripture; distinctly this is the Targum; and gave the sense, these are the accents; and caused them to understand the reading, these are the heads of verses.

A. D. 230.

In this year the Jerusalem Talmud was finished, as is generally owned, though Scaliger* places it in 370, and Whiston § in 369, in which the accents are made mention of. The passage in Neb. is explained much in the same manner, as in the Babylonian Talmud, and in the Rabbot just now quoted; the distinction of the verses is observed in it||, which is made by the accent Silluk.

* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. P. 323.
§ Chronological Tables, cent. 19.
|| T. Hierol. Megilliah, fol. 74. 2. 4.
|| Ib. fol. 75. 1. 2.
Sillük. In this Talmud the double reading of a word in Hag. i. 8. is observed, which in the text is written יאלברר, but in the margin it is read יאלברר; the one is according to the letters without the נ paragogic, the other according to the points with it, which, as Schindler says, is the true reading; for because the point Kametz is under the last letter, the quiescent letter נ is to be assumed, and so the word is to be read with נ paragogic; but if the word had no points at the time this Talmud was compiled, nor written with נ in any copies, why should it be read, or directed to be so read? I have placed this Talmud here because it is generally received, though some think it was not written so early, since mention is made in it of Dioclesian the king; and if the Roman emperor of that name is meant, it must be written in or after his time; though it appears from the Talmud itself, that the Doclet or Dioclesian spoken of was, according to that, some petty king, that lived in the times of R. Judah Hakkodesh, the compiler of the Misnah, by whose

1 T. Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. & Taanit, fol. 65. 1.
2 Lexie. Pentaglott. col. 830 3 T. Hieros. Trumot, 46. 2. 3.
children he had been beaten, as pretended, and when he became a king, complained of it; which can not so well agree with the emperor Dioclesian: however, what is quoted from it, is a proof of the accents being mentioned in it, which some have denied, and for the sake of which it is observed.

About this time flourished that indefatigable writer Origen, who had knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and is almost the only one of the antients that had, excepting Jerom. This writer, in one of his commentaries*, quotes the Hebrew reading of Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. and agreeable to the present punctuation; in which he appears to be instructed by a Jew, since he puts Adonai instead of Jehovah, and by which it is evident that the Jews pointed as they do now. The same writer composed a work called Hexapla; which, had it been preserved, would have been of great use in this controversy about the antiquity of the Hebrew points; for in this work he placed in the first two columns, first the Hebrew text with its proper letters, and then the same in Greek characters: Fabricius has given

given a specimen of it in the whole first chapter of Genesis, collected out of the fragments of the antient Greek interpreters; and so has Montfaucon after him; which I have compared with our pointed Bibles, and find it exactly agrees with our modern punctuation, with scarce any variation at all; take as a proof the first two or three verses.

The rest of the specimen, throughout the whole chapter, is agreeable to this; both Fabricius and Montfaucon have given another specimen of the Hexapla, on Hos. xi. 1. the same which Walton has transcribed from a copy of cardinal Barberini, from whom they seem to have taken it, which does not so exactly agree with the modern pointing as the other does; but Montfaucon has given two more specimens,

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* Præliminar. ad Hexapla. c. 1. p. 16.
one out of the *Octapla* of *Ps.* ii. 6. and another out of the *Enneapla* of *Hab.* ii. 4. which perfectly agree with the present punctuation; and it is surprising they should, when it is considered, that particularly the specimen of the whole first chapter of *Genesis* is collected from fragments preserved in various writers, and those but little skilled in the *Hebrew* language, and who sometimes wrote differently one from another; and that these have passed through the hands of various抄iers, entirely unacquainted with that language; and yet *Fabricius* complains not of any difficulty in collecting it; *Montfaucon* indeed does, and it is pretty much he should, since he wrote after *Fabricius*; this shews that he did not consult him, and that he had not his specimen from him; and therefore it is the more surprising that they should so nearly agree, the difference between them being chiefly not in the vowel-points, but in the powers of some few of the consonant letters. With what precision and exactness, agreeable to the modern punctuation, may it reasonably be supposed were the *Hexapla* of *Origen*, as *first* published by him,
and as it would have appeared had it been preserved; and who must have had a pointed Bible before him when he composed it; and the most exquisite care, circum-pection and diligence must have been used by him, to observe every letter and every point, so as to write each word in Greek characters, and give them a proper regular pronunciation. Though I must confess, that since Origen was but indifferently skilled in the Hebrew language, as Huetius* has observed, and so father Simon; I greatly suspect he had, by some means or other obtained a copy of the Hebrew Bible; written in Greek characters, perhaps from a Jew with whom he was acquainted, well versed in the Hebrew language, both letters and points; for it was allowed by the Jews* to write the Hebrew text in the characters of any language, though not to read it so written in their synagogues; and especially they allowed of writing it in Greek characters, it may be for the use of the Hellenistic Jews; nay they allowed the sacred books to be written in Greek characters.

* Origenian. 1. 2. c. 1. f. 2. p. 26.  
* Disquisit.  
Critic. c. 9. p. 61.  
racters only, for so it is laid in the Misnab*, "there is no difference between the (sacred) books, the Phylacteries, and Mezuzah, (the parchments on the door-posts), only that the books may be written ten in every tongue, but the Phylacteries and Mezuzah may not be written but in the Assyrian (i.e. in Hebrew characters). "Rabbi Simeon Ben Gamaliel says, they don't allow the books to be written but in Greek;" and the decision was, according to Simeon, as Maimonides* observes, and who agreeable to this says, "they may not write the Phylacteries and Mezuzah but in Assyrian characters, but they allow the (sacred) books to be written also in Greek; and in that only." I suspect therefore, I say, that Origen lighted on one of those copies, and what serves to strengthen the suspicion is, that in his Hexapla, Adonai is put for Jehovah, as the Rabbins read it.§. Now what he did in compiling his Hexapla, was placing the several copies, as he found them, in order, in distinct columns as follows; first, the Hebrew text in Hebrew letters, as then in use with the Jews.

* Megillah, c. 1. s. 8. T. Hierol. Sabbat, fol. 15. 3.
* Tephillin, c. 1. s. 19. § Vid. Epiphan. contr.
Heres. 3. her. 76.
Jews, as Eusebius assures*, who doubtless saw the work itself; and next a copy of the same in Greek characters, he had somewhere met with; then followed the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotion: but be it in which way it may, whether the composition of the Hebrew copy in Greek characters, was Origen's, or another's, it seems a clear case that a pointed Bible must then be in being, and was made use of; and that there was a regular punctuation, and that by the specimen the present punctuation agrees with it; which observation sufficiently confutes and destroys those notions and vulgar mistakes so generally received, of the invention of the points by the men of Tiberias, and of their being invented after the writing of the Talmud, and of their being unknown in the times of Jerom; all which must now be retracted.

A. D. 200.

In this century, and the preceding, lived the Rabbins of Tiberias, so frequently mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud, finished in the year 230, as before observed; at this time

time as there were many synagogues of the Jews at Tiberias, so there was a famous academy; and now lived the true men of Tiberias, spoken of in Jewish writings, and at this time only, as to any number of them; for in the following century, universities and promotions ceased in the land of Israel. These men, so famous in Jewish writings for their knowledge of the Hebrew language, and the purity and elegance of it, and the right manner of reading and pronouncing it, lived before the times of Jerom, and so not after the finishing of the Talmud, as Elias says; for Jerom manifestly refers to them, and to the sentiments the Jews had of them, for their knowledge of the law, and the beauty and elegance of their language*. But though these men studied the Hebrew language, and were very expert in it, and in the affair of pointing, yet they were not the inventors of the points; which may be concluded from what Aben Ezra says of them; "I have seen, says he, the books which the wise men of Tiberias examined, and fifteen of their elders gave it upon

* Quest. seu Trad. Heb. in Gen. T. 3. fol. 73. I. K. Comment. in Exod. 25. 31.
Upon oath, that three times they diligently considered every word and every point, every full and deficient word, and behold, Υοd was written in the word "נָבִיעָרְיָה", i.e. in Exod. xxv. 31. by which it appears that the Bible was not pointed by them, but pointed Bibles, which they had, were examined by them; so that pointed Bibles were in being before their time; they were pointed to their hands; they only searched into them, and studied them, and became very expert and accurate in their knowledge of the points: hence the same writer, in another work of his says, that from them, the men of Tiberias were the Masoretes; from them we have the whole pointing; not that they were the authors and inventors of the points; but that by them they were handed down to them with great accuracy and exactness; for he expressly says in another work of his, that "the men of the great synagogue taught the people the sense of the scriptures by the accents, and by the kings and ministers; so he calls the vowel-

vowel-points, Cholem, Shurek, &c. and were instead of eyes to the blind; therefore in their foot-steps we go forth, them we follow, and on them we lean in all expositions of the scripture.” But whatsoever skill the men of Tiberias might attain to in the study of the points, they appear to be very unfit for, and unequal to such a work as the invention of them. Hear what Dr. Lightfoot* has observed of them, who was thoroughly acquainted with their characters, as to be learned from the above Talmud. “There are some who believe the holy Bible to be pointed by the men of Tiberias; I do not wonder at the impudence of the Jews who invented this story; but I wonder at the credulity of Christians who applaud it. Recollect, I beseech you, the names of the Rabbins of Tiberias, from the first situation of the university to the time that it expired; and what at length do you find, but a kind of men mad with Pharisaism, bewitching with traditions and bewitched, blind, guileful, doting, they must pardon me, if I say magical and monstrous? men how unfit, how unable,

"unable, how foolisb, for the undertak-
ing so divine a work?" Then he gives
the names of many of them, and observes
their childishness, sophistry, froth, and
poison, and adds, "if you can believe the
Bible was pointed in such a school, be-
lieve also all that the Talmudists write.
"The pointing of the Bible favours of
the work of the Holy Spirit, not the
work of lost, blinded, and besotted
men;" and elsewhere he says, "it is
above the skill of a mere man to point
the Bible; nay, scarcely a verse as it is.
"The ten commandments may puzzle all
the world for that skill.

As about this time, the universities both
of Tiberias and Babylon were the most flou-
rious, it may be reasonably supposed,
that as they had each of them copies of
the Bible, which they carefully examined,
and preserved for the use of the Jews in
Palestine and Babylon, that now were made
the various readings called western and east-
ern, published at the end of some printed
Bibles; the one for the Jews in their own
land, called western, and the other for the
Jews in Babylon, called eastern. The dif-

Erubhim, or Miscellanies, c. 31. vol, i. p. 1014.
ference in number are 216, and none of them in the law; and they are mostly very trivial, and chiefly about letters and words, but not altogether, for in two places, Jer. vi. 6. Amos iii. 6. they make mention of the point Mappick, in which the one copy differs from the other; so that Elias is wrong, in saying that the differences are about words and letters only, but not about points and accents, and therefore he supposes they were made before the invention of the vowel-points and accents; but he is mistaken, these were then in being.

In Lam. v. 21. the western Jews have the Tetragrammaton, Jehovah, but the eastern have Adonai; the former word, as it should seem, having in their copy the points of the latter, as it sometimes has, they put Adonai instead of it; which shews that the points then were.

A.D. 190.

Clemens of Alexandria lived and wrote about this time, and is thought to make mention of the Hebrew points and accents, where he says, there are some, who in reading,

Prefat. 3. ad Masoret.  Stromat. 1. 3. p. 442.
reading, by the tone of the voice pervert the Scriptures to their own pleasure, and by a transposition τίνων προσώπων καὶ σιγ-μων (which Sylburgius his interpreter renders) of certain accents and points, what are wisely and profitably commanded, force to their own liking;” in which he has respect to a text in Mal. iii. 15, and which he vindicates against some heretics of his time; but not to the Greek version of it, and the accents of that; for those in the opposition say, there were no accents in the Greek tongue for ages after; but to the Hebrew text, and the points and accents in that; and the rather this may be supposed, seeing it appears in several parts of his writings, that he had some knowledge of the Hebrew tongue.

A little before Clemens, Irenæus wrote, who, tho' he had but a small degree of knowledge of the Hebrew language, yet something of it he endeav—

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a Some say they began in the 7th century, vid. Velasti Differt. de Lit. Græc. Pronunciata. par. 4. c. 2 p. 95. Romæ, 1751. It it said the ancients the MSS. are, the fewer are the accents, and that those which exceed a thousand years have none at all, Mirtifb. Sarpedon (alias Frideric Reiffen-berg), Differt. de Vera Attic. Pronunciata. par. 3. c. 1. p. 48. Romæ, 1750; but Gregorius Placentinus makes them much more ancient. See his Epitome Græc. Paleograph. c. 11. p. 88. Romæ, 1735. The controversy about the Greek accents has been of late years revived at Rome.
endeavoured to get, that he might answer the heretics of his time, who were fond of introducing foreign words and their significations into their schemes. The first and ancient Hebrew letters, he says, were but ten; which Feuardentius his annotator explains of the ten from Aleph to Yod inclusive, because these were the first and chief from whence all the rest were formed; and indeed the cabalistick Jews say the Yod is the beginning of all letters; and Hermannus Hugo observes, that all the Hebrew characters are composed from the single letter Yod variously joined together; but Irenæus adds, "that every one of the letters are written by fifteen, the last letter coupled to the first." Now what he means by fifteen Dr. Grabe says he could not devise. I suspect he means the fifteen vowel-points, as some grammarians reckon them, and call them five long, five short, and five most short, which Irenæus might have some knowledge of from those who taught him the little Hebrew he had; for that he consulted the Rabbins of his time.
time is clear from what he before says of the Hebrews and their language, "Sicut periti eorum dicunt:" and it is observable that in his time Hebrew words were read and pronounced according to the modern pointing; as for instance, יִּלְוַּ יִּי is read not Culaču nor Coloco, as most natural, without points; but Culačau¹, as it is in our pointed Bibles in If. xxviii. 13. and was read so before his time by the heretics he opposes. There are other words in Irenæus² which agree with our modern punctuation, as Sabaoth, Eloa, Adonai: and here I cannot forbear observing, that Philo Byblius¹, who lived half a century at least before Irenæus, in translating Sanchoniatho's history out of the Phænician language, reads דָּוָּ, his author's word no doubt, in Greek Ελασθμού, as Jerom³, Bašil⁴, and Epiphanius⁵, in the fourth century read it Eloim; and Origen before them, as the specimen of his Hexapla given above shews. This very antient way of reading and pronouncing Elohim, as it agrees with the

the modern punctuation, so it may be observed against the Hutchinsonians, who sometimes write and pronounce it Elabin and sometimes Aleim, as Maslelag also does.

A. D. 150.

In this year, or about this time, the Misnab or book of Traditions was finished, which R. Judab Hakkodesh collected together, that they might not be lost; and it must be written so early, since by the unanimous consent of Jewish writers, it was compiled by this Rabbi, who flourished in the times of Antoninus Pius, with whom he was very familiar. Some Christian writers indeed place it at the beginning of the sixth century, or at the end of the fifth, and others at the end of the fourth; but no good reason can be given why the Jews should antedate this book, for whose use only it was written. There is not one Rabbi mentioned in it but lived before R. Judab, the supposed compiler of it; nor is there any chronological character in it that brings it lower than the times of Adrian the predecessor of Antoninus.
ninus, whose name is once mentioned in it; therefore Maimonides * thinks the Mifnab was composed about his time. Now the Jews had been very much harassed in the times of Trajan and Adrian, but obtained some favour and ease in the times of Antoninus; and having more ease and leisure, it was the fittest opportunity of setting about this work of collecting their traditions from several parts; which were put together by the above Rabbi, that they might not be lost: according to the author of Cosri*, this year 150 is the year 150 from the destruction of the second temple, which brings it to the year of Christ 220; but R. Abraham Ben David, b and R. Menachem c place the Mifnab in 120 from the destruction, which is A. D. 190; but Morinus d himself owns that Rabbenu Hakados compiled the Mifnaiot or traditions almost two hundred years before the council of Nice, and that council was but little more than three hundred years after

p Avodah Zarah, c. 3. f. 3. * Comment. in Ib.
after the birth of Christ. The general regard paid to the Mishnah by the Jews in all parts, in Palestine and in Babylon, the puzzle the Gemarists are at in many places to understand it, many of the traditions in it being the same that are observed or referred to in the New Testament, are proofs of the antiquity of it; and though it is denied, yet it is most clear that Jerom had knowledge of it as a written book; his words are, that the traditions of the "Pharisees are what to this day are called "δευτερωσεῖς" (secondary laws or the Mishnah, and are such old wives fables, that "I cannot bear evolvere to turn them over; "for neither will the bigness of the book "admit of it, and most of the things in "it are so filthy that I am ashamed to speak "of them;" in which he not only gives the work its proper name, a secondary law or Mishnah, but speaks of it as a book, and of a considerable bulk, it being bigger than our New Testament, and there are things in it which agree with the character he gives of it, and such as well deserved his censure, as Dr. Wotton * thinks; though

though I must confess in this I am of a different mind; but choose rather to subscribe to what the learned Wagenseil says *, that in the Mishnah as abstracted from the Gemara, "there is no fable nor apologue in it, nor any thing very foolish, nor very remote from reason; it contains mere laws and traditions." Jerom therefore says this upon hear-say, and it is plain by his own words he had not read it; or, it may be, rather he refers to the Jerusalem Talmud, which consists both of the Mishnah and Gemara; and not only the matter but the bulk of the book Jerom speaks of better agrees with that, which is a large folio; and being finished in the year 230, as before observed, there was time enough for Jerom to have knowledge of it; however, I think it is beyond all doubt, that there was a collection of the Jewish traditions called in his time Mishnah or Mishnaiot, and that this was a written book, in some form or another, either by itself or with the Gemara, of which Jerom had knowledge; and that Jerom saw the Mishnah itself is the opinion of the learned Dr. Bernard in his letter to the bishop of Fern, prefixed to the

* Præfatur Tela Ignæa, p. 57, 58.
the Mifnab of Surenhusus; and Jerom in the same epistle makes mention of the Mifnac doctors by name, as Rab, Akiba, Simeon, and Hillel, who delivered to the Jews the tradition of walking 2000 feet on a sabbath day; and a little after he says, "on certain days when they (the Jewish doctors) explain their traditions they usually say to their disciples, οἱ σοφοὶ διδαχῶν, that is, the wise men teach "the traditions," than which no words can more fully and fitly express or give a better translation of the phrases הנוּנְאֶה רַבּא Our Rabbins teach, that is, in the Mifnab, and מִשְׁמַר רַבּי such a Rabbi teaches, that is, in the Mifnac way; phrases to be met with in innumerable places in Talmudic writings; which shews the knowledge Jerom had of them, and that they were in being before his time; and hence it is, that the wise men are called Tanaim, Mifnac doctors, and the Mifnab itself Matbnitha, tradition, instruction, doctrine. The Mifnac doctors are frequently called wise men in

† Videret equidem aliquando opus illud Mifnicum Rector Bethleemiticus, &c. Vid. Triglandium de secta Karacorum c. 9. p. 123, who is of the same opinion. ' See the meaning of these phrases in Halicot Olam, p. 35, 39. Ed. L' Empereur.
in it. The most famous of them for their doctrines, debates, and decisions in the Mifnah were well known to Jerom, and their names and the order of time in which they lived, are given by him:

"The Nazarites, says he, interpret the two houses (If. viii.) of the two families of Sammai and Hillel, from whom sprung the Scribes and Pharisees, in whose school Akiba succeeded, thought to be the master of Aquila the proselyte, and after him Meir, succeeded by Johanan the son of Zaccaei, after him Eliezer and then Delphon (Tarphon I suppose is meant) and again Joseph the Galilean, and Joshua unto the captivity of Jerusalem. Sammai and Hillel therefore did not arise in Judea much before the Lord was born; the first of which signifies a dissipator, and the other probane; because that by their traditions and secondary laws (or Mifnic doctrines) they dissipated and despised the precepts of the law; and these are the two houses which did not receive the Saviour." It is observable in this passage, that Jerom calls

* Comment. in Esaiam, c. 8. fol. 17. I. Tom. 5.
calls the schools of Hillel and Shammai, which make so considerable a figure in the Misnab, houses and families, which is the very name they go by in the Misnab hundreds of times, as הילל and שמאי Shammai. So Jerom elsewhere calls the Jewish fables and traditions, דואת אספריאס secondary laws, as is also before observed, and answers to Misnaiot, the very name by which their book of traditions is called: and Eusebius*, who lived before Jerom, makes mention of the Deuterote or Misnic doctors among the Jews, by which name Jerom* often calls the Pharisees, who were traditionary men, retailers of traditions, and the authors of the Misnab; and by the same name he calls one of the Rabbins, that instructed him in the Hebrew tongue†, and from whom, with others, he became acquainted with many things now to be met with in the Misnab and Talmud; and this accounts for Jerom's knowledge of the Misnab, which might not be known by those who were his cotemporaries; and

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which need not be wondered at, since the book was written purely for the use of the Jews, and was not designed to be made public to others; and it was only thro' Jerom's acquaintance with some Jewish Rabbins his preceptors, that he came to have any notion of it; wherefore Austin not knowing it was committed to writing*, is no objection to it, since it might be written, and he be ignorant of it, he having no correspondence with the Jews, as Jerom had: and it may be further observed, that of the Mifnic doctors some lived before the birth of Christ, and some after, yet before the destruction of Jerusalem, and others after that, but all before R. Judah Hakkodesh, the last of them, and who compiled the Mifnab about the date given; and it may also be observed, that whereas some of these men lived before this date some considerable time, in course, their debates and decisions about any matter must be reckoned as early; so that the discourse between two Rabbins I shall presently produce, founded upon punctuation, who lived about, or a little P

after, the destruction of Jerusalem, carries the affair of punctuation higher than the date fixed, even into the first century.

The Misnab, according to the Jews, was pointed. Ephodeus says, you will find all the ancient copies of the Misnab written with points and accents; and R. Aza-riab affirms, that he saw two copies of the Misnab more than 500 years old, with points and distinguishing accents; and in the Misnab not only mention is made of verses in the Bible, and how many to be read at a time, by which it appears that the sacred books were distinguished into verses so early, but the points are manifestly referred unto. Two doctors are introduced as disputing about the reading of the text in Cant. i. 2. Says R. Joseph, brother Ishmael how dost thou read the words, דודו א horses? that is, whether he read the word with a masculine or feminine affix; and so, whether it was the congregation or church that spoke to God, or

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or whether it was God that spoke to the church? now this could not be determined by the letters or consonants which are the same; but by the vowel-points, which distinguish the affixes: according to R. Jbr-mael it was to be read feminine as if spoken by God to the church; but this R. Josbua denied; Not so, says he, but masculine, and so spoken by the church to God. Now though these two Rabbins might have an unpointed bible before them, yet the foundation of their reasoning lay in the points; for their dispute was not barely how the word was pronounced, but how it was read; and it is observable, that it is the modern punctuation of this word that is by this instance established; to which may be added, that the Majoreth is expressly made mention of in the Misnah as the hedge of the law, one branch of which is concerned with the points and accents, and to the authors of it those that oppose the points ascribe them. Now R. Akiba, whose saying this is, flourished about eighty years after Christ, and died in the year 120, in the

P 2

war

b Pirke Abot, c. 3. s. 13. vid. Leusden in ib.
war of Adrian against the Jews; in whom the glory of the law is said to cease, because he gave his mind to search out the meaning of every apex, tittle, and point in it, as it was foretold of him that he should: the extraordinary point in the letter נ in מזוזה, Numb. ix. 10. is observed in the Misnab.

A. D. 120.

About this time, according to the Jewish chronology, lived Simeon Ben Jochai, a disciple of R. Akiba, author of the book of Zobar; the authority and antiquity of which book is not called in question by any of the Jews, no not by Elias Levita himself, who first asserted the points to be the invention of the men of Tiberias; yet declared, if any one could convince him that his opinion was contrary to the book of Zobar, he should be content to have it rejected. What may be urged in favour of the antiquity of that book, is not only, that the persons introduced speaking in it, and whose

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whose sayings are recorded, were as early or earlier than the time to which it is placed; but the neatness of the language in which it is written, which far exceeds any thing written after this time; as also there being no mention made of the Talmud in it, though there is of the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan. Some things objected to its antiquity may be only interpolations. R. Azariah says *, it was written before the Mishnah was compiled. According to Masius † it was written a little after the destruction of Jerusalem. Now in this book it is said, "the letters are the body, and the points are the spirit or soul;" and the text in Dan. xii. 3. is thus paraphrased, they that be wise shall shine, the letters and points; as the brightness, the modulation of the accents; they that turn many to righteousness, these are the pauses of the accents; so Nebemiah viii. 8. is interpreted in it, of the pauses of the accents, and of the Masoreth;* and in another place ** Jehovah is called Elohim, because he is the river of mercies;

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* Zohar in Gen. fol. 61, 1. † Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 179, 2. ‡ Zohar in Gen. fol. 1, 3. § In Exod. fol. 82, 4. ¶ In Lev. fol. 4, 3. Ed. Sultz bach.
cies; and it is written mercy, and pointed "by Elohim;" yea, the very names of the points and accents are mentioned in it in various places, as Cholem, Shurek, Chirek, Pathach, Segol, Sheva, Kametz, Tzere, Zarka, Segolta, Shalshelet, &c. and elsewhere mention is made of the seven vowels, which are by grammarians called Kametz, Tzere, Chirek, Cholem, Shurek, Pathach, Segol; so some of the extraordinary points or pricks, on certain words are observed in it, as that on the word for be kissed him, Gen. xxxiii. 4. and on the word for afar off, in Numbers ix. 10. 1; the double letters in the Hebrew tongue, the pronunciation of which depends upon the points, are made mention of in this book 2.

A. D. 109.

In the time before this date, or in the first century, the Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos were written; the one is upon the

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1 Ib. in Gen. fol. 1, 2, & 26, 3, & 38. 1, 2, & 71, 2, Tikkune zohar præfat. fol. 6, 2, & 7, 1. 2 Ib. in Gen. fol. 98, 4. 3 In Gen. fol. 38, 1.
the prophets, and the other upon the Pentateuch, and are by Buxtorf* said to be the most ancient books of all the Hebrews, Jonathan flourishing a little before Christ, and Onkelos a little after; though some write that they knew one another; however, they were in this century: it is certain also there was a Targum on Job, as ancient † as R. Gamaliel, the master of the Apostle Paul; and Onkelos must be cotemporary with him, if what is said ‡ is true, that he burnt at Gamaliel's funeral as much as was worth seventy Tyrian pounds. The Targums are now in our printed bibles pointed; but whether they were so when first written cannot be said. Elias Levita § is very positive and says, without doubt the Targumists wrote their paraphrases without points; and affirms also, that they were not pointed by the Masoretes, but by men of note long after their time; but this is all said to serve an hypothesis of his own, that there was no pointing before the men of Tiberias;
that the points of them were then in a corrupt state, and very irregular; and so indeed Buxtorf found them, and took great pains to restore them; and which not only supposes their being, but it may be that such a state was owing to their great antiquity and the long neglect of them. With some Jewish commentators Jonathon is observed in some places to translate and paraphrase according to the points. Kimchi on 2 Sam. xix. 14. observes, that instead of be bowed, Jonathon renders it passively, was bowed, by which it seems, he says, that he read ש with a Tzere under Yod, but the Masorah testifies of it that it is with a Patach under the Yod; and on Hos. v. 15. he remarks, that in the word יִשָּׂא the Aleph and Shin are with a Sheva, agreeable to which is the Targum of Jonathon; and Jarchi on Ezek. xxvii. 16. observes, that as to the point Dagesh, Jonathon explains the word that has it sometimes literally, and sometimes allegorically; for in that way he sometimes paraphrased otherwise than in the copy before him; so the Jerusalem Targumion on Gen. xiv. 5. what Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathban take for the proper name

Prefat. ad Bibl. Heb.
name of a place, he instead of Zuzim in Ham, has it, the illustrious ones among them; and so it is quoted in Bereshit Rabba, on which the commentator observes, that Zuzim is allegorically explained, as if it had the signification of splendor and luster, and Beham, which is with a Kametz, as if it was written with a Segol; but if the points were not then known, there could be no foundation for such an allegorical interpretation. Capellus himself owns, that Jonathan and Onkelos made use of an Hebrew copy different from what the Septuagint did, and almost the same we now have from the Masoretes; and indeed Onkelos scarce ever departs from the modern punctuation, and it will be difficult to produce a single instance proving that he used an unpointed Bible.

A. D. 70.

Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, flourished about this time. Scarce anything can be expected from him concerning the Hebrew Points, who wrote in Greek, and conformed Hebrew words to the

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the genius of that language, and who read and pronounced consonants, as well as vowels, different from the Hebrew words. There is a passage of his which is thought to militate against the antiquity and necessity of the vowel-points, when he says 4, that the sacred letters engraven on the mitre of the high priest, meaning the word Jebovah, are four vowels; which are supposed to be a sufficient number of vowels for the Hebrew language, at least, if another or two are added to them: but, to take off the force of this objection, if there is any in it, let it be observed, 1st. Josephus's want of skill in the Hebrew tongue, with which he is charged by some learned men; the Syro-Chaldean language being commonly spoken by the Jews in his time, and which, perhaps, may serve also to account for his different pronunciation of Hebrew words in some places. 2dly, What he calls vowels, and which some think may be used instead of vowels, are allowed by the same to have also the power of consonants; and it is certain, that the Vau, was used as a consonant before, and in the times of Josephus; so David

4 De Bello Jud. 1. 5. c. 5. f. 2.
vid is read Δαλδ, in Matt. i. 1. 6. & passim, and in the very name Jehovah he speaks of; for the Samaritans* pronounced it Jafe; and י and י are sometimes changed for one another in the Hebrew language, as in Bathshua for Bathsheba, 1 Chron. iii. 5. and Josephus must have known that the Χοd is used in the Bible as a consonant, in a multitude of proper names of men and places, and in other words, and even in his own name. 3dly, If the sacred name Jehovah consisted of vowels only, it could not be pronounced; for as consonants cannot be pronounced without vowels, so neither can vowels without consonants; and though the word is by the Jews said to be ineffable, yet not because it could not be pronounced, for it was pronounced by the blasphemer in the times of Moses, by Hiram, by the former wise men to their children once a week*, and by the high priest in the sanctuary, as they allow†; but because as they thought it was not lawful to pronounce it, at least in common, as say both

both Philo\textsuperscript{a} and Josephus\textsuperscript{b}; and so in the Mishnah\textsuperscript{1}, he is said to have no part in the world to come who pronounces the name Jebovah with its own letters. When the ancient Greek writers say it is unutterable, as the author of Delphi Phænicizantes observes\textsuperscript{k}, it is only as written by the Greeks, who scarce admit of \textupsilon\ as a consonant, and cannot express aspirates in the middle and end of a word, as this word requires; but then he adds, not because it cannot be pronounced, for it may be pronounced according to the Hebrew letters, with which it is written. 4thly, The three letters in the name Jebovah, for there are no more in it of a different kind, can at most be only considered as matres lectionis, as they are called, and so used in the room of vowels; but then these are often wanting in the Hebrew text, and in places where they might be expected, and where their presence would be necessary, if this were their use, and there were no other vowels or vowel-points, and therefore are insufficient to supply the place of them.

5thly

\begin{itemize}
  \item [\textsuperscript{a}] De vita Mosis, l. 3. p 670.
  \item [\textsuperscript{b}] Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12.
  \item [\textsuperscript{c}] Sanhedrin, c. 11. l. 1.
  \item [\textsuperscript{k}] Dickinson, c. 6.
\end{itemize}
5thly, After all, γραμματα and φωνετα are the same in Ἰωσῆφ as in the Greek epigram in Eusebius, and they the same with φωνη the human and articulate voice, which, as Capellus observes, consists not of vowels only, but of consonants also; and both in the one as in the other, the tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, Jehovah is thought to be meant; or of seven letters, four consonants and three vowel-points; hence Scaliger says, "there is no necessity by φωνετα to understand vowels, in the above Greek epigram, since Ἰωσῆφ expressly calls the four letters of the tetragrammaton φωνετα, whence it appears that any letters may be so called;" and Ἰωσῆφ's view in the observation he makes was not to tell us what sort of letters they were that were upon the mitre of the high priest, whether vowels or consonants; but that it was the tetragrammaton or name of four letters, that was written upon it, using the language of his own nation, and which continues in use to this day; wherefore both Selden and Braunius render the passage in Ἰωσῆφ thus, "about it

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1 *Prepar. Evangel. l. xi. c. 6.*  
3 *In. Fragment. ad Cælum lib. de Emend. Temp. p. 54.*  
4 *De Succel. in Pontif. Ebr. l. 2. c. 7.*  
5 *De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 22. l. 18. p. 811.*
it (the mitre) was another golden crown bearing sacred letters, that is, the name tetragrammaton." Philo calls them the four engravings of the name, and this, says he, divines call tetragrammaton. Moreover, though Josephus does not make express mention of the Masorab in his writings, yet Arias Montanus thinks, he never could have so confidently said what he said without the help of it; as when he says', in such a space of time that was past, meaning from Mosés, "no man dared to add, nor to take away, nor to change any thing in the scriptures, choosing rather to die;" and the same says Philo the Jew, who lived in the same age, and a little before him, that the Jews in the space of more than 2000 years, "never moved out of its place one word of what was written by Moses, rather willing to die a thousand times than go contrary to the laws and customs;" and that there was a Masorab before their times is acknowledged by some who have been opposers

posers of the points, as before observed. The silence of Philo and Josephus about the points, is only a proof that they were not a matter of controversy, but no proof of their not being in use.

A. D. 31.

That the points were in use in the times of Christ may be concluded from Mat. v. 18, till heaven and earth pass away one jot (or one Yud, as the Syriac version) or one tittle (or one Chirek, as Elias Hutter in his Hebrew version) shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled; and so as the least letter in the Hebrew alphabet Yod is referred to, the least of the points in use, Chirek, is also; between which and the Greek word παλαμά, used by the Evangelist, is great nearness of sound, and seems to be no other than that point made Greek. So, Dr. Lightfoot observes that our Saviour in his words of one Ιώτα, and one Κεραία, not perishing from the law, seems to allude to the least of the letters, Ιωδ, and to the least vowel and accent. The argument from hence cannot well be put more strongly.

Works, vol. i. p. 1014.
strongly than it is by Dr. *John Prideaux*, who yet was an opposer of the points; "if the points, says he, were not at this time, why does the Saviour make mention of them? if they were the same with the consonants or only cornicular eminencies of them, why are they reckoned here as distinct things?" and to which he makes a very feeble answer, and indeed the argument seems unanswerable: nor can the pricks on certain letters called ד, be designed, though very ancient, being mentioned in the *Talmud*, and the same letters on which they are put, and on them only and not on all; and as *Broughton* observes, "these, and likewise accents, are no part of the word, therefore vowel-pricks (or points) must be meant;" and it may be concluded with *Piscator* on the place, that Christ "so calls, i.e. tittles, what now go by the name of points, which in *Hebrew* writing are variously put to letters, both to signify the proper sound of some of them, and the vowel-sounds, and also the accents and parts of a sentence; hence it appears that the holy Bible in the time

*Viginti duae Lectiones, Lef. 12. p. 182.*  
*T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29, 2.*  
*Works, p. 204.*
time of Christ was pointed, and that that punctuation was approved of by him; so Pastor in his Lexicon says, "by tittle here is meant a point; wherefore the vowel-points were in the time of Christ, and not, as some pretend, a new invention." The words of Christ expressed on the cross, Eli, Eli, &c. and the names of persons in the genealogies of the Evangelists, and in Heb. xi. and in other places of the New Testament, seem to confirm the modern punctuation. The Dageš forte appears, and is preserved in many words in those times, as in Immanuel, Mat. i. 23. Matthew, Lebbeus, Thaddæus, Matt. x. 3. Hosanna, Matt. xxii. 9. Ephphatha, Mark vii. 34. Anna, Luke ii. 36. Matthias, Mattthathias, Luke iii. 24, 25. Matthias, Acts i. 23. Abaddon, Rev. ix. 11. Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 16. Sabattan, Matt. xii. 5. Lamima, Mark xv. 34. with others, and the Dageš lenè in Capernaum, Sarepta; and others; and even the use of the Pathach Genubab appears in the pronunciation of Messiah and Siloam as well as the other points, John i. 41. and ix. 7, 11.

About this time lived two famous doctors among the Jews, Hillel and Shammai, heads of two schools and of two sects, so different, that it is said the law was as two laws, and a fast was appointed on account of the division between them; the former was followed by the Rabbanite Jews, and the latter by the Karaite Jews; and it may be observed, that Josephus calls Pollio, the same with Hillel, a Pharisee, but not Sammeas or Shammai, he mentions with him; through whom the Karaites derive the genealogy and succession of their doctors, and from whom they say they received the doctrine and copy of the law which Shammai had from Shemaiab, and he from Judah ben Tabba, in whose days the separation was made, 120 years before Christ, as will be seen hereafter. Now the Karaites with one consent declare, that the copy of the law they had, had the points and accents, and that such copies

\[ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88, 2. \]
\[ Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. \]
\[ Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. l. 1. \]
\[ Dod Mordecai, five Comment. de Karzeis, c. 9. p. 97. Edit. \]
\[ a Wolfio. \]
\[ 8 Ibid, c. 12. p. 150. \]
copies they always had and used; as the Hillellian copy is also a pointed one. I have observed under A. D. 340. that some learned men take that copy to be this Hillell's, and I am pretty much inclined to the same opinion; for, as Shammai had a copy for him and his party, so Hillell had, no doubt, one for him and his; and as the Karaites boast of their copy, and of the antiquity of it, so the Rabbanites boast of Hillell's copy; which must be the copy of some eminent person of that name, by which all copies were corrected; and who so eminent as this Hillell? It is indeed most generally ascribed to a Hillell, who lived in the fourth century, not so famous as this; and as for the copy which R. Zacuth saw, and which had been written 900 years before he saw it, which, from 1500, in which he lived, carries it up to the year 600, it falls short of that Hillell, and still more of this. I suppose, therefore, that that was a copy taken from the original copy of the elder Hillell, and being the only one remaining, was valued, and made use of for correcting all other copies; so that if this was the case, there were two pointed Bibles as early as the date.
date given. Hillel began his government as the head of an academy, 100 years before the destruction of the temple, about the beginning of the reign of Herod, with which Josephus \(^1\) agrees, who calls him Pollio, as before observed.

A. 40. Ante Christum.

About this time lived R. Nechuniah Ben Kanab, as the Jewish chronologers \(^2\) generally place him. I suspect him to be the same whom Grotius \(^3\) calls R. Nebumias, who, according to him, was fifty years before Christ, and who then openly declared, that the time of the Messiah signified by Daniel, would not be prolonged beyond those fifty years. To this Rabbi the book of Babir is generally ascribed by the Jews: Could the authenticity and antiquity of it be established, it would furnish out a very early proof of the points; for R. Bechais, a celebrated writer with the Jews, has a quotation out of it to this pur-

purpose, "Letters are like to the body, " and points to the soul, for the points " move the letters as the soul moves " the body, as our R. R. expound in " the book of Babir;" but seeing such antiquity of this book is doubtful as ascribed to it, I lay no stress upon it; though Buxtorf says, it is the most ancient of all the Rabbinical books, and if so, it must be as ancient as it is said to be; since Jonathan Ben Uzziel, who wrote on the prophets, was cotemporary with the supposed author of it.

A. 120. Ante Christum.

In the times of John Hyrcanus, and Alexander Janneaus his son, sprung up the sect of the Karaites in opposition to the Pharisees, who had introduced traditions, and set up the oral law, which these men rejected. In the times of the said princes lived Simeon Ben Shetach, and Judah Ben Tabbai, who flourished A. M. 3621. these two separated, the latter from the former, because he could not embrace his inventions.

tions which he formed out of his own brain; and from him the Karaites sprung, who were first called the society or congregation of Judah Ben Tabbai, which was afterwards changed into the name of Karaites: for that they had their rise from Anan and Saul, who lived in the eighth century after Christ, and so after the Talmud was finished, as say Morinus and others, is very false; for mention is made of them in the Mijnab compiled in the 2d century; they were only the restorers not the authors of Karaiism, which must be near as early as Pharisaism; and that, according to Josephus, was as early as the times of Jonathan the Maccabee. Now these men, the Karaites, adhered to the scriptures only, whence they had their name, which signifies Scripturarians, the same, as some think, with the Scribes, γραμματες, letter-men, and these the same with the lawyers in the New Testament, who kept to the letter of the scriptures, Matt. xxiii, 13, compared with Luke ii.

and Matt. xxii. 35. with Mark xii. 28. but the Scribes and Pharisees are not only put together, but as agreeing with each other, and so they might in some things agree against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, See Acts, xxiii. 9. and might differ in other things; but what makes most against the Scribes being the same with the Karaites, is their joining with the Pharisees in the point of traditions, Mat. xv. 1. 2. Mark vii. 1—5. and on the other hand what seems most to favour the notion that the Scribes and Lawyers differed from the other sects, is the text in Luke xi. 45. and certain it is, that Christ does speak more favourably of the Scribes than of others, Matt. xiii. 52. and xvii. 19, 11. Mark xii. 28, 34. and he is sometimes compared with them, though with some difference, Matt. vii. 29; and Orobio, a Jew, of the last century, said * our Jesus was a Karaite; and a Rabbinical Jew, out of ill-will to the Karaites, feigned a letter from them to the other Jews, asserting that Jesus of Nazareth agreed with them, and exhorted his followers to receive

* Apud Trigland. ut supra, c. 6. p. 66.  
* Apud Huldrig. Not. ad Toldos Jeichu, p. 82, 83.
ceive their rites, and not those of the Rabbanites; and that their ancestors had no hand in his death, and that they were the Rabbanites that flew him, and were only answerable for it; but it is evident that the Scribes were concerned in the death of Christ, Matt. xvi. 21, and xx. 18, xxvi. 3, xxvii. 42. though after all, it may be reasonably thought that the Karaites, some of them, were among the Scribes, of which scribes there were some in every sect, and included in them; for as there were Scribes on the side of the Pharisees, Acts xxiii. 9. so mention is made in Jewish writings, of the Scribes of the Sadducees, and of the Samaritans. Now the sentiments of these men, the Karaites, were from the beginning of them, constant and uniform; they made the scripture their only rule, would not admit of any innovation in it, nor addition to it, nor that the inventions and traditions of men should be made equal to it, and much less set up above it. The testimony therefore of such men for the points, must be very considerable.

Buxtorf*, the younger, indeed, does say of the Karaites, that they rejected punctuation as a species of the oral law; and of tradition; greatly mistaking the author of the book of Coſri, who from the Karaites admitting the points, urges their admission of tradition; since he, and other Jews, thought punctuation, from the times of Mojes to Ezra, was delivered by tradition, and therefore, says he *; 'if so it is, both we and the Karaites, are bound to admit tradition;' to which king Choſroes is made to answer, 'so the Karaites indeed will say (i.e. with respect to the necessity of the tradition of the points and accents to read the book of the law); but when they have found or got a perfect law (a copy with points and accents) they will deny that they have any further use of tradition, i.e. for the explanation of it.' Now though this writer may go too far in ascribing traditions to the Karaites, though they did allow it in some sense; yet it is plain he took it for granted, that they were for using, and did make use of pointed copies of the law; and so Morinus * himself understood it, and owns it;

it; but this is still more clear and manifest from their own writings: in a book 7 of theirs, in great repute with them, it is observed, that the patrons of tradition explain boughs of thick trees, used in the feast of tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 40. of a tree whose leaves are treble, according to Exod. xxviii. 14. but, says the Karaite writer, this is contrary to the nature of the language, for this y (in יה) is with a Kametz, but that is with a Sheva; so in another work 8 they say, the Rabbanites affirm, that what is written in the law needs explanation by tradition, but we don't believe so; but that what is written, its explanation goes along with it, meaning in the vowel-points; and a little after some pointed words are used. The Karaites own, that their copies of the Bible agree with those of the Rabbins, because the disposition and order of the books of scripture were made by Ezra, who lived before the schism; and as to the various readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, many of which are about the points and ac-

* R. Caleb, Asarah Maamarot, MS. apud Trigland, Ib. p. 117.
accents, they rather agree with the latter; but it greatly displeases them that in some places the points are changed and others put in their room for modesty’s sake, as in 1 Sam. v. 6. 9. 12. and vi. 4. 2 Kings vi. 25. by which it appears they are very tenacious of the points, and are not for altering them on any account; which they would never be sticklers for, could they be thought by them to be the invention of the Rabbins, and additions to the scriptures made by them. Mordecai, the famous Karaite in 1699, and his associates, are unanimous for the antiquity and coevity of the points with the letters; his words in answer to some questions sent him by Triglandius are these*:

“all our wise men with one mouth affirm and profess, that the whole law was pointed and accented, as it came out of the hands of Moses the man of God;” how false then is it what Morinus † says, that “all the Jews, the Karaites also, tho’ enemies of the traditions, and the Kabala, believe, as a most certain tradition, that the book of the law which Moses deliv–

* Chillouk MS. apud Trigland. Ib. p. 189, 190.
vered to the Israelites, was without points and accents;' but F. Simon * is against him, and affirms, that the Karaites readily receive the Bible with the vowel-points, accents, and Masorah. The above Karaites goes on and says, 'far be it that the invention of points and accents was made after the finishing of the Talmud, for this is largely to be confuted; for the division of the Rabbans and Karaites was long before the finishing of the Talmud, as has been proved; and if there were no points nor accents in the time of the division, but were found out only after the finishing of the Talmud, then there would be different copies of the law and of the prophets in our hands; that is, copies in the hands of the Karaites, pointed different from the pointing of the copies in the hand of the Rabbans; for in the places where the Rabbans have contradicted the vowels and the accents, and say, don't read so, and so, they would not have said, don't read, but absolutely they would have pointed according to their will and sense;' of which he gives instances in

in which they might have so done; and observes, that many of the Rabbans assert, that the points and accents were equally as ancient as the letters; as R. Azariah in Meor Enayim, and R. Samuel Arkovolti in Arugat Habboshem: and he goes on and says, that "the copy of the scriptures which we have is the same that the Rabbans have; in this there is no division, no difference between us; for the disposition or order of the scriptures was from the men of the great synagogue, those good figs, on whom be peace, at which time there was no division between them; wherefore with us there is nothing full and deficient, neither first and last, no Keri and Che-rib, but what are in the order of the scriptures which is now in the hands of the Rabbans; and the most correct books are the most in esteem with us, and we follow, or depend upon the reading of "Ben Naphtali:" and it is certain their Bibles had the same Masoretic notes and observations in common with the Rabbanites; so it is observed by them *, that

* Menachem in Dod Mordecai, c. 10. p. 130. that Menachem was a Karaite, vid. Trigland, de sect. Karzorum, c. ii. p. 187.
the letter ם in twenty places is written at the end of a word, but not read, which agrees with the present Masorah. R. Aaron, a Karaité, published a Hebrew grammar in 1581, in which he never deserts, as can be observed, the modern punctuation of the Bible, and consults the Masorah in words written defectively, or in any other irregular way, and is full of Masoretic observations, such as the Rabbanites produce*; and a Karaité †, of the same name, who wrote a commentary on the law in 1294, frequently refers to the points, and makes mention of the names of them, as: Tzere, Patbach, Sheva, Hataph-cames, Cholem, Shurek, Dagesh. This sect, the Karaites, would never have admitted the present punctuation, if they had not believed it obtained in the Bible of old, and came from God himself; and as others relate*, they strongly affirm, that the vowel-points of the Hebrew Bible are from Moses and the prophets. The sense of the Karaites about the points is with me an invincible

ble proof of the great antiquity, and against the novelty of them; for from the time that this sect rose up, it was not possible for the Pharisees, Rabbanites, Masoretic, or traditional Jews call them by what names you will, to have introduced such an invention as the vowel-points, in any period of time whatever, but these men would have objected to them as such, and would never have received them; it is to me a demonstration that the vowel-points were in being before the schism was, which was about the time before given, and were universally regarded by the Jews so early, as of a divine original.

A. 164. Ante Christum.

The Keries and Cetibs, of which Elias says there are 848, are various readings, or differences of the marginal reading from the written text. That these are of great antiquity is certain; since they are not only mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud*, but in the Jerusalem Talmud*, particularly the various reading of Hagg. i. 8. and in the

* Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.  e T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37, 2. Sopherim, c. 6. f. 5. 8.  & c. 7. f. 1, 2, 3, 4. & c. 9. f. 8.  Maccot, fol. 32, 1.
the book of Zobar; though when these marginal readings were first made or began to be made, is not certain: the Jews say, they are a tradition of Moses from mount Sinai; but that cannot be, since his books were not then written, and much less the books of the prophets, some Christians indeed are of opinion, as Broughton, Ainsworth, and Wasmuth, that both the text and marginal reading are of divine inspiration; and it must be owned, that in many places they may be both taken into the sense of the passage, and much enrich it, and both are taken in by our translators in Prov. xix. 7. and in the margin of 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. and in other versions; but they are by others supposed to be put by Ezra and the men of the synagogue, on the return from the captivity, who, upon revising the books of scripture, and several copies of it, observed various readings; so Kimchi, on 1 Kings xvii. 14. says, the copies were perplexed or disturbed in the captivity; they found one copy so, and another so; and some they did not understand.

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stand, and some of which they did not chuse to put into the text, nor to cast away, and therefore put one within in the text, and the other without in the margin, to be used at discretion; and in his preface to the former prophets he observes much the same: "In the first captivity the copies were lost or removed out of their place, (were out of order) and the wise men that knew the law were dead; and the men of the great synagogue, who restored the law to its former state, found variations in the copies, and they went after the greater number (of copies) according to their judgment; and a place which they could not clearly understand, they wrote the word and did not point it; or they wrote it without (in the margin) and did not write it within (in the text) and so they wrote in one way within, and in another way without." It is said in the Jerusalem Talmud: "they found three copies in the court, (not with Ezra, as Morinus renders it,) in one they found it written Deut. xxxiii. 27. in two מעלות; they confirmed the two (as the true reading) and rejected the
"the one; in one they found it written, "יְהִי, Exod. xxiv. 5. in two נֶפֶר, they "confirmed the two, and rejected the "other; in one they found it written הָשָּׁמַש, "Gen. xxxii. 22. in two אָשֶׁר עָשָׂר, they "confirmed the two and rejected the one."

Some think b these three copies were what belonged to the three bodies of the Jews in Judea, Babylon, and Egypt; and conjecture, that from the collation of these copies arose the Keri and Cetib; though this refers to times after Ezra and the great synagogue. Translators sometimes follow the Cetib, and sometimes the Keri, as do the Chaldee paraphrases, which sometimes take in both, as in Ps. xxii. 16. which is a proof of the antiquity of them: there is a various reading in Is. xliv. 5. Jonathan ben Uziæl, and so Aquila, an ancient Greek interpreter, translate according to the margin; and Symmachus and Theodotion, two other ancient ones, translate according to the textual writing, which is observed by Jerom ¹; so that these various readings were known by him, though it has been denied,

nied, and were in being before the pretended Masoretes of Tiberias. Nay, the forms and figures of letters unusual, or of an unusual position, marked by the Masoretes are observed in the Talmud*; so that these Masoretic remarks were before those men were, said to be after the finishing of that. These readings seem to be designed not as corrections and emendations of the text, but only some as various readings, and others as euphemisms, to be regarded by readers as may seem good to them, and others as observing anomalous punctuations; but in none was it intended that alterations should be made in the text, but that that should stand as it is, and was found: but it seems better with Carpzovius k to suppose that these marginal readings were made after the times of Antiochus, when the temple was purified and worship in it restored; and the autograph of Ezra, perhaps, and many copies of it being destroyed, though not all, (see Maccab. i. 59, 66. and iii. 49, and xii. 9.) it was thought proper to revise the books.

books of the scripture; and observing different readings in the copies they found, they placed them in the margin for the said uses; and therefore I have put the date of the original of them as above: now though these greatly respect words and letters, yet in some instances the change of consonants appears to be in the margin for the sake of vowels found in the text not so suitable to the consonants in it; and therefore the vowels must be in the text when the Keri was put in the margin, as the learned Pocock has observed in the Keri and Cetib of Ps. xxx. 4. "for, says he, unless the Masoretes, or whoever put the Keri in the margin had found מיוורו, so as it is now pointed, with vowels agreeing to the word מיוורו, what need had they to substitute it? since the sense as well, if not better, flows by reading it מיוורו; but if in other copies they had found it מיוורו, and without vowel-points, why did they not dash out the Vau, and read it so? and if they had found מיוורו, with its own vowels, in which they read it, they would never have dared to have cast them away without necessity, and put those in their

1 Miscellan. Not. in Port. Mosis, p. 64, 65.
their room, proper to an infinitive; as it is said, the same commonly is the reason of others, in which Vau is postponed to Kometz, 1. Sam. xxvii. 11. Jofb. xv. 63. Ps. ci. 5. and to Pathach, Ps. v. 9." so that it appears to be the doctrine of the points, and the anomalous ones observed, that is sometimes the cause of the marginal Keri. See If. xxxvi. 12. where the points under the word in the text better agree with that in the margin, and seems to be the reason of the marginal reading. Some of those Keri may not be so ancient as the date above; but additions may be made by some in later times; yet they seem chiefly to be of great antiquity, as appears by what has been observed of the Targums and ancient Greek copies; and Buxtorf has given some rules to discern the one from the other.


In this year, according to bishop Usher, Ptolemy Philadelphus king of Egypt, being desirous of erecting a library in Alexandria, employed
employed Demetrius his librarian to collect books for that purpose, who in a letter to the king preserved by Eusebius*, tells him that he had diligently executed his orders; but that with some few other books, there remained the books of the law of the Jews to be got, which he says were contained in Hebrew letters and vowels; for what else can be meant by φωνη, as distinguished from letters? not the pronunciation and sound, which those volumes could not be said to lie in, but the vowel-points, by which the letters were read and pronounced, and are annexed to them for that purpose; so that it seems at this time the books of the Jews were written not only in Hebrew letters, but with Hebrew points, and in their own characters, as Demetrius says, which were different both from the Egyptian and Syrian, as he affirms; and which deserves to be remarked, as what may be of some service to shew what were the Hebrew characters then in use: and though it is commonly supposed that the seventy interpreters used an unpointed copy from which they translated, whence came

came so many mistakes to be made in their version; yet Hottinger⁴ has observed near fifty places in which for Kametz they read Tzere or Segol; so Leusden* observes, that they read words with wrong vowels, as Tzere for Kametz, Ps. xl. 5. Patach for Tzere, Ps. vii. 12. Chirek for Patach, Ps. vii. 7. Patach for Segol, Ps. xci. 3. and which might be owing either to a vitiated pointed copy before them, which led them wrong; or to an unpointed copy, and trusting to their memory, put one point for another; though Dr. Lightfoot⁵ suggests they purposely "used an unpricked Bible, in which the words written without vowels might be bended divers ways, and into divers senses, and different from the meaning of the original; and yet if the translation was questioned they might prick or vowel the word so as to agree to their translation: how they have dealt in this kind there is none that ever laid the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint together, but hath observed;" though he adds, "their differences from the original, R 4

original, which were innumerable, were partly of ignorance, they themselves not being able to read the text always true, in a copy unvowelled; but this ignorance was also voluntary in them; they not caring to mistake, so that they might do it with their own security;" and so Mr. Broughton says, "that the seventy had not the vowelled Bible, both for the rareness, and because they never meant to give the truth;" but be it that they used an unpointed Bible purposely, or a pointed one vitiated, it shews that points were in use in their time, and very necessary: and it may be observed, that the Pentateuch, which some, as Josephus and others, think was the only part of scripture translated by them, is almost everywhere translated in agreement with the modern punctuation; and Jerom * long ago observed this, that the five books of Moses translated by them more agreed with the Hebrew than any other. It is an observation of Capellus † himself, that the seventy interpreters, who lived about 300 years

years before Christ, instead of the tetragrammaton or the word Jebovah, always read Adonai, and always render it by χυπὸς, a word not expressive of essence, as Jebovah is, but of lordship, as Adonai is; and that they are followed in this by the Apostles of Christ, and the rest of the writers of the New Testament, and the ancient fathers of the church; and that from them the Greek interpreters of the Old Testament never depart, as Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Now what could lead them to read Adonai, and sometimes Elohim instead of Jebovah, and translate the word accordingly? not the consonant letters of Jebovah, but the points of Adonai and Elohim put unto it as they now are; and Capellus* plainly confesses that this word had the points of Adonai, and sometimes of Elohim in their time; for he says, the seventy when יובא has the points of אדונא oftner render it κυπίς κυπίς, as Pf. lxviii. 21. & passim, and sometimes κυπίς, and θεός, as in Amos iii. 7. &c. from whence it is conjectured that for Adonai Jebovah they read Adonai Elohim.

* Ib. p. 146.
A. 454. Ante Christum.

In this year, according to bishop Usher', Ezra was returned from Babylon, and was at Jerusalem, and read, and expounded the law to the people of the Jews there. It is the generally received notion of the Jews, that the vowel-points were annexed to the letters of the sacred Books by Ezra; not but that they suppose they were originally from Moses and the prophets, and that they are equally of divine authority as the letters; only they imagine they were delivered down from them by oral tradition to the times of Ezra, and by him affixed to the letters; and Elias, who invented the story of the men of Tiberias, is of the same mind, only with this difference, that the oral tradition of the points was carried down to those men, and they put them to the letters: as much like a fiction as this oral tradition looks, as it undoubtedly does, yet it is little less, if any, what Capellus and Walton allow, especially the latter; that the pointing of the Masoretes is not arbitrary, and at their pleasure, but according to the found,

sound; pronunciation, true and accustomed reading, always in use, handed down successively to their times, and which contains the true sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost. Dr. John Prideaux, an opposer of the antiquity of the points, yet thinks it probable that some of the points and accents for the distinction of the text, and for the direction of the reading, were devised by Ezra, and by the succeeding Masoretes before the Talmudists, and were preserved in separate parchments and sheets, and that they were used and increased to the times of the Tiberian Masoretes, who were after the Talmudists; which is giving up the invention of them by the men of Tiberias, and ascribing the original of them to Ezra. Many who are clear for the divine authority of the points and accents are content they should be ascribed to Ezra, since he was divinely inspired, as Buxtorf and others; and it may be safely concluded that the points and accents were in being in his time, since the Masorah which was begun by him, or about his time, at least by the men of his

his synagogue, is concerned about the points and accents, as well as other things, as has been observed; and besides, the Scribes, which were assistant to Ezra in reading the law, cannot well be thought to read, at least so well, to read it distinctly, and cause the people to understand the reading of it, even men, women, and children, without the points. Not to take any further notice of the sense the Talmudists, both Jerusalem and Babylonian, give of the text in Neb. viii. 8. I now refer to, which has been quoted already. Dr. Humphrey Prideaux, though he took that side of the question, which denies that the vowel-points were affixed by Ezra, and of the same divine authority with the rest of the text, yet allows, that they came into use a little after the time of Ezra, being then necessary for the reading and teaching of the Hebrew text*; which is not only an acknowledgement of the great usefulness of the points, but carries the antiquity of them very high; and I see not if they were needful for the reading and teaching of the Hebrew text a little after the time of Ezra, why they were not as necessary in the time

* Connection, par. 1. b. 5. p. 352, 353.
time of Ezra; for was the necessity of them, owing to the Hebrew language, then ceasing to be vulgarly spoken, so, according to him, it did cease to be in the times of Ezra; though I apprehend that is a mistake, for it was some hundreds of years after, ere it ceased to be vulgarly spoken.

There is nothing to be observed between the times of Ezra and Moses relative to the points; for I lay no stress on the different pronunciation of Shibboleth, in Jud. xii. 6, though Schindler is of opinion that from hence it appears, that the point on the right and lefthand of ו, was then in use, and so by consequence the other points also.

Elias Levita roundly afferts, that the copy of the law which was given by Moses to the children of Israel was without points and accents; but this is said without proof, and is what no man is able to prove. He quotes Aben Ezra, who says, the points were delivered at Sinai, but the tables of the law were not pointed, which seems to be a flat contradiction, at least it is what is very improbable. Much better does

does another writer argue, whom he mentions, who in answer to the question, How do we know that the points and accents are of God? says, "it may be replied, what is written in Deut. xxvii. 8. and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly; but without the points and accents, which explain the words, no man, he says, can understand them clearly and plainly;" and whatever may be said for the king’s writing out a copy of the law, and reading in it all the days of his life Deut. xvii. 18, 19. and for the priests reading it once a year in the hearing of all Israel, which yet is not very easy to account for, without the points, so as to be understood, Deut. xxxi. 11. yet how the common people should be able to read it to their children, and teach them the knowledge of it without the points, is still more difficult of belief.

The common opinion of the Jews is, either that the points and accents were delivered to Moses on mount Sinai, yet only as to the power of pronouncing and reading, but not as to their marks and figures

- R. Levi bar Joseph Semadar, in ib.
figures in writing; but that the true manner of reading the scriptures was propagated and preserved by oral tradition to the times of Ezra; or that they were given to Moses at Sinai, but were omitted in writing for the most part afterward, and so were forgotten, 'till Ezra came and restored them. But it rather seems that they were as early as the Hebrew letters; and since it is not improbable that these were before the flood, and before the confusion of tongues, the points were also; and could the sense of Gen. xi. 1. given by a late writer, be established, it would be out of all doubt; which is this, and the whole earth was of one language, i.e. the Hebrew language, as afterwards called, and of one speech, or words, that is, according to this writer, words distinguished by acute or sharp points; deriving the word used from דִּגְלָה to sharpen, whereby he thinks, the tautology in the text is avoided; and to which may be added, that the latter clause of the text is plural: yet I fear the word will not bear this sense, since the singular and plural words used, the one in one clause, and the other in the other, must have

have a different derivation, which is not usual of a word in the same text.

If the book of Jetzirah was compiled by Abram, to whom the Jews commonly ascribe it, though sometimes to Adam, the points might be traced to his time; for in that book frequent mention is made of the double letters Begad Cephat, or Begad Cepbrat, as there so called, because they have a double pronunciation, which pronunciation depends upon the points, their having or not having in them the Dagesh lene. But though there is no reason to believe that the book was written either by Abram or Adam, yet it is an ancient one, and by this instance it carries the antiquity of the points higher than is now commonly allowed unto them; for the book is spoken of in the Talmud; and if it was written by R. Akiba, who is the only one mentioned by the Jews as the author of it, besides Adam and Abram, he died in the beginning of the second century; though if Jonathan Ben Uzziel wrote a supplement to it, which was as a

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[256] Coſri, par 4. c. 27. Juchafin, fol. 52, 2. C. 1. f. 2, 9, 10, & c. 2. f. 1, & c. 4. f. 1, 2, 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65, 2.
commentary on it, as is said, it must be before his time, since Jonathan was cotemporary with Christ, or a little after him; and it may be observed, that the double pronunciation of the above letters was in use in the times of Christ, as appears from the words, Armageddon, Capernaum, Euphrates, Joppa, Pascha, Sarepta, and others.

It is not only the opinion of some Jewish writers, that the vowel-points, as well as letters, were given by God himself to Adam, as the author of Ceyes, and his commentator Muscatus, and of R. Azariah, and of others; but some Christian writers also, ascribe them to Adam; and indeed, if the Hebrew letters were of his invention, as many have thought, and Walton himself thinks, there can be no reasonable doubt but the vowels were also; but be this as it may, I am inclined to believe that the vowels were coeval with the letters, and that the penmen of the sacred scriptures, severally annexed, the vowel-points

- Par. 4. c. 25.  
- In Ib. fol. 229, 1.  
- Meor Enayim, c. 59.  
- Prolegam. 2. f. 7.
points to letters in their writings. My reasons are these:

1. The perfection of language requires vowels. No language can be perfect without them; they are the life and soul of language; letters without them are indeed dead letters; the consonants are stubborn and immovable things, they can't be moved or pronounced without vowels, which are, as Plato says, the bond of letters, by which they are joined, and without which they can't be coupled together: can it be thought, therefore, that the Hebrew language, the first, and most perfect of all languages, should be without them, which, if this was the case, would be the most imperfect of all the oriental languages? for notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, the Samaritan had its points, though differing from the Hebrew, as Jerome observes, and so a later writer has observed it has. The Syrians, Chaldeans, Arabs, and Persians, had vowel-points likewise, as Hottinger affirms, and so dean Prideaux. The invention of the Syriac

1 Sophista p. 177.  n Prefat ad Reg. T. 3. fol. 5. L.
355.
Syriac vowel-points is indeed by some ascribed to Ephrem Syrus, who lived in the 4th century; and as for the Ethiopic language, the vowels are incorporated into the consonants, and are a part of them, and so must be ab origine, and coeval with them; and even those who are for casting away the vowel-points seem to be sensible of a necessity of substituting something in their room, the matres lectionis, as they call them, נק to which some add י; but these are not sufficient, being wanting in a great number of words; witness also the various methods of reading Hebrew, contrived by men; but why should they be at pains to find out a method of reading and pronouncing the Hebrew language, when there is such a plain one at hand, ready prepared for them, and of which Walton himself says, that it is a most profitable and useful invention no man can deny?

2. The nature and genius of the Hebrew language require points; without these the difference can't be discerned between nouns and verbs, in some instances, as הבנק, with many others; between verbs active, וְ and

and verbs passive, between some conjugations, moods, tenses, and persons, *Kal, Piel, Pual*; imperatives and infinitives, are proofs hereof; nor can the *Vau* conversive of tenses be observed, which yet is used frequently throughout the Bible, and without which, the formation of some of the tenses by letters would be useless. *Morin* himself says, "that without the " points a grammar cannot be written, as " *Elias* rightly observes; for example, describe the conjugation *Kal* without " points, and immediately you'll be at a " stand, and much more in *Piel*;" and *Walton* also owns the use of them in the investigation of the roots. The pronunciation of some letters depends upon the points as has been observed.

3. The vowel-points are necessary and useful to the more easy learning, reading, and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language. What men well skilled in the language may be able to do is one thing, and what learners of it, and beginners in it can do is another thing; men well versed in it may

* Vid. Cosri, par. 2. c. 80.  
may chuse to read without them; and so a man that is master of Brachygraphy may chuse to read what he has written in short hand, and to which he is used, rather than in long hand; but this is no proof of the perfection and propriety of his Brachygraphy. "A tongue, as Dr. Lightfoot lays", "cannot first be learnt without vowels, "though at last skill and practice may "make it to be read without; grammar "and not nature makes men to do this:" and a late learned writer has observed *, that "to talk of reading Hebrew without points, "is a collusive way of speaking; we may "do it when we have learnt the language," but not before; as it is a dead language "we want instructions either by word of "mouth or by grammar. Points in Hebrew "are like scaffolds in building, when "the work is finished we may take them "down and throw them aside, but not "sooner with safety." Dr. John Prideaux * an opposer of the antiquity of the points, owns that "the tongue being tossed "about by various calamities, the points

* Chappelow's Preface to his Comment on Job, p. 18, 19.  
"were added, that it might be the more accurately preserved, and that by the Jews, to whom it ceased to be vernacular; as also that by others it might the more easily be understood, and be more exactly pronounced:" and elsewhere he says, let them be whose additions to the text they may, they are so far from corrupting it, that they rather protect it from corruption, and lead to a more easy reading and understanding of it; and so Walton, another opposer of the points, says, "the Christian church received their (the Masoretes) punctuation, not upon their authority, but because it expressed the true sense received in the church of God; and withal because they saw it conducted much to the more easy reading of the text, and even to the true reading of it, as he owns:" and their great master and chief leader Capellus, having treated of the points and accents devised and added to the sacred Hebrew text by the Masoretes, as he supposed, frankly owns, "that upon that account we now certainly owe much

much unto them; or rather, should give thanks to God, who stirred up these men to it, and put them upon the study of it; for in that work they have certainly laboured most successfully, so that now by the help of those little marks we can far more easily, and even more happily be conversant in reading and understanding the sacred Hebrew text, than otherwise wise could have been done by us without this help." Why then should it not be attended to? and indeed I cannot see how common people, men, women, and children, could be able to read it without points, when it was their mother tongue; it was their duty and interest to read their Bible in it, for whose sake it was written, and who had as great an interest and concern in it as men the most learned have, it being the grand charter of their salvation; the Bible was not written for learned men only, but for these also, and therefore it was written, as it was proper it should be, in the most plain and easy manner.

4. The vowel-points and accents are useful and necessary, to remove ambiguity and confusion in words and sentences, and that
that the true sense of them may be come at with ease, by persons of the lowest capacity and meanest ability, for whose sake, as observed, the Bible was written; and that they are of this use has been owned by the opposers of them: so Capellus', speaking of the accents says, "certainly these little marks when fitly and opportunely put, are indeed of this use, that sometimes we less hesitate about, and more expeditiously take in the mind and sense of the writer;" and so Walton says of the Masoretes, that "they pointed the text, not at their own will and pleasure, but according to the true sense and received reading from the sacred writers to their times; hence the reading is made more easy, and the text less obnoxious to ambiguity and corruption." Should it be said, as it often is, that by attending to the connexion of words, and to the context, the sense of a word in question may be soon and easily understood. Let it be observed, that all have not the same natural parts and abilities, and the like acumen of wit, clearness of understanding, and critical judgment, as particularly the above

Arcan. Punct. 1. 2. c. 25. s. 7.  e Prolegom. 8. s. 10.
above persons mentioned; and besides, the
words in connexion and in the context be-
ing unpointed, some of them may be
equally difficult to be understood, and the
sense of them must be examined and fixed,
ere the sense of the word in question can
be determined; all which will require time,
and perhaps after all, entire satisfaction is
not obtained: and if men who may be
thought to be well versed in the language,
and men of parts and abilities, have been
led into mistakes, through a neglect or
want of the points, much more may per-
sons of mean and ordinary capacities.
The authors of the several Greek versions
of the Bible, the Septuagint interpreters,
Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, were all
Jews, excepting the last, and he was a
Samaritan, and may be allowed to have a
considerable share of knowledge of the
Hebrew language; yet these, especially the
seventy interpreters, neglecting the points,
and translating without them, what gross
senses have they put upon the text? some-
times directly contrary to what is intended,
sometimes what is very absurd, and even
wicked and blasphemous, or nearly so;
take an instance of each, God is angry
every
every day, Ps. vii. 11. the Greek version is, does not bring on anger, or is not angry every day, the word ἀί διαφορο τα ρα θερα αντίγραφο is used for God, and for the negative not. The passage in Is. xxiv. 23. then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign, &c. which with others Dr. Lowth represents as so grand and magnificent, and so coloured, that no translation can express, nor any altogether obscure; and yet this is most miserably obscured in the Greek version of it, and a sense given extremely low, mean, and absurd; the brick shall waste, and the wall shall fall, when the Lord reigns, &c. differently pointed signifies the moon, and a brick, and the sun and a wall, the authors of this version have absurdly taken the latter sense. Lam. iii. 33. it is, be, i.e. God, doth not willingly afflict; the Greek version is be doth not answer from his heart, cordially and sincerely, thereby charging God with insincerity and dissimulation; yet the three letters יִלָע unpunctuated signify to answer as well as to afflict; in Kal it signifies the former, in Piel the latter; which is the true sense here, and to be distinguished by: 

by the points; and how have the same interpreters, by changing points and letters, spoiled the famous prophecy of the Messia in Is. ix. 6. where, instead of everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, they translate I will bring upon the princes peace? though the passage is otherwise produced by Clemens of Alexandria, more agreeable to the Hebrew text; which shews that the Septuagint version is not in the same state now it formerly was. The learned Vitringa* has observed, that "the Greek interpreter of Alexandria, who came forth under the name and number of the Seventy, not being expert in the Jerusalem reading, has often in his unhappy and unlearned version, so deformed the prophet (Isaiab's) discourse, in the more obscure places, that Isaiab cannot be known again in Isaiab:" and through negligence or diffuse of, or want of the points, the Greek interpreters have made mistakes, when one would think it was almost impossible they should; thus וּב differently pointed, or without any points, may signify sons or builders.

they have taken the word in the
first sense in 1 King v. 18. and contrary to
the context and plain sense of the words,
read, Solomon's sons and Hiram's sons bewed
them, the stones. The same word, con-
sisting of the same letters, as differently
pointed, has two or three senses, and some-
times half a dozen, and even eight or ten,
as the wordربع. How difficult therefore
must it be to attain unto, and settle the true
sense, as in such and such a place, at least
to common persons; and for these the bible
was originally written, as well as for learned
men.

5. It will be difficult to assert and main-
tain the perspicuity of the scripture, lay-
ing aside the vowel-points and accents; and
make it to comport with the wisdom of
God to deliver out his laws, the rule of
man's conduct both towards himself and
one another, and doctrines designed to
make men wise unto salvation, and to in-
struct them in matters of the greatest mo-
ment for time and eternity: to deliver these,
I say, in ambiguous words, that admit of
various senses, and at best give a sense dif-
ficult to attain unto by men of the deepest
learning and of the greatest capacity. It is
the
the part of a wise law-giver to express his laws, and of a king to publish his edicts, and of a teacher to give forth his doctrines and instructions in the clearest manner, in the plainest terms, in words the most easy to be understood; and not in ambiguous language capable of admitting divers senses, and such as is contrary to what is intended; and can it be thought that God, our law-giver and king, and who by his word proposes to teach men to profit, and to lead them by the way they should go, would act otherwise?

6. Nor shall we be able, I fear, to support the infallibility of the scripture, that part of it the Old Testament, as a sure rule of faith and practice, when by taking away or laying aside the points, it becomes flexible, and may be turned as a nose of wax to any thing, to serve a purpose, to countenance any doctrine or practice agreeable to the different tastes and inclinations of men; since hereby it will admit of different senses, and so in consequence must be uncertain, and not to be depended on: and, I fear it is this wantonness of spirit that has led many to throw away the points and accents, that they might be under no restraint,
strait, but at full liberty to interpret scriptures as their fancy inclines, and their interest leads; but if the points give the true sense and mind of the Holy Spirit in the sacred writings, which has been owned by such who have opposed the divine original of them, why should they be laid aside, to make way for any sense the fancy of men may impose upon them? Walton in so many words affirms, that "they (the Masoretes) express in their punctuation the true sense of the Holy Ghost, which was dictated to the holy penmen, and by them committed to writing, and preserved both by Jews and Christians"; and that "they pointed the text according to the true and received reading, which expressed the true sense of the Holy Ghost, and not as they pleased; nor is it lawful for any one to reject their reading at pleasure, but all are tied to it, unless some error or better reading can be clearly proved;" and Capellus himself says, "none are to be obliged to admit the punctuation of the Masoretes, because, and as it is from them; but all may be bound by this punctuation."

1 Prolegom. Polyglott. 3. f. 51. 2 The Considerator considered, p. 200. 3 Arcan. Punct. 1. 2. c. 26. f. 2.
punctuation, as and because it can be demonstrated, that it almost everywhere both agrees with the consonants to which it is added, with the series and structure of the words in the passage, and that it produces a sense commodious, true, coherent, &c. nor can any other punctuation be produced more apt and more commodious."

7. The inspiration of scripture is affected thereby. If all scripture or the whole writing of the Bible is by inspiration of God, then not the matter only, but the words in which it is written, are of divine inspiration; and indeed what else are meant by the words the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. ii. 13? and if the words of scripture are of divine inspiration, and given by God himself, then, surely, not half words, as consonants without vowels are; and if whole words, which is most agreeable to the wisdom and honour of the Divine Being, then both consonants and vowels were given by inspiration; and if the latter were not, but of human invention, then, so far as they have been and are in use, and the sense of scripture

1 Qui puncta vel negligunt, vel prorsum rejiciunt, certe careat omni judicio & ratione. Calvin. in Zech. xi. 7.
true has been and still is taken from them, and made to depend on them, such sense stands not upon divine authority, but upon human authority; and on that of a set of men, blinded, besotted, and destitute of the Spirit of God, bitter enemies to Christianity, and perhaps a set of men as bad as ever was on earth; and if the points are of their invention and addition, they ought never to stand in our Bibles, and be used by us, but should be rejected with great indignation: a pointed Bible, if possible, should not be in the world, having in it such an addition to the word of God, which ought not to be made, and which is so directly contrary to his order, Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32. Prov. xxxi. 6. And to which may be further observed,

8. If the vowel-points were not annexed to the letters by the penmen of the sacred writings, when penned by them, but have had a later and a new beginning, that would have been known; some would have divulged it; it would have been on record somewhere or another, and we should have been informed by some means or another, by whom they were placed, and where and at what time; but nothing of this has ever tran-
transpired. The story of Elias about the men of Tiberias merits no regard; and even that the points were annexed by Ezra, or by the men of his congregation, is mere conjecture, without any foundation; and therefore upon the whole it may be concluded, that they were originally put by the sacred penmen, Moses and the prophets.

It is often said, in favour of reading the Bible without points, that Rabbinical books are written without them, and are easily read. But then it should be observed, that they are read by such who have first read the Hebrew Bible with points, and who are well versed in Bible-Hebrew; and by such the commentaries of Kimchi, Abarbinel, and others, may be read with some ease, whose style is plain and clear; and by degrees other writings more rough, crabbed and difficult may be read also; but as Buxtorf and others observe, there is a great difference between the Bible and Rabbinical books, in writing, in style, in manner and means of learning and reading them. In Rabbinical books, the matres lectionis, as are called, are used to supply the want of vowels; whereas in the Bible they are

1 De Punct. Antiq. par. 3. p. 370.
are most frequently omitted, and even in places where they might be expected, and least of all should be omitted: the style of Rabbinical books is for the most part plain, and where it is not, as in the Talmud and other writings, it is hard and difficult to read them; but the style of the Bible is generally short, concise, full of ellipses and other figures, especially in the prophetic writings; add to which, what is contained in Rabbinical writings are things usually before known, or easily understood, and to be read without much stop or hindrance; but the sacred scriptures contain mysteries, things sublime, and more remote from the capacities of men, and require more attention, help and assistance in reading them; and besides, if a mistake is made in Rabbinical writings, it is not of that importance, as in reading the Bible; and therefore we may venture to read with less pain and with more safety, the one without points than the other. Buxtorf, the son, upon his own observation asserts, that it is more easy to read Rabbinical books unpointed, than any of the books of the Bible pointed; and that he could venture to say, that

\[ \text{De Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 376.} \]
that he could more readily and certainly read any Rabbinical books never seen by him before, than any book of the Bible even pointed, and though well known by him, and often read over and over again. Yet, notwithstanding all the advantages on the side of Rabbinical writings, how many mistakes have been made by learned men, as by Scaliger, Schickard, Kircher, Vorstius, and others? what blunders in translation has Buxtorf exposed in Morinus and Capellus? and even those great masters in Rabbinical literature, as the Buxtorfs themselves, Selden, Lightfoot, &c. are not without their errors; nor need it be wondered at, since, in the Talmuds especially, there are many places which seem quite unintelligible, and besides are written in the Chaldee dialect, and that very impure, and abounding with exotic words.

It is frequently objected against the Bible being written and read with points, that the copy of the law everywhere kept in the Jewish synagogues is without points, as answering to the Mosaic Archetype. That it is an unpointed copy of the law which is usually kept in the Jewish synagogues now,
will be allowed, but that the Archetype or Autograph of Moses was without points may be asserted, but not easily proved; nor can it be said, with any precision, how long it has been the custom of the Jews to have an unpointed copy of the law in their synagogues; nor can what they have, be thought to be an ectype of, or to answer to the copy of Moses, nor be kept with that view. For had the Autograph of Moses the Keri, or marginal readings? it will not be said by the opposers of the points that it had; but the present copies of the law in the synagogues of the Jews have, if I mistake not, and even the pricks and points which they call crowns; are the present copies in the synagogues written in Samaritan characters? they are not; and yet, according to the hypothesis of Morinus, Capellus, and those that follow them, they ought to be so written, to be an ectype of, or to answer to that of Moses; since that, according to them, was in that character; but to have a copy in that character now would be contrary to their own rules, one of which runs thus:

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they don't write (the sacred books) neither in the language beyond the river (or the Samaritan), nor in the Syriac, nor in the Median, nor in Greek; and in whatsoever language or writing they are written, they may not be read (i.e. pub-lickly) until they are written in the Assyrian, or square character. There are other reasons to be given, why unpointed copies are kept and used in the synagogues of the Jews, and which may serve to lead to the original of this custom, and the reason of its continuance.

I. One reason was, that the Cabalists, and those who had got into the allegorizing way of interpreting the scriptures, might have the opportunity of framing and establishing their own and even various senses of them, which an unpointed Bible will admit of, when a pointed one will not. Hence that saying of R. Menachem ⁰, "a book of the law in which there are many faces (or on which many senses may be put) is one not pointed," for, as he says, when letters are not pointed, they have many faces (or may be differently read); but when they are pointed, they have only one.

* Apud Munster, Praefat. ad Vet. Test.
and this R. Bechaj plainly suggests, is the original cause and reason of using unpointed copies; "letters not pointed, he says, admit of various senses, and are divided into divers sparks; and because of this we are commanded not to point the book of the law; for the literal sense of every word is according to the punctuation, and there is but one literal sense in a pointed word; but an unpointed word a man may understand many ways, and find out many wonderful and excellent things:" and it is for much the same reason, that men may not be tied down to one sense of a word, that points are now so much opposed. Some have drawn an argument for the novelty and against the antiquity of the points, from the Cabalists making no use nor mention of them in their writings, but drew their various senses, it is said, from the letters only, and the combination of them, and not from the vowels and accents, but this has been abundantly confuted by Buxtorf. The commentator on the book of Cosri makes mention of R. Aaron, a great

Apud Buxtorf. ut supra, p. 45, 46.  
Ut supra, par. 1. c. 5. p. 54, &c.  
R. Judah Muscatus in Cosri, fol. 230. 4.  
The great Mekubbal or Cabbalist, the head of the university at Babylon, as the author of a book of pointing, and which is quoted by Rittangelius*; and in the Cabalistic Lexicon†, under the word נקודות, mention is made of nine points, and their names are given, Kametsz, Pathach, Zere, &c. and the use that is made of them is observed; and Menasseb ben Israel* describes the Cabalists, as employing themselves in searching out the deep mysteries of the law, which are contained in the letters, points and musical accents; and a little after, he observes, that "the law was given without points, like the books the Jews now have in their synagogues; so that when any word occurs, whose letters now are not tied to certain vowels, men may put what points they please to them, and so the words may be read one way and another."  

2. Another reason of the Jews having an unpointed copy of the law in their synagogues is, that it might be a memorial of the oral tradition of points and accents, from the times of Moses to Ezra. They sup-

* De Verit. Relig. Christ. p. 27. 40.  
† Kabel. Deudata. par. 1. p. 592.  
suppose the points were of Moses, but not annexed by him to the Pentateuch; but that they were delivered and handed down by oral tradition from one to another until Ezra, who added them to it; and therefore to keep in memory this wonderful affair, they always have an unpointed copy in their synagogues.

3. Another reason why only unpointed copies of the law are kept in the synagogues, may be their superstitious accuracy and exactness in writing the law; so as to letters, if any are wanting or not rightly placed, or similar ones put for each other, the copy is profane or rejected; and as it is still more difficult to have the points and accents exactly put, they choose to have none at all: hence they say a pointed copy is profane or to be rejected, even though the punctuation is razed out; partly because it will not admit of various senses; as before observed, and partly because of the difficulty and almost impossibility of a perfect pointed copy; and the rather they are indifferent to one, and like as well to have an unpointed one in their synagogues, since there, none but their learned men, as priests, &c. read in them.

w Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 274. f. 7.
4. But the chief reason of unpointed copies in the synagogues seems to be, that none but learned men, or such who are well versed in the Hebrew language, should be admitted readers there; for if the copy was pointed, as then, any common man might read it, so any such man might be chosen to the office of a reader, though otherwise very illiterate; and to prevent any such being introduced into it, is the principal reason now, why it is unpointed. And though those who are expert in the language, and are able to read without points, and are chosen into the office of reader in the synagogue, and have exercised that office many years; yet it is their custom, as one of those readers told Cocceius \* long ago, to prepare themselves at home by reading out of a pointed copy, for their better, easier and more accurate reading in the synagogue. And it is their usual method to this day, for the præcentor of the synagogue, though ever so well versed in reading the scripture, and ever so exact in the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, the day before the sabbath, to read the passages appointed to be read that day out of a pointed copy,

copy, and thereby make himself master of
the exact reading of them, that so the day
following he may read them without hesi-
tation or stop, and pronounce, as he does,
exactly in conformity to the present punctu-
tuation: and after all it follows not, be-
cause the Jews now have, and have had for
ages past, unpointed Bibles in their syna-
gogues, which men of learning could read,
that they have not, nor had any pointed
ones for the common people. It is certain
that they had formerly, and have such
now; wherefore this is no sufficient objec-
tion against the antiquity and use of the
points, but an argument in favour of them;
since the true reason of having unpointed
copies in the synagogue is, that none might
be admitted readers in them, but such who
are so perfect in the Hebrew language as to
be able to read exactly in an unpointed
copy, agreeable to the points and accents
in a pointed one.


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