INTRODUCTION TO THE MASSORETICO-CRITICAL EDITION OF THE
HEBREW BIBLE. By CHRISTIAN D. GINSBURG, LL.D. Lon-
don: Published by the Trinitarian Bible Society, 1897. Pp.
xii+1028.

In the year 1894 the Trinitarian Bible Society published an edition
of the Hebrew Bible as prepared by Ginsburg. The text is based upon
the oldest editions, which were published between 1477 and 1525, and
is practically the third great edition of the Hebrew Bible—the first
being that of Soncino, 1488; the second, Venice, 1524-5; and this, the
third, of London, 1894. Printed by Carl Fromme, of Vienna, this
edition has the most beautiful black type. Below the text, in addition
to the massoretical notes, there is a selection of the various readings
taken from the ancient versions, but all in Hebrew. While retaining
the modern divisions of chapters and verses, the text is arranged
according to the ancient chapters and sectional divisions of the Mas-
sorah and the MSS. which are thus restored. To this Bible (highly
spoken of by Kautzsch in the preface to the twenty-sixth edition of
his Hebrew Grammar, 1896) Ginsburg wrote his Introduction, which
will supplant all that matter pertaining to the text which we generally
find in the so-called "Introductions to the Old Testament." The
work consists of two parts. Part I, "The Outer Form of the Text,"
contains the following chapters: (1) the order of the books; (2) the
sectional divisions of the text; (3) the division into chapters; (4) the
sebarim, or triennial pericopes; (5) the parashiyot, or annual peric-
opes; (6) the division into verses; (7) the number of the words; (8)
the number of the letters (pp. 1-113). Very interesting is the notice
appended to a MS. in the Cambridge University Library that the
division of the text into chapters was adopted by Solomon ben Israel
about 1330 A.D., for controversial purposes, in order to facilitate
reference to particular passages.

The second part treats of "The Text Itself" and has thirteen chap-
ters, viz.: (1) dagesh and raphe; (2) the orthography; (3) the division
of words; (4) the double or final letters; (5) abbreviations; (6) homoeo-
teleoton; (7) the Keri and Kethiv; (8) the readings called Sevirin;
(9) the Eastern and Western Recensions; (10) the differences between
Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali; (11) the Massorah: its rise and devel-
opment; (12) the history and description of the MSS.; (13) the his-
tory of the printed text (pp. 114-976). Then follow appendices,
indexes, tables. By far the most interesting part is chap. 11, which
treats of the Massorah: its rise and development. Here we are told
of: the introduction of the square characters; the division of the con-
sonants into words; the introduction of the final letters; the intro-
duction of the *matres lectionis*; the consonants of the Hebrew text and
the Septuagint: i, *Mikra Sopherim*; ii, *Itur Sopherim*; iii, words read
which are not written in the text; iv, words written in the text, but
canceled in reading; v, the fifteen extraordinary points; vi, the sus-
pended letters; vii, the inverted Nuns; viii, the removal of indelicate
expressions and anthropomorphisms, etc., from the text; ix, the emen-
dations of the Sopherim; x, impious expressions toward the Almighty;
xi, the safeguarding of the Tetragrammaton; xii, the attempt to
remove the application of the names of false gods to Jehovah; xiii,
safeguarding the unity of divine worship at Jerusalem. As an illustra-
tion of No. xi, Ginsburg points out how a certain school altered words
beginning with *Jeho* (יהו) into *Jo* (יו). Thus we have names Jeho-
ahaz and Joahaz; Jehoash and Joash; Jehozabad and Jozabad; Jeho-
hanan and Johanan; Jehoiada and Joiada; Jehoiachin and Joiachin;
Jehoiakim and Joiakim; Jehoiarib and Joiarib; Jehonadab and Jona-
dab; Jehonathan and Jonathan; Jehoseph and Joseph; Jehozadak
and Jozadak; Jehoram and Joram; Jehoshaphat and Josaphat. He
points out words which, ending in *Jah*, have a vav appended, so that
they respectively occur in duplicate form now terminating in *Jah* and
again in *Jahu*, as Abijah and Abijahu, Adonijah and Adonijahu,
Urijah and Urijahu, Ahazjah and Ahazjahu, Ahijah and Ahijahu, etc.,
fifty-nine names. The distinction between these two forms of the
same name is entirely obliterated in both the Authorized and Revised
Versions. In illustration of xii, Ginsburg points out how names com-
pounded with Baal have been altered either in a good sense or prin-
cipally by way of ridicule into compounds with *bosheth* = shame;
thus Jerubbaal became Jerubboseth; Eshbaal = Ish-bosheth; Ashbel
= Jechiael (an alteration in a good sense); Merib-baal = Mephibosheth;
Beeliada = Eliada, etc.

After mentioning the lost codices, such as Codex Mugah, Hilleli,
Zambuki, etc., Ginsburg gives the history and description of the man-
uscripts examined and perused by him (pp. 469–778). He mentions
altogether sixty. As the oldest he regards *Oriental. 4445* in the
British Museum, which he thinks to have been written probably about
A. D. 820–50. It contains the Pentateuch. The next oldest is the
*Petersburg Codex* of A. D. 916 on the prophets and reproduced by Pro-
fessor Strack in 1876. Without going into the details, which are very
minutely given by Ginsburg, we only remark that a codex (mentioned
as Kings i) written in the year 1385 has the chapters and verses marked in the margin throughout the whole Bible in red Hebrew letters. In the margin against Gen. 1:1 the scribe frankly avows that he has taken the chapter and verse divisions from the Christians and by a play upon the word Edom, which denotes both “Christian” and “red,” he tells us that “he indicated them so distinctly in red ink in order that he who readeth may run and be enabled to answer those who turn white into black and green into red, as well as to cope with unbelievers.” Cod. Add. 9399 of about 1250 divides the Psalter into 159 psalms, whilst Oriental. 4227 of A.D. 1300 divides into 170 psalms. The fifty-ninth codex (Madrid University Library, Cod. No. 1) is dated Toledo A.D. 1280, originally belonging to the University Library of Alcala. In 1837 this codex, with other MSS. and a number of printed books, was taken to the University Library at Madrid and remained packed up in boxes for eight years, until, in 1845, the boxes were unpacked at the earnest solicitation of the professor of Semitic languages. The MS., which still has the book plate with the arms of Cardinal Ximenes, was taken to pieces at Alcala, about A.D. 1506-10, to be rubricated and prepared for printer’s copy in loose sheets. The rubricator and redactor was a Jewish Christian. To show the sincerity of his new faith, which was necessary in those days, especially in Spain, the converted editor converted in two passages a simple ornament, which indicates the official variant or Keri, into a cross by putting a horizontal line across the perpendicular shaft. So much on the manuscripts.

The thirteenth chapter is headed “History of the Printed Text,” which is a somewhat misleading title. It conveys the idea that we have here a history of the printed text down to our days, as the writer of this review has endeavored to do in Hebraica, Vol. IX (1892-3), pp. 47-116. Ginsburg merely gives the history of the editions published from 1477-1525. The first part was the Psalter, which contains no fewer than 108 omissions of whole verses, three omissions of half verses, forty-three omissions of single words. The editio princeps of the entire Bible was published in 1488 at Soncino. Kennicott once stated that this edition’s variations from the received text amount to above “twelve thousand,” a misleading statement according to Ginsburg’s examination. The second edition of the Bible was published at Naples, 1491-3; the third at Brescia, 1494, used by Luther for his translation of the Bible into German. His own copy, with his autograph, is preserved in the Royal Library at Berlin. The fourth edition was published at Pesaro, 1511-17. In the latter year the Complutensian Polyglot was
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issued at Alcalá. At the same time the first edition of the Rabbinic Bible was published at Venice, 1516–17; also the first edition of the Bible in quarto, which was followed in 1521 by a second edition. In 1524–5 the second edition of the Rabbinic Bible, or the editio princeps of Jacob ben Chayim with the Massorah, left the press at Venice, and the third quarto edition followed in 1525–8. With this the history of the printed text of the Hebrew Scriptures closes in Ginsburg's Introduction. Altogether he describes twenty-four editions, and to these he refers in his Hebrew text. It is of interest to learn that in the first edition of the Rabbinic Bible (Venice, 1516–17) both Samuel and Kings are for the first time divided each into two separate books; so also Ezra and Chronicles. Ginsburg points out that the final letters were not yet used at the time when the Septuagint version was made, and he also infers that the same version perused a text in which abbreviations were used. This he proves from some passages, e.g., Gen. 47:3, where רְאוּפִיא (his brethren) originally read דְּרוּפִיא, i.e., the brethren of Joseph, as Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac, and Targum Jonathan read; Exod. 8:23, as Jehovah said; Levit. 6:10, according to the testimony of the Samaritan, Septuagint, and the Vulgate, stands for מְעַשֶׁהָ רוֹאֵשׁ = מֱשַׂא הָהַ רֵאֶשׁ the offerings of Jehovah. This is not only confirmed by vs. 11, but by some MSS. In 2 Sam. 17:11 חִנָּם is an abbreviation of בְּחִנָּם in the midst of them, and the passage ought to be rendered: “and thou thyself shalt go in the midst of them.” This is not only the solution of the abbreviation in the Septuagint and Vulgate, but is most suitable to the context. Besides, חִינָם is never used in Samuel for battle or war, which is invariably חֲלָמִים. Ginsburg has also many stricures on certain features introduced by the late Baer into his edition of the Hebrew text (complete with the exception of Exodus to Deuteronomy). Enough has already been said to show the importance of Ginsburg's Introduction, which is replete with information. Even those who know already something of the history of the Hebrew text will find this work highly instructive. The author is probably the only living authority on massoretic lore, and his works in that department have been highly appreciated by scholars. The index of principal texts referred to in the Introduction (twenty-four columns) will be greatly appreciated by all who study the text of the Old Testament.

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