

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים

In The Beginning God Created ...

א בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

ב וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוֹ וָבִהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:

2 Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.

ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר:

3 And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים 'In the beginning God created ...'. Thus begins the narrative of the story of creation as found in the Jewish Scriptures. There is no discourse into just who 'God' is; there is no pretext of any history before this event; plain and simple, this is a record of how things came to be.

You, the reader, have a choice!

You can believe that this account is true or you can believe that it is a myth, although these are diametrically opposed positions!

When we humans give thought to such things, we typically end up in the same place that we started. We want to believe that we can be objective. **This is probably because objectivity implies intelligence.**

In a sense, this conundrum is the result of our attitudes. There is a modern expression regarding a glass being half-full or it being half-empty, used to describe one's attitude.

What is your attitude? Are you willing to give the Hebrew-language based Jewish Scriptures a chance, and perhaps learn something? Or, do you innately know the **objective truth** for what has been written before you?

Although counterintuitive, the latter position is somewhat understandable!

We should question things! We should ask, "How did this 'book' come to be?" "What is its source?" If we come to find that the source for what we consider to be 'Scripture' cannot be verified or that we cannot find any progression of ancient writings to support the authenticity of our sources, **then our questioning it just might be valid and quite reasonable!**

There is a quote from Mark Twain, which goes like this:

"When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years."

I have to admit that when I was younger, having gone through as much higher education as I could reasonably afford, when confronted by others about the Bible, I had no answers. **I came to the realization that I was woefully ignorant of it.** It was then that I decided I would start to read it so that I could respond intelligently in the future.

However, I had preconceived notions about the Bible which took some time for me to overcome.

I started out really believing that the Bible was a myth! I read it allegorically, thinking that it was an esoteric story of man inventing deity to control and rule over the ignorant masses. I looked for occult and hidden meanings just waiting for *me* to decode and decipher them! In my ignorance I was really arrogant — and, I actually didn't believe in 'God' at all! In spite of that, I still wanted to be better informed so that I could answer more intelligently when confronted with Biblical questions.

Thus, it was in January of 1980 that I began the discipline of reading the Bible completely each year. I have continued that discipline ever since.

It took a bit of time, but my thinking changed. As I read and as I became familiar with it, I just came to a place in time where I approached its message as true and realized that it was beneficial that I should learn to understand it.

Ironically, as my knowledge of Scripture increased, I didn't really give too much thought as to how the written word came about. I just assumed that whoever put it together would have had such devotion to truth that they would have approached it as a sacred document.

At one point in the not too distant past, my own questioning was reawakened. I wanted to know how the Scriptures, as handed down through generations, came about.

I happened upon the knowledge of ancient sources for the Jewish Scriptures. Jewish Bibles all have some reference to their authoritative sources. Most use the term, **'The Masoretic Text'** to describe it. In my quest to follow up on that, I discovered the ancient source known as **The Leningrad Codex (aka The Masoretic Text)!**

Do you wish to know about the ancient and authoritative source used as the foundation for the Hebrew-language based Jewish Scriptures?

What Is The Leningrad Codex?



Let us say on the outset that the *Leningrad Codex* is one of the most important Hebrew documents extant, with ramifications and influence that is immeasurable. It is – along with the other famous biblical codex, the *Aleppo Codex* – one of the sources for biblical tradition, for the study of Hebrew Scriptures, and for providing an accurate text for the reading and writing of the Torah and the other books of the Bible.

The *Leningrad Codex* is the oldest complete manuscript of the Tanakh, the 39 books of the Bible. Written in Cairo on parchment in the year 1009 (the date appears on the manuscript), it is inextricably bound up with the *Aleppo Codex*, which is about a century older but undated. Moreover, the *Aleppo Codex*, housed for many years in the Aleppo Synagogue in Syria, was badly damaged in a fire during anti-Jewish riots in Syria in 1947, and so it is incomplete. The *Aleppo Codex*, now safely stored at the National Hebrew Library in Jerusalem, along with the *Leningrad Codex*, set the standard for the correct text of the Tanakh, including its vocalization and the musical accents (*trop* or *te'amim*) that accompany every word. Although the spelling of a word may be consistent in Hebrew, in the absence of vocalization (more commonly called the vowel "dots"), there can be variations as to how the letters are pronounced. Take the letters *s*, *f*, *r*, for example, which can

variously be read as *sefer*, *sapar* (nouns), *siper*, *safar*, *saper* (verbs). The *Leningrad Codex* is a fully vocalized biblical text, assuring correct pronunciation of each word. Moreover, it contains all the accent marks (*te'amim*) above and below the letters. These accent marks almost miraculously serve three disparate functions: a) they are notes for cantillation of the word; b) they show the part of the word that should be stressed or accented; c) they serve as marks for phrasing and punctuation. It should be noted that the handwritten Torah scroll has only the letters of the words and no vowels points or other marks, for no vocalization of the text or trop are permitted on the Torah parchment. Hence, the importance of a fully vocalized manuscript like the *Leningrad Codex*, which follows a tradition that goes back nearly 2,000 years to Tiberias, in the land of Israel. By virtue of its existence, then, this Codex is the guide for all future handwritten Torahs and printed editions of the Bible. The *Leningrad Codex* is part of the Abraham Firkovich collection at the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), where it has been for more than 130 years. Firkovich was a Jewish businessman, a devoted Karaite (Jews who follow only the Bible and reject oral or Talmudic tradition), an inveterate traveler and collector of Hebrew manuscripts. The Codex was acquired by Firkovich (who offered no details in his letters or in his autobiography as to where he got it) and then sold it to the then St. Petersburg Imperial Library.

It has been known for years that this important Codex was in the great library in Leningrad, which also houses hundreds of other priceless Jewish manuscripts. In 1990, under Gorbachov's glasnost, and after much delicate negotiations (including giving the library photographic equipment and a fax machine), the library permitted foreign photographers to come and photograph this rare document for the first time.¹

¹Curt Leviant, "Jewish Holy Scriptures: The Leningrad Codex," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed 19 May 2022, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-leningrad-codex>.

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Westminster Leningrad Codex

An electronic representation of the best manuscript of the entire Hebrew Bible.

Leningrad Codex This text began as an electronic transcription by Richard Whitaker (Princeton Seminary, New Jersey) and H. van Parunak (then at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) of the 1983 printed edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). It was continued with the cooperation of Robert Kraft (University of Pennsylvania) and Emmanuel Tov (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), and completed by Prof. Alan Groves. The transcription was called the *Michigan-Claremont-Westminster Electronic Hebrew Bible* and was archived at the Oxford Text Archive (OTA) in 1987. It has been variously known as the "CCAT" or "eBHS" text. Since that time, the text has been modified in many hundreds of places to conform to the photo-facsimile of the Leningrad Codex, Firkovich B19A, residing at the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg; hence the change of name.

The Groves Center continues to scrutinize and correct this electronic text as a part of its continuing work of building morphology and syntax databases of the Hebrew Bible, since correct linguistic analysis requires an accurate text.

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How is *The Pill Tanakh* Different?

First of all, the books of *The Pill Tanakh* follow the order of the books as they naturally occur in the Leningrad Codex, whereas modern Jewish Scriptures order their books differently. I also separate the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah into two separate books apiece.

²J. Alan Groves Center For Advanced Biblical Research, "Westminster Leningrad Codex," accessed 27 May 2022, <https://www.grovescenter.org/projects/westminster-leningrad-codex/>.

The typical order of the Writings section in a modern Tanakh³ are:

25) Psalms, 26) Proverbs, 27) Job, 28) The Songs of Songs, 29) Ruth, 30) Lamentations, 31) Ecclesiastes, 32) Esther, 33) Daniel, 34) Ezra-Nehemiah (combined), 35) Chronicles (1 & 2 combined).

The Pill Tanakh honors the Leningrad Codex order in the 'Writings' section:

27) 1 Chronicles, 28) 2 Chronicles, 29) Psalms, 30) Job, 31) Proverbs, 32) Ruth, 33) Song of Songs, 34) Ecclesiastes, 35) Lamentations, 36) Esther, 37) Daniel, 38) Ezra, 39) Nehemiah.

Assembling This Edition Of The Jewish Scriptures

In January of 2022, I began putting this Tanakh together. Because of the complexities in placing Hebrew and English texts on facing pages and have them correspond to each other, I decided that the best choice to typeset this volume would be using the T_EX Typesetting system.⁴ It took me a couple of months to learn the T_EX language well enough just to begin typesetting and another 7 months to typeset the core of this book. That followed years of preparation and programming just to get to that point!

Hebrew Language, Jewish Scripture Source

Based upon the hand-written Leningrad Codex; 'programatically' derived from: "Electronic" Leningrad Codex obtained from www.tanach.us; the source for the Westminster Leningrad Codex (WLC) — Groves Center: Maintained by the J. Alan Groves Center For Advanced Biblical Research.⁵

English Language, Jewish Scripture Source

Digital source taken from "The Hebrew Bible in English according to the JPS 1917 Edition, © 2002 Mechon Mamre HTML version."⁶

³Tanakh. "Though the word "Bible" is commonly used by non-Jews — as are the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" — the appropriate term to use for the Hebrew scriptures ("scripture" is a synonym used by both Jews and non-Jews) is Tanakh. This word is derived from the Hebrew letters of its three components: Torah: The Books of Genesis (Bereshit), Exodus (Shemot), Leviticus (Vayikrah), Numbers (Bamidbar) and Deuteronomy (Devarim).

Nevi'im (Prophets): The Books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. (The last twelve are sometimes grouped together as "Trei Asar" ["Twelve"].)

Ketuvim (Writings): The Books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel (although not all that is included in the Christian Canon), Ezra and Nehemiah, I Chronicles, and II Chronicles."

Shamash Hadash, "The Tanakh," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed 25 April 2021, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-tanakh>.

⁴T_EX Users Group, "Just what is T_EX?," accessed 15 February 2022, <https://www.tug.org/whatis.html>.

⁵J. Alan Groves Center For Advanced Biblical Research, "Westminster Leningrad Codex," accessed 17 January 2015, <https://www.grovescenter.org/projects/westminster-leningrad-codex/>.

⁶Mechon Mamre, "The Hebrew Bible in English according to the JPS 1917 Edition © 2002 all rights reserved to Mechon Mamre for this HTML version," accessed 17 Jan 2015, <https://mechon-mamre.org/e/et/et0.htm>.

WLC Font-Encoding Conversion

I used the C++ Programming Language to convert the Westminster Leningrad Codex (WLC) UTF-16 encoded text to an editable UTF-8 decimal encoding (e.g. 'ש' is 'א'). That enabled me to format the Hebrew text. Hundreds of programming hours were required to read the digitized WLC UTF-16 (wide-character) unicode font-encoding and convert it to a standard ASCII decimal web-page encoding, that I could easily edit and manipulate.

Subsequently, I needed to write another program to read the Hebrew-English html files I had created from the WLC conversion and JPS 1917 English to create separate files for the Hebrew and the English texts. In that process, I had my 'program' output L^AT_EX typesetting code to display in html format, so that I could 'cut-and-paste' the data directly into my T_EX editor from a web browser. In that process, I made the "Kativ" the predominant reading and I relegated the "Qere" to footnotes (see section on Qere/Kativ, page xix).

It should be noted that the UTF-16 (wide-character) unicode font-encoding, as found in the WLC, is very "tricky" to work with. Even if you can open the text file or html file in an editor, just when you think you are deleting a certain UTF-16 (wide-character) unicode encoded character, a different character several positions removed will typically be the one affected!

Modifications Were Necessary To Correspond To The Actual Leningrad Codex!

When I examined the photo-facsimile pdf⁷ of the Leningrad Codex to verify the Hebrew text for the Ten Commandments as found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, I discovered the singular uniqueness — the sublime rendering — in its verse structure and sequencing!

In other words, the Leningrad Codex, being the source Hebrew as claimed to be used by most Jewish Scriptures and Christian Bibles, is absolutely ***not*** followed in the Hebrew and in the English translations as so claimed!

Moreover, in descriptions for Jewish Publications, the Stone Edition Tanakh (Hebrew-English), Koren Tanakh (Hebrew-English) as well as the JPS 1917 Tanakh (English) promote their texts as based upon *The Masoretic Text* (aka The Leningrad Codex). However, at least for the rendering of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 in both Hebrew and English Scripture, their verse separations and sequencings do not even come close to *actually* following the Leningrad Codex source document!

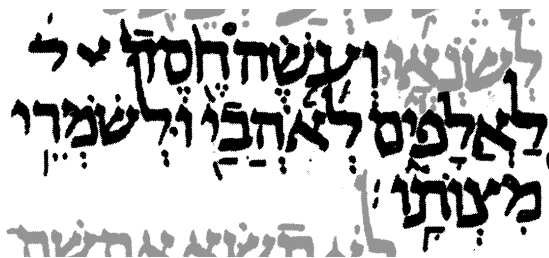
For both the Hebrew and English texts in *The Pill Tanakh*, I have typeset the verses in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 to exactly correspond to the Leningrad Codex source document!

⁷It is referred to as a 'facsimile' or a 'photo-facsimile' because it is a photographic reproduction.

Additionally, I changed the English interpretation for Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:11 (the third commandment), which I feel better expresses the actual Hebrew text:

Thou shalt not lift up the Name of Yehovah thy God as to declare Him worthless; for Yehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name falsely.

I also "fixed" the last letter of the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 5:10 to match the Leningrad Codex. The WLC represents the last letter as a *yud*, whereas in the Leningrad Codex it clearly appears to be a *vav* (last letter of last word of the verse):



You might find it of interest that for the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 in the Leningrad Codex there are just *twelve verses* (Exodus 20:1-12). In my opinion, the flow is totally natural. Each "Commandment" is contained within its own verse unit (two verses have modifying verses, totalling 12).

Although other versions come near in the number of actual verses, **absolutely none come close** to rendering the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 as found in the Leningrad Codex! In fact, those Jewish versions that come close in verse numbering offer what I consider to be a *staccato* rendering of the actual text, separating the larger sections into independent verses (as found in the '2nd Commandment,' "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." and the '4th Commandment,' "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"), but combining the smaller passages (thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal) **into one single verse!**

The Sublime Rendering Of The Leningrad Codex

In my opinion, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20, as found in the Scripture source Leningrad Codex, is a sublime rendering. I believe that those words are the same as was **written by the "Finger of Yehovah" on both sides of the two tablets of stone, which He commanded Moses to place into the Ark of the Testimony (אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת), otherwise known as the Ark of the Covenant (אֲרוֹן בְּרִית־יְהוָה).**

In its natural rendering, The Leningrad Codex separates each "commandment" into an independent unit of thought. There are two extra verses which add greater clarity (verse 1 and verse 4): verse one modifies verse two and verse four modifies verse three. Every other version of Scripture separates larger sections and combines smaller ones in their representation of the text of the Ten Commandments!

Compared to twelve (12) verses of Exodus 20:1-12 in the Leningrad Codex:

The following Jewish editions contain fourteen (14) verses each:

The Koren Tanakh,
The Stone Edition Tanach,
The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB).

The following Christian versions contain seventeen (17) verses each:

The King James Version (KJV),
The English Standard Version (ESV),
The New International Version (NIV).

Can Verse Order / Structure Affect The Meaning?

I doubt that I am alone among those who believe that changing structured ordering may alter the meaning and interpretation of an entire section. In the least, the flow is necessarily different from that of the source document itself. Moreover, I believe that the Ten Commandments, as rendered in Exodus 20 of the Leningrad Codex, *in its natural flow*, to be The Real God Code!⁸

Qere: What Is Read — Ketiv: What Is Written

In The Pill Tanakh, 'Ketiv' Is Normal, 'Qere' Is Minimized!

I believe the handwritten Leningrad Codex to be the *authoritative version of the Holy Scriptures*. It is written in the *ancient Hebrew language*. There are just some renderings in the original, that we, as well as all those who have come after the Masoretic scribes, may not fully understand.

That does not mean we cannot have a good grasp on the whole. However, I believe we need to recognize our own limitations if our expectation is that we can understand every word, every phrase and every ancient idiom. For those coming afterwards to not know some words or particular phrases should not indict the original Leningrad Codex source, nor its scribes!

In efforts to make some words better understood, the system known as Qere/Ketiv *appears to have been invented!* In the margin, to the side on the line of the column where a word in question appears, there is a word called Qere, containing consonants only, having no vowels or accents. ***It is written on the actual parchment of the Leningrad Codex itself!***

The intent or motive of the creators of the Qere/Ketiv system matters less to me than the net effect of it. I believe that the 'Qere/Ketiv system' was introduced by rabbis some time after the Leningrad Codex was completed.

Regardless of who it was who devised it, I am only interested in what the Masoretic scribes wrote in the original document!

⁸Robert M. Pill, "The Real God Code: The Ten Commandments In The Leningrad Codex," (Robert M. Pill, 2021).

It is my own desire to read the Hebrew text just as the Jewish Masoretic scribes originally wrote it. To me, the 'Qere system of additions,' as found in modern Hebrew-language Scriptures, in the least interferes with a natural reading of the text. Moreover, I consider it to be a deliberate subterfuge upon those who believe they are directly reading a true reproduction of the Scriptural source!

The following is one internet source of information on this subject:

Qere and Ketiv, from the Aramaic qere or q're, קִרְיָ ("[what is] read") and ketiv, or ketib, kethib, kethibh, kethiv, כְּתִיב ("[what is] written"), also known as "keri uchesiv" or "keri uchetiv," refers to a system for marking differences between what is written in the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible, as preserved by scribal tradition, and what is read. In such situations, the Qere is the technical orthographic device used to indicate the pronunciation of the words in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew language scriptures (Tanakh), while the Ketiv indicates their written form, as inherited from tradition.⁹

Q. What is the Qere and Ketiv and how does it relate to the Masoretes?

A. Qere and Ketiv are orthographic devices that were used by the Masoretes, i.e., Jewish scribes from the 6-10th centuries.

Qere means, "what is read," and ketiv means, "what is written".

It is found in existing Masoretic manuscripts dating to the 9th and 10th centuries, CE.

There are several forms of Qere / Ketiv, including: ordinary, vowel, omitted, added, euphemistic, split, and qere perpetuum.

The ketiv that is most relevant is the vowel qere. In this case, the consonants are unchanged, but different vowel signs are added and only the qere, i.e., what is read, is vocalized. ...

Well, that is pretty much an official "rabbinic" stance on the subject. However, in the midst of looking for other sources of information, I found some that, even unwittingly, may contribute to a different view from that of the rabbis:

1. Although it is generally agreed that the *Ketiv-Qere* system was developed during the Masoretic period, the ultimate origins of the readings contained in the system are still not fully understood. Historically, attempts to explain the origins of the *Ketiv-Qere* readings have centered around two basic models. According to one model, both the *Ketiv* and the *Qere* represent variant readings which can be traced back to an ancient collation of manuscripts. According to the other

⁹Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, "Qere and Ketiv," accessed 25 May 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qere_and_Ketiv.

model, readers introduced the *Qere* into the written text (the *Ketiv*) with the intention of correcting what they perceived to be an error. Both views have been held in some fashion from early on in the study of the Masorah, and both views still exist in modern times. In addition, several new approaches have emerged, most of which attempt in some way to combine features of the two traditional models. It will be suggested here that these two traditional models have not supplied an adequate framework for evaluating the origins of the *Ketiv-Qere* readings, and that a better approach can be established by focusing on the central questions which cut across both traditional positions.¹⁰

My position is somewhat similar to the second "model" mentioned above: "According to the other model, readers introduced the *Qere* into the written text (the *Ketiv*) with the intention of correcting what they perceived to be an error." However, I do not consider the *Qere* additions to be legitimate!

I Challenge The Rabbinic 'Qere/Ketiv' System!

Within a verse, the Stone Edition of the Tanakh places the *Qere* before the *Ketiv* (which is within brackets), making it so that the reader automatically sees the *Qere*, but with difficulty may read the bracketed *Ketiv*.

Similarly, Koren Publishers place the *Ketiv* in the margin, to the right of the column of the same verse and the unvowelled *Qere* within the Hebrew text itself, where it is predominantly and naturally read.

It could be inferred that those publishers "*could have cared less*" in their efforts which could amount to what is adding to or taking away from Scripture (aka 'The Word of God'). Scriptural admonitions for doing so may be found in Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 13:1 (Christian Bibles: Deuteronomy 12:32), Proverbs 30:6; this sentiment is also expressed in the Christian New Testament book of Revelation 22:18-19!

In *The Pill Tanakh*, I have chosen to make the *Ketiv*, what the authors of the Leningrad Codex originally wrote, to be the natural and predominant rendering, while making the *Qere*, *what the "rabbis" have commanded as must be read instead*, to be a minor, secondary format, relegated to a small footnote notation, displayed only within a page's footnote section.

Tedious Hand Editing To Reverse The *Qere/Ketiv*

I spent many hours laboriously hand editing the Hebrew text to reverse the order of each of the 1,110 instances of the *Qere/Ketiv* throughout this Tanakh. That effort allowed me to place the *Qere* within footnotes in my program to parse Hebrew-English text and create separate files for both the Hebrew and English texts in the L^AT_EX typesetting language–markup. I was

¹⁰Michael Graves, "The Origins of Ketiv-Qere Readings," Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, accessed 25 May 2022, <http://jbtc.org/v08/Graves2003.html>.

then able to open the files in a web browser to copy and paste Hebrew and English marked-up text into the L^AT_EX editor to typeset each page.

I decided to take on this challenge after having tried to understand the nature of the *rabbinic* Qere/Ketiv system. I had not truly found a satisfactory explanation as to why, when reading the Tanakh, rabbis demand that the "Qere" must always be read, but the "Ketiv," *never!*

Regardless, I consider '*what was written by the Masoretes*' to be more likely what was intended to be read by those same Masoretes!

In most of the literature around this issue, there is a prevalent assumption that the Masoretic scribes wrote the Qere on the actual manuscripts as corrections. That view practically negates the idea of it being a later addition.

Moreover, as rabbinic sources seem to indicate that the "Ketiv" *should never be uttered*, I have found instances, just as in Exodus 21:8, where I believe the "Qere" is **blatantly wrong** and that the "Ketiv" *should be the preferred, preserved, and natural rendering*!

The following is an example, similar to that which has been rendered in the Stone Tanakh for Exodus 21:8 (with brackets around the 'Ketiv' - [לֹא]):

אִם-רָצָה בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר-לֹא [לֹא] יַעֲדָהּ וְהַפָּדָהּ לָעַם
נָכְרִי לֹא-יִמְשַׁל לְמִכְרָהּ בְּבִגְדוֹ-בָּהּ:

"If she please not her master, who hath espoused her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed; to sell her unto a foreign people he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her." [Exodus 21:8 (JPS 1917)]

Interestingly, this instance actually translates the Ketiv ([לֹא]) instead of the Qere (לֹא)! Were the Qere to have been translated, the section of the verse where it appears might translate "*who hath NOT espoused her to himself!*"

I believe that the Masoretes actually knew what they were doing all along!

In my own regular Scripture reading of the Hebrew, my preference had been to make the effort to read the "Ketiv" (what is written) and pretty much minimize the "Qere," skipping it altogether! This was not easy to do because the predominant Qere is rendered as if it is the normative form, and the Ketiv follows, within brackets, *as if it is an offensive variant!*

I consider that 'Talmudic' rabbis have expended much effort in obscuring the written Torah as part of a regular practice and to elevate their own writings. Thus, they appear to view themselves collectively as אֱלֹהִים [Elohim].

In creating, or, in the least promoting the Qere/Ketiv System, **Talmudists no doubt exalt themselves to be a greater authority than Masoretic scribes.**

Again, **I believe that the Talmudists (rabbis) collectively consider themselves to be יהוה [Yehovah] (i.e. God, Elohim)!!!** They certainly demand that their dictates, their edicts (תקנות takkanot¹¹) **must be followed just as if they are divinely inspired law!**

It should be noted that **non-Jewish Bibles may have also been affected by the rabbinic Qere/Ketiv system:**

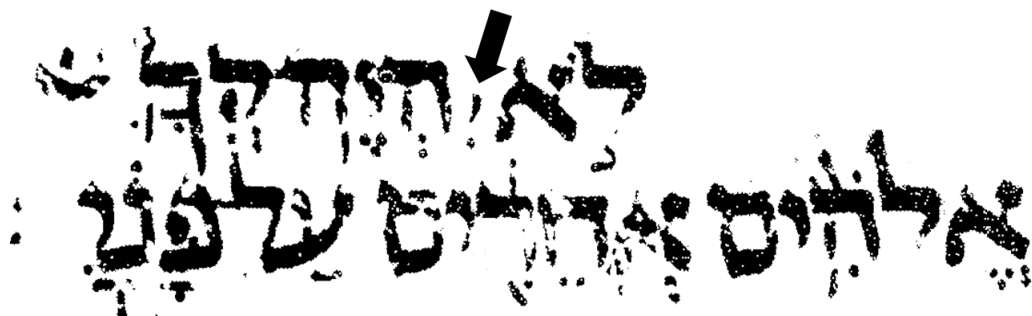
In a number of the texts containing K לֹא and Q לוֹ (Ex 21:8; 1 Sam 2:3; 2 Kings 8:10; Is 63:9; Ps 100:3), the Ketiv is as acceptable as is the Qere, yet nearly all of the English Bibles surveyed opt for the Qere. This might indicate that the translators are predisposed to give priority to the Qere unless some other factor makes it clearly unusable.¹²

I think that those folks who have produced the modern Bible versions ought to truly consider that their own translations could have been ***influenced by a system that may not have been biblically inspired!*** In other words, ***those who put together the modern Christian Bibles may have been unduly influenced by rabbinic authorities and the Qere/Ketiv system!*** They very well may have chosen the Qere additions over what was actually written in the textual source.

In doing so, could they also be considered to be among those who have added to or taken away from the actual 'Word of God?'

There is no doubt that this subject has many strong opinions as to its origins. However, I think the actual Leningrad Codex may show instances of where its scribes made corrections. **If this is the case, it could diminish or negate a reason to have a subsequent Qere/Ketiv system!**

The following image is just one example of what appears to me to be a correction made by the Masoretic scribes themselves (Deuteronomy 5:7).



¹¹Jewish Virtual Library, 'Takkanah,' accessed 19 May 2022, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/takkanah>.

¹²Tim Hegg, "To Read or Not to Read?: Translating the Qere/Kativ," TorahResource Institute, accessed 25 May 2022, <https://tr-pdf.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/articles/to-read-or-not-to-read-qere-ketiv.pdf>.

The above verse is from Deuteronomy 5:7.

I have placed an arrow over the *yud* in the second word to show where I'm directing your attention. To me, it certainly appears that the initial *yud* may have been missing, and a Masoretic proofreader could have added it at a later time. It is certainly smaller than a regular *yud* elsewhere, including the third letter of the same word, so it is my opinion that this is an example of how the Masoretes may have actually corrected their own texts, having no need to invent the Qere/Ketiv system.

Moreover, because Masoretes wrote on individual sheets, it is my opinion that where they may have found too many mistakes, that they very well could have started over for that section of parchment and discarded the previous one, rather than meticulously writing in the margins, in a Qere/Ketiv notation, every place they decided that a word should have been rendered differently.

A couple of paragraphs from the-iconoclast.org website may help to understand my reasoning:

Qumran A Community Of Scribes!

It is well known that the majority of ancient inkwells archaeologists found in the land of Israel were discovered at Qumran and/or related to it. Consequently, with this information as well as based upon the layout of its settlement and even information found in some of the recovered scrolls themselves, many people hold to the idea that Qumran was a "Scribal Community."

Hebrew Manuscripts With Scribal Errors Were "Buried" In Earthen Jars! (They were deemed unfit to be used in Temple Service)

The "dead sea scrolls" at Qumran that comprise texts from the Hebrew Scriptures were "buried" in earthen jars. They could not be destroyed because they contained the name of יהוה [YehoVaH] (G-d)! They did not 'pass muster' for having been copied without error — they were unfit to be used in Temple (or Synagogue) worship, and were buried rather than destroyed for the aforementioned reason.¹³

¹³Were The 'Christian Scriptures' Written For And By Goyim (Gentiles)?, "Are 'Scribal' Standards Important?," accessed 5 June 2022, <https://www.the-iconoclast.org/reference/scribalstandards.php#id.05>.

Some Other Changes I Made For This Edition Of The Holy Scriptures

The Name יהוה [Yehovah]

יהוה [Yehovah]¹⁴ : the name of G-d in the Hebrew-language based Jewish Scriptures ("YHVH": י 'Yud,' ה 'He,' ו 'Vav,' ה 'He,' aka the Tetragrammaton) is used instead of "LORD" in the phrases "the LORD," "The LORD," and "O LORD" in the JPS 1917 Tanakh. In converting "LORD" to "Yehovah," I counted 5,553 occurrences in the JPS 1917 Tanakh!

יהוה | האדון [ha Adon Yehovah]

The Hebrew phrase יהוה | האדון occurs in only two places: in Exodus 23:17 and 34:23. In those cases, I have changed the translation wording from "Lord GOD" to "Lord GOD [ha Adon Yehovah]".

אדני יהוה [Adonai Yehovi]

Typically translated as "Lord GOD," it is a much less common form of the Divine Name (יהוה [Yehovah]).

This form is, nevertheless, quite important in understanding pronunciation. I think this is exceptionally profound since the Hebrew texts, as well as English translations, have not undergone the intense scrutiny of rabbinic censorship as has the Name יהוה [Yehovah]!

Obviously, אדני יהוה [Adonai Yehovi] – this vowelized form of the Divine Name – should help withstand those who vigorously defend and insist upon the name "Yahweh" to be the *de facto* pronunciation of the Divine Name!

In converting "Lord GOD" to "Lord GOD [Adonai Yehovi]," I counted a total of 291 occurrences in the JPS 1917 Tanakh.

The fully vowelized form of the Hebrew אדני יהוה appears 31 times, and the non-fully vowelized form אדני יהוה (minus just the one 'Oh' sounding character (ה), "the Holam," the 'dot' which rests to the above left of the first 'He' in י 'Yud,' ה 'He,' ו 'Vav,' ה 'He'), make up all other occurrences.

תורה Torah

The word "law" as found in the JPS 1917 has been changed to "Torah" in all places where the root Hebrew תורה (Torah) is in the corresponding Leningrad Codex Text! In converting "Law" to "Torah," I counted a total of 223 occurrences in the JPS 1917 Tanakh!

¹⁴Nehemia Gordon, "Nehemia Gordon on the Name of God," Nehemia's Wall, accessed 24 January 2022, <https://www.nehemiaswall.com/nehemia-gordon-name-god>.

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם — City Of "Jerusalem" Yerushalam, Yerush'lem and Yerushalayim

יְרוּשָׁלַם Yerushalam

The name "Jerusalem" as found in the JPS 1917, has been changed to its transliterated equivalent, "Yerushalam" (note the 'am' ending), in all places where it corresponds to the Hebrew [יְרוּשָׁלַם].

יְרוּשָׁלֵם Yerush'lem

A **rare**, second transliterated form, "Yerush'lem" (note the 'em' ending), has been changed from "Jerusalem" where the Hebrew letters spell out the Aramaic form [יְרוּשָׁלֵם] found in parts of Daniel and Ezra.

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם Yerushalayim

The **extremely rare**, third transliterated form, "Yerushalayim" (note the 'ayim' ending), has been changed from the JPS 1917 "Jerusalem" to correspond to the Hebrew [יְרוּשָׁלַיִם].

Noteworthy is that **this rarest form appears in only four (4) places in the entire Hebrew Scriptures**, yet, it is the most common pronunciation for the name of the ancient city! Its **four occurrences** are: 1) Jeremiah 26:18, 2) Esther 2:6, 3) I Chronicles 3:5, and 4) II Chronicles 25:1.

In converting "Jerusalem" to its transliterated equivalents, I counted a total of **625 occurrences** in the JPS 1917 Tanakh!

בִּלְעָם Bilaam

The name "Balaam," as found in the JPS 1917, has been changed to "Bilaam" in all places where the Hebrew בִּלְעָם (Bilaam) is in the corresponding Leningrad Codex text! This form is closer to its Hebrew transliteration.

In converting "Balaam" to "Bilaam", I counted a total of **60 occurrences** in the JPS 1917 Tanakh!

The Third Commandment!

As I mentioned earlier, I changed the English interpretation for Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:11, which I feel is a closer translation of the actual Hebrew text. I cover this subject in "The Real God Code."¹⁵

Thou shalt not lift up the Name of Yehovah thy God as to declare Him worthless; for Yehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name falsely.

'The Morrow After The Day Of Rest'

For Shavuot, The Mistranslation Forces A Misinterpretation

I changed the phrase in Leviticus 23:15 as found in the JPS 1917, "from the morrow after the day of rest," to "from the morrow after the sabbath," which is the literal translation of the Hebrew text.

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמָּחָרֵת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאָכֶם אֶת-עֹמֶר
הַתְּנוּפֶה שִׁבְעַת שָׁבוּעוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה:

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the waving; seven weeks shall there be complete;

This also helps to prevent the *false rabbinical interpretation*, which forces the **counting of the Omer** to begin on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread. Rabbis interpret the text for **Sabbath not to be the 7th-day Sabbath** but rather the first day of the feast (also known as a High Sabbath). Thus, they unnaturally force the interpretation of the 'morrow after the Shabbat' to be the second day of the feast of unleavened bread!

By confusing the plain meaning of the Hebrew text, are they not forcing an interpretation contrary to the intention of the original text, which speaks plainly by using the Hebrew word for the weekly, seventh-day Sabbath? Rather than allow the natural meaning that explicitly states that the counting of the Omer begins on the *next* "first day of the week" (the day following the weekly Sabbath, i.e. the morrow after the Shabbat), this rabbinical edict forces all its adherents to potentially *not celebrate Shavuot*, one of the three mandatory attended feasts on the Jewish calendar!

Yes, I said '*not celebrate*.' If someone celebrates a *required* feast at a time other than what is commanded, does their observance count as if they celebrated on the correct day? That is a rhetorical question, but the plain meaning of the verse is clear that the Scripture has a particular day in mind for the observation of Shavuot, aka the "feast of weeks."

¹⁵Robert M. Pill, "The Real God Code: The Ten Commandments In The Leningrad Codex," (Robert M. Pill, 2021), Chapter: "Getting The Third Commandment Right," pp35-40.

Psalms 110:1

... שָׁב לְיָמִינִי עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ תַּחַת לְרַגְלֶיךָ

קִי אֶלְדֹּדֶר מְזִמּוֹר נָאִם יְהוָה | לְאַדְנִי שָׁב לְיָמִינִי עַד־אָשִׁית
אֹיְבֶיךָ תַּחַת לְרַגְלֶיךָ: בִּמְטָה־עֶזְךָ יִשְׁלַח יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן רֹדֶה

The traditional English translation for Psalms 110:1 has been:

A Psalm of David. The LORD saith unto my lord: 'Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'

I have altered the English to correspond to what I believe captures the actual intent of the Hebrew:

110 1 A Psalm of David.{N}

Yehovah saith unto my lord: 'Return unto My right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool to thy foot.' 2 The rod of Thy strength Yehovah will send

I translate שָׁב (Shin-Vet) as **"Return."** The root should actually be considered as שׁוּב (Shin-Vav-Vet) but it is seen by most translators as יָשָׁב (Yud-Shin-Vet), which is a completely different root, and would mean 'Sit' as it is so often translated. The last word, לְרַגְלֶיךָ, is not the plural for 'your feet,' but rather, as singular, 'your foot!' A more thorough study would reveal nuggets herein!

צִלְמָוֶת

Great Darkness — not 'Shadow of Death'

17 verses in the Tanakh contain the Hebrew word צִלְמָוֶת (pronounced Tzal-mah-vet). In each of those verses, the Hebrew word צִלְמָוֶת is usually translated into English as *"Shadow of Death."*

However, according to Ernest Klein, in his great reference book, *"A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English,"* צִלְמָוֶת (Tzal-mah-vet) means *"Great Darkness."*

"Shadow of Death" would be the translation if the word was a compound word separated by a (־) maqqef, which looks like a high dash, and is pronounced "mah-qef." This is because צֶלַ (Tzal), by itself, means "shadow"; and מָוֶת (Mah-vet), by itself, means "death!"

That resulting compound word would have been written: צִלְ-מָוֶת. You may note that in the aforementioned 17 verses there is **NOT** a (־) ("maqfep") within the word צִלְמָוֶת. It is, therefore, properly translated as "*great darkness*."

Job 38:17 - A Correct Compound Word With A (־) Maqfep!

הֲנִגְלוּ לְךָ שַׁעֲרֵי-מָוֶת וְשַׁעֲרֵי צִלְמָוֶת תִּרְאֶה:

"Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee? Or hast thou seen the gates of great darkness?" [Job 38:17 (JPS 1917)]

Among those verses containing צִלְמָוֶת, Job 38:17 is a good illustration of the use of the (־) (maqfep) in another word in the same verse, which is a compound word having the combining notation of the maqfep.

That compound word, שַׁעֲרֵי-מָוֶת, is translated as "**gates of death**!" This is an appropriate use of a maqfep and since it is in the same verse as a צִלְמָוֶת, it is easy to see the distinction, whether you insist in keeping previously understood translations of "*shadow of death*," especially in such iconic passages as Psalms 23:4, which usually reads, "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death ...*."

If that is not enough to help understand why I have made these changes, here is the definition of צִלְמָוֶת as given in Ernest Klein's resource:¹⁶

צִלְמָוֶת m.n. great darkness. [According to the traditional pronunciation the word is regarded as compounded of צִל and מָוֶת, hence lit. means shadow of death. However, most modern scholars read צִלְמָוֶת and derive the word from צֶלֶם^{II}].

צֶלֶם^{II} to be dark. [Arab. alima, Ethiop. alma (= was dark). Base of צִלְמוֹן, possibly also of צִלְמָוֶת].

צִלְמוֹן m.n. MH darkness (in the Bible occurring only as the name of a mountain, Jud. 9:41, and Ps. 68:15). [Formed from צֶלֶם^{II} with וֹן, suff. Forming abstract nouns.].

¹⁶Ernest Klein, "A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English" (Carta, Jerusalem), Copyright © 1987 by The Beatrice & Arthur Minden Foundation & The University of Haifa.

Digitized version of Klein Dictionary: Ernest Klein, 'Klein Dictionary,' Sefaria, accessed 13 May 2021, https://www.sefaria.org/Klein_Dictionary.

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Hebrew Letters Representing Numbers: י"ה for 15 And י"ו For 16

For over a millenium, rabbinic edict has determined that the numbers that would normally be written with Hebrew letters for 15 (י"ה) and 16 (י"ו) would spell out parts of the Tetragrammaton (the 4 letter Hebrew Name for Yehovah). Just as they forbid the saying of the Name יהוה [Yehovah], they also have forbidden subsets of that Name to represent numbers 15 and 16!

As a *self-proclaimed Karaite*,¹⁷ I do not consider the dictates of the rabbis to be my authority, but rather the Jewish Scriptures themselves! Thus, in this Tanakh, I decided to forego what I consider to be the *euphemistic rabbinic superstition* of using טו for the number 15 and טז for the number 16. In their stead, for the entire Tanakh, I am now using י"ה for the number 15 and י"ו for 16 in every place that Hebrew letters represent numbers!

The Pill Tanakh Does Not Contain The Weekly Parshiyot!

Those of you familiar with other Jewish 'Tanakh's will notice that this Tanakh *does not* provide sectioning of the entire volume into the weekly readings known as Parshiyot. The reason for this is simple: the Leningrad Codex *does not* contain the Parshiyot, the sectioning off of weekly readings for the Torah (the five books of Moses) and Haftarah (the reading from the Prophets)! Thus, neither does this version of the Holy Scriptures!

JPS 1917: Curly-Braces "{ }" In The English Text

"We have added signs for the paragraphs found in the original Hebrew: In the poetical books of Psalms, Job (aside from the beginning and end), and Proverbs, each verse normally starts on a new line; where there is a new line within a verse, we added {N}, and when there is a blank line, we added {P}. In the rest of the books, we added {S} for setumah (open space within a line) and {P} for petuHah (new paragraph on new line) according to our Hebrew Bible)."¹⁸

¹⁷Karaism is the original form of Judaism commanded by God to the Jewish people in the Torah. Karaites accept the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) as the word of God and as the sole religious authority. At the same time, Karaites deny human additions to the Torah such as the Rabbinic Oral Law because Deuteronomy 4:2 states, "You shall not add to the word which I have commanded you, neither shall you diminish from it..." Karaite Judaism also rejects the Rabbinical principle that the Rabbis are the sole authorities for interpreting the Bible.' Shawn Lichaa, Nehemia Gordon, Meir Rekhavi, "As It Is Written A Brief Case For Karaism," (Hilkiah Press, 2006), p7. Reproduced by permission.

¹⁸Mechon Mamre, "The Hebrew Bible in English according to the JPS 1917 Edition © 2002 all rights reserved to Mechon Mamre for this HTML version," accessed 17 January 2015, <https://mechon-mamre.org/e/et/et0.htm>.

Matching Verse Numbers On Facing Hebrew-English Pages!

On each facing page, there are matching verses for the Hebrew and English texts. The English translation is much more verbose than the Hebrew, and many pages required font size adjustments to have them correspond one to the other.

Sometimes a font had to be made smaller and at other times a font size needed to be larger. Most of the time this meant I needed to enlarge the Hebrew to fill a page where the corresponding English verses naturally filled the page. Sometimes, there was no getting around it, I just had to reduce the English font to make both pages fit. Especially where the numerous Qere footnotes reduced the actual volume space for the Hebrew to fit, I had to reduce the font size for the Hebrew as well. Still, I attempted to come as close as I could to maintain the original sizes to keep both the Hebrew and English texts easily readable.

Fonts Used And Their Base Sizes

For the Hebrew text, I used the Ezra SIL SR¹⁹ font at 12.75 points as a starting base size and for the English, I used Palatino font at 12 points as a starting base size. I wanted the Hebrew font size to be as large as that in my 'Stone Edition Tanach – Full Size,' which is what I had been reading regularly for several years (older eyes sometimes need a reward of a larger font size!).

New Chapters Begin On A New Line, With The Chapter Number Enlarged

Rather than starting a chapter on a new page or using a centered-bold headline to designate it, I opted for using an enlarged number (in both English and Hebrew texts) preceding the first verse on a new line.

Verse Numbers Precede Each Verse For Both Hebrew And English

Most Hebrew versions place the verse numbers in the margin of the same line as the verse. When a verse doesn't start a line or a new verse starts in the midst of the line, this forces you to scan the line for the start of that verse, which is, actually, the end of the previous verse, marked with a סוף פסוק (Sof Pasuq), which looks like our colon symbol, only heavier.²⁰

In this version, I have underlined each verse number and placed them at the beginning of each verse, hoping to make them easier to find on a page.

¹⁹SIL, SIL Language Technology, accessed 15 February 2022, <https://software.sil.org/ezra/>

²⁰Sof pasuq / Silluq Hebrew / or Sof pasuk / Siluk is a trope (from Yiddish trop) in the Jewish liturgy and is one of the biblical sentence, stress and cantillation symbols Teamim that appear in the Tanach. Translated, Sof Pasuq means 'end of the verse.' The sign is at the end of each verse in the Tanach and thus roughly corresponds to a point in German.

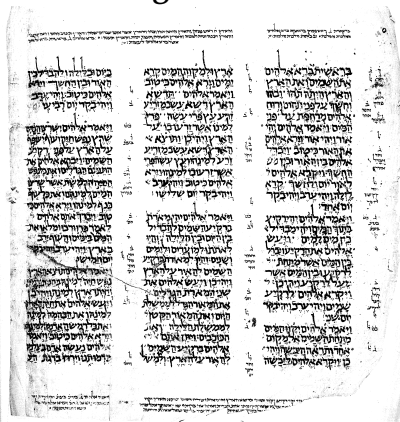
Sof pasuq, Wikimedia Foundation, 1 Dec 2019, https://de.zxc.wiki/wiki/Sof_pasuq.

Page Header Format Includes Book Name, Starting And Ending References

In the page headers, on the outside edge I have placed the page number and in the middle I have placed the book name with starting chapter/verse and ending chapter/verse.

For the inner (binding) sides in English I have placed the words Torah, Prophets or Writings, depending on its section; using unvowelled Hebrew text, I have done the same for Hebrew pages (תורה - נביאים - כתובים).

Leningrad Codex Image For Each Book's First Page



For the beginning page of each of the thirty-nine (39) books of this Tanakh, I have included a reduced sized image of the page in the Leningrad Codex where the first verse of the book appears. Below each image I give the name of the book, the column and position for the starting text of the first verse and the page number of the photo-facsimile Leningrad Codex pdf file as a reference.²¹

It is my desire that your life will be enriched by reading this version of the Hebrew-English Jewish Scriptures. I hope you will read it regularly and that you also consider having the discipline to follow a daily reading plan.²²

In doing so, may this version of the Holy Scriptures help to make your life fuller, and may you grow closer to Yehovah as He reveals to you an understanding of the words of His written revelation.

May יהוה [Yehovah] greatly bless you in the reading of *His Word!*

– Robert M. Pill, May 2024

P.S. It is my intention to repair errors I may find, and update the text as I deem to be important – over the course of time!

²¹Internet Archive, Samuel ben Jacob, "The Leningrad Codex (Codex Leningradensis)," accessed 6 June 2022, https://archive.org/details/Leningrad_Codex/page/n6/mode/2up.

²²[Daily Reading Plan] Example: 'Read Scripture In-A-Year!,' Congregation Sar Shalom, last revised 20 Sept 2006, http://sarshalom.us/resources/scripture/read_scripture-in-a-year.pdf.