

**HIERONYMIAN HEBREW: OR, A  
GRAMMAR OF THE SACRED  
LANGUAGE  
ON THE SYSTEM DISCLOSED BY  
THE WRITINGS OF SAINT JEROME**

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Hieronymian Hebrew: Or, a Grammar of the Sacred Language on the System Disclosed by the Writings of Saint Jerome by William Beeston

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**WILLIAM BEESTON**

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HIERONYMIAN HEBREW ;  
OR, A GRAMMAR OF THE  
SACRED LANGUAGE ON THE  
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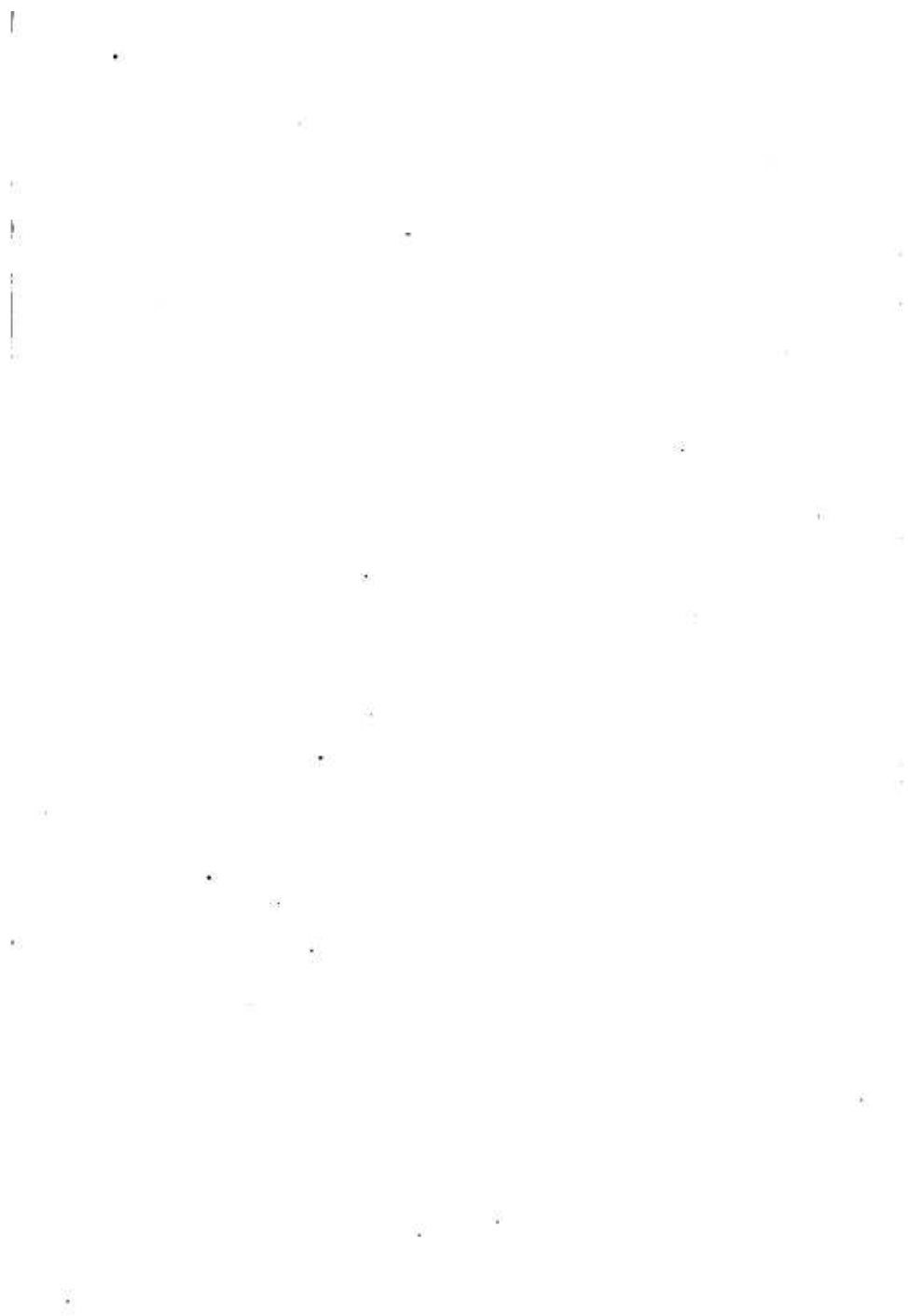
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1843.

ADDENDA, AND CORRIGENDA.

- Page 5, line 25, for *more than thirty*, read *near thirty*.  
 — 6, — 14, for *Ba-cha-liy*, read *Ba-kha-liy*.  
 — 7, — 9, for  $\text{𐎧𐎧𐎧𐎧}$  (*Khabh-bak-kuk*), read  $\text{𐎧𐎧𐎧𐎧}$  (*Kha-bhak-kuk*).  
 — 10, — 23, for  $\text{𐎧}$ , read  $\text{𐎧}$  (*Yakh*).  
 — 14, — 25, for *changing* ' (y) into  $\text{𐎧}$ , read *changing* ' (iy) into  $\text{𐎧}$  (*ith*);  
 and add, or  $\text{𐎧}$ , (*ek*) into  $\text{𐎧}$ , (*ah*).  
 — 15, — 4 and 5, for *Mo-ab-hiy* and *Mo-ab-hiy-yah*, read *Mo-a-bhiy*, and  
*Mo-a-bhiy-yah*.  
 — 15, — 7, after *woman* add,  $\text{𐎧𐎧}$ , (*Ya-pheh*) 'Fait;' *Feminine*,  $\text{𐎧𐎧}$ , (*Ya-*  
*phah*).  
 — 15, — 25 and 26, for *changing* ' (y) into  $\text{𐎧}$ , read *changing* ' (iy) into  
 $\text{𐎧}$  (*im*).



# OF THE HEBREW LETTERS

AND THE

## MANNER OF READING.

THE letters of the Hebrew alphabet are twenty-two in number; sixteen of which are pure consonants, and the remaining six, in the words of Josephus and Saint Jerome, are 'γραμματα φωνητα,' 'literæ vocales,' 'vocal letters.' In the language of musicians, they are consonants which 'have voices.'

Number and Order.	Names.	Forms.	Final Forms.	Powers.	Numerical Values.
1	Aleph	א		Vocal	1.
2	Beth	ב		Bh	2.
3	Gimel	ג		Gh	3.
4	Daleth	ד		Dh	4.
5	Hhe	ה		Vocal	5.
6	Waw	ו		Vocal	6.
7	Zayin	ז		Z	7.
8	Kheth	ח		Vocal	8.
9	Teth	ט		T	9.
10	Yod	י		Vocal	10.
11	Caph	כ	ך	Ch; as in Archangel.	20; final, 500.
12	Lamed	ל		L	30.
13	Mem	מ	ם	M	40; final, 600.
14	Nun	נ	ן	N	50; final, 700.
15	Samech	ס		S	60.
16	Ain	ע		Vocal	70.
17	Pe	פ	ף	Ph	80; final, 800.
18	Tsadde	צ		Ts	90; final, 900.
19	Koph	ק		K	100.
20	Resh	ר		R	200.
21	Shin	ש		Sh	300.
22	Tau	ת		Th	400.



The Hebrews, for the most part, omitted the vocal characters in writing; though they always wrote them when the subtraction of them from the word would have reduced the number of its letters to less than three. Thus, in בָּרַךְ, *he blessed*, there is no vowel; in בָּרָא, *he created*, the last letter, *Aleph*, is a vocal character.

An immense amount of vocal character was, therefore, not expressed in writing; and the text of the Old Testament, as it issued from the pens of Moses and the Prophets, formed a species of *shorthand*.

This method of writing, however, would occasion no difficulty to persons speaking the language, and constantly reading and studying the sacred books. To satisfy himself of this, the student need only write out the English translation of the first chapter of Genesis, leaving no vowels but where the absence of them would reduce the letters of the word below three; and he will find that the text is as intelligible without the vowel characters as with them, and that he can *point it*, can supply the omitted vowels, as fast as he can read.

But to teach the language to others, and to preserve the true pronunciation and meaning of its words after it should cease to be spoken, it became necessary 'to *point*' the text; which punctuation is said by the Jews to have taken place soon after the

Babylonish captivity, and to have been performed by Ezra.

The system by which this punctuation is regulated commences by ascertaining the vocal powers of the six letters mentioned; finding *what notes they have in their voices*.

Their vocal capabilities, as expressed by the Greek of the Septuagint translators, are as follow.

1. Aleph (א) sounds the *long and short 'Alpha'* of the Greeks; or the English A, as heard in the words 'BAR' and 'BAT.'\*
2. Hhe (ה) has the Greek '*Eta,*' and '*Epsilon;*' or our 'E,' as sounded in 'HERE' and 'HER.'
3. Waw (ו) sounds the *Greek diphthong 'OU,'* and the '*Omega,*' and *short 'Upsilon,'* of the Greeks; or our 'ow' in the word 'cow,' 'o,' as in 'SHORE,' and 'u,' as in 'BUT.'
4. Yod (י) has the *long and short 'Iota'* of the Greek; or our 'y,' as sounded in 'FULLY'† and 'TWENTY.'
5. Ain (א) has a note equal to the *short 'Alpha'* of the Greeks *doubled;* or somewhat longer than the second 'A' in the English word 'AMAZE.'

\* The English expresses no less than four distinct sounds by the same character: as, 'BALL,' 'BAR,' 'BARE,' 'BAT.'

† That is, FULLEY.

6. Kheth (כּ), or 'K-Hhe,' (which is a double letter, containing 'Koph' and 'Hhe'), has all *the sounds of the 'Hhe.'*

Such was the amount of the 'natural voices' of each of the six vocal characters: each of them had, also, certain 'false notes,' and would frequently sound in falsetto notes natural only to the others. So is it in our own language. If we extract the vowel sounds from the A and the E in the words WARE and WERE, each word must be pointed with an A, to show the true pronunciation of its first vowel.

The vocal capabilities of the six 'literæ vocales' ascertained, the fundamental rule of the punctuation is enforced: by virtue of which, all the letters of the alphabet are (for the purposes of the punctuists), made *mere consonants*; the powers of the vocal characters are taken from them; and they *lose every note of their voices.*

The vocal characters, as consonants, have the powers following:—'Aleph' has the force of the Greek aspirate breathing; 'Hhe' is 'H,' or the same aspirate doubled, as in 'HARD'; 'Waw' is a 'w,' sounded as the French 'oui'; 'Yod' is our 'y,' as in 'YONDER,' or the Greek 'Iota' before a vowel; 'Ain' is an unaspirated H, as in our word 'HUMAN,' or the Greek Epsilon in Εὐδωκ; and 'Kheth' has the power of 'KH.'