

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^c, 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 *cabalistic Jews*^f say the *Yod* is the beginning of all letters; and *Hermannus Hugo*^g 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*^h 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

^a Adv. hæres. l. 2. c. 41. ^c R. Abraham Dior. in Jetzirah p. 58. Ed. Rittangel. ^e De prima Scribendi Orig. c. p. 64. ^b Vid. Balmouï Mikneh Abraham p. 25. lin. 3. & 26. lin. 5.

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, לקו קו is read not *Culacu* nor *Coloco*, as most natural, without points; but *Caulacau*ⁱ, as it is in our pointed Bibles in *Ij. xxviii. 13.* and was read so before his time by the heretics he opposes. There are other words in *Irenæus*^k which agree with our modern punctuation, as *Sabaoth, Eloa, Adonai*: and here I cannot forbear observing, that *Philo Byblius*^l, who lived half a century at least before *Irenæus*, in translating *Sanchoniatho’s* history out of the *Phœnician* language, reads אלהים, his author’s word no doubt, in *Greek* Ελωειμ, as *Jerom*^m, *Basil*ⁿ, and *Epiphanius*^o, 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

ⁱ Adv. hæref. l. 1. c. 23. ^k Ib. l. 2. c. 66. ^l Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 37. ^m Epist. Marcellæ fol. 31. A. Tom. 3. Quæst. Heb. in Gen. fol. 66. E.
ⁿ Adv. Eunom. l. 1. ^o Contr. Hæref. l. 1. Hæref. 40.

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

A. D. 150.

In this year, or about this time, the *Misnab* or book of Traditions was finished, which *R. Judab Hakkodesb* 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^p; therefore *Maimonides* * thinks the *Misnab* 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 *Cofri*^a, 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 *Misnab* in 120 from the destruction, which is A. D. 190; but *Morinus*^d himself owns that *Rabbenu Hakados* compiled the *Misnaiot* of 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.
^a Par 3. c. 67. fo R. Serira in Juchasin fol. 115. and
 R. Azariah Meor Enayim c. 24. fol. 95, 1. ^b Sepher Ca-
 bala. ^c Apud Ganz Tzemach David, par 1. fol. 30, 2.
^d De sinceritate Heb Text. l. 1. Exercit. 1. c. 2. p.
 17.

after the birth of *Christ*. The general regard paid to the *Misnab* 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, that⁹ “ the traditions of the
 “ *Pharisees* are what to this day are called
 “ *δευτερωσεις* (secondary laws or the *Mis-*
 “ *nab*, 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 *Misnab*, 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

⁹ *Epist. Ad Galatas* Qu. 10. fol. 55. I. Tom. 2. * *Miscellaneous Discourses, &c.* p. 94.

though I must confess in this I am of a different mind ; but chuse rather to subscribe to what the learned *Wagenfeil* says *, that in the *Misnab* 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 hearsay, 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 *Misnab* 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 *Misnab* or *Misnaiot*, 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 *Misnab* itself is the opinion of the learned Dr. *Bernard* in his letter to the bishop of *Fern*, prefixed to the

* Præfat ad Tela Ignea, p. 57, 58.

the *Misnah* of *Surenbusius* †; and *Jerom* in the same epistle makes mention of the *Misnic* doctors by name, as *Rab*, *Akiba*, *Simeon*, and *Hillell*, 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 “*δευτερωσιν*, 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 *תנו רבנו* *Our Rabbins teach*, that is, in the *Misnah*, and *תני רבי* such a *Rabbi teaches*, that is, in the *Misnic* 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*, *Misnic* doctors, and the *Misnah* itself *Mathnitba*, tradition, instruction, doctrine. The *Misnic* doctors are frequently called *wise men* in
in

† Videret equidem aliquando opus illud Misnicum Rector Bethleemiticus, &c. Vid. Triglandium de secta Karæorum 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 *Misnab* 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 (*Is.* viii.) of the two fami-
 “ lies of *Sammai* and *Hillell*, from whom
 “ sprung the Scribes and Pharisees, in
 “ whose school *Akiba* succeeded, thought
 “ to be the master of *Aquila* the profe-
 “ lyte, and after him *Meir*, succeeded by
 “ *Jobanan* the son of *Zaccai*, after him
 “ *Eliezer* and then *Delphon* (*Tarphon* I
 “ suppose is meant) and again *Josepb* the
 “ *Galilean*, and *Joshua* unto the captivity
 “ of *Jerusalem*. *Sammai* and *Hillell*
 “ therefore did not arise in *Judea* much be-
 “ fore the Lord was born ; the first of
 “ which signifies a *dissipator*, and the other
 “ *prophane*; because that by their traditions
 “ and secondary laws (or *Misnic* 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 *Esaïam*, c. 8. fol. 17. I. Tom. 5.

calls the schools of *Hillell* 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 בית *Hillell* and בית *Shammai*. So *Jerom* elsewhere ^t calls the *Jewish* fables and traditions, δευτερωσεις secondary laws, as is also before observed, and answers to *Misnaiot*, the very name by which their book of traditions is called: and *Eusebius* ^u, who lived before *Jerom*, makes mention of the *Deuterotæ* 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
which

^t Comment. in *Esaïam* c. 59. fol. 103. in *Ezek.* c. 36. fol. 235. H. & in *Matt.* 22. fol. 30. M. *Epist.* ad *Damasum*, T. 3. fol. 40. A. ^u *Præpar.* *Evangel.* l. 11. c. 5.
^{*} In *Esaïam*, c. 3. fol. 9. C. & c. 10. fol. 20. D. & c. 29. fol. 57. C. Tom. 5. † In *Habacuc.* c. 2. fol. 85. D. Tom. 6.

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 *Misnic* 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 *Misnah* 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

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af-

* Opera T. 6. contr. Adversar. Leg. & Proph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 256.

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

THE *Misnab*, according to the *Jews*, was pointed. *Ephodeus*^x says, you will find all the ancient copies of the *Misnab* written with points and accents; and R. *Azariab*^y 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^z, 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^a as disputing about the reading of the text in *Cant.* i. 2. Says R. *Joshua*, brother *Ishmael* how dost thou read the words, דוּרִיךְ or דוּרִיךְ? 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

^v Vid. *Halicot Olam*, c. 2. p. 19, 26, 228. & *Pocock. Port. Mosis*, p. 120. ^x Apud *Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu.* p. 78. ^y *Meor Enayim*, c. 59. fol. 180, 2. ^z *Megillah*, c. 4. f. 4. ^a *Avodah zarah*, c. 2. f. 5.

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. Ishmael* it was to be read feminine יְיָיָהּ as if spoken by God to the church; but this *R. Joshua* denied; Not so, says he, but יְיָיָהּ 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 *Masoreth* is expressly made mention of in the *Misnah*^b 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. f. 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 ה in רחוקה, *Numb.* ix. 10. is observed in the *Misnab* †.

A. D. 120.

About this time, according to the *Jewish* chronology^c, 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^d, 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

* *Misn. Sotah*, c. 9. f. 15. Bartenora in ib. *T. Bab. Me-*
nachot fol. 29, 2. † *Pefachim*, c. 9. f. 2. ^c Ganz
Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 30, 1. ^d *Præfat.* 3. ad
Maforet.

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^e is of the *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*. Some things objected to its antiquity may be only interpolations. R. *Azariab* says*, it was written before the *Misnah* 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*^f; so *Nebemiab viii. 8.* is interpreted in it, of the pauses of the accents, and of the *Masoreth*^g; and in another place^h “*Jehovah* is called “*Elohim*, because he is the river of mercies;

P 3

cies;

^e Zohar in Gen. fol. 61, 1. * Imre Binah, c. 59.
 fol. 179, 2. † Comment. in Josh. 1, 3, † Zohar
 in Gen. fol. 1, 3. § In Exod. fol. 82, 4. † Ib.
 in Lev. fol. 4, 3, Ed. Sultzbach.

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 places¹, as *Cholem*, *Schurek*, *Chirek*, *Pathach*, *Segol*, *Sheva*, *Kametz*, *Tzere*, *Zarka*, *Segolta*, *Skalshelet*, &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 *he 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 pronounciation of which depends upon the points, are made mention of in this book^m.

A. D. 100.

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

¹ *Ib.* in *Gen.* fol. 1, 2. & 26, 3. & 38. 1. 2. & 71, 2. *Tikkune zohar* præfat. fol. 6, 2. & 7, 1. ¹ *Ib.* in *Gen.* fol. 98, 4. ^m 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* ⁿ 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*;

P 4

that

* Biblioth. Rabbin. p. 293. † T. Hierof. Sabbat, fol. 15, 3. ‡ T. Bab. Avodah zarah fol. 11, 1.
ⁿ Præfat. ad Methurgeman, fol. 2, 1.

that the points of them were then in a corrupt state, and very irregular ; and so indeed *Buxtorf* ^a 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 *Jonathan* is observed in some places to translate and paraphrase according to the points. *Kimchi* on 2 *Sam.* xix. 14. observes, that instead of *he bowed*, *Jonathan* renders it passively, *was bowed*, by which it seems, he says, that he read וי with a *Tzere* under *Yod*, but the *Masorab* testifies of it that it is with a *Patach* under the *Yod*; and on *Hof.* v. 15. he remarks, that in the word אשמו the *Aleph* and *Skin* are with a *Sheva*, agreeable to which is the *Targum* of *Jonathan*; and *Jarchi* on *Ezek.* xxvii. 16. observes, that as to the point *Dagesh*, *Jonathan* 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 Targumist* on *Gen.* xiv. 5. what *Onkelos* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* take for the proper name

^a Præfat. 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 *Beresbit Rabba*^a, on which the commentator^b observes, that *Zuzim* is allegorically explained, as if it had the signification of splendor and lustre, 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*^c 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 any thing can be expected from him concerning the *Hebrew* Points, who wrote in *Greek*, and conformed *Hebrew* words to the

^a Parash. 42 fol. 37, 2.
ib. ^c Critica, p. 324.

^b In *Mattánot Cehunnah* in

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^d, that the sacred letters engraven on the mitre of the high priest, meaning the word *Jehovah*, 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*

^d De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. f. 2.

vid is read Δαειδ, in *Matt.* i. 1. 6. & *passim*, and in the very name *Jehovah* he speaks of; for the *Samaritans*^e pronounced it *Jabe*; 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 *Yod* 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^f; but because as they thought it was not lawful to pronounce it, at least in common, as say both

^e Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 15. vid. Epiphan. contra Hæref. l. 1. hæf. 40. * T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71, 1.

^f Mifn. Sotah, c. 7. f. 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39, 2.

both *Philo*^g and *Josephus*^h; and so in the *Misnab*ⁱ, he is said to have no part in the world to come who pronounces the name *Jehovah* with its own letters. When the ancient *Greek* writers say it is unutterable, as the author of *Delphi Phœnicizantes* observes^k, it is only as written by the *Greeks*, who scarce admit of *v* 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 *Jehovah*, 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

^g De vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670. ^h Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12.
 f. 4. ⁱ Sanhedrin, c. 11. f. 1. ^k Dickinson, c. 6.
 P. 57.