הערות קרי‎-‎כתיב לספר ירמיהו

אבנר רמו

Jeremiah, as depicted by Michelangelo. From the Sistine Chapel ceiling

Jeremiah prophecy began in the last quarter of the seventh century BC and lasted well into the first quarter of the sixth century BC.

It was claimed that except for one Aramaic verse (Jer 10:11), the Book of Jeremiah was written in a Hebrew genre which does not display Aramaic, Greek, or Persian influences. However, it is unlikely that a book that contains many visions and prophecies about foreign nations, will be completely free of the linguistic influences of these nations.

Prof. Emanuel Tov's. Doctoral thesis: "The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch", 1973, was the seminal study about both books.

The differences between the old Greek translation (Septuagint = LXX) and the Massoretic version of this book (MT) are greater than those found in most other biblical books. The LXX version of the Book of Jeremiah is shorter by one-seventh and its material is arranged differently than that of the MT. Prof Tov suggested that the Hebrew Vorlage of the Greek translators of this book was shorter than the MT version. The surviving remnants of the Qumran version of the Book of Jeremiah (4QJer[b,d]), supports the suggestion about the existence of such a short version. Prof Tov speculated that the extra material found in the MT version of the Book of Jeremiah constitute a layer of additions created in the course of its literary growth.

The earliest copies of the Massoretic Hebrew Bible are from the 10th-11th century AD. They contain marginal notes about some of the words of the main biblical text. In Hebrew the marginal notes are named **קרי וכתיב** - "read and the written" and generally the corresponding English term is "Biblical gloss." Some scholars differentiate between "Correcting gloss" which relates to the spelling of a word that appears in the main text, and "Explanatory gloss" that relates to foreign or difficult word of the main text. We will show that the large majority of the marginal notes are in regard to what were assumed to be spelling and grammatical errors.

Some scholars assume that most of the marginal notes were inserted in the 8th century AD, but it is not unlikely that they had been accumulating gradually over a much longer period of time. There is some evidence that in earlier time, similarly to the Akkadian texts, correction were inserted into the main biblical texts. It is possible that at later time, when such corrections were recognized, they (or only some of them) were moved to the margins of the main texts. Unlike the biblical Qumran scrolls, the Massoretic Bible does not contain interlinear corrections (except for what appear to be canceling dots, and possibly "hanging letters"), and it is possible that at some point in time, some of them were also moved to the margins of the main text (while others were ignored). However, it is not unlikely that several marginal notes were added to the Massoretic Bible without being related to these scribal techniques.

Several explanations for the insertion of the marginal notes had been suggested, but prior to further deliberating about them, we should sort the marginal notes into categories. In this study I will analyze the marginal notes found in the Massoretic version of the Book of Jeremiah.

The total number of marginal notes in the Massoretic Hebrew Bible is 1054. Although the words in the Book of Jeremiah make only 7.1% of total number of words of the Bible, the marginal notes of this book (132) amount to 12.4% of the total biblical marginal notes. In the Book of Jeremiah there are 75 words which appear only once in the Hebrew Bible (Hapax legomena). This allows us to compare more than 99.65% of the words of this book to those appearing in other biblical books. Furthermore 6 of the Jeremiah's Hapax legomena arose from the marginal notes of this book (Jer 5:8; 6:7; 8:7; 19:2; 43:10; 50:15).

Marginal notes assuming improper division of the letters to words

Dr. Guy Deutscher observed that "**In fluent speech we don't pause between words, and the sounds just run one another**." If the listeners are not familiar with the language in general, or

of the specific content of a certain text in particular, it will be difficult for them to hear where one word ends and the next begins (G. Deutscher: The unfolding of language. Arrow books, London 2006 P. 160).

There are two marginal notes in the Book of Jeremiah that assume incorrect division of the letters of the main text to words.

We read:

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נָחַר מַפֻּחַ מאשתם (מֵאֵשׁ תַּם) עֹפָרֶת-לַשָּׁוְא צָרַף צָרוֹף, וְרָעִים לֹא נִתָּקוּ.
</div>

"**The bellows blow fiercely, the lead is consumed of the fire; in vain does the founder refine, for the wicked are not separated**" (Jer 6:29).

Apparently in an effort to somewhat clarify this difficult verse, a marginal note was inserted here, claiming that the Hapax legomenon **מאשתם** (*meeshtham*) which has no known meaning is in fact two words: **מאש תם** (*meesh tham*) - "from fire (the lead) was consumed." However, as heat may only melt the lead (but not consume it), we should consider the possibility that here **תם** (*tham*) is a letter-deletion error of **תמס** (*thimas*) - "(the lead) would melt" (e.g. Ex 16:21; Ps 68:3).

Twelve chapters forward we read:

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וָאֵרֵד בֵּית הַיּוֹצֵר; והנהו (וְהִנֵּה-הוּא) עֹשֶׂה מְלָאכָה עַל-הָאָבְנָיִם.
</div>

"**And I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was at his work on the wheels**" (Jer 18:3).

Here again the word **והנהו** (*vehinehu*) is a Hapax legomenon. However, this word sounds similar to **והנה-הוא** (*vehineh- hu*) - "**And here he is**" (Ex 4:14; see also: Gen 20:16; 42:27; Deu 22:17; Jud 9:33; 1 Sam 10:22; 2 Sam 9:4; Jer 38:5; Hab 2:19; Ruth 3:2; 2 Ch 26:20).

We have no reason to doubt the correctness of this marginal note.

However, we may question whether the marginal notes relate to all the cases of incorrect division of the letters of the main text of the Book of Jeremiah to words. As will be indicated by the following examples, the answer is negative.

The Psalmist wrote: **יפיפית מבני אדם** - "**You are fairer than the children of men**" (Ps 45:3).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **עגלה יפה-פיה, מצרים** - "**Egypt is a very fair heifer**" (Jer 46:20). Yet the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that **יפה-פיה** (*yepheh-phiyah*) is a mis-divided **יפיפיה** (*yepheiphiah*) - "exceedingly beautiful."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read the phrase: **שאו-נס ציונה** - "**Set up a standard toward Zion**" (Jer 4:6). However, the Greek translator wrote here: "Take up and flee to Sion" which suggests that he divided the letters of this expression to: **שאו נס ציונה** (*sa vanus tsiona*).

In the Book of Leviticus we read: **ואיש או-אשה, כי-יהיה בעור-בשרם, בהרת-בהרת לבנת**- "**And if a man or a woman has in the skin of their flesh bright <u>spots</u>, even white bright <u>spots</u>**" (Lev 13:38; see also: Lev 13:4, 23, 25, 26, 28, 39; 14:56).

Pantera pardus nimr

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:
היהפך כושי עורו, ונמר חברברתיו; גם-אתם תוכלו להיטיב, למדי הרע.
"**Can the Ethiopian change his skin and** (the) **leopard <u>his spots</u>? Then may you also do good, that are accustomed to do evil**" (Jer 13:23).

However, the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators of the Hapax legomenon: **חברברתיו** as: "his spots" suggests that **חברברתיו** (*khavarburothav*) is a vowel letter-deletion and mis-division to letters error of: **יחבר בהרתיו** (*yekhaber beharothav*) - "will connect his spots."

In the Book of Jeremiah we also read:
וכי-ישאלך העם הזה או-הנביא או-כהן לאמר, מה-משא יהוה-ואמרת אליהם את-מה-משא, ונטשתי אתכם נאם-יהוה.

"And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask you, saying: What is the burden of *YHWH*? Then shall you say to them: <u>What burden</u>! I will cast you off, said *YHWH*" (Jer 23:33).

The phrase את-מה (*et mah*) does not appear anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible, and it is not clear how the English translator determined that it means: "**what**." The Greeks and the Latins translated את-מה-משא (*et mah masa*) as: "you are the issue" and it is clear that they divided the letters of this phrase to אתם-המשא (*atem-hamasa*) - "you are the issue (or burden)."

In the Book of Jeremiah we also read:
והבור אשר השליך שם ישמעאל את כל-פגרי האנשים אשר הכה ביד-גדליהו-הוא אשר עשה המלך אסא, מפני בעשא מלך-ישראל; אתו מלא ישמעאל בן-נתניהו-חללים.
"Now the pit wherein Ishmael cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain <u>by the side of Gedaliah</u> was that which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasa king of Israel; the same Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled with them that were slain" (Jer 41:9).

The Latin (and English) translation: "<u>by the side of Gedaliah</u>" indicates that the translator assumed that here ביד (*beyad*) is a misspelled ליד (*leyad*). The Greek translator had a different opinion and he assumed that ביד-גדליהו (*beyad gedalyahu*) is the result of a ר (r) - ד (d) exchange and a miss-division of: בר גדל היה (*bor gadol hayah*) - "was a large pit" (e.g. 1 Sam 19:22).

In the Book of Leviticus we read the expression: על-קרנות המזבח - "**upon the horns of the altar**" (Lev 4:7; 8:15; 9:9; 16:18).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:
חטאת יהודה כתובה בעט ברזל-בצפרן שמיר : חרושה על-לוח לבם, ולקרנות מזבחותיכם.
"**The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond; it is graven upon the tablet of their heart and** [upon] **the horns of your altars**" (Jer 17:1).

The English translator believed that the word על - "upon" is missing here. Yet the comparison between these verses suggests that here ולקרנות is a letter-deletion and mis-division to words of: ועל קרנות (*veu'l qarnoth*) - "and upon the horns."

In the Book of Isaiah we read the expression: <u>הלזה תקרא-צום, ויום רצון ליהוה</u> - "<u>**Will you call this** a fast, and an acceptable day to *YHWH*?</u>" (Is 58:5).

Now we read in the Book of Jeremiah:
אי לזאת אסלוח- (אסלח-) לך-בניך עזבוני, וישבעו בלא אלהים; ואשבע אותם וינאפו, ובית זונה יתגודדו.
"<u>**Wherefore should I pardon you?**</u> **The children have forsaken Me, and sworn by no-gods; and when I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery, and assembled themselves in troops at the harlots' houses**" (Jer 5:7).

<u>**העל-אלה לוא-אפקד, נאם-יהוה; ואם בגוי אשר-כזה לא תתנקם נפשי.**</u>

"**Shall I not punish for these things? Said** *YHWH***; and shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?**" (Jer 5:9).

The comparison between these verses suggests that **אי לזאת** (*ai lzoth*) is a misspelled and mis-divided **הלזאת** (*halazoth*) - "as for this."

We read in the Book of Job the expression: **עד-אנה, תוגיון נפשי** - "**How long will you vex my soul**" (Job 19:2), but it appears more likely that we should comprehend it as: "How long will you weary my soul."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
אמרת אוי-נא לי, כי-יסף יהוה יגון על-מכאבי; יגעתי באנחתי, ומנוחה לא מצאתי.
"**Woe is me now! For** *YHWH* **has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest**" (Jer 45:3).

Yet in the same Book we find:
מבליגיתי, עלי יגון; עלי לבי דוי.
"**Though I would take comfort** against sorrow, my heart is faint within me" (Jer 8:18).

The Greeks translated the Hapax legomenon **מבליגיתי** (*mavligiti*) as: "incurable things." However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **מבליגיתי** (*mavligiti*) is an incorrect division of **מבלי יגעתי** or: **מבלי יגעתי** (*mebli yagaa'ti*) - "without being weary." There are also other biblical words where the letter **ע** (a') replaces the letter **י** (i).

We can conclude that the marginal notes to the Book of Jeremiah correct only some of the erroneous divisions of letters to words of the main text. Furthermore, they may ignore other spelling corruptions that appear in these verses.

Marginal notes assuming the presence of superfluous letters
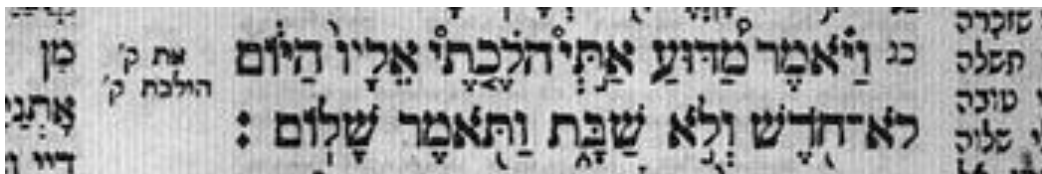
In the Book of Jeremiah there are thirty-two marginal notes about words of the text that in the opinion of their inserter contain superfluous letters. Except for one (Jer 52:11), they are in regard to the vowel letters **ו** (v), **י** (i), and **ה** (h). In other books of the Bible we also find marginal notes that relate to some words that contain a superfluous vowel letter **א** (a) (e.g. Hos 4:6).

It seems that some of these corrections relate to what the inserter assumed to be incorrect phonations or incorrect grammatical forms. However, in some cases, the assumed "corrupt" words appear in other parts of the Bible without such a correction. For example:

We read in the Book of Ezekiel:

וְעָלִיתָ עַל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, כֶּעָנָן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ; בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים תִּהְיֶה, וַהֲבִאוֹתִיךָ עַל-אַרְצִי,

"And you shall come up against My people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the end of days, <u>and I will bring you</u> upon My land" (Eze 38:16).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:

והבאותי (וְהֵבֵאתִי) עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרַי אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּרְתִּי עָלֶיהָ-אֵת כָּל-הַכָּתוּב בַּסֵּפֶר הַזֶּה, אֲשֶׁר-נִבָּא יִרְמְיָהוּ עַל-כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם.

"<u>And I will bring</u> upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah had prophesied against all the nations" (Jer 25:13).

The comparison between these verses suggests that there was no reason to correct **והבאותי** (*vehaveothi*) to **והבאתי** (*vehevethi*) - "and I shall bring." In some other cases it appears that a scribe recognized a spelling or a grammatical error and inserted one of several alternative corrections. For example:

In the Book of Hosea we read: **וְהֹלַכְתִּיהָ הַמִּדְבָּר** - "**and I will lead her into the wilderness**" (Hos 2:16; see also: Deu 8:2; Is 42:16; Pro 16:29).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:

הַצִּיבִי לָךְ צִיֻּנִים, שִׂמִי לָךְ תַּמְרוּרִים-שִׁתִי לִבֵּךְ לַמְסִלָּה דֶּרֶךְ הלכתי (הָלָכְתְּ);

"**Set you up waymarks, make you guide-posts; set your heart toward the high-way,** (even the) **way by which <u>you went</u>**" (Jer 31:20).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **הלכתי** is not necessarily a **י** (i) insertion error of **הלכת** - "**you went**", and could be a letter-deletion error of: **הלכתיך** - "(which) I lead you."

There are some instances where the inserter recognized a corrupt word but he wrongly assumed that this happened due to the presence of a superfluous vowel letter, and he replaced the corrupt word with another erroneous word. For example:

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

לָכֵן הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻם-יְהוָה, וְהִשְׁמַעְתִּי אֶל-רַבַּת בְּנֵי-עַמּוֹן תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה

"**Therefore, behold, the days come, said *YHWH* that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard against Rabbah of the children of Ammon**" (Jer 49:2).

עַד-מָתַי אֶרְאֶה-נֵּס-אֶשְׁמְעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

"**How long shall I see the standard, shall I hear the sound of the horn?**" (Jer 4:21).

Yet two verses earlier we find:

מֵעַי מֵעַי אחולה (אֹחִילָה) קִירוֹת לִבִּי, הֹמֶה-לִי לִבִּי-לֹא אַחֲרִשׁ: כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שמעתי (שָׁמַעְתְּ) נַפְשִׁי, תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה.

"**My bowels, my bowels! I writhe in pain! The chambers of my heart! My heart moans within me! I cannot hold my peace! because <u>you had heard my soul</u>, the sound of the horn, the alarm of war**" (Jer 4:19).

The Greek translator wrote here: "my soul heard", which suggests that he belied (and as suggested by the comparison between these verses) that שמעתי (*shama'thi*) is a letter-substitution error of שמעה (*shamea'h*) - "heard." Furthermore, the comparison between these verses suggested that the word order of כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שׁמעתי (שָׁמַעְתְּ) נַפְשִׁי, תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה originally could have been: כִּי נַפְשִׁי שָׁמְעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה - "because my soul heard the sound of horn, the alarm of war."

In some other cases it appears that the scribe corrected the wrong word. For example:

In the Book of Kings we read:
וְיִהְיוּ דְבָרַי אֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִתְחַנַּנְתִּי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, קְרֹבִים אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה:
"**And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before *YHWH*, be nigh to *YHWH* our God day and night**" (1 Ki 8:59; see also: 1 Ki 1:7).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:
נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרֶיךָ, וָאֹכְלֵם, וַיְהִי דבריך (דְבָרְךָ) לִי, לְשָׂשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחַת לְבָבִי:
"**Your words were found, and I did eat them; <u>and Your word were</u> to me a joy and the rejoicing of my heart**" (Jer 15:16).

It seems that as the scribe read here the word וַיְהִי which relates to singular object, he had to correct here: "your words" to "your word." However, the comparison between these verses suggests that here the error is not a superfluous י (i) letter in "words", but rather a missing ו (v) letter in the word וַיִהְיוּ - "and (your words) became."

Marginal notes assuming superfluous words

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
אֶל־יִדְרֹךְ ידרך ( ) הַדֹּרֵךְ קַשְׁתּוֹ, וְאֶל־יִתְעַל בְּסִרְיֹנוֹ; וְאַל־תַּחְמְלוּ אֶל־בַּחֻרֶיהָ־הַחֲרִימוּ כָּל־צְבָאָהּ.
"**Let the archer <u>bend</u> his bow against her, and let him lift himself up against her in his coat of mail; and spare you not her young men, destroy you utterly all her host**" (Jer 51:3).

The inserter of the marginal note here apparently assumed that a scribe must have erred and copied twice (dittography) the word ידרך - "will bend."

In another two verses the marginal notes delete wards that are not copies of adjacent words.

In the Book of Kings we read: וַיֹּאמֶר : חַי־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־פָּדָה אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִכָּל־צָרָה - "**and he said: As *YHWH* lives, Who had redeemed my soul out of all adversity**" (1 Ki 1:29; see also: 2 Sam 4:9; 1 Ki 2:24; 2 Ki 5:16; Jer 16:14, 15; 23:7, 8).

In the Book of Jeremiah we find:
וַיִּשָּׁבַע הַמֶּלֶךְ צִדְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ־בַּסֵּתֶר לֵאמֹר : חַי־יְהוָה את ( ) אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לָנוּ אֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַזֹּאת, אִם־אֲמִיתֶךָ, וְאִם־אֶתֶּנְךָ בְּיַד הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר מְבַקְשִׁים אֶת־נַפְשֶׁךָ.

"**And Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying: As *YHWH* lives, that made us this soul, I will not put you to death, neither will I give you into the hand of these men that seek your life**" (Jer 38:16).

The comparison between these verses suggests that the marginal note that omitted here the word **את** (*eth*) turned a part of this verse, that was probably corrupt, to have a similar form to that found in other biblical verses. On the other hand we have to wonder why there is no marginal note here that would omit the word **הזאת** - "this" which appears to be truly superfluous.

In the Book of Ezekiel we read: **כי אם-דבר אליהם** - "**but if you shall speak to them**" (Eze 12:23).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we read:
קָחֶנּוּ וְעֵינֶיךָ שִׂים עָלָיו, וְאַל-תַּעַשׂ לוֹ מְאוּמָה רָע: כִּי אם ( ) כַּאֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ-כֵּן עֲשֵׂה עִמּוֹ.
"**Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do to him even as he shall say to you**" (Jer 39:12).

Although the marginal note omits here the word **אם** - "if", the comparison between these verses suggests that this word could stay, but the next one: **כאשר** - "as" should be omitted.

These examples suggest that some marginal notes appear justified as they improve the syntax of the main biblical text, while others although inserted where the text appear to be corrupt, are only one of several corrective options. We also should notice that for many other words of the text that appear to be corrupt, no corrective marginal notes were inserted.

Marginal notes assuming erroneous deficiency of letters

A scribe (or more than one) assumed that letters are missing in some words of eleven verses of the Book of Jeremiah. Here again, except for two, they are in regard to the vowel letters **ו** (v), **י** (i), and **ה** (h).

An Egyptian place named: **תחפנחס** - "**Tahpanhes**" is mentioned in the Bible six times (Jer 43:7, 8, 9; 44:1; 46:14; Eze 30:18). Therefore when a scribe read a unique form of this name: **גַּם-בְּנֵי-נֹף, וּתַחפנס (וְתַחְפַּנְחֵס), יִרְעוּךְ, קָדְקֹד** - "**The children also of Noph and Tahpanhes feed upon the crown of your head**" (Jer 2:16), he assumed that here **תחפנס** (*thakhpenes*) is not the sister of Pharaoh's wife (1 Ki 19, 20), but a **ח** (kh) letter-deletion error of **תחפנחס** (*thakhpenkhes*) - "**Tahpanhes.**" Both names: **תחפנס** (*thakhpenes*) and **תחפנחס** (*thakhpenkhes*) appear in the Greek translation as "Taphnas", and if this is a transliteration of a Hebrew name, it could have appeared in the translator's Hebrew Vorlage as **תפנס** (*thaphnas*) or as **תפחנס** (*thapkhanes*). We should also note that the assumed name: **תפחנס** (*thapkhanes*) is an order-type change of **תחפנס** (*thakhpenes*). It was indicated by Prof Tov that in the Qumran scroll of Jeremiah (4QJer[d]) the name of this place appears as: **תחפחס** (*thakhpakhes*).

The expression: **אשר אנחנו** - "**which we are**" appears in the Bible four times (Deu 12:8; Jud 18:5; 2 Ki 6:1; Neh 2:17). In the Book of Jeremiah we find a similar but unique variant: **אשר אנו**. Although it appears to be a legitimate expression we read:

אִם-טוֹב וְאִם-רָע-בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר אנו (אֲנַחְנוּ) שֹׁלְחִים אֹתְךָ אֵלָיו, נִשְׁמָע:

"**Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will hearken to the voice of** *YHWH* **our God, <u>to whom we</u> send you**" (Jer 42:6).

It seems that a scribe assumed that here the word **אנו** (*aanu*) is a two letter deletion error of **אנ<u>ח</u>נו** (*aana<u>kh</u>nu*) - "we."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read: **כי מלכם בגולה ילך, כהניו ושריו יחדיו** - "**for Malcam shall go into captivity, his priests and his princes together**" (Jer 49:3; see also: Am 1:16).

Yet one chapter earlier we find: **וְיָצָא כמיש (כְמוֹשׁ) בַּגּוֹלָה, כֹּהֲנָיו וְשָׂרָיו יחד (יַחְדָּו)** - "**and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity, his priests and his princes together**" (Jer 48:7).

Here again although the word **יחד** (*yakhad*) means: "together" (e.g 1 Sam 11:11; 2 Sam 10:15; 21:9; Is 22:3; Ps 41:8), appears to be legitimate, a scribe replaced it with the word **יחדיו** (*yakhdav*) which has the same meaning, assuming that **יחד** (*yakhad*) is a **ו** (v) vowel letter deletion error of **יחד<u>יו</u>** (*yakhda<u>v</u>*) - "together."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

אשר צויתי את-אבותיכם ביום הוציאי-אותם מארץ-מצרים

"**Which I commanded your fathers <u>in the day that I brought them forth out</u> of the land of Egypt**" (Jer 11:4).

Yet four chapters earlier we find:

כִּי לֹא-דִבַּרְתִּי אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, וְלֹא צִוִּיתִים, בְּיוֹם הוציא (הוֹצִיאִי) אוֹתָם, מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם-עַל-דִּבְרֵי עוֹלָה וָזָבַח.

"**For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them <u>in the day that I brought them out</u> of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices**" (Jer 11:22).

The comparison between these verses suggests that a scribe believed that here **הוציא** (*hotsi*) is a **י** (i) vowel letter-deletion error of **הוציא<u>י</u>** (*hotsi<u>i</u>*).

These examples suggest that some of the scribes that inserted marginal notes made effort to standardize the phonations and the grammatical forms of the biblical text. However, it appears that this effort was not consistent (or was not followed by all the scribes that inserted marginal notes). For example:

In the Book of Jeremiah we also read:

כה-אמר יהוה אלהי ישראל: אנכי כרתי ברית את-אבותיכם, ביום הוצאי אותם מארץ מצרים.

"**Thus said** *YHWH*, **the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers <u>in the day that I brought them forth</u> out of the land of Egypt**" (Jer 34:13).

However, although here the word: **הוצאי** (*hotsii*) is a **י** (i) vowel letter-deletion error of **הוציאי** (*hotsii*), no corrective marginal note was inserted by the scribes.

Similarly, we read in the Book of Kings:

וידבר אתו טבות; ויתן את-כסאו מעל כסא המלכים אשר אתו בבבל.
"**And he spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above** (the) **throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon**" (2 Ki 25:28).

Yet when these words appear in the Book of Jeremiah we find:

וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת; וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-כִּסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל לְכִסֵּא מלכים (הַמְּלָכִים) אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּבָבֶל.
"**And he spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of <u>the</u> kings that were with him in Babylon**" (Jer 52:32).

Here again it seems that a scribe inserted a marginal note for the word **מלכים** (*melachim*) assuming (correctly, and as indicated by verse 2 Ki 25:28) that it is a **ה** (h) vowel letter-deletion error of **המלכים** (*hamlachim*) - "<u>the</u> kings."

However, we have to wonder why this scribe did not correct the phrase: **מִמַּעַל לְכִסֵּא** (*mimaa'l lekise*) to: **מעל כסא** (*mea'l kise*) - "above (the) throne" as it appears in verse 2 Ki 25:28. Furthermore, in the Book of Isaiah we read: **הקים מכסאותם כל מלכי גוים** - "**all the <u>kings</u> of the nations are raised up from their <u>thrones</u>**" (Is 14:9; see also: Eze 26:16), and we have to wonder why the scribes of the Books of Kings and Jeremiah did not correct the singular **כסא המלכים** - "**the throne of the kings**" to the plural **כסאות המלכים** - "the throne<u>s</u> of the kings." This is only one of similar examples that indicate that for one reason or another, the scribes inserted marginal notes for some corrupt words while ignoring others. It is therefore likely that a careful study of the biblical texts may reveal other corrupt words.

There are many other words in the Book of Jeremiah with erroneous letter-deletion that were not dealt by marginal note. For example:
We read:

וירפאו את-שבר עמי על-נקלה-לאמר, שלום שלום; ואין שלום.
"**They have <u>healed</u> also the hurt of My people lightly, saying: Peace, peace, when there is no peace**" (Jer 6:14).

Yet two chapters later we find:

וירפו את-שבר בת-עמי על-נקלה-לאמר, שלום שלום; ואין שלום.
"**And they have <u>healed</u> the hurt of the daughter of My people lightly, saying: Peace, peace, when there is no peace**" (Jer 8:11).

Marginal notes assuming erroneous deficiency of words

There are two marginal notes in the Book of Jeremiah which assume erroneous lack of certain words from the main text.

In the Book of Jeremiah we find the expression: **הנה ימים באים, נאם-יהוה** - "**Behold, the days come, said** *YYHWH*" (Jer 9:24; see also: Jer 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:26, 30; 33:14; 48:12; 49:1; 51:52; Am 8:11; 9:13).

Yet in chapter thirty-one of this book we read:
הִנֵּה יָמִים   (בָּאִים), נְאֻם-יְהוָה; וְנִבְנְתָה הָעִיר לַיהוָה, מִמִּגְדַּל חֲנַנְאֵל שַׁעַר הַפִּנָּה.
"**Behold, the days <u>come</u>, said** *YHWH*, **that the city shall be built to** *YHWH* **from the tower of Hananel to the gate of the corner**" (Jer 31:37).

The comparison between these verses suggests that the marginal note about the missing word in this verse is justified.

In the Book of Samuel we read: **קומו ונברחה-כי לא-תהיה-לנו פליטה מפני אבשלם** - "**Arise, and let us flee; for else none of us shall escape from Absalom**" (2 Sam 15:14; see also: Joel 2:3).

In the Book of Jeremiah we read: **ולא יהיה פליט ושריד לשארית יהודה** - "**and there shall not be an escapee or a remnant to that which remains of Judah**" (Jer 44:14; see also: Thr 2:22).

These verses indicate that **פליטה** (*pleitah*) is a female term; while the word **פליט** (*palit*) is a male subject.

Yet in chapter fifty of the Book of Jeremiah we find:
הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל-בָּבֶל רַבִּים כָּל-דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת חֲנוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב, אַל-יְהִי-   (לָהּ) פְּלֵיטָה, שַׁלְּמוּ-לָהּ כְּפָעֳלָהּ, כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ-לָהּ: כִּי אֶל-יְהוָה זָדָה, אֶל-קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.
"**Call** [together the archers] **against Babylon, all them that bend the bow; encamp against her round about, <u>let none thereof escape</u>; recompense her according to her work, according to all that she had done, do to her: for she had been arrogant against** *YHWH*, **against the Holy One of Israel**" (Jer 50:29).

Although the inserter of the marginal note here detected a faulty phrase, his correction left here unsolved the problem of male or female terms. We suggest that if Babylon is a female subject then: **אַל-יְהִי- (לה) פליטה**, should be replaced by: **אל-<u>תַ</u>הִי-לה פליטה** . Alternatively, it should be replaced by **אל-יהי- (לה) פליט**.

We may conclude from this example, that the inserter(s) of marginal notes were better in detecting faulty language, than in solving the problems found in these verses.

Marginal notes assuming letter order errors

In the Book of Jeremiah there are fifteen marginal notes where the scribes assumed that the words of the main text contain errors in the order of their letters (metathesis). Of all these words four are identical (Jer 15:4; 24:9; 29:18; 34:17), while the rest appear only once in this book (Jer 2:25; 5:24; 8:1, 6; 9:7; 17:23; 25:7; 29:23; 32:23; 42:20; 50:15). In thirteen of them the letter disorder involves the vowel letter ו (v); one is a case of vowel letter י (i) metathesis (Jer 42:20);

and in the remaining case (Jer 25:7) the scribe replaced the **ו** (v) letter with the letter **י** (i), prior to moving it to its "correct" position.

It seems that the scribes felt more comfortable in inserting corrections in regard to vowel letter of the main text, probably assuming (correctly) that vowel letters (in Hebrew: **אימות קריאה** - *matres lectionis* (Latin: "mothers of reading") were added to the main biblical text relatively late (gradually since the 6th century BC), as the use and knowledge of the Hebrew language was declining among the Jews and helping devices became necessary for reading and comprehending the biblical text (that previously was written largely with consonant letters).

In the Book of Deuteronomy we read: **וְהָיִיתָ לְזַעֲוָה לְכֹל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ** - "**and you shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth**" (Deu 28:25; see also: Eze 23:46).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **וּנְתַתִּים לזועה (לְזַעֲוָה) לְכֹל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ** - "**And I will cause them to be a horror among all the kingdoms of the earth**" (Jer 15:4; see also: Jer 24:9; 29:18; 34:17; 2 Ch 29:8).

The old Greeks translated this word as: "dispersion"; "tumult"; "anguish"; "scattering"; "disposition"; and "terror", which suggests that already in their time the true meaning of this word was lost. Furthermore, in one of these verses we read:

וּנְתַתִּים לזועה (לְזַעֲוָה) לְרָעָה לְכֹל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ, לְחֶרְפָּה וּלְמָשָׁל לִשְׁנִינָה וְלִקְלָלָה, בְּכָל-הַמְּקֹמוֹת אֲשֶׁר-אַדִּיחֵם שָׁם.

"**I will even make them a horror among all the kingdoms of the earth, <u>for evil</u>; a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them**" (Jer 24:9).

Here we find the additional word **לרעה** - "**for evil**" which appears grammatically disconnected, and does not appear in the old Greek translation. It is possible that this word was inserted into the main text itself by an earlier scribe, who "tried" to explain to the reader what the word **לזועה** actually meant.

While **לזועה** (*lezvaa'h*) appears in the main text of the Bible five times, and **לזעוה** (*lezaa'vah*) only twice, it seems that probably due of the reverence of the text of the Pentateuch, a late scribe preferred to insert five glossae (instead of just two) so that he would not need to correct verse Deu 28:25. If this explanation is correct, then we could assume that sometimes the insertion of glossae was influenced by the degree of piousness of the scribes.

In the Book of Proverbs we read: **יקבהו עמים ; יזעמוהו לאמים** - "**peoples shall curse him, nations shall execrate him**" (Prp 24:24).

In the Book of Jeremiah we read: **מקצפו תרעש הארץ, ולא-יכלו גוים זעמו** - "**at His wrath the earth trembles, and the nations are not able to abide His indignation**" (Jer 10:10).

Yet the Chronicler wrote:

וַיְהִי קֶצֶף יְהוָה עַל-יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלִָם ; וַיִּתְּנֵם לזועה (לְזַעֲוָה) לְשַׁמָּה וְלִשְׁרֵקָה,

"**Wherefore the wrath of *YHWH* was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He had delivered them <u>to be a horror</u>, an astonishment, and a hissing**" (2 Ch 29:8).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that זועה (*zevaa'h*) is a letter-deletion error of זעמה (*zeaa'mah*) - "antipathy."

In the Book of Jeremiah the last marginal note regarding letter order:

הָרִיעוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב, נָתְנָה יָדָהּ, נָפְלוּ אשויתיה (אָשְׁיוֹתֶיהָ), נֶהֶרְסוּ חוֹמוֹתֶיהָ : כִּי נִקְמַת יְהוָה הִיא הִנָּקְמוּ בָהּ, כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ-לָהּ.

"**Shout against her round about, she had submitted herself;** <u>**her buttresses are fallen, her**</u> <u>**walls are thrown down**</u>**; for it is the vengeance of** *YHWH*, **take vengeance upon her; as she had done, do to her**" (Jer 50:15).

The word אָשְׁיוֹתֶיהָ is a Hapax legomenon and its true meaning is not known. It is not even certain that this correction of the word אשויתיה is more than a wild speculation.

In the Book of Isaiah we read: לא-יקמו אשרים וחמנים - "**the Asherim and the Khamanim shall rise no more**" (Is 27:9). This verse suggests that in verse Jer 50:15 instead of reading: נפלו אשויתיה, נהרסו חומותיה (*naphlu ashvitheah, nehersu khomotheiha*) we should read: נפלו אשר<u>ו</u>תיה, נהרסו חמ<u>נ</u>יה - "(*naphlu asherotheah, nehersu khamaneiha*) – "her Asheroth had fallen, her Khamanim had been thrown down."

This example suggests that sometimes the inserters of marginal notes recognized that certain words had been corrupted, yet their corrections sometimes were based on pure speculations.

Marginal notes assuming word order errors

The comparison between the Massoretic Hebrew Bible and its old Greek translation (LXX) indicate that in many verses there is a major difference in the word order. However, it is not clear whether such changes were obligatory due to the difference in syntax between the Greek and Hebrew languages. Yet it is not unlikely that some of the word order differences appeared already in the Hebrew Vorlage of the Greek translators. It is also possible that some of the word order differences between the Hebrew and Greek versions resulted from corrections made by the Greek translators. In addition, we cannot rule out the possibility that such changes had been carried out in the copies of the Hebrew Bible that are the source of the Massoretic Hebrew Bible and that they are different from those changes that may have been carried out in the Hebrew Vorlage of the Greek translators.

In the Book of Jeremiah there are no marginal notes in regard to faulty word order. However, the Hebrew Bible contains at least one such correction (see: 1 Ki 17:15).

Although without marginal notes we find the following in the Book of Jeremiah.

In the Book of Isaiah we read: ברב דרכך יגעת, לא אמרת נואש - "**You were wearied with the length of your way;** (yet) <u>**you did not say:** (I am) **despaired**</u>" (Is 57:10).

Now we read in the Book of Jeremiah:

מנעי רגלך מיחף, וגורנך (וגרונך) מצמאה; ותאמרי נואש-לוא, כי-אהבתי זרים ואחריהם אלך.

"**Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst; but you said:** (I am) **despaired; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go**" (Jer 2:25).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that **ותאמרי נואש-לוא** is a word disorder of: **ולא תאמרי נואש** - "and you did not say: (I am) despaired."

Sixteen chapters later we find:

שובו נא איש מדרכו הרעה, והיטיבו דרכיכם ומעלליכם.
ו[] אמרו נואש: כי-אחרי מחשבותינו נלך, ואיש שררות לבו-הרע נעשה.

"**Return you now everyone from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings. But they say:** (we are) [] **despaired: for we will walk after our own devices, and we will do every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart**" (Jer 18:11-12).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that here the word: **לא** - "not" is missing.

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
ונבחר מות מחיים, לכל השארית הנשארים, מן-המשפחה הרעה הזאת-<u>בכל-המקמות הנשארים אשר הדחתים שם</u>, נאם יהוה צבאות.

"**And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue that remain of this evil family, <u>that remain in all the places whither I have driven them</u>, said** *YHWH* **of hosts**" (Jer 8:3).

However, the literal translation of: **בכל-המקמות הנשארים אשר הדחתים שם** is: "in all the places that remain, which I have driven them there." It is therefore no wonder that the Greek translator disregarded here the word **הנשארים** - "that remain." The English translation: "**that remain in all the places whither I have driven them**" indicates that the translator believed that **בכל-המקמות <u>הנשארים</u> אשר הדחתים שם** is a word disorder of:
<u>הנשארים</u> בכל-המקמות אשר הדחתים שם - "**that remain in all the places whither I have driven them**."

In the Book of Jeremiah we also find:
ונתתי לך את-נפשך לשלל, <u>על כל-המקמות</u> אשר תלך-שם.

"**And your life will I give to you for a prey <u>in all the places</u> where you will go**" (Jer 45:5).

However, the comparison to verse Jer 8:3, and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that here **<u>על כל-</u>המקמות** (*u'l kol-hameqomoth*) is a letter-substitution error of **<u>בכל-</u>המקמות** (*bechol-hameqomoth*) - "in all the places."

In the Book of Genesis we read: **ויהי יוסף יפה-תאר** - "**And Joseph was of beautiful form**" (Gen 39:6; see also: Gen 29:17; 41:18; Deu 21:11; 1 Sam 25:3; Est 2:7).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **זית רענן יפה פרי-תאר** - "**a leafy olive-tree, fair** [with] **goodly fruit**" (Jer 11:16). The inaccurate English translation of this verse is not supported by the Greek translation. However, the comparison between these verses suggests that should reorder

the words of this expression to **זית רענן, פרי יפה-תאר** - "A freshly (looking) olive tree, fruit that is of a beautiful form."

In the Book of Hosea we read: **דבר-יהוה אשר היה אל-הושע** - "**The word of** *YWWH* **that came to Hosea**" (Hos 1:1; see also: Joel 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zep 1:1).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **אשר היה דבר-יהוה אל-ירמיהו** - "**The word of** *YHWH* **that came to Jeremiah**" (Jer 14:1; see also: Jer 46:1; 47:7; 49:3; Dan 9:2).

However, the comparison between these verses and the understanding of the English (but not the Greek) translator suggest that **אשר היה דבר-יהוה אל-ירמיהו** is word disorder of:
דבר-יהוה אשר היה אל-ירמיהו - "The word of *YHWH* that came to Jeremiah."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
הנני שלח לדוגים (לדיגים) רבים, נאם-יהוה-ודיגום; ואחרי-כן אשלח לרבים צידים וצדום מעל כל-הר ומעל כל-גבעה ומנקיקי הסלעים.
"**Behold, I will send <u>for many fishers</u>, said** *YHWH***, and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send <u>for many hunters</u>, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the clefts of the rocks**" (Jer 16:16).

However, the content of this verse and the understanding of the Greek (and English) translators suggest that **לרבים צידים** is a word disorder of **לצידים רבים** - "**for many hunters**."

Marginal notes assuming erroneous substitutions between the vowel letters ו (v) and י (i)

These are the shapes of the "V" letter ᕴ and the "I" letter ƶ of the ancient Hebrew Alphabet.

Almost 40% of all the marginal notes of the Book of Jeremiah assume substitutions between the letters ו (v) and י (i). Unlike their dissimilar shape in the ancient Hebrew script, the letters ו (v) and י (i) of the Aramaic script, that was gradually adopted by the Jews between the 6th-2nd centuries BC, to a large extent resemble each other. This fact probably had resulted in some transmission errors in the biblical manuscripts that were copied in this era. It seems that the inserters of the biblical marginal notes were aware of this possibility as did the Greek translators of the Bible. It seems that by itself the process of transmission of the biblical texts written in the ancient Hebrew script, to the newer Aramaic script, was prone to cause scribal spelling errors.

Many of the marginal notes assuming errors of the substitutions between the vowels י (i) and ו (v) appear to be justified, but some seem to be erroneous. Here are several examples:

In the Book of Genesis we read:
ויצג את-המקלות אשר פצל ברהטים, בשקתות המים-אשר תבאן הצאן לשתות לנכח הצאן, ויחמנה בבאן לשתות.

וַיָּחֵמוּ הַצֹּאן אֶל־הַמַּקְלוֹת; וַתֵּלַדְןָ הַצֹּאן עֲקֻדִּים נְקֻדִּים וּטְלֻאִים.

"**And he set the rods which he had peeled over against the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where the flocks came to drink; <u>and they conceived</u> when they came to drink.**
And the flocks <u>conceived</u> at the sight of the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted" (Gen 30:38-39; see also: Gen 30:41; 31:10; Ps 51:7).

However, the Greeks translated these words more accurately: "coming into heat."

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we read:
סוּסִים מוּזָנִים (מְיֻזָּנִים), מַשְׁכִּים הָיוּ; אִישׁ אֶל־אֵשֶׁת רֵעֵהוּ יִצְהָלוּ.
"**They are become as <u>well-fed horses, lusty stallions</u>; every one neigh to his neighbour's wife**" (Jer 5:8).

It is not clear why the marginal note here assumes erroneous **י** (i) - **ו** (v) vowel exchange in this Hapax legomenon word of the main text. While the Greek translator wrote here "lusty stallions" the English translator added to that: "well fed horses." However, if the Greek translator is right then these stallions were in heat, which suggests (as the comparison between these verses does) that **מוזנים** (*muzanim*) is a letter-substitution error of **מיוחמים** (*meukhamim*) - "in heat." It is also not clear how it was determined that here **מַשְׁכִּים** (*mashkim*) means "neigh", in particular as another word **יצהלו** which has the same meaning, appears at the end of this verse. We suggest that in this word the dot vowels are incorrect and that we should read it as "*moshchim*) - "pulling (to)."

In the Book of Genesis we read: **וְהַבּוֹר רֵק, אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם** - "**and the pit was empty, there was no water in it**" (Gen 37:24).

This verse and others (e.g. Deu 6:11; 1 Sam 19:22; Ps 7:6; Neh 9:25; 2 Ch 26:10) indicate that **בור** (*bor*) - "pit" is a male object.

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **כְּהָקִיר בּוֹר (בַּיִר) מֵימֶיהָ** - "**As a cistern wells with her waters**" (Jer 6:7).

However, the meaning of the Hapax legomenon **ביר** (*bair*) introduced here through the marginal note is not clear. It is more likely that here **בור** (*bor*) should have been corrected to **באר** (*beer*) - "well" which indeed is referred to as a female object (e.g. Gen 21:30; 26:21, 22; Num 21:18; Ps 69:16; Pro 23:27).

In the Book of Isaiah we read: **כְּסוּס עָגוּר כֵּן אֲצַפְצֵף, אֶהְגֶּה כַּיּוֹנָה** - "**Like <u>a swallow</u> (or a) crane, so do I chatter, I do moan as a dove**" (Is 38:14).

It is not clear how the English translator determined which birds have these names. The Greek translator wrote here "a swallow' which suggests that he ignored the word **עגור** (*a'gur*), or that he assumed that **סוס עגור** (*sus a'gur*) is a "swallow."

In the Book of Jeremiah we find:

גַּם-חֲסִידָה בַשָּׁמַיִם, יָדְעָה מוֹעֲדֶיהָ, וְתֹר וְסוּס (וְסִיס) וְעָגוּר, שָׁמְרוּ אֶת-עֵת בֹּאָנָה;

"**Even, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle <u>and the swallow and the crane</u> observe the time of their coming**" (Jer 8:7).

Unlike verse Is 38:14, a marginal note was made in regard to verse Jer 8:7 which corrects the word **וְסוּס** (*vesus*) to the Hapax legomenon: **וְסִיס** (*vesis*). We have no idea on that basis this **ו** (v) - **י** (i) vowel exchange was made. However, the English translator refers to this word again as: "the swallow (and the crane)", while the Greek translator wrote here: "swallow (agour)."

This example indicates that sometimes we have no way to determine whether a marginal note is correct or is just a wild speculation.

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
וְיָצָאתָ אֶל-גֵּיא בֶן-הִנֹּם, אֲשֶׁר פֶּתַח שַׁעַר הַחַרְסוּת (הַחַרְסִית); וְקָרָאתָ שָׁם אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר-אֲדַבֵּר אֵלֶיךָ.

"**And go forth to the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the gate Harsith, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell you**" (Jer 19:2).

This gate is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, and we have no idea how the inserter of the marginal note to this verse knew that **חרסות** (*kharsoth*) is a **י** (i) - **ו** (v) vowel error of **חרסית** (*kharsith*). However, in the Greek translation of this verse we find that this gate name was transliterated as "*charasith*." If this is not a case of sheer coincidence, we may consider the possibility that some of the inserters of the marginal notes "consulted" the Septuagint.

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
ויאמר ירמיהו אל-המלך צדקיהו: מה חטאתי לך ולעבדיך ולעם הזה, כי-נתתם אותי אל-בית הכלא.

"**And Jeremiah said to king Zedekiah: Wherein have I sinned against you, or against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison?**" (Jer 37:18; see also: 1 Ki 22:27; 2 Ki 17:4; 25:27; Is 42:7, 22; Jer 37:15; 2 Ch 18:26).

Yet in the same chapter we find:
וְיִרְמְיָהוּ, בָּא וְיֹצֵא בְּתוֹךְ הָעָם; וְלֹא-נָתְנוּ אֹתוֹ, בֵּית הַכְּלִיא (הַכְּלוּא).

"**And Jeremiah came in and went out among the people; for they had not put him into prison**" (Jer 37:4; see also: Jer 52:31).

It seems that a scribe noticed that the words **בית הכליא** (*beith hakali*) contain a spelling error, but it seems that he did not realized that this is a **י** (i) vowel letter insertion error, and instead he inserted a **י** (i) - **ו** (v) vowel exchange erroneous correction.
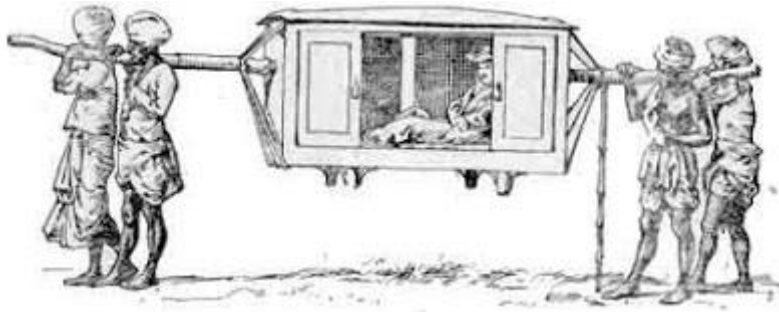
In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה, הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּעִיר הַזֹּאת יָמוּת בַּחֶרֶב בָּרָעָב וּבַדָּבֶר; וְהַיֹּצֵא אֶל-הַכַּשְׂדִּים יִחְיֶה (וְחָיָה), וְהָיְתָה-לּוֹ נַפְשׁוֹ לְשָׁלָל וָחָי.

"**Thus said *YHWH*: He that remains in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goes forth to the Chaldeans <u>shall live</u>, and his life shall be to him as a spoil, and he shall live**" (Jer 38:2; see also:21:9).

However, the word **יחיה** (*ikhyeh*) means "shall live" (e.g. Eze 33:19; Hab 2:4; Pro 15:27; Ecc 6:3; 11:8), and does not need to be corrected.

We may conclude that although it appears that one of the goals of the inserters of marginal notes was to amend corrupt grammar of the main biblical text, their knowledge of Hebrew grammar was sometimes wanting.

In the Book of Canticles we read: **אפריון עשה לו המלך שלמה-מעצי הלבנון** - "**King Solomon made himself a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon**" (Cant 3:9).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:
הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶת-נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר מֶלֶךְ-בָּבֶל עַבְדִּי, וְשַׂמְתִּי כִסְאוֹ מִמַּעַל לָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר טָמָנְתִּי; וְנָטָה אֶת-שַׁפְרוּרוֹ (שַׁפְרִירוֹ) עֲלֵיהֶם.
"**Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread <u>his royal pavilion</u> over them**" (Jer 43:10).

We have no idea how the inserter of the marginal note to this verse determined that **שפרורו** (*shaphruro*) is a **י** (i) - **ו** (v) vowel error of **שפרירו** (*shaphriro*), as both words are Hapax legomena. While the English translator believed that the meaning of this word is "**his royal pavilion**", the Greek translator assumed that it means: "his weapons", but we have no way to determine which of these translations (if any) is correct.

However, the comparison between these verses suggests an alternative explanation of this word. It appears possible that **שפרורו** (*shaphruro*) is a letter-substitution error of **אפריונו** (*apiryono*) - "(and he shell set) his litter." The Greek word for a "litter" is "*phoreion*" but we do not know if this Greek word is the source of the Hebrew **אפריון** (*apirion*), or whether the Greek and Hebrew words share a source in another language.

Marginal notes assuming ה (h) letter substitution errors

In the Book of Jeremiah there are eleven marginal notes (Jer 2:15, 24; 21:12; 22:6; 28:1; 32:1; 37:19; 49:25, 30; 50:6; 52:21) in regard to letter substitutions between the letter ה (h) and the

letters: **ו** (v); **ת** (th); or **כ** (k). It appears that most of them it was assumed that the main text contain grammatical errors. However, here again some of the corrections are flawed. Here are several examples:

We read in the Book of Isaiah: **והיו עמים, משרפות שיד** - "__And__ the peoples __shall be__ as the burnings of lime" (Is 33:12).

Here the (correct) word for: "shell be" for a plural object is **והיו** (*vehayu*). Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **צאן אבְדֹות, היה (הָיוּ) עמּי** - "My people __had been__ lost sheep" (Jer 50:6). Although in the original writing **היה** (*hayah*) is the correct "__had been__" for the singular "people", the marginal note changes it to the incorrect **היו** (*hayu*).

We read in the Book of Isaiah:
ואל-תתנו דמי לו: עד-יכונן ועד-ישים את-ירושלם, תהלה-בארץ.
"__And__ give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem __a praise__ in the earth" (Is 62:7).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find: **אֵיךְ לֹא-עֻזְבָה עִיר תהלה (תְּהִלָּת)- קִרְיַת מְשׂוֹשִׂי** - "How is the __city of praise__ left unrepaired, the city of my joy?" (Jer 49:25).

However, in this verse the word **תהלת** which means: "praise of" creates a grammatical error while the genuine **תהלה** meaning "praise" (see verse Is 62:7) does not.

In the Book of Jeremiah we read: **ונטשתי אתכם ואת-העיר אשר נתתי לכם ולאבותיכם** - "__and I will cast__ you __off__ and the city that I gave unto you and to your fathers" (Jer 23:39; see also: Jer 12:7).

Yet we also find in the Book of Jeremiah:
עָלָיו יִשְׁאֲגוּ כְפִרִים, נָתְנוּ קוֹלָם; וַיָּשִׁיתוּ אַרְצוֹ לְשַׁמָּה, עָרָיו נצתה (נִצְּתוּ) מִבְּלִי יֹשֵׁב.
"The young lions have roared upon him, and let their voice resound; and they have made his land desolate, __his cities are laid waste__, without inhabitant" (Jer 2:15).

Although the marginal note corrected the grammar of this verse, it did not deal with the much more important question of the relevance here of **נצתו** (*nithatsu*) which means "were kindled." Already the Greek (and English) translators realized that here "were kindled" is not logical and therefore used substitutions that are not related to the exact meaning of this word. Yet the comparison between these verses suggests that here **נצתו** (*nithatsu*) is a sibilant letter-exchange, a dental letter-exchange and an order-type error of **נטשו** (*nitashu*) - "were deserted."

These examples also suggest that marginal notes were inserted in regard to some of what were presumed to be corrupt words of the main text. It is not known what the criteria for inserting correction were, or why marginal notes were not inserted in regard to other clearly corrupt words.

Although there are eleven marginal notes substituting the ה (h) of words of the main text of the Book of Jeremiah with other letters, the book contain many other ה (h) containing corrupt words with no such notes. For example:

We read: **קוה לשלום, ואין טוב; לעת מרפה, והנה בעתה** - "**We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of <u>healing</u>, and behold terror**" (Jer 8:15).

Six chapters later: **קוה לשלום ואין טוב, ולעת מרפא והנה בעתה** - "**We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of <u>healing</u>, and behold terror**" (Jer 14:19).

Marginal notes assuming erroneous substitutions between the vowel letters ד (d) and ר (r)

Prof Tov indicated that the Greek translators assumed that 498 exchanges between ד (d) and ר (r) had occurred in the Hebrew Bible. Fifty-five of them are in the Book of Jeremiah (E. Tov: Interchanges of consonants between the Masoretic text and the Vorlage of the Septuagint. In: Eds: M. Fishbane and E. Tov. Sha'arei Talmon; Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the ancient Near East. Presented to Shemariahu Talmon. Eisenbrauns. Winona Lake. Indiana. 1992. pp 255-267).

Not all the Greek's assumptions about ד (d) - ר (r) exchanges are correct. For example:

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
אל-דרך עמדי וצפי, יושבת ערוער; שאלי-נס ונמלטה, אמרי מה-נהיתה.
"**Inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and watch; ask him that flees, and her that escapes; say: What had happened?**" (Jer 48:19).

Yet thirteen verses earlier we find: **נסו, מלטו נפשכם; ותהיינה, כערוער במדבר** - "**Flee, save your lives, and be like a tamarisk in the wilderness**" (Jer 48:6).

It is not clear how the English translator determined that here **ערוער** (*a'roer*) means a "**tamarisk**" and not "**Aroer**" as is suggested by the comparison between these verses. The Greek translator wrote here "wild ass" which suggests that he (erroneously) believed that **ערוער** (*a'roer*) is an erroneous letter-insertion and a ד (d) - ר (r) exchanges of **ערוד** (*a'rod*).

In the Book of Jeremiah there are only two words of the main text that were assumed by the inserters of the marginal notes to be the result of erroneous exchanges between the letters ד (d) and ר (r).

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:
כִּי מֵעוֹלָם שָׁבַרְתִּי עֻלֵּךְ, נִתַּקְתִּי מוֹסְרוֹתַיִךְ, וַתֹּאמְרִי, לֹא אעבוד (אֶעֱבוֹר): כִּי עַל-כָּל-גִּבְעָה גְבֹהָה, וְתַחַת כָּל-עֵץ רַעֲנָן, אַתְּ, צֹעָה זֹנָה.

"**For of old time I have broken your yoke, and burst your bands, and you said: <u>I will</u> not transgress; upon every high hill and under every leafy tree you did recline, playing the harlot**" (Jer 2:20).

While here the scribe of the marginal note assumed that the word **אעבוד** (*ee'vo<u>d</u>*) is a letter-substitution error of **אעבור** (*ee'vo<u>r</u>*) -"I will pass (or transgress)", the Greek translator wrote: "I will (not) be a slave" which indicates that he believed (or so found in his Vorlage) that the last letter of this word is **ד** (d) and not **ר** (r).

In the Book of Kings we read about a place named **שדמות קדרון** (*shedemoth qidron*) - "**the fields of Kidron**" (2 Ki 23:4). The Greek translator transliterated here to: "*Sademoth of Kedron*." However, when the word **שדמות** (*shedemoth*) appears in Is 16:8 and in Hab 3:17, it was translated by the Greeks to: "plains" probably assuming that **שדמות** (*shedemoth*) is a letter-insertion error of error of **שדות** (*sadoth*) - "fields" (e.g. Jer 6:12; 32:44). It seems that the English translator of the Bible adapted this interpretation of the Greeks.

In the Book of Jeremiah we find:

וְכָל-הָעֵמֶק הַפְּגָרִים וְהַדֶּשֶׁן וְכָל-הַשְּׁרֵמוֹת (הַשְּׁדֵמוֹת) עַד-נַחַל קִדְרוֹן עַד-פִּנַּת שַׁעַר הַסּוּסִים,
מִזְרָחָה-קֹדֶשׁ, לַיהוָה: לֹא-יִנָּתֵשׁ וְלֹא-יֵהָרֵס עוֹד לְעוֹלָם.

"**And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all <u>the fields</u> to the brook Kidron, to the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy to *YHWH*; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more forever**" (Jer 31:39).

The corrective marginal note: **השרמות (הַשְּׁדֵמוֹת)** - "*hashremoth*" to: "*hashdemoth*" is probably based on the reading of **שדמות קדרון** (*shedemoth qidron*) - "**the fields of Kidron**" in the Book of Kings (2 Ki 23:4; see also: Deu 32:32; Is 16:8).

However, in the Greek version of the Book of Jeremiah we read here: "(and all) hasaremoth as far as Nachal Kedron." The Greek transliteration of this verse of the Book of Jeremiah suggests that **השרמות** (*hashremoth*) already appeared in the Vorlage of the Greek translator of this book.

The shapes of the "D" letter ____ and the "R" letter ____ of the ancient Hebrew Alphabet.

As was indicated above the letters **ו** (v) and **י** (i) have a similar contour in the Aramaic script but in the ancient Hebrew script their shape is dissimilar. This cannot be said about the letters **ד** (d) and **ר** (r) that look similar in both scripts. Therefore, it cannot be determined whether these errors occurred prior or after the adoption of the Aramaic script by the biblical scribes.

Marginal notes that substitute whole words

As already indicated above, five Hapax legomena of the Book of Jeremiah were created by marginal notes. However, the Book of Jeremiah contains another seventy words that appear only once in this book and nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. Naturally the meaning of such words is

not certain, and for some of them not even known, yet there are no marginal notes that relate to them. If indeed the role of the marginal notes was to turn the Hebrew Bible to a more comprehensible text, we could have expected to find for these words "marginal glosses" explaining their meaning. If the reasoning for the lack of marginal notes for these words is the inability of the scribes to understand their meaning, then we could expect to find in the Bible other verses containing words of questionable meaning that were also not corrected by marginal notes. Furthermore, it is a well-established fact that copying of texts containing words and sentences that copier does not comprehend results in many more copying errors than is done in transmitting text written in a language that the copier is fully familiar with. This argumentation also suggests that a priori we could expect more than the usual rate of spelling errors among Hapax legomena.
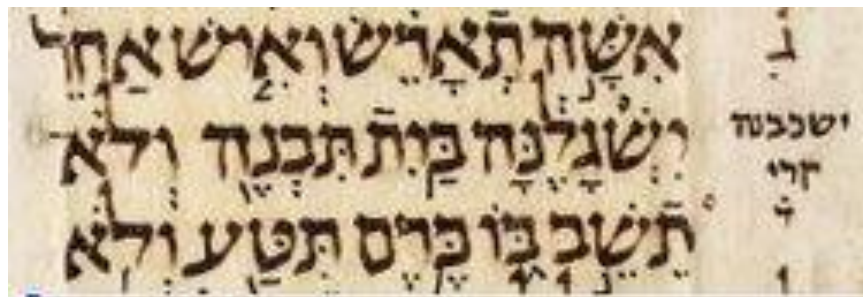
In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

שְׂאִי-עֵינַיִךְ עַל-שְׁפָיִם וּרְאִי, אֵיפֹה לֹא שגלת (שֻׁכַּבְתְּ)- עַל-דְּרָכִים יָשַׁבְתְּ לָהֶם כַּעֲרָבִי בַּמִּדְבָּר; וַתַּחֲנִיפִי אֶרֶץ בִּזְנוּתַיִךְ וּבְרָעָתֵךְ.

"Lift up your eyes to the high hills, and see: where had you not been lain with? By the ways had you sat for them, as an Arabian in the wilderness; and you had polluted the land with your harlotries and with your wickedness" (Jer 3:2).

The marginal note here replaces the word **שגלת** (*shugalth*) with **שכבת** (*shuchavth*) - "been lain." This corrective marginal note is in line with those made for all the biblical verses that contain verbs from the root **שגל** (shgl) (Deu 28:30; Is 13:16; Zec 14:2). However, such marginal notes were not made when dealing with a woman that is described in Hebrew (Ps 45:10; Neh 2:6), or in Aramaic (Dan 5:2, 3, 23) as **שגל** (*shegal*) - "concubine". Another biblical word for "concubine" is **פילגש** (*pilegesh*), and this word appears multiple times in the Books of: Genesis, Judges, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, Ezekiel, Canticles, Esther, and 1 & 2 Chronicles. In none of these books we find the term **שגל** (*shegal*) or verbs from this root. We should also notice that **פילגש** (*pilegesh*) is a mirror image **שגל** (*shegal*) with the addition of an initial **פ** (p) letter.

This reasoning challenges the notion that some marginal notes were inserted to avoid profanity from the biblical texts. After all, if verses such as Eze 23:20 made their way into the biblical text and were left untouched, such an argument should be rejected.

Other erroneous letter-substitutions in the Book of Jeremiah with no marginal notes

In the Book of Jeremiah we find the phrase: **חרפת עולם** - "**everlasting reproach**" (Jer 23:40; see also: Ps 78:66).

Yet two chapters later we read:

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הנני שלח ולקחתי את-כל-משפחות צפון נאם-יהוה, ואל-נבוכדראצר מלך-בבל עבדי, והבאתים על-הארץ הזאת ועל-ישביה, ועל כל-הגוים האלה סביב; והחרמתים-ושמתים לשמה ולשרקה <u>ולחרבות עולם</u>.

</div>

"**behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, said *YHWH*, and I will send to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and <u>perpetual desolations</u>**" (Jer 25:9).

The Greek translator wrote here: "everlasting disgrace" which suggests that he believed that **חרבות עולם** (*kharvoth o'lam*) is a **פ** (p) - **ב** (b) bilabial substitution error of **חרפות עולם** (*kherphoth o'lam*) - "perpetual disgrace." The content of this verse and the comparison to Jer 23:40 supports such a suggestion.

In the Book of Ezekiel we read: **והנה נטיתי ידי עליך, ואגרע חקך** - "**Behold, therefore I have stretched out My hand over you, and have <u>diminished</u> your allowance**" (Eze 16:27).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we find:

<div dir="rtl">

כי-כה אמר יהוה, הנני קולע את-יושבי הארץ בפעם הזאת; והצרתי להם למען ימצאו.

</div>

"**For thus said *YHWH*: Behold, <u>I will sling out</u> the inhabitants of the land at this time, and will distress them, that <u>they may feel it</u>**" (Jer 10:18).

However the comparison between these verses suggests that here **קולע** (*qolea'*) is a **ר** (r) - **ל** (l) exchange (rotasismus), and a **ג** (g) - **ק** (q) velar exchange error of **גורע** (*gorea'*) - "diminish."

In addition, the English translations: "**they may feel it**" is not the usual meaning of the word **ימצאו** (*imtsau*).

Yet the reading six verses later of: **יסרני יהוה, אך-במשפט: אל-באפך, פן-תמעטני** - "***YHWH*, correct me, but in measure; not in Your anger, lest <u>You diminish me</u>**" (Jer 10:24), suggests that **ימצאו** (*imtsau*) is a **ע** (a') - **א** (a) "vowel" letter xchange, a **ט** (t) - **צ** (ts) exchange, and order-type error of **ימעטו** (*ima'tu*) - "will become fewer."

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

<div dir="rtl">

והלכו ערי יהודה וישבי ירושלם, וזעקו אל-האלהים אשר הם מקטרים להם; והושע לא-יושיעו להם <u>בעת רעתם</u>.

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 "**Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry to the gods to whom they offer; but they shall not save them at all <u>in the time of their trouble</u>**" (Jer 11:12; see also: Jer 2:27, 28; 15:11; Am 5:13; Mic 2:3; Ps 37:19; Ecc 9:12).

Yet three verses later we find:

**ואתה אל-תתפלל בעד-העם הזה ואל-תשא בעדם רנה ותפלה׃ כי אינני שמע בעת קראם
אלי-בעד רעתם.**

**"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for
them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto Me <u>for their
trouble</u>"** (Jer 11:14).

The Greek translator wrote here: "in the time of" and it seems that he believed that
the word **בעד** (*bea'd*) here is a misspelled **בעת** (*bee'eth*). If this interpretation is
correct then we have here a case of **ת** (th) - **ד** (d) dental letter exchange.

The Psalmist wrote: **יהוה מעוז-חיי, ממי אפחד** - "*YHWH* is the stronghold of my life; of whom
shall I be afraid?" (Ps 27:1).

Yet in the Book of Jeremiah we hear the Prophet telling Moab: **כי יען בטחך במעשיך** - "**For,
because you had trusted <u>in your works</u>**" (Jer 48:7).

The Greek translator wrote here: "in your strongholds" which suggests that he believed that here
במעשיך (*bemaa'saich*) is a **ז** (z) - **ש** (s) sibilant letter-exchange error of **במעזיך** (*bemaa'uzaich*)
- "in your strongholds." The comparison between these verses supports the Greek translator's
assumption.

We read in the Book of Jeremiah:

ויהי דבר-יהוה אל-ירמיהו שנית; והוא עודנו <u>עצור</u> בחצר המטרה לאמר.
"**Moreover the word of *YHWH* came to Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet <u>shut up</u>
in the court of the guard, saying**" (Jer 33:1; see also: Jer 36:5; 39:15).

We also read in the same book:

**ויקצפו השרים על-ירמיהו והכו אתו; ונתנו אותו <u>בית האסור</u>, בית יהונתן הספר-כי-אתו עשו
לבית הכלא.**
"**And the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in <u>prison</u> in the
house of Jonathan the scribe; for they had made that the prison**" (Jer 37:15).

We have no evidence that, similar to modern times, in the biblical period there was a legal
process between detention and imprisonment. Therefore, we may suspect that the biblical
Hebrew word: **אסור** (*asur*) is the same as **עצור** (*a'tsur*). We already saw that the letters **ע** (a')
and **א** (a) may interchangeable, and in this case it appears that the sibilant letters **צ** (ts) and **ס** (s)
also can replace each other.

Another type of letter-exchange between the sibilant letters is between **צ** (ts) and **ז** (z).

In the Book of Judges we read:

ויצעקו בני-ישראל אל-יהוה׃
"**And the children of Israel <u>cried</u> to *YHWH***" (Jud 4:3).

Yet one chapter earlier we find:

<div dir="rtl">

וַיִזְעֲקוּ בני-יישראל אל-יהוה,

</div>

"**And when the children of Israel <u>cried</u> to *YHWH***" (Jud 3:9; See also 3:15; 10:10).

In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

<div dir="rtl">

וְזָעֲקוּ אלי ולא אשמע אליהם

</div>

"**They shall cry to Me, I will not hearken to them**" (Jer 11:11).

In the Book Psalms we find:

<div dir="rtl">

צָעֲקוּ ויהוה שמע

</div>

"**They cried, and *YHWH* heard**" (Ps 34:18).

In the Book of Jeremiah we find 14 words from the root **זַעק** (zaa'q), and they are twice as many as the words from the root **צַעק** (tsaq) in this book. On the other hand, in the Pentateuch there are 26 words from the root **צַעק** (tsaa'q,, while there are there only two words from the root **זַעק** (zaa'q). It is not known whether the difference in the frequency of the sibilant letters **צ** (ts) and **ז** (z) in these books reflect a personal preference of the scribes, or change in pronunciation between various historic periods. However, as it is claimed that the inserters of the marginal notes were concerned about the proper **קרי** (*qere*) - "reading", it seems peculiar that they did not insert in these cases any marginal note.

Conclusions reached from the analysis of the marginal notes of the Book Jeremiah

There are several common phrases in Hebrew that are the essence of these conclusions:

<div dir="rtl">

אדם לטעות יולד

</div>

"Man was born to err."

<div dir="rtl">

טעות בידו

</div>

Literally: "Mistake in his hand."

As long as transmission is carried out by human hand errors will occur. However, we have to ask: Is this important? It seems that David Hume answered:

"**Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous**." (A Treatise of Human Nature).

Baruch the son of Neriah

At the beginning of the Book of Jeremiah we read:

<div dir="rtl">

דברי ירמיהו בן-חלקיהו, מן-הכהנים אשר בענתות בארץ בנימן.
אשר היה דבר-יהוה אליו בימי יאשיהו בן-אמון מלך יהודה, בשלש-עשרה שנה, למלכו.
ויהי בימי יהויקים בן-יאשיהו מלך יהודה, עד-תם עשתי עשרה שנה לצדקיהו בן-יאשיהו
מלך יהודה-עד-גלות ירושלם, בחדש החמישי.

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"**The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin;**
To whom the word of *YHWH* **came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.**
It came (also) **in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, to the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month**" (Jer 1:1-3).

Among other things, the book describes in detail the interactions of the Prophet with several of the kings of Judah and their officials, yet it seems odd that Jeremiah is not mentioned in the Book of Kings even once.
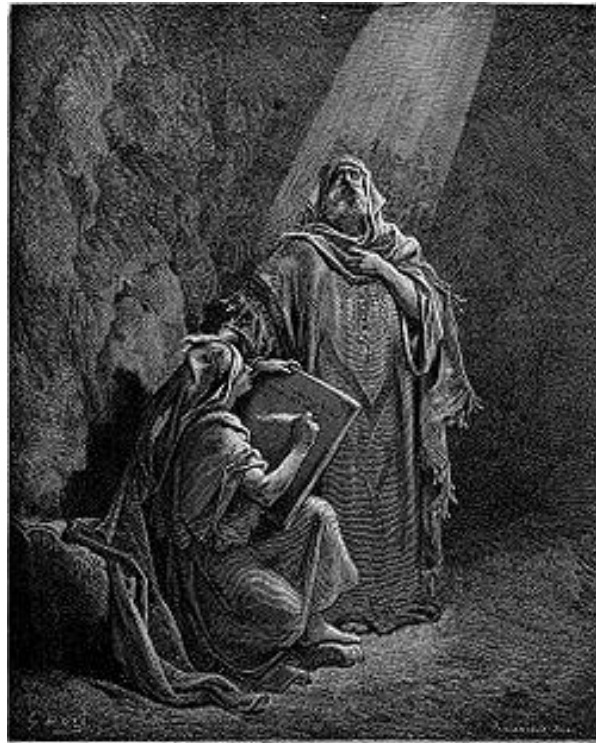
Baruch son of Neriah writing the words of Jeremiah. Gutave Dore (1832-1883) illustrations for: "La Grand Bible de Tours.

In the Book of Jeremiah we also read:

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ויקרא ירמיהו את-ברוך בן-נריה; ויכתב ברוך מפי ירמיהו את כל-דברי יהוה אשר-דבר אליו-
על-מגלת-ספר.

</div>

"**Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of** *YHWH***, which He had spoken to him, upon a roll of a book**" (Jer 36:4).

<div dir="rtl">

ואת-ברוך-שאלו לאמר: הגד-נא לנו-איך כתבת את-כל-הדברים האלה מפיו.
ויאמר להם ברוך, מפיו יקרא אלי את כל-הדברים האלה; ואני כתב על-הספר בדיו.

</div>

"And they asked Baruch, saying: Tell us now: How did you write all these words of his mouth?
Then Baruch answered them: He pronounced all these words to me with his mouth, and I wrote them <u>with ink</u> in the book" (Jer 36:18).

It is not known how the English translator knew that the Hapax legomenon **בדיו** (*badio*) means "ink", Furthermore, it does not seem that the officials were interested in the technical details of the writing process. It appears that the Greek translator did not know the meaning of this word and he omitted it from the translation. However we suggest that **בדיו** (*badio*) is a **ע** (a') - **י** (i) substitution and order-type error of **בעדו** (*baa'do*) - "for him" (e.g. Gen 7:16; Lev 16:6, 11, 17, 24; Jud 3:23; 2 Ki 4:21; Eze 45:22; Ps 72:15; Job 1:10; 3:23).

These and several other verses (Jer 32:12,-16; 36:5-13, 26-28, 32; 43:3, 6; 45:1-2) are the basis for the assumption of several biblical scholars, that Baruch the son of Neriah might have been the editor or even the writer of the Book of Jeremiah.

A bulla of Baruch ben Neriah.
The fingerprint (not noticeable in the photograph)
is located in the highlighted area.

Reads in Hebrew: "Berachyahu son of Neriahu, the scribe" Published first by Prof Nahman Avigad in 1975. Authenticity questionable. Now is in the Israel Museum.

While we have some evidence that Baruch the son of Neriah was a real person, such evidence is lacking in regard to the Prophet Jeremiah. In the Hebrew Bible we find multiple examples of **נ** (n) - **מ** (m) letter-exchanges, and of changes in the position of the letters in words. It is therefore possible that the name **ירמיה** (*yermiah*) - **Jeremiah** (e.g. Jer 27:1; 28:5, 10, 11, 12) is an

intentional variant of the name **נריה** (*neriah*) - "**Neriah**." If this assumption is correct then **ירמיה** (*yermiah*) - "**Jeremiah**" could have been a type of pseudonym.