The present system of indicating vowels in the Hebrew Bible originated

rather later and was standardized in the 9th and ~~t~~ 10th centuries after Christ, A.D.,

when a group of very careful Biblical ~~schol~~ students devoted their lives to

the task of ~~guardin~~ guarding the text from error. Their purpose, they said,

              or

was to build a hedge/~~fax maxx Masora~~ masora around the law to preserve it

from ~~ant~~ contamination. ~~From this word they came to be called Masoretes,~~

Though these men, who came to be called "Masoretes," examined the extant

manuscripts very carefully, and copied precisely what they found, in some

places--perhaps once to a page--they found a word contained in a majority

               form

of their manuscripts in a/~~fax~~ slightly different from the tradition that had

                                       keep

~~been passed on~~ had come down to them. In these cases they would/~~keep~~ the

text exactly as they found it in the majority of the manuscripts available to

              into

them, but would put in a footnote the ~~consonant~~ consonants that they

believed should be there. When they inserted the vowel points above ~~of~~ or

below the consonants they would put in into the text the vowels that

~~belongd~~ belonged with the ~~common~~ consonants ~~tht~~ that were kept in the footnote.

They called the reading preserved in the ~~xxxxxxxxixxxxx~~ consonantal text

the ~~kxxkkxxxkxtktx~~ kethibh (Aramaic for "written"). The reading that they

thought should be read they called ~~that~~ the ~~qeri~~ "qeri" (Aramaic for the

imperative of "read."~~)~~ read).

The judgment of the Masoretes on these points ~~t~~ is very important,

yet ~~schola... modern~~ modern scholars feel that the ~~kagktkk~~ kethibh is always

worthy of ~~xxx~~ consideration as a possibility.

Sometimes it is ~~obvicius~~ obvious that the kethibh does not make much

sense in the context, and that the qeri is ~~doubtless right.~~ correct. In other

cases there may be two possibilities of interpretation.

      ~~I~~