



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 30

Studies in
Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts:
A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of
Professor Geoffrey Khan

Edited by
*Nadia Vidro, Ronny Vollandt, Esther-Miriam Wagner
and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger*



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ISSN 0585-5535

ISBN 978-91-513-0290-4

Distributor: Uppsala University Library,
Box 510, SE-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden
www.uu.se, acta@ub.uu.se

Printed in Sweden by DanagårdLiTHO AB, 2018

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Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan

THE EDITORS

The work of Geoffrey Khan has had a tremendous impact on a vast array of domains of study, including Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Semitic grammar and linguistics, Bible vocalisation tradition, Cairo Genizah studies, palaeography, codicology and Arabic papyrology. His fresh insights into Semitic syntax and into the pronunciation traditions of the Hebrew Bible, supported by the study of Arabic transcriptions, his pioneering work on Hebrew grammatisation and the history of Hebrew linguistic ideas, his daring fieldwork trips to rescue endangered Neo-Aramaic dialects as well as his precise philological and editorial work on medieval manuscripts and other documents have all transformed our perceptions of these fields. The diversity of fields covered by the research interests of the contributors to this volume reflects the richness of the themes investigated by Geoffrey Khan.

This Festschrift is a collection of twenty-one papers written by the disciples of Geoffrey Khan, the Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Cambridge. His doctoral students and the post-doctoral researchers whom he has been guiding since 1989 gather here to celebrate his sixtieth birthday. Some of us have since gone on to become university professors and senior researchers, while others are still working on their doctoral and post-doctoral research projects. We all feel and proclaim a deep gratitude to Geoffrey Khan, who has led us with passion through the intricacies of philological and linguistic methods. We have all benefited from his immense erudition and amazing kindness, and he has shared with us his rigorous scientific approach while ensuring that everyone has had the freedom of thought and initiative to follow his or her own path. A typical Geoffrey supervision experience consists of presenting to him the fruits of the labours of past weeks in a somewhat garbled fashion, which then prompts him to say “So do you mean ‘...’?”, effortlessly transforming all you have just said into a fully formed and reasonable theory, while all the time giving you the impression that this is indeed what you had been thinking. A good teacher explains. An exceptional teacher inspires. Geoffrey

Khan is just such an extraordinary teacher. His encouragement, care and intellectual generosity turned many fledgling students into scholars, forming a Khan school.

We are grateful to be counted among the students of this outstanding scholar. Eager to show our affection for him as mentor and friend, we are presenting Geoffrey with this ‘*liber discipulorum*’ to mark his sixtieth birthday. The twenty-one papers contribute to different fields ranging from Semitic linguistics and biblical grammar to codicology and the textual study of 19th century books in Hebrew or Arabic. This rich array of objects of study and of disciplinary methodologies is, however, united by a common approach. This focuses on a careful description of the ‘document’ – whether it is written (a manuscript) or oral (a recording of a speaker of a contemporary endangered language) – prior to its interpretation in the light of the most recent ideas of the relevant disciplines. In this manner, our contributors re-examine well-worn assumptions or shed light on old questions. The interrelated questions of language, texts and their material vehicle – the manuscripts – are the leading thread of the volume.

The first group of contributions, in Part 1, ‘Linguistics, Grammar and Exegesis’, deal with various aspects of Semitic grammar, linguistics and the history of grammatical and exegetical thought. Several deal with the analysis of the language of the Hebrew Bible. They propose new interpretations of biblical language phenomena such as variations in word order or modality, explore new sources for reconstructing phonetics, and provide fresh research into specific questions of different traditions of Bible vocalisation.

Peter J. Williams illustrates one of the under-appreciated features of the famous Codex Vaticanus of the New Testament: its consistent distinction between short and long /i/ vowels in spelling. This distinction is applied to long and short vowels in Greek as well as in Latin loan-words, but also applies to words of Semitic origin. Williams reassesses, moreover, the implications of this for our understanding of early Christian knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic.

Aaron D. Hornkohl’s study examines a series of weaknesses in current approaches to Biblical Hebrew grammar which, it is argued, hinder progress to a fuller understanding of the factors driving word order variation in Biblical Hebrew and to an appropriate interpretation of their intended effects. The use of long and short *wayyiqtol*s in biblical, parabiblical and commentary scrolls from Qumran takes centre stage in Johan M. V. Lundberg’s article. In the following contribution, Elizabeth Robar revisits the assumption traditionally held by scholars that modality is a part of the verbal system in Biblical Hebrew, expressed through a paradigm often called ‘volitional’, with clearly modal functions. She suggests that modality cannot be confined to the verbal system, but belongs also in the lexicon and in syntax.

Shai Heijmans sheds new light on the *shewa medium*, looking at a *shewa* that is considered to be silent, but appears in a position where a vocal *shewa*

is expected. While the Tiberian vocalisation system does not distinguish graphically between a silent and a vocal *shewa*, the Compound Babylonian vocalisation system does. In his contribution, he explores the pronunciation of the so-called *shewa medium* – when it is silent and when it is vocal – in the Compound Babylonian vocalisation according to Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus. Daniel Birnstiel focuses on the difficult issue of the vowel of the definite article placed before a guttural consonant in pre-Masoretic and Tiberian Hebrew. Quoting rich evidence from the Bible itself, from transcriptions in Greek and from comparisons with other Semitic languages, the paper explains various phonetic changes in the realisation of consonants and vowels and the way they affected the vowel of the article. Samuel Blapp deals with the use of *dageš* in the Non-Standard Tiberian manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible. The data presented in this article comes from his recently submitted PhD thesis, and is based on six manuscripts from the Taylor-Schechter Genizah collection at Cambridge University Library.

Later periods of the development of the Hebrew language are also represented. For example, Lily Kahn's paper investigates the 17th century variety reflected in Nathan Nata Hannover's chronicle of Chmielnicki's pogroms written in Eastern Europe. Through a detailed grammatical and philological analysis of the chronicle's language, the paper proposes a much-needed definition of some pertinent features characteristic of 'Ashkenazi Hebrew' – the main literary language of north-central European Jews from the Middle Ages to the 20th century.

Two papers discuss medieval approaches to grammatical phenomena and the narrative structure of the Bible. In her contribution, Fiona Blumfield sets out to examine the comments of the medieval Jewish exegetes on the use of infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form. Its origin, use and semantics in Biblical Hebrew have occupied modern grammatical researchers, but none of their interpretations seem entirely satisfactory. Blumfield asks whether it is possible to apply medieval insights to the analysis of this category. Meira Polliack's study examines the use of the Arabic term *qiṣṣa* as a technical term for biblical 'story/narrative' in Judaeo-Arabic exegesis. It aims at a more detailed understanding of the medieval exegetes' conceptualisation of the biblical story as a structural-thematic unit that forms part of the final form of the biblical text.

The final three contributions in this first part are dedicated to Neo-Aramaic linguistics. They present original research on three dialects of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA). Strongly endangered by tragic political events affecting the Iraqi and Kurdish population, these dialects are in need of linguistic recording and description, as precious elements of intangible cultural heritage. Lidia Napiorkowska deals with variation encountered in a language during the process of documentation and the challenges this poses to descriptive linguists. In the NENA dialect of Azran, the phonological processes of consonant and vowel fronting appear to be far from regular, and Lidia demonstrates that

these changes are conditioned by a number of factors, including word frequency and the coherence of morphological patterns, as well as language contact. Eleanor Coghill gives a grammatical sketch of a NENA dialect spoken by the Chaldean Catholic Christians of the town of Telkepe, north of Mosul. Since the capture of the town by ISIS in 2014, the dialect has become severely endangered. This contribution outlines the main features of the dialect, comparing and placing it within the NENA dialect context, and noting unusual features in the phonology, morphology and syntax, as well as contact influences from Arabic. The final contribution of this section, by Oz Aloni, provides the transcription and translation of a folk-tale told in the Jewish NENA dialect of Zakho. This folk-tale is rather unusual, since it is built around a relatively uncommon motif in folk-literature, that of gender transformation.

Manuscripts and their production, and in particular the work of scribes, are the subject of Part 2 of this volume, 'Texts, Scribes and the Making of Books and Documents'. The papers all centre around the manuscripts discovered in the Cairo Genizah and other similar collections. This part opens with Judith Olszowy-Schlanger tackling the question of the acquisition and use of writing skills in both Hebrew and Arabic scripts by the scribes of the Genizah world, and the impact that this bi-alphabetism had on the palaeographical changes of the Hebrew script itself. Benjamin M. Outhwaite presents fresh Genizah evidence of the life and work of the master calligrapher Samuel b. Jacob, the scribe of the famous Leningrad Codex. Despite the prominence of his work, little is known of Samuel b. Jacob himself. A colophon of the codex places him in Fustāt in the first decade of the 11th century, a time and place richly documented in the Cairo Genizah, and now from a few further manuscript discoveries in the Genizah we are able to better trace some new facts about his work, life and possible journey from penury to scribal perfection. Nadia Vidro's contribution looks at the Arabic vocalisation found in grammars of Classical Arabic copied in Hebrew characters. She provides an edition and analysis of a Genizah fragment consistently vocalised with Arabic signs, suggesting that the fragment is a vocalisation exercise performed by a learner of the Classical Arabic language and its grammar.

The cultural and scribal contacts between the Jewish and Muslim epistolary traditions are discussed by Estara J Arrant, who edits and examines three Cairo Genizah documents from the Fatimid period, which are petitions written by Jewish individuals to prominent and influential members of the Jewish community. Esther-Miriam Wagner explores commonalities and differences between Judaeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic by comparing mercantile correspondence of the 18th and 19th centuries from the Cairo Genizah and from the Prize Papers collection, placing linguistic phenomena into the context of literacy, the use of script, and general scribal norms. Magdalen M. Connolly investigates a 19th century Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic folk narrative. Narrated from the perspective of a rural Jewish community oppressed by their 'uncircumcised' rulers, this folk-tale – found in the manuscript BNF Hébreu 583

and dated to 1839 – depicts a mythologised episode from the life of Abraham ibn ‘Ezra, who liberates the community from its tyrannical rulers.

Rebecca J. W. Jefferson’s contribution is on popular renditions of Hebrew hymns in 19th century Yemen. It provides a detailed description of a previously unknown Yemenite manuscript codex from the early 19th century. The content consists primarily of Hebrew lamentations and penitential hymns for the Ninth of Av and for personal mourning, as well as texts regarding funerary practices and burial procedures. Rebecca additionally analyses a sample text from the codex.

In the last contribution, Ronny Vollandt discusses the *status quaestionis* of research on the Arabic Bible, surveying the present state of research with a programmatic outlook on what is still to be achieved. It brings together different strands of a dynamic field, which has gained considerable momentum since the turn of the new millennium.

This collective volume has benefitted from the help and support of several colleagues. We warmly thank Timothy Jowan Curnow for copy-editing and proofreading the volume. His exceptional skills turned the final stages of preparation into something pleasant. We are grateful to the EPHE-PSL Paris, the LMU Munich and the Carlo Landberg Foundation, administered by Uppsala University, for their support. Thanks are also due to George Kiraz and Melonie Schmierer-Lee, who kindly arranged a first hard copy of this book for the occasion of Geoffrey Khan’s birthday gathering. Last but not least, we are indebted to Colette Khan, who has been so wonderful at keeping a secret.

PART 1

Linguistics, Grammar and Exegesis

Semitic Long /i/ Vowels in the Greek of Codex Vaticanus of the New Testament

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It is commonly believed that by the time of the New Testament, and certainly by the time of the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, there was no distinction between the long and short /i/ vowel in Greek.^{1,2} According to this view, whereas in earlier forms of Greek, *iota* could represent a long or short /i/, this distinction no longer held by the time of the New Testament. This article argues that the 4th century Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B), arguably the most prestigious witness to the New Testament, provides evidence against this view.³

The distinction between long and short /i/ can be seen in B in the spelling of many words. One only has to read a single page of the manuscript with this question in mind to be overwhelmed by the mass of supporting data. Here we can establish the distinction by simply appealing to a single word.

The verb which in Classical Greek is spelled κρίνω ‘I judge’ (present), κρίνω (future) has a long stem for the present tense and a short stem for the future. Some time before our earliest New Testament manuscripts, the long /i/ could be marked by the digraph *epsilon-iota*. This can be seen in Matthew 7:1–2 which, according to the spelling of the first hand of B, reads: μη κρείνεται να μη κριθητε εν ω γαρ κριματι κρεινεται κριθησεσθε. Here the macron and breve have been added to show the distinction in Classical vowel length,

¹ My first introduction to my future doctoral supervisor, Geoffrey Khan, was hearing him lecture on vowel length in Hebrew as reflected in Arabic script. It is a pleasure therefore to dedicate to him an essay on vowel length in Hebrew as reflected in Greek script.

² See Gignac 1981, p. 191, who states that “The confusion of ει and ι, found already in some classical dialects, is paralleled throughout Koine Greek ... With the loss of quantitative distinction, there was no longer any question of short or long /i/ in pronunciation, but only of an /i/ sound indifferent in length.” This statement is slightly nuanced by n. 2, which allows that the spelling ει for short [i] makes a later appearance in Asia Minor. Buth, 2012, p. 219 says: “It is certain that ει and ι were both pronounced [i] for the Roman period Koiné. Likewise, there was no distinction between long and short time. There was no ‘short ιωτα’ and ‘long ιωτα’.”

³ The Old and New Testament sections of B are thought to be by two different scribes. What is said in this article applies to the New Testament, but many of the same features also appear in the Old Testament.

which corresponds in turn with the alternation in B between *epsilon-iota* and *iota*. An even more striking example of this in B is in 1 Corinthians 5:12–6:7:⁴

5:12 τι γαρ μοι τους εξω **κρεινειν** ουχι τους εσω υμεις **κρεινετε**. 13 τους δε εξω ο θς **κρινει** εξαρατε τον πονηρον εξ υμων αυτων· 6:1 τολμα τις υμων πραγμα εχων προς ετερον **κρεινεσθαι** επι των αδικων και ουχι επι των αγιων· 2 η ουκ οιδατε οτι οι αγιοι τον κοσμον **κρινουσιν** και ει εν υμιν **κρεινεται** ο κοσμος· αναξιτοι εστε **κριτηριων** ελαχιστων· 3 ουκ οιδατε οτι αγγελους **κρινουμεν**. μητι γε βιωτικα· 4 βιωτικα μεν συν **κριτηρια** εαν εχητε τους εξουθενημενους εν τη εκκλησια τουτους καθιζετε· 5 προς εντροπην υμιν λαλω· ουτως ουκ ενι εν υμιν ουδεις σοφος ος δυνησεται **διακρειναι** ανα μεσον του αδελφου αυτου· 6 **αλλα** αδελφος μετα αδελφου **κρεινεται** και τουτο επι απιστων· 7 ηδη μεν συν ολως ηττημα υμιν εστιν οτι **κριματα** εχετε μεθ εαυτων

In this passage the six present and aorist verbs have *epsilon-iota*.⁵ However, the three nouns and the three verbs plausibly interpreted as future have *iota*. Again, this is absolutely in line with Classical distinctions in vowel length. It also means that we do not have to wait until the widespread use of accents from the 9th century onwards to tell the difference between the present and future of κρ(ε)νω.

Not only do we find that so extensive a passage consistently marks the distinction, but we also find an absence of hypercorrection in B in the entire New Testament. According to unpublished data gathered by Patrick James in preparation for the Tyndale House Greek New Testament,⁶ B avoids all examples of representing etymological short /i/ by *epsilon-iota* in verbs or nouns relating to κρ(ε)νω, totalling over 309 cases.

We find the same tendency for B to distinguish long and short vowels in many lexemes, and also find that in some patterns B is joined by other witnesses. For instance, if we just consider verbs in Luke's Gospel, long /i/ is represented in a wide range of witnesses by *epsilon-iota* for common verbs including γ(ε)νομαι, γ(ε)νωσκω, κλ(ε)νω, κρ(ε)νω and μ(ε)ισεω. In fact in all these cases, *epsilon-iota* is the strongest attested spelling in early witnesses.

A natural question to arise in relation to B is whether these spellings are inheritances from the earliest forms of the text, or alternatively are innovations by the scribe of this manuscript or one of its forebears.

The answer to this is not simple: in this matter, as in many others, B appears sometimes as completely isolated and at other times as well supported by other manuscripts. The isolation may be so total that it might suggest that B contains

⁴ I am grateful to Patrick James for pointing this passage out.

⁵ The aorist active is also long by compensatory lengthening for the loss of original *sigma* after the *nu*.

⁶ Jongkind, 2017.

an innovation, or the reading may be so widely shared that we are more likely to conclude that it was inherited. This pattern of readings is consistent with the view that the scribe of B was rather knowledgeable. He not only distinguishes historical vowel length in Greek with almost complete consistency, but may also have been aware of Latin vowel length.⁷

Here, however, we consider what is potentially an even more impressive feat in representing vowel length, namely the representation of Hebrew (and occasionally Aramaic) vowel length.

1 The genealogies of Jesus

We consider this question first in relation to the genealogies of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew and the third chapter of Luke. An advantage of considering the genealogies is that they contain many names which show little or no sign of nativisation in Greek.

In the genealogy of Matthew 1:1–16, the /i/ sounds occur in a variety of phonetic contexts.⁸ Here are a few broad classes:

- Names beginning with a pre-vocalic consonant where *iota* represents *yodh*: ιακωβ, ιεχονιας, ιουδας, ιωαθαμ, ιωραμ, ιωσαφατ and ιωσηφ. Presumably by assimilation to the prevalence of the beginning ιω- (occurring in four other names in this list and representing the most common initial pattern), we also have ιωβηδ as the name of David's father Obed (עֹבֵד).
- Names containing *iota* in a post-consonantal pre-vocalic position: αβιουδ, ελιακειμ, ελιουδ and σελαθιηλ.
- Names containing stressed /i/ and arguably a long /i/ represented by *epsilon-iota*: αμειναδαβ, αχειμ, δαυειδ and ελιακειμ. In each case the 9th century accentor of B placed the accent on the final syllable, though the Hebrew equivalent of αμειναδαβ also has secondary stress on the /i/ vowel (e.g. Ruth 4:19 and 20 in the Masoretic text).
- Names with a final Yahwistic element, where the data are less clear. Some have *epsilon-iota*, while others have just *iota*: οζειας, ουρειου and ιωσηας vs εζεκιας, ιεχονιας and αβια. ουρειου is the only genitive here and αβια is unique for being treated as indeclinable.⁹ Looked at

⁷ Pontius Pilate, for instance, is called *πειλατος* (e.g. Matthew 27:13), consistent with the long initial vowel in Latin.

⁸ Where possible the names are given in their nominative forms as they occur in the genealogy, which typically has both accusative and nominative. The exception to this is the genitive ουρειου. In instances where the nominative and accusative differ, the final consonant for the nominative is *sigma* and for the accusative is *nu*. The vowels do not change.

⁹ It lacks *sigma* and *nu* in the nominative and accusative respectively, and receives an accent on the final syllable from the accentor of B, when all other forms have accent on the preceding /i/ vowel.

from a purely Greek angle we thus have the contrasting pairs οξειας and ωσειας vs εξεκιας and ιεχονιας, which do not provide enough data to draw any firm conclusions.

- In a category of its own is ισαακ, the only case where an /i/ vowel precedes a consonant at the beginning of a name, whether or not this name was pronounced in Hebrew with initial /y/.

We see broadly similar patterns in B for Luke 3:23–38:

- Thirteen names begin with a pre-vocalic consonant where *iota* represents *yodh*: ιακωβ, ιανναι, ιαρετ, ιεσσα, ιησου, ιουδα, ιωναν, ωβηλ,¹⁰ ιωδα, ιωναμ, ιωρειμ, ιωσηφ and ιωσηχ. This is a large class, as it was for Matthew 1:1–16.
- An equally large class consists of names containing stressed /i/ and arguably a long /i/ represented by *epsilon-iota*. The digraph occurs in these final syllables whether it ends in a consonant or not: αδδει, αρνει, εσλει, ηλει, ηλειει,¹¹ λευει, μελχει, νηρει, αδμειν, δαυειδ, ελιακειμ, ιωρειμ and σεμειν.
- Names containing *iota* in post-consonantal pre-vocalic position: ελιεζερ, μαθηθαιου, ματταθιου and σαλαθηλ.
- Again, ισαακ in a class of its own.

However one classifies the examples, we see two clear patterns in both genealogies:

- Initial consonantal and therefore pre-vocalic /y/ is always a single *iota*.
- Stressed final /i/ is always spelled *epsilon-iota*.

Thus the distribution of *epsilon-iota* vs *iota* in Hebrew names is not random.

More difficult is the question of vowel length, where our method with ancient sources is necessarily inferential. We may at least say that all of the above cases of *epsilon-iota* might be long. Because *epsilon-iota* always occurs in what in Hebrew would be the stressed position (or, in the case of αμειναδαβ, where there was secondary stress) and because these vowels are all probably etymologically long, it becomes plausible, in light of other tendencies in B, that these vowels were considered long by the scribe of B or whoever formed his tradition.

¹⁰ Probably a corruption of ωβηδ, itself an assimilation to the prevailing ω- prefix rather than a representation of *yodh*.

¹¹ This form in Luke 3:24 appears to be a mistake corrected by the first corrector to λευει.

2 Three common words

In the rest of this article we will be considering individual words which occur in speech or within a wider discourse. The method we will use is to put B alongside other early witnesses, including Codex Sinaiticus (ⲛ = Codex Sinaiticus; ⲛa = Codex Sinaiticus Scribe A; ⲛd = Codex Sinaiticus Scribe D), which is also from the 4th century, and various papyri. All the papyri referenced in this article are plausibly dated to the 3rd century.¹²

We begin by considering in table 1 the spelling of Elijah, which occurs 29 times in the New Testament. B spells every single occurrence with *epsilon-iota*, offering the forms $\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$, $\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$, $\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon$ and $\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha$.

Table 1. *Epsilon-iota vs iota* in the name Elijah

Elijah	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Matthew 11:14	B	ⲛa
Matthew 16:14	B	ⲛd
Matthew 17:3	ⲛd B	
Matthew 17:4	ⲛd B	
Matthew 17:10	ⲛd B	
Matthew 17:11	ⲛd B	
Matthew 17:12	ⲛd B	
Matthew 27:47	B	ⲛa
Matthew 27:49	B	ⲛa
Mark 6:15	B	ⲛa
Mark 8:28	ⲛ B	
Mark 9:4	B	ⲛa
Mark 9:5	B	ⲛa
Mark 9:11	B	ⲛa
Mark 9:12	B	ⲛa
Mark 9:13	B	ⲛa
Mark 15:35	ⲛd B	
Mark 15:36	ⲛd B	
Luke 1:17	ⲛd B	
Luke 4:25	B	ⲛa
Luke 4:26	ⲛa B	
Luke 9:8	P75 ⲛa B	
Luke 9:19	P75 B	ⲛa
Luke 9:30	P45 P75 ⲛa B	
Luke 9:33	P45 P75 B	ⲛa
John 1:21	P66 P75 B	ⲛa
John 1:25 ¹³	P66 ^{corrector} P75 B	P66 ⲛa
Romans 11:2	B	ⲛa
James 5:17	B	ⲛa
Total	51	18
Total excluding B	22	18

¹² This dating is for the practical purposes of this article of establishing early spelling. The argument is not affected if some of them are from the 2nd or 4th centuries.

¹³ At John 1:25, P119 has]ιας ουδ[ε. Unfortunately it is not possible to know whether it spelled $\eta\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\varsigma$ or $\eta\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma$.

What makes the spelling with *epsilon-iota* so impressive is that it is the majority spelling of manuscripts from the 4th century or earlier, occurring in 51 of 69 occurrences. A problem with this, of course, is that B's own 29 uses of *epsilon-iota* have been counted in the total. If we remove these we still have 22 occurrences of *epsilon-iota* in other witnesses against 18 of simple *iota*. *Epsilon-iota* is still the majority spelling at 55 per cent of occurrences. We must further note that the occurrence of *epsilon-iota* in \aleph on 12 out of 29 instances is striking given \aleph 's strong scribal tendency to use simple *iota*, even where forms are traditionally spelled with *epsilon-iota*.

Moreover, we have a further consideration: The New Testament of \aleph was written by two scribes, known as Scribe A and Scribe D. Scribe A penned the majority of the New Testament, but Scribe D replaced six of the leaves in the New Testament with his own work.¹⁴ Scribe D is thought to be much better at spelling than Scribe A.¹⁵ Thus 8 of the 12 occurrences of *epsilon-iota* in \aleph are provided by the better speller – a scribe who only once allows plain *iota*, namely in Matthew 16:14. This occurrence is easily explained by the phenomenon in Greek manuscripts whereby a scribe corrects the first occurrence of an unexpected spelling because he considers it a mistake. However, when he sees it for a second time he accepts that it is not a mistake and copies it accurately. Thus the testimony of \aleph strongly points towards a plentiful representation of *epsilon-iota* in its *Vorlage*.

In the 3rd century, though the papyri overwhelmingly attest *epsilon-iota* (in 9 of 10 occurrences) the instance of $\eta\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma$ in John 1:25 in P66 indicates that the pattern is not uniform.¹⁶

Next we consider two contrasting cases: the word 'rabbi', in table 2, and the word 'Pharisee', in table 3. B spells the words as $\rho\alpha\beta\beta\epsilon\iota$ and $\phi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ respectively. Because of the large number of occurrences, and in order to maximise the number of witnesses from the 4th century or earlier, we will only consider these in the Gospel of John.

Table 2. *Epsilon-iota vs iota* in the word 'rabbi'

Rabbi	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
John 1:38	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 1:49	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 3:2	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 3:26	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 4:31	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 6:25	P75 \aleph B	
John 9:2	P66 P75 \aleph B	
John 11:8	P45 P66 P75 \aleph B	
Total	32	0
Total excluding B	24	0

¹⁴ Jongkind, 2007, p. 40.

¹⁵ Jongkind, 2007, pp. 90–94.

¹⁶ The fact that the contemporaneous corrector of P66 inserted *epsilon* in John 1:25 may give us greater confidence that P66's *Vorlage* had the longer spelling.

Table 3. *Epsilon-iota vs iota* in the word ‘Pharisee’

Pharisee	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
John 1:24	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 3:1	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 4:1	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 7:32a	B	P66 ⋈
John 7:32b	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 7:45	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 7:47	B	P66 ⋈
John 7:48	B	P66 ⋈
John 8:13	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 9:13	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 9:15	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 9:16	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 9:40	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 11:46	P45 B	P6 P66 ⋈
John 11:47	P45 B	P66 ⋈
John 11:57	B	P66 ⋈
John 12:19	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 12:42	B	P66 P75 ⋈
John 18:3	B	⋈
Total	21	50
Total excluding B	2	50

The contrast could hardly be starker. In the case of the first word, ραββι receives no support while ραββει receives complete support. In the case of the second word, φαρισαιος receives almost universal support while φαρεισαιος has support only from P45 and B.

3 Three similar words

Next we consider three words which, whatever their origin, come from Semitic texts, and appear similar in Greek: Sion (in table 4), Sidon (in table 5),¹⁷ and Sinai (in table 6).

Table 4. *Epsilon-iota vs iota* in the place-name Sion

Sion	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Matthew 21:5	B	⋈
John 12:15	P66 P75 B	⋈
Romans 9:33	B	⋈
Romans 11:26	P46 B	⋈
Hebrews 12:22	P46 (B not extant)	⋈
1 Peter 2:6	B	⋈
Revelation 14:1	P47 (B not extant)	⋈
Total	10	7
Total excluding B	5	7

¹⁷ The words for ‘Sidonia’ and ‘Sidonian’ are also relevant here, but left out for simplicity.

Table 5. *Epsilon-iota* vs *iota* in the place-name Sidon

Sidon	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Matthew 11:21	B	⊠
Matthew 11:22	B	⊠
Matthew 15:21	B	⊠
Mark 3:8	B	⊠
Mark 7:31	P45 B	⊠
Luke 6:17	⊠ B	
Luke 10:13	P45 B	P75 ⊠
Luke 10:14	P45? P75 B	⊠
Acts 27:3	B	⊠
Total	14	9
Total excluding B	5	9

Table 6. *Epsilon-iota* vs *iota* in the place-name Sinai

Sinai	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Acts 7:30	B	⊠
Acts 7:38		⊠ B
Galatians 4:24	P46 B	⊠
Galatians 4:25	P46 B	⊠
Total	5	5
Total excluding B	2	4

In all three words, B prefers *epsilon-iota* and is also on the side which is overall better attested.

4 Less common words

In less frequent words, we still see a strong preference for *epsilon-iota* for Semitic long /i/ in Greek witnesses up to the 4th century, as we can see from the forms for the place-name Chorazin (in table 7) and the word ‘cherubim’ (in table 8).

Table 7. *Epsilon-iota* vs *iota* in the place-name Chorazin

Chorazin (χοραζειν)	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Matthew 11:21	⊠ B	
Luke 10:13	P45 P75 ⊠ B	
Total	6	0
Total excluding B	4	0

Table 8. *Epsilon-iota* vs *iota* in the word ‘cherubim’

Cherubim (χερουβειν)	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Hebrews 9:5	P46 B	⊠
Total	2	1
Total excluding B	1	1

We also get an /i/ vowel in Semitic speech in the representations of *talitha* and the rather similar name Tabitha (see table 9).

Table 9. *Epsilon-iota vs iota* in the word *talitha* and the name Tabitha

<i>Talitha</i> and <i>Tabitha</i>	<i>Epsilon-iota</i>	<i>Iota</i>
Mark 5:41 (<i>talitha</i>)	B	⋈
Acts 9:36 (Tabitha)	P45 P53 B	⋈
Acts 9:40 (Tabitha)	P53 B	⋈
Total	6	3
Total excluding B	3	3

The different forms of Jesus’s dereliction cry in Matthew and Mark contain an /i/ vowel and are spelled thus in B: ελωει ελωει λεμα σαβακτανει (Matthew 27:46) and ελωι ελωι λαμα ζαβαφθανει (Mark 15:34). It is interesting to note that B is isolated as the only witness to have the phrase in these two ways. Arguably the best early attested form as represented in the Tyndale House Greek New Testament is ηλει ηλει λεμα σαβαχθανει (Matthew 27:46) and ελωι ελωι λαμα σαβαχθανει (Mark 15:34). In particular, the form ελωει for the Matthaean occurrence is unique to B, as is the form σαβακτανει, perhaps because some scribe felt that it better represented תנתינ than σαβαχθανει, which follows Greek rules of assimilating the aspirate χ to the following θ but in doing so creates the counterintuitive equation of χ and ρ.

The form ζαβαφθανει is also unique to B in Mark, but may be a corruption of some representation of the Hebrew תנתינ (cf. Codex D’s unique ζαφθανει).

5 Interpretation of the data

When we consider B’s treatment of etymological long /i/ Greek words, and then its treatment of Hebrew names in the genealogy of Jesus, and then its treatment of the various individual words above, we see a clear pattern: B with striking consistency uses *epsilon-iota* for what looks etymologically like a long /i/, either in Hebrew/Aramaic or in Greek. This is the case with common words, mid-frequency words and low frequency words – a pattern which must either point to the extremely careful work in transmission or in ensuring editorial consistency.

The question we now pose is how we should interpret these data. We consider first two contrasting hypotheses:

- a. The Preservation Hypothesis. One possibility is that B is overwhelmingly preserving the original or earliest form of the text. In that case we would have to posit that B represented a stream of copying which was exceedingly faithful, even in the minutiae of spelling; there was no link in the chain of transmission which was weak in this issue.

Moreover, the authors of the New Testament or their amanuenses consistently distinguished short and long vowels in their writing. This is a high demand, which requires learning and care in both the authors and in the entire line of scribes leading to this 4th century manuscript. There is a further downside to this hypothesis: it requires us to posit selective carelessness on the question of spelling in many other witnesses. According to this hypothesis, these witnesses consistently preserved the long spelling of $\rho\alpha\beta\beta\epsilon\iota$, while regularly adapting an original spelling of $\varphi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ to the shorter $\varphi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$.

- b. The Innovation Hypothesis. A rather different view is that the scribe of B (or, in a slightly more complex hypothesis, a previous scribe whose work was faithfully copied into B) actually knew the distinction between long and short vowels and imposed this upon the text he received even though the text he received did not actually show that distinction at all. The problem with this view is that it becomes hard to imagine how someone could have such extensive knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew vowel length in a context where no one else preserved vowel length.

From considering the weaknesses of these two extreme views, we turn to a middle way which may actually have more explanatory power. This position is that the correlation between *epsilon-iota* and historically long /i/ in B is mostly preservation and partly innovation. The principal disadvantage with this view is that it takes a unitary phenomenon (the correlation between *epsilon-iota* and long /i/) and splits it in two. The advantages, however, are several:

- a. we do not have to suppose that all other manuscripts strayed from the earliest forms with such frequency as in the Preservation Hypothesis;
- b. we allow for a range of care in transmission such that some scribes do not preserve spelling, while many do;
- c. we explain how traditions about short and long vowels could be available to the scribe of B;
- d. we do not require the scribe to be introducing the *epsilon-iota* grapheme for a long /i/ *de novo*;
- e. we explain a significant correlation between the spelling of B and many of the earliest papyri and the way *epsilon-iota* is sometimes used in the earliest majuscules;
- f. we explain B in a way consistent with its scribal tendencies elsewhere: the scribe is clearly sufficiently learned to seek to reinforce the tendencies of the authors themselves;

- g. B may be regarded as carefully put together and as representing a high quality tradition, without being accorded an almost unchallengeable authority at the expense of other manuscripts.¹⁸

6 Conclusions

We have seen that B distinguishes long and short /i/ for Greek words and for Semitic ones too. The almost complete consistency with which it does this is impressive. For many or even most of these forms it receives considerable support from other Greek witnesses of the 3rd and 4th centuries, but at times it is much more isolated, especially in the case of $\varphi\alpha\rho\epsilon\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ for the more common $\varphi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$. This leads to the conclusion that whereas many or perhaps even a majority of B's uses of *epsilon-iota* for originally long Semitic /i/ are preservations from the beginnings of the tradition, not a few cases are innovations.

From the fact that long Semitic /i/ is differentially preserved in writing in some parts of the Greek manuscript tradition until the 4th century it is not a very big step to conclude that knowledge of its pronunciation may also have been preserved this late.

A simple objection to this inference is the observation that traditional spelling can lag long behind pronunciation. Scribes may learn received spelling and use it long after the spelling no longer represents pronunciation. This is true and is abundantly the case for Greek. Yet this insight cannot be used to explain all the New Testament data precisely because the use of *epsilon-iota* to represent the long /i/ is not a traditional spelling but an innovation. While traditional spellings may not represent pronunciation, innovative spellings typically do. The early papyri of the New Testament give testimony to a prior spelling reform away from the use of *iota* for the long /i/ towards *epsilon-iota*, and this can only be interpreted as an attempt to codify a pronunciation difference between short and long /i/. This spelling reform, of course, did not begin with the scribes of Christian literature, but given the significant correlation between *epsilon-iota* and Semitic long /i/ in early witnesses of the New Testament, we may conclude that it probably did not post-date the composition of the New Testament books.

¹⁸ This includes the tendency to omit the definite article with the name Ἰησοῦς in John's Gospel, and to increase the frequency of the name 'Christ Jesus' over the name 'Jesus Christ' in the Pauline Corpus. See Jongkind, 2017, p. 507.

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Biblical Hebrew Tense–Aspect–Mood, Word Order and Pragmatics: Some Observations on Recent Approaches

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1 Introduction¹

As has been observed more than once in recent years, consensus remains elusive on a ‘grand unified theory’ of constituent order variation in the Biblical Hebrew (henceforth BH) verbal clause.² Useful concepts have been proposed and promising theories have been applied to – and, indeed, at times forced upon – the Hebrew data, but even the most successful, highly explanatory approaches leave large numbers of cases unexplained.³ This study aims at nothing so ambitious as the proposal of a comprehensive system, but is merely one in a series of recent treatments offering critical observations on traditional and current approaches, suggesting elements that, it is here argued, should be considered integral within such an all-encompassing explanation. Due to concerns of space, no attempt at bibliographic exhaustiveness is made; rather, references are generally limited to especially influential, recent and/or relevant research. It is hoped that the particular critique and synthesis offered in this modest article might pave the way for further scholarly development, or, at the very least, may prove of clarificatory benefit to interested parties.

2 Verbal semantics: TAM

There is no sound way of treating word order variation in BH that does not take into account the ‘in-built’ semantics of the language’s individual verbal

¹ For as long as I’ve known him, my friend, colleague and mentor, Prof. Geoffrey Khan, has been an inexhaustible source of help and support as well as a worthy example of scholarship and humanity. As his first published monograph, *Studies in Semitic Syntax* (based on his 1984 PhD dissertation), dealt with the pragmatics of extraposition in the Semitic languages, it is a pleasure to contribute this study on the related matter of constituent order in Biblical Hebrew to a Festschrift in honour of his 60th birthday.

² Moshavi, 2010, pp. 18–47, 119–120; Holmstedt, 2011, p. 2; Shimasaki, 2013, pp. 763–766. The lack of consensus touches on verbless/nominal clauses as well; see e.g. Miller, 1999.

³ Moshavi, 2010, p. 119.

forms, especially – but not exclusively – the respective meanings of the four principal finite forms, *qatal*, *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*, in terms of tense, aspect and mood (henceforward TAM). This is because the choice between these, while to some extent pragmatically conditioned, depends, at least partially, on fixed semantic values.⁴ As such, before coming to the issue of constituent order, it is necessary to dedicate some space to BH verbal TAM. The approach adopted here is principally synchronic, but informed by awareness of historical developments in Hebrew and the Semitic languages more broadly, and by sensitivity to cross-linguistic evidence from the related domains of diachronic typology and grammaticalisation. In other words, for purposes of the present discussion it is deemed more important to explain how the BH verbal system works than the exact routes and processes required for development from a preceding system,⁵ although it is readily admitted that certain assumptions about its ancestor(s) help to explain features unexpected within a purely synchronic perspective.⁶

2.1 Tense-prominence

In Bhatian typological terms,⁷ it is claimed here that BH is best seen as a tense-prominent language. Whatever the nature of the verbal system in the linguistic ancestor(s) of BH, BH verbs seem to encode temporal values – whether absolute or relative – more basically and consistently than either aspectual or modal values. *Qatal* and *wayyiqtol* correlate strongly with past time, *yiqtol* and *weqatal* with future orientation, while also encoding limited non-future values. The active participle, a morphological substantive with both nominal and verbal functions, must also be accorded full membership in the verbal system, since it defaults for both actual and relative present, and can also bear generic present and imminent-future force.⁸

⁴ In agreement with Cook, 2012, pp. 272–275.

⁵ Thus the present approach differs from those in which great emphasis is placed on the precise character of the proto-system from which the BH system could conceivably have developed.

⁶ For example, while eventualities (actions, events, states) depicted using *qatal* forms are most often in the past, regular exceptions to this norm are present tense uses of stative verbs, verbs denoting feeling or thought, and performatives. These apparently irregular *qatal* uses are illuminated by comparative evidence, e.g., the old use of *qatal* as a ‘verbal adjective’ in Akkadian. From this perspective, present tense uses of *qatal* in BH may be considered remnants of a more ancient verbal system, which were eventually superseded. A helpful discussion of the development is provided by Cook (2012, pp. 201–211), who, however, in light of the *qatal* form’s non-past meanings in BH, sees the form as basically aspectual, labelling it ‘perfective’. Beyond the aforementioned present tense usages (which, in terms of aspect, are actually imperfective), the use of *qatal* to signal the future perfect (‘he will have done’) is adequately explained on the assumption that BH verb forms encode relative tense (see Cohen, 2013, pp. 19–20, 57–58; cf. Cook, 2012, p. 202). Note that unlike in Cook’s (2012, pp. 208–210) treatment, *weqatal* is here considered a separate form from *qatal*.

⁷ Bhat, 1999.

⁸ In agreement with Joosten, 1989; Joosten, 2002; Hatav, 1997, pp. 89–116; Cook, 2012, pp. 223–225; Cohen, 2013, pp. 125–149.

2.2 Aspect

Grammatical aspect broadly refers to the portrayal of an eventuality as either an entirety with endpoints, that is, perfective, or as a less defined process, duration or iteration without reference to endpoints, that is, imperfective.⁹ Crucially, only in the sphere of the past did BH users routinely select between perfective and imperfective presentations: *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* default as perfective; *yiqtol*, *weqatal* and the compound *haya qotel* encode iterative/habitual imperfectivity; and the participle serves to portray durativity/on-goingness. Unsurprisingly, in the present, the choice was merely between shades of imperfectivity: the actual present is generally conveyed using the participle, the generic present with *yiqtol* and *weqatal*.¹⁰ In the future, though duration and/or repetition characterise many eventualities, the explicit portrayal of future imperfectivity through devices internal to the BH verb system is extremely uncommon. Rather, imperfective interpretation depends on context, adverbials, lexical aspect or some combination thereof. Examples (1)–(4) illustrate the default perfective or undefined aspect of future verbs, as well as the use of adverbs and rare compound structures for the explicit signalling of future imperfectivity.

Examples (1)–(4): Yiqtol/weqatal aspect

- (1) :אֲשֶׁר-יִכֶּה אֶת-קִרְיַת-סֶפֶר וְלָכְדָהּ וְנָתַתִּי לּוֹ אֶת-עַכְסָהּ בְּתִי לְאִשָּׁה:
‘Whoever **strikes** Kiryath-Sepher and **captures** it – **I will give** him Achsah my daughter as a wife’ (Josh. 15:16)
(the verbs default as perfective)
- (2) :יּוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא-יִכָּבֵד וְיָרַח בַּלַּיְלָה:
‘**By day** the sun **will not strike** you, and the moon **at night**’ (Ps. 121:6)
(context and adverbials lead to imperfective interpretation)
- (3) ... וְהָיִיתָ מִמְשֹׁשׁ בַּצֶּהָרִים כַּאֲשֶׁר יִמְשֹׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאֶפְלָה ...
‘**and you will (continually; repeatedly) grope** at noon as a blind person **gropes** in the dark ...’ (Deut. 28:29)
(the compound verbal structure and the generic present context signal imperfectivity)

⁹ Grammatical aspect is also called viewpoint aspect (Cook 2012, pp. 26–27, 199–201). It contrasts with situation aspect (including lexical aspect or Aktionsart), which is a semantic property of individual verbs (Cook, 2012, pp. 19–25, 194–199), and phasal aspect, which refers to different stages within an eventuality (Cook, 2012, pp. 25–26, 191–194).

¹⁰ Though there also exists a gnomic or generic use of *qatal* (see Cook, 2012, pp. 214–216), presumably explicable as a holdover from a previous TAM system (see above, n. 6).

- (4) ... וְאָמַרְתָּ לְלֵוִיִּם אֲשֶׁר יִהְיוּ מְשֹׁקְדִים וּבָאִים שְׁמֹרֵם הַשְּׁעָרִים
'and I said to the Levites that **they should (regularly) purify and come, guarding** the gates ...' (Neh. 13:22)
(compound verbal structure signals imperfectivity)

Crucially, where the inherent meaning of a verb and/or the context do not invite an imperfective reading, mere use of the *yiqtol* or *weqatal* forms, that is, those forms traditionally labelled 'imperfect', is insufficient for conveying future iterativity or duration. From this perspective, whatever the diachronic course of grammaticalisation or typology paths, the BH verbal system appears to be more tense- than aspect-prominent, though it must be emphasised that the language possesses clear means of marking both tense and aspect.

Another argument against a primarily aspectual view of BH has been advanced by Joosten. He notes that

The most prominent features attached to the imperfective in recognized aspect languages are the expression of real present and of attendant circumstances in the past. Since neither of these functions is regularly expressed by *yiqtol* in BH there is no point in classifying *yiqtol* as imperfective.¹¹

Presumably, this would also apply to Joosten's view of *weqatal*, since he views it as a semantically identical syntactic alternative to *yiqtol*.¹² As noted above, the depiction of the actual present and of attendant circumstances in the past is generally achieved through employment of the active participle. These uses of the participle can be explained as functions of either relative present tense or imperfective aspect.

2.3 Mood/modality

The realm of BH modality is complicated.¹³ On the one hand, if the discussion concerns the distinction between indicatives and explicitly marked directive-volitives, such as the jussive, imperative and cohortative, then the BH verbal system clearly cannot be considered mood-prominent, for the simple reason that many of its dedicated means for marking volition – whether morphological, such as the imperative, the jussive (short *yiqtol*) or the cohortative (lengthened 1st-person *yiqtol*); lexical, such as the negative אַל and the particle אָנֹכִי; or syntactic, like *yiqtol* plus initial word order – are not consistently employed in apparently volitive contexts and also not infrequently crop up where the context seems to call for indicatives. Many of the more important means of directive-volitive marking seem to have been in flux. From the limited perspec-

¹¹ Joosten, 2002, p. 53.

¹² Joosten, 1992, p. 13.

¹³ See Robar's contribution to the present volume.

tive of the directive-volitional dimension of deontic modality, such inconsistency and irregularity militates against viewing BH as a mood-prominent language, at least in so far as it has been preserved.¹⁴

Where things are less clear is in the broader domain of what might be termed ‘unmarked deontic modality’. It is well known that in BH the future-oriented forms *yiqtol* and *weqatal* frequently convey various nuances related to the freedom to act and the imposition of one’s will, ranging from permission through obligation to declarative future and variously corresponding to English *may*, *should*, *must* and *will*. Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between indicative future and such modal nuances. While there are theoretical/philosophical views, supported by both cross-linguistic evidence and diachronic typology paths, according to which it is argued that future-oriented utterances should by their nature be deemed modal,¹⁵ there are arguably valid reasons for doubting whether this should necessarily be seen as a linguistic universal.¹⁶ While an important issue, however, it is beyond the scope of the present study to pursue it any further. Even so, it seems of critical import that it is generally in the domain of future-oriented eventualities that modality comes into play in BH. This is significant because in a mood-prominent language one would expect the explicit marking of modality across the full range

¹⁴ Cf., for example, Dallaire (2014, pp. 3–4, 122, 125–141), who, on the basis of comparative Semitic evidence, concludes that full (i.e. non-short) *yiqtol* forms with volitive meanings represent not the encroachment of indicative *yaqtulu* into the modal domain otherwise reserved for jussive *yaqtul*, but the existence in BH of *yaqtula*, an ostensible volitive form whose Tiberian reflex, *yiqtol*, can no longer be distinguished from that of indicative *yaqtulu*. One of Dallaire’s concerns is gratuitous textual emendation, in which full *yiqtol* forms in volitive contexts are ‘corrected’ to short forms. However, as Hornkohl (in press) contends, scribal mistakes are not the only alternative to an explanation of the volitive use of full *yiqtol* assuming derivation from *yaqtula*. Genuinely ancient expansion of full *yiqtol* at the expense of short *yiqtol* is also a possibility.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Hatav, 1997, p. 29; Joosten, 1997, p. 58; Joosten, 2012, p. 33; Penner 2015; cf. Hornkohl, 2016, pp. 306–307.

¹⁶ Just as some of the parameters of tense and aspect are often conflated (e.g. the notions of the future tense’s ‘yet to happen-ness’ and the imperfective aspect’s ‘non-completive-ness’), so some conceptions of modality appear to confuse dimensions that it seems proper to keep separate, e.g. English *would* to denote past habituais versus English modal *would* to denote future in the past (see Cook, 2012, pp. 142–143). Despite the notional attraction of theories that subsume certain temporal and/or aspectual dimensions under modality, it is problematic to pre-judge indicative declarations about the future or about repeated actions in the present or past to be logical and linguistic impossibilities (cf. Joosten, 1997, p. 58 on future and Joosten, 2012, p. 26 on imperfective past). It is instructive that though explaining the habitual/iterative force of *yiqtol* and *weqatal* (and presumably *haya qotel*) as a function of mood rather than aspect, Joosten (2002, p. 62) recognises that “iteration is not itself modal”. Cf. also Bhat (1999, pp. 175–178), who contends that the TAM classification of, *inter alia*, future and imperfective past should be done on a language-by-language basis with reference to the way in which each language patterns in terms of TAM-prominence. In other words, a function rightly classified as modal in a mood-prominent language may legitimately be viewed as tense- or aspect-based in a language in which mood is less prominent.

of tenses and/or aspects, not in one alone.¹⁷ As a response to the claim that BH *iyqtol* and *weqatal* are fundamentally modal, it seems fair to ask why their unambiguous modal uses are restricted to the realm of future-oriented eventualities.¹⁸ Put somewhat simplistically, in a mood-prominent version of BH one would expect the indicative forms, that is, *qatal* and *wayyiqtol*, to function regularly for declarative certainties regardless of an eventuality's temporal relation to speech time, and the modal forms, that is, *iyqtol* and *weqatal*, to encode volition, uncertainty and/or irrealis/conditional/hypothetical/counterfactual status across all tenses. But this situation does not obtain in BH. Shades of directive-volitive modality are (inconsistently) discernible only in the realm of eventualities temporally posterior to speech or reference time; nuances of deontic modality cannot generally be perceived on the basis of details internal to the verb system; and non-future-oriented conditionals and the like are typically not encoded with *iyqtol* or *weqatal*.

2.4 The importance of a balanced, data-centric approach to TAM

Whatever the best explanation for how exactly BH manages to cover the range and combinations of TAM values given the relatively few forms and structures at its disposal, the temptation to oversimplify must be resisted. Valid, sufficiently comprehensive accounts are unlikely to be of the sort that reduce the BH verb system to a unidimensional dichotomy or that exaggerate the prominence of a single parameter. One of the problems with accounts that focus on the system's historical development, attempting to arrive at its basic or original TAM essence, is that students are often left with an under-appreciation of the ways in which the system developed to handle multiple TAM values, and combinations thereof, using relatively limited grammatical resources.¹⁹

¹⁷ See Bhat (1999, pp. 130–140), according to whom the degree to which languages are classified as mood-prominent should be measured in terms of such criteria as grammaticalisation, obligatoriness, systematicity and pervasiveness of mood. Not all of these dimensions may be reliably traced in the history of ancient Hebrew. But, as in the case of aspectual marking, it would seem that modal marking in BH – directive-volitional as well as the ‘unmarked deontic’ variety mentioned above – lacks the obligatoriness, systematicity and pervasiveness of tense marking. Beyond the restriction of clear modality to temporally posterior eventualities and the use of the ostensibly modal forms for TAM values that may be otherwise explained (e.g. future, imperfective past), the split between first conditionals, on the one hand, and second and third conditionals, on the other, is to be observed. Crucially, conditionals with protases referring to realisable eventualities employ *iyqtol* after ׀ (Gen. 18:26, 28:20, etc.), whereas irrealis hypotheticals use *qatal* after ׀ (Num. 14:2 (2x), 20:3, Deut. 32:29, Josh. 7:7, Judg. 8:19, 13:23; significantly, *iyqtol* after ׀ serves to mark non-past-oriented wishes and doubts: Gen. 17:18, 30:34 (jussive), 50:15). In other words, the more realis eventuality is expressed by means of the allegedly modal form, while the clearly irrealis eventuality is expressed with what is otherwise considered the indicative form.

¹⁸ As argued above, the past imperfective use of *iyqtol* and *weqatal* is not unambiguously modal.

¹⁹ See Buth, 1992. For the sake of comparison, it is worth pointing out that the ‘primitive’ BH verbal system, with its relatively meagre number of forms for indicating TAM, possesses a

Another problem is the imposition of perspectives arguably foreign to the system. While cross-linguistic probabilities, comparisons with other languages (especially Semitic cognates) and typological development paths can provide helpful evidence, it is necessarily circumstantial. Analysts must rigorously and transparently chart the verbal semantic values of large numbers of unambiguous examples along all three TAM axes without undue influence from reductionist approaches, no matter their philosophical attraction, cross-linguistic support or basis in grammaticalisation theory and/or diachronic typology. Though subject to criticism on certain points, Penner's recent statistical analysis of TAM in the Dead Sea Scrolls is a welcome contribution with promising potential as a model.²⁰ Only by means of such studies are we likely to minimise subjectivity and theoretical bias in our characterisation of the BH verbal system, and, in so doing, to carve out a place in which BH linguistic investigation not only benefits from the wider world of linguistics, but contributes meaningfully thereto.

3 Verbal semantics, syntax and word order

Before moving on, it is worth pausing to clarify why understanding of BH verbal TAM semantics is so central to a discussion of constituent order. Two points are crucial. First, it emerges that the four principal finite verbal forms have fixed semantic values, and also that they occur in sets of semantically equivalent alternative pairs: *wayyiqtol* and *qatal* are past, perfective, indicative, whereas *weqatal* and *yiqtol* are either future/modal, with generally perfective/undefined aspect, or have habitual/iterative aspect in past or present.²¹ Second, from a syntactic perspective, the members of each pair occur in complementary distribution, the *waw*-initial forms coming clause-initially, those without *waw* – with the exception of directive-volitive *yiqtol*²² – being reserved for syntactic environments in which a clause-initial element precludes use of the *waw*-initial form.²³ But we must go further than these observations, which, though accurate, have little explanatory value. The apparent systemic redundancy of semantically equivalent forms that alternate depending on word order demands an explanation. One thing is certain: no analysis confined to

greater variety of morphological resources than Modern Israeli Hebrew, speakers of which, nevertheless, manage passably to communicate TAM distinctions.

²⁰ Penner, 2015; cf. Hornkohl, 2016.

²¹ Buth, 1992, p. 104.

²² Whether or not they exhibit distinct volitive morphology, it is notable that clause-initial (*we*)*yiqtol* forms usually have explicit volitional, purposive or final force.

²³ Notably absent from this description is *we*+unconverted *qatal*, which is best seen as marginal within the BH verbal system, principally restricted to hendiadys, poetry and post-exilic BH (especially Qohelet, whereas most LBH books chiefly preserve the classical system). See Hornkohl, 2014, pp. 254–266, 287–293; cf. Longacre, 1994, pp. 83–84; Robar, 2014, pp. 152–159. I am grateful to my friend and former teacher, Randall Buth, for enlightening discussions on this topic.

the traditional domains of syntax and semantics promises to furnish a satisfactory account of the BH verbal system. This is where pragmatics has much to contribute.

4 Pragmatics and word order

Over the years, scholars have discerned consistent, communicatively significant meanings and effects beyond the basic semantics of individual verb forms and clause-level syntax, meanings and effects that operate at a higher, discourse dimension.

4.1 Information structure

Thus, long ago scholars noted that the *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms not preceded by *waw* often followed constituents that bore special ‘emphasis’.²⁴

4.1.1 Focus

Consider examples (5)–(10), in which the pre-verbal element in the second clause supplies the answer to a content question posed in the first.

Examples (5)–(10): Fill-in focus with wh-questions

- (5) :מַה־עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ ... מַעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲשׂוּ עִשְׂיֹת עִמָּדִי:
 ‘**What** have you done to us? ... **Deeds that are not done** you have done with me!’ (Gen. 20:9)
- (6) ... מִי אַתָּם וּמֵאַיִן תָּבֹאוּ: ... מֵאַרְצֵי רְחוֹקָה מְאֹד בָּאוּ עִבְדֶיךָ ...
 ‘**Who** are you **and where** are you **from**? ... **From a very distant land** your servants have come.’ (Josh. 9:8b–9a)
- (7) ... מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָנוּ אֶל־הַכְּנַעֲנִי בַתְּחִלָּה לְהִלָּחֵם בּוֹ: ... יְהוּדָה יַעֲלֶה ...
 ‘**Who** will go up for us to the Canaanites first to fight against them? ... **Judah** will go up.’ (Judg. 1:1–2)
- (8) :מִי עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה ... גִּדְעוֹן בֶּן־יֹאֵשׁ עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:
 ‘**Who** did this thing? ... **Gideon son of Joash** did this thing.’ (Judg. 6:29)

²⁴ See, e.g., Gesenius, 1910, §142a; Muraoka, 1985, pp. 1–46; Joüon and Muraoka, 2006, §§146a, 155na–nb, nh.

- (9) ... לָמָּה עָלִיתֶם עָלֵינוּ ... לְאַסּוֹר אֶת־שַׁמְשׁוֹן עָלֵינוּ
 ‘Why have you come up against us? ... **To capture Samson** we have come up.’ (Judg. 15:10)
- (10) מָה אָמְרוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה וּמַאיִן יָבֹאוּ אֲלֵיךָ ... מֵאַרְצֵי רְחוֹקָה בָּאוּ ... מָה רָאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ ...
 אֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתִי רָאוּ ...
 ‘What did these men say to you and **where** have they come **from**? ...
From a distant land they have come ... **What** have they seen in your house? ... **Everything in my house** they have seen.’ (2 Kings 20:14–15a)

Things have come a long way since scholars were satisfied with a term and explanation as vague as ‘emphasis’. Nowadays, such cases are usefully explained with reference to the notion of information structure, according to which the pre-verbal constituents in the foregoing examples are considered to be marked for focus. While variously defined, for purposes of the present study focus is understood as marked rhematic (or comment) material or as that element designated by explicit marking as the most salient, or newsworthy, piece of information in the clause, often for purposes of contrast, fill-in, identification, contra-expectation or reinforcement.²⁵

4.1.2 Topic

However not all pre-verbal, apparently emphasis-bearing constituents can properly be considered focal in this way. In many cases, such an element is highlighted as a topic, a marked point of reference for ensuing information.²⁶ Consider examples (11) and (12).

Examples (11)–(12): Topic

- (11) וַיְהִי בְעֶרְבַּי וַתַּעַל הַשָּׁלֹו וַתִּכְסֶּ אֶת־הַמַּחֲנֶה וּבִבְקֹר הָיְתָה שְׂכַבְתַּי הַטֹּל סָבִיב לַמַּחֲנֶה:
 ‘And it was in the evening and quail came up and covered the camp.
And in the morning a layer of dew was around the camp.’ (Ex. 16:13)

²⁵ For various formulations of this definition see Buth, 1995, p. 84; Buth, 1999, p. 81; Shimasaki, 2002, p. 42; Holmstedt, 2009, pp. 126–129. See Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 31–36 for examples, and also the careful discussion in Moshavi, 2010, pp. 90–97, 121–143. Alternatively, some use the term to refer to the new information provided by a sentence, regardless of markedness (Lambrech, 1994, p. 206). Traditionally, this was called the predicate, but since today that term is generally considered to have a purely syntactic definition (in contrast to ‘subject’), some now refer to the ‘psychological predicate’; other terms include ‘comment’, ‘rheme’ and ‘focus’ (as opposed to capitalised ‘Focus’ in Functional Grammar, which is used in reference to marked rhematic information).

²⁶ Buth, 1995, p. 84. Moshavi (2010, pp. 97–103, esp. 101–102) provides an instructive discussion, showing that marked topics in BH can relate to the immediately preceding context or the immediately following context or can signal relations between text segments, like discourse connectives. See also Khan, 1988, p. 86–87.

- (12) ... וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ | אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ ... אֶל־יְהוָה אֱמֹר ... וְלֵאמֹר אָמַר ...
 ‘And Yhwh God said to the serpent ... **To the woman** he said ... **And to the man** he said ...’ (Gen. 3:14, 16–17)

This is common with scene-setting prepositional phrases, as in example (11), where *וּבְבֹקֶר* unambiguously orients the reader to the temporal setting of what is about to be related. But it also occurs with other types of constituents, as in example (12), where the salient information in each clause is communicated not by means of the pre-verbal prepositional phrases used in reference to two of the addressees, but in the ensuing curses. The fronted prepositional clauses help merely to organise the information relevant to each addressee, serving to juxtapose the members of the set.

4.1.3 Contrastive focus vs contrastive topic

The difference between focus and topic deserves further elaboration, because the two phenomena are sometimes confused, particularly when they are used for purposes of contrast. Consider the cases of contrastive focus in examples (13)–(15).

Examples (13)–(15): Contrastive focus

- (13) ... לֹא־יִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה שְׁמֶךָ ...
 ‘Your name will no longer be called **Jacob**, but **Israel** will be your name’ (Gen. 35:10b)
 (the first clause exhibits standard predicate focus, while in the second the verbal complement is marked via fronting for argument focus as the salient piece of – in this case, contrastive – information)
- (14) כִּי לֹא אֶתְּךָ מָאַסוּ כִּי־אֲנִי מָאַסוּ מִמְּלֶכֶת עַל־יָהֶם
 ‘For not **you** have they rejected, but **me** they have rejected from ruling over them’ (1 Sam. 8:7b)
 (in both clauses focus via fronting of the direct objects conveys counter-expectation)
- (15) לֹא אַתָּה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת לְשֹׁכֵת ... וְנִקְיַמְתִּי אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ אַחֲרָיִךָ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִבְּנֵיךָ ... הוּא יִבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת ...
 ‘**You** will not build me the house for dwelling ... but I will establish your seed after you who will be from your sons ... **He** will build me a house.’ (1 Chr. 17:4, 11–12)
 (independent subject pronouns are unnecessary in BH; when used they almost obligatorily precede the verb for which they serve as subject, often, as here, marking contrastive focus)

In the foregoing examples, each pre-verbal constituent is marked as the salient point of contrast between two eventualities. This is not to be confused with contrastive topic, such as in examples (16)–(20), where the pre-verbal constituent in each case does not itself constitute the salient point of contrast, but is one of a set of entities held up for comparison with respect to the salient point of contrast (that is, the newsworthy or previously unknown information), which is conveyed by the verbal predicate or some element therein.²⁷

Examples (16)–(20): Contrastive topic

- (16) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה
 ‘God called *the light* **day**, *whereas the dark* he called **night**’ (Gen. 1:5)
 (the ‘new’ information (in bold) consists of the respective names bestowed upon the light and darkness; ‘and the dark’ is fronted as a marked topic to provide a reference point for the comparison (in italics))
- (17) אֶתִּי הִשְׁיב עַל־כְּנִי וְאֶתְּוֹ תִּלֵּה:
 ‘**Me** he restored to my office, *whereas him* he hanged’ (Gen. 41:13)
 (the fronted direct objects (in italics) are topics in reference to which the main points of contrast, the difference in treatment in standard predicate focus (in bold), are related)
- (18) וַיִּפְרַח יוֹסֵף אֶת־אָחָיו וְהֵם לֹא הִכִּירוּהוּ:
 ‘**And Joseph** recognised his brothers, *but they* did **not** recognise him’ (Gen. 42:8)
 (the salient point of contrast is the brothers’ non-recognition of Joseph; the fronted subject pronoun is not obligatory, but here serves as a marked topic to heighten the contrast)
- (19) וַיִּגַּשׁ מֹשֶׁה לְבַדּוֹ אֶל־יְהוָה וְהֵם לֹא יִגָּשׁוּ וְהָעָם לֹא יַעֲלוּ ...
 ‘**And Moses alone** will approach Yhwh, *but they* will **not** approach, and *the people* will **not** ascend ...’ (Ex. 24:2)
 (the principal difference is in the actions, the fronted subjects serving to bring the differences into clearer relief)
- (20) וַתִּשָּׂק עֲרֹפְתָהּ לְחַמּוֹתֶיהָ וְרוּת הִבְקִיָה בָּהּ:
 ‘**And Orpah** kissed her mother-in-law, *but Ruth* **clung** to her’ (Ruth 1:14)
 (the women are compared with respect to their actions toward their mother-in-law)

²⁷ The identification of such pre-verbal constituents as topics is in agreement with van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze, 2000, p. 348 and Moshavi, 2010, pp. 98–100, 144–146; cf. Holmstedt, 2009, pp. 127–129. Buth (1994a, p. 223) views such cases of contrastive topics simultaneously as instances of marked topic and marked focus.

4.2 The inadequacy of information structure

There is undeniable value in recognising within BH word order variation functions known from information structure. However, in terms of explanatory power, information structure alone proves inadequate, as there are a great many cases of XV order (where X stands for any clausal argument or adjunct, and V for the verb) to which the functions of focus and topic do not obviously apply. Indeed, according to Moshavi's statistics for the prose sections of Genesis, in just 56.6 per cent of the cases can a pre-verbal constituent be so explained.²⁸

4.3 Basic subject-verb word order?

4.3.1 Arguments for basic subject-verb word order in BH

The pre-verbal placement of one category of constituents, namely subjects, might conceivably be accounted for on the assumption that the BH verbal clause has a basic subject-verb (SV) word order, an opinion that has been held by a minority of scholars past and present.²⁹ On this view, SV linearisations, by dint of representing the default, neutral order, require no explanation. Holmstedt has put forth the most lucid and comprehensive case for just such a view.³⁰ Focusing on a corpus consisting of main clauses in Genesis (though he has also applied his method to Jonah, Ruth and Proverbs), his approach is fundamentally frequency-based, but refined according to the criteria of syntactic distribution, clause type and pragmatic marking. This filtering is indispensable, since in any given language the numerically dominant – and thus apparently basic – order might have a limited syntactic distribution,³¹ obtain only in a specific clause type or types³² and/or exhibit pragmatic markedness.³³ On the basis of syntactic distribution and clause type, Holmstedt excludes

²⁸ Moshavi, 2010, p. 119. And this, despite the fact that Moshavi's definition of topic extends beyond many traditional definitions (see n. 26 above).

²⁹ Joüon, 1923, §155k; Greenberg, 1965, §27.4; DeCaen, 1999, p. 118 n. 22; Gross, 1999, p. 30 n. 46; Holmstedt, 2003; Holmstedt, 2005; Holmstedt, 2009; Holmstedt, 2011; Holmstedt, 2016, pp. 46–49; Cook, 2012, pp. 235–236.

³⁰ Holmstedt, 2011.

³¹ Holmstedt, 2011, pp. 7–13 (see also Holmstedt, 2009, pp. 117–119). To be precise, Holmstedt uses the criterion of distribution not to establish basic word order in BH, but to justify his excluding from consideration clauses with *wayyiqtol*, with its virtually obligatory clause-initial position, which, in his view, “distorts” (2009, p. 120) or “skews” (2011, p. 17 n. 35) the word order profile of much of the Hebrew Bible. Of course, this is true of *wayyiqtol* only if SV order really is basic in BH. If, on the other hand, basic VS order can be established (without consideration of *wayyiqtol* clauses), it is reasonable to conclude that the VS order of *wayyiqtol* clauses is simply one among several manifestations of the basic, unmarked order, rather than a distortion thereof.

³² Holmstedt, 2011, pp. 13–20 (see also Holmstedt, 2009, pp. 116–117). Again, Holmstedt uses this criterion not to establish basic word order, but to argue that *wayyiqtol* clauses should be filtered out of the data to be considered when measuring frequency.

³³ Holmstedt, 2011, pp. 20–25 (see also Holmstedt, 2009, pp. 119–120).

wayyiqtol clauses from consideration, as the form is essentially confined to a single syntactic environment – the verb-initial clause – and is used almost exclusively in one clause type – indicative, past temporal, narrative clauses. Further, since BH, like other languages, frequently displays word order variation motivated by pragmatic factors, clauses pragmatically marked for topic and focus are winnowed, resulting in sets of what Holmstedt considers pragmatically neutral SV and VS clauses. According to Holmstedt’s application of the methodology to eligible clauses in Genesis, pragmatically neutral SV clauses (of which he counts 47) outnumber their VS counterparts (of which he counts 26³⁴) by a ratio of nearly 2:1.³⁵ Holmstedt stops short of citing such results as proof of basic SV order in the BH verbal clause, but he understandably sees them – along with the acknowledged basic subject-predicate order of the BH verbless clause – as fatally problematic for the basic VS view.

4.3.2 Problems with the view that basic word order in BH is SV

4.3.2.1 SV order and pragmatic markedness

The methodology just summarised is arguably sound. Its insistence on linking basic word order to pragmatic neutrality is especially laudable. Holmstedt’s study is reasonable, well-documented and compellingly argued. Its conclusions are so fundamental and far-reaching that ignoring them is out of the question. And there is much of value in the study, both in terms of the questions it addresses, the weaknesses it cites in competing arguments, the supporting arguments that it furnishes for its central claim and, most importantly, the methodology it proposes. Be that as it may, at certain points Holmstedt’s application leads one to doubt the reliability of the results obtained and, consequently, the conclusions drawn therefrom. Most crucially, its central conclusion, that a basic SV word order for the BH verbal clause better accounts for the data than a basic VS order, proves unconvincing for the simple reason that, if rerun in strict accordance with the methodology that Holmstedt rightly advocates, the experiment produces very different results. For a provisional presentation of such results, see table 1. The remainder of this paper consists of examples and discussion, including the data behind the table.

³⁴ The figure does not include *wayyiqtol*, negative or volitive clauses, which Holmstedt excludes on various grounds.

³⁵ On three occasions Holmstedt counts a single example of SV word order in a verse arguably containing two cases: Gen. 15:17 *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וְעַלְטָה הָיָה* and *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וְעַלְטָה הָיָה*, 43:23 *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וְעַלְטָה הָיָה* and *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה וְעַלְטָה הָיָה*. Presumably, the *וַיֹּאמֶר* forms were interpreted as participles (though *וַיֹּאמֶר* in Gen. 15:17 is accented as a *qatal* form). Gen. 19:23 has two cases of SV word order and is included in both of Holmstedt’s lists, but it is not clear which case is intended in each list. Also, Gen. 50:23, with just one SV clause, is included in both the marked topic list (Holmstedt, 2011, pp. 23–24 n. 53) and the unmarked SV list (Holmstedt, 2011, p. 24 n. 54).

Table 1. Holmstedt's results and the results from re-running the test

Holmstedt's statistics		Statistics from re-run test	
marked SV (topic):	112 ³⁶	marked SV (topic / focus):	62 / 9 ³⁷
unmarked SV (no topic or focus):	47 ³⁸	SV unmarked for topic or focus:	11 ³⁹
unmarked VS:	26 ⁴⁰	unmarked VS:	23

From a theoretical standpoint, under the assumption of a pragmatically neutral SV order, it is natural to suppose that pre-verbal positioning, that is, fronting, would entail pragmatic marking only in the case of *non-subject* constituents, the pre-verbal slot being default for subjects. The pragmatic marking of subjects would presumably necessitate alternative strategies, such as intonation, focalising particles and special structures. As Holmstedt shows, however, there is strong correlation between pre-verbal subjects and topic marking. In-

³⁶ Holmstedt, 2009, p. 23 n. 53.

³⁷ The discrepancy between the figures in this line is due primarily to the fact that many of the cases of SV order in which Holmstedt identifies a topic are classified here as marked for some other pragmatic value. In other words, it is maintained here that the element fronted in each of the following does not convey the clause- or discourse-level 'about-ness' of a genuine topic, but some other argument-centred value (i.e. focus), or, more frequently, discourse-level marking of the entire clause for purposes of pragmatic discontinuity (on which concept see below, section 4.4.3 and n. 64): Gen. 2:6 (ואד יעלה); sentence focus), 4:1 (והאדם ידע), 7:19 (גברו והמים), 8:5 (מלכי עמים), 9:2 (והמים יהיו), 9:2 (והמים יהיו), 13:14 (ויהנה אומר), 14:3 (ויהנה אומר), 17:16 (כל־אלה חבור), 18:5 (מקנה יהיו), 18:17 (ויהנה אומר), 19:15 (ויבמו השחר עלה), 19:23 (whether השמש יצא or בא is intended), 19:24 (ויהנה המטיר), 21:1 (ויהנה המטיר), 21:7 (*sic*; read 21:6, כלה־השמע יצחק), 22:1 (והאלהים נסה), 24:1 (two cases, ויהנה ברך and ויאברהם וזן), 24:35 (ויהנה ברך), 24:40 (ויהנה אומר), 24:56 (ויהנה הצלילים), 25:34 (ויעקב נתן), 26:26 (וואבימלך הלב), 27:6 (ורבקה אומרה), 27:30 (ויעשו אחיו בא), sentence focus), 28:3 (ואל שדי יברך), 29:9 (ויהנה אומר), 31:5 (ויהנה אומר), 31:19 (ויהנה אומר), 31:29 (ויהנה אומר), 31:34 (ויהנה אומר), 34:5 (ויעקב שמע), 34:7 (ויעקב בא), 35:10 (ויעקב בא), 35:11 (ויהנה אומר), 35:11 (ויהנה אומר), 37:3 (ויעקב אומר), 37:33 (ויעקב אומר), 37:36 (ויעקב אומר), 41:10 (ויעקב אומר), 41:16 (ויעקב אומר), 41:56 (ויעקב אומר), 41:57 (ויעקב אומר), 44:19 (ויעקב אומר), 46:31 (ויעקב אומר), 47:5 (ויעקב אומר), 50:23 (ויעקב אומר). The instance Gen. 5:29, with a single SV clause, is included by Holmstedt in his list of SV clauses with marked topic as well as in that containing unmarked SV clauses. Having a pronominal subject, its eligibility for consideration according to Holmstedt's criteria is questionable; see below, n. 44. It is also arguably explicable as an instance of focus; see below, n. 47. As such, it has been excluded from the count. Gen. 3:11 appears to be a mistake for Gen. 3:1, while Gen. 21:26, 44:8 and 49:9 seem to have been listed by mistake. It is to be emphasised that the classification of pragmatic effects involves the subjective judgement of individual readers, so that differences of opinion are not unexpected. The important point is that scholars be furnished with notional frameworks in which to compare approaches to individual clauses.

³⁸ Holmstedt, 2009, p. 24 n. 54.

³⁹ The discrepancy between the totals in this line is due to two factors. First, adhering strictly to Holmstedt's criteria, 32 of the SV clauses he considers unmarked for information structure ought to be considered ineligible for consideration due to other factors; see the discussion below and n. 44. Additionally, in some nine cases (four of which are not excluded on other grounds), the SV order appears to involve either focus or topic; see below, examples (21)–(29).

⁴⁰ Holmstedt, 2009, p. 25 n. 55.

deed, he finds *marked SV* cases (112) more than twice as common as *unmarked SV* cases (47).⁴¹ Intuitively, the fact that *SV* order, like *XV* more generally, correlates so highly with pragmatic markedness would seem to militate against seeing *SV* order as basic in BH.

4.3.2.2 *Alleged unmarked cases of SV word order*

But a more serious problem arises when one rigorously applies the proposed criteria for establishing basic word order to Holmstedt's ostensibly neutral clauses. His discussion of clause type⁴² explicitly cites Siewierska's oft-quoted dictum:

Within the context of typological studies the term 'basic order' is typically identified with the order that occurs in stylistically neutral, independent, indicative clauses with full noun phrase (NP) participants, where the subject is definite, agentive and human, the object is a definite semantic patient, and the verb represents an action, not a state or an event.⁴³

She then goes on to note that this basic order "need not be the dominant linearization pattern in a given language". The problem is that, according to these guidelines, the majority of Holmstedt's 47 neutral *SV* cases must be disqualified. Some 32 involve a stative, passive or middle verb; a subject that is non-human, non-agentive or both; or some combination of the above;⁴⁴ by comparison, just three of his 26 pragmatically neutral *VS* clauses are excluded on

⁴¹ Holmstedt, 2011, pp. 23–24 n. 53. This figure includes neither clauses with pre-verbal pronominal subjects, which Holmstedt justifiably sees as pragmatically marked (though an argument could be made that these should be counted, since it might well be markedness by means of fronting that leads to the use of the independent subject pronouns), nor modal clauses with pre-verbal subjects, in which category Holmstedt (following others) includes negative clauses (2011, p. 20 n. 44; cf. Bhat, 1999, pp. 178–179). Interestingly, Holmstedt identifies no cases of marked *SV* word order with the subject marked for focus. In n. 37 above, at least five of Holmstedt's cases have been classified as marked for argument focus, but some of these are debatable. Consider, by way of example: *לֹא־יִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עוֹד יַעֲקֹב כִּי אִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה שְׁמֶךָ* 'no longer will your name be called Jacob, but **Israel** will be your name' (Gen. 35:10). Here the fronted proper noun is arguably construable as a focalised subject, but is probably better understood as the complement of the verb 'will be', the subject being *שְׁמֶךָ* 'your name', as in the preceding clause. As Buth (1999, pp. 100–101) opines, the subject of a clause is normally the more definite and the more presupposed. While 'Israel' here is more definite than 'your name', in the immediate context 'your name' is far more presupposed as the issue at hand, and is thus the better candidate for clausal subject.

⁴² Holmstedt, 2011, p. 13.

⁴³ Siewierska, 1988, p. 8.

⁴⁴ Gen. 1:2 (וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה), 2:5a (two cases, וְכָל שֵׁיט הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְכָל שֵׁיט הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וְכָל שֵׁיט הַשָּׁמַיְמָה), 2:6 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 7:6 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 7:10 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 7:11 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 9:2 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 11:3 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 15:12 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 19:31 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 19:31 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 34:10 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 35:11 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 36:12 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 36:13 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 36:14 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 42:19 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 43:23b (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 44:20b (two cases, וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 45:16 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 48:10 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 49:22 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 49:26 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה), 50:23 (וְהַמַּבּוּל הָיָה). Holmstedt's list of topic *SV* cases and his list of unmarked *SV* cases each

the same grounds.⁴⁵ In fifteen of the 32 allegedly neutral SV cases with stative, passive or middle semantics, the verb is the tensed copula הָיָה.⁴⁶ The dubious relevance of these clauses is seen not only in their lack of agentive subjects, action and transitivity, but in their striking similarity to verbless clauses, with the expected neutral subject-predicate order. If *wayyiqtol* clauses are to be excluded because of their restriction to a specific clause type, so, arguably, should these. Finally, in at least nine cases (four of which are not excluded on other grounds), the pre-verbal subject in an allegedly neutral SV clause looks to be marked for one of the information structure functions; these are given in examples (21)–(29).⁴⁷

Examples (21)–(25): Arguable cases of focal fronting among Holmstedt’s unmarked SV clauses

- (21) ... הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וְאֵינָהּ הַשֶּׁשֶׁה לְעֹלָה: ... אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לּוֹ הַשֶּׁשֶׁה לְעֹלָה בְּגִי ...
 ‘Here’s the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the offering?
 ... **God** will provide for himself the sheep ...’ (Gen. 22:7b–8a)
 (fill-in: that someone must provide the offering is assumed, but it is not known who; the fronted element supplies the missing information)
- (22) ... פְּרֹה וּרְבִיחַ גּוֹי וְקַתַּל גּוֹיִם יִהְיֶה מִמֶּנּוּ.
 ‘Be fruitful and multiply. **A nation, even an assembly of nations** will be from you.’ (Gen. 35:11a)
 (contra-expectation: notwithstanding the commands to be fruitful and multiply, that Jacob’s progeny should become a nation, much less an assembly thereof, is unexpected; excluded from previous counts due to use of הָיָה)

include two examples from Gen. 49; one wonders if the poetry here qualifies as “stylistically neutral”. The relevance of four verses, two of which are listed above, is questionable on the grounds that the subject is encoded using a pronoun: Gen. 5:29, 36:13, 36:14, 38:28.

⁴⁵ Gen. 19:28 (עָלָה קִיטָר הָאָרֶץ), 27:41 (יָקֵרְבוּ יָמַי אֶבֶל אָבִי), probably jussive), 42:28 (כִּפְסֵי הַיֹּשֵׁב).

⁴⁶ See above, n. 44.

⁴⁷ There are other cases in which a pre-verbal subject can be read as marked in terms of information structure. Focus: הִנֵּה יִנְחַמְנוּ מִמַּעֲשֵׂינֵנוּ וּמִמַּעֲבֹדֵי יָדֵינוּ ‘**This one** [as opposed to previous children] will comfort us from our deeds and from the toil of our hands’ (Gen. 5:29). In two further cases, the fronting is arguably intended to mark the entire clause for what Lambrecht (1994, pp. 222–224, 233–235) calls sentence focus: וְאָמַרְנוּ חַיָּה רַעָה אֲכָלָתָהוּ ‘and we will say: “**A wild animal has eaten him!**”’ (Gen. 37:20); הָאֱלֹהִים מָצָא אֶת־עוֹן עַבְדֶּיךָ ‘**God has found out your servants’ guilt**’ (Gen. 44:16). Constituent marking in such cases (fronting in BH) signals that the entire clause, not just the fronted element, constitutes marked rhematic information, usually as an answer to the (implied) question ‘What happened?’. Alternative pragmatic readings are also possible.

- (23) לֹא מְצָאתֶיהָ וְגַם אַנְשֵׁי הַמְּקוֹם אָמְרוּ לֹא־הָיְתָה בְּזֶה קְדֻשָּׁה׃
 ‘I haven’t found her. Even **the locals** said “There was no prostitute here.”’ (Gen. 38:22)
 (focalising particle, contra-expectation: even those expected to know do not know)
- (24) וַתִּקַּח הַמִּיֻלְדֶת וַתְּקַשֵּׁר עַל־יָדוֹ שָׁנִי לְאָמֹר זֶה יֵצֵא רִאשׁוֹן׃
 ‘And the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying: “**This one** came out first.”’ (Gen. 38:28)
 (identification, disambiguation: given the cultural importance attached to primogeniture, and the ambiguity involved in the birth of twins, identification of the firstborn is fitting information to be focalised)
- (25) לֹא יָדָעְנוּ מִי־שָׁם כִּסְפָנוּ בְּאִמְתַּחְתֵּינוּ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלֹם לְכֶם אֶל־תִּירְאוּ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם נָתַן לְכֶם מִטְמוֹן בְּאִמְתַּחְתֵּיכֶם ...
 ““We don’t know who put our silver in our sacks.” And he said “Peace be with you. Don’t be afraid. **Your God and the God of your fathers** put treasure in your sacks.”’ (Gen. 43:22b–23a)
 (fill-in: the fronted element answers the indirect question in the preceding verse)

Examples (26)–(29): Arguable cases of topic fronting among Holmstedt’s unmarked SV clauses

- (26) בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נִבְקְעוּ כָּל־מַעְיֵנֹת תְּהוֹם רַבָּה וְנִאֲרָצְתָה הַשָּׁמַיִם וּנְפְתָחוּ׃
 ‘on that day burst forth all the springs of the great deep, *while the floodgates of the sky* opened’ (Gen. 7:11)
 (excluded from previous counts due to passive/intransitive verb and non-agentive/non-human subject⁴⁸)
- (27) וַתְּהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבָנָה לְאֶבֶן וְתַחֲמֹלֶר הָיְתָה לָהֶם לְחֵמֶר׃
 ‘And brick served them as stone, *while bitumen* served them as mortar’ (Gen. 11:3)
 (excluded from previous counts due to use of הָיְתָה and non-agentive/non-human subject)
- (28) אִם־כֹּפְנִים אַתֶּם אֲחֵיכֶם אֲתוּד יֵאָסֵר בְּבַיִת מִשְׁמַרְכֶם וְאַתֶּם לָכוּ ...
 ‘If you’re honest, let *one of your brothers* remain in the place of detention, *whereas you*, go ...’ (Gen. 42:19)
 (excluded from previous counts due to use of passive verb and non-agentive/non-human subject)

⁴⁸ The prepositional time adverbial ‘on this day’ is also topicalised as a temporal, scene-setting device (see above, section 4.1.2).

(29) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלוֹם לָכֶם אֶל־תִּירָאוּ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֵלֵהֶי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נָתַן לָכֶם מִטְמוֹן בְּאִמְתַּחְתֵּיכֶם כִּסְפָכֶם
... בָּא אֵלַי

‘And he said “Peace be with you. Don’t be afraid. Your God and the God of your fathers put treasure in your sacks. *Your money* came to me.”’ (Gen. 43:23)

(excluded from previous counts due to use of intransitive verb and non-agentive/non-human subject)

4.3.2.3 *Ramifications: Is VS basic after all?*

In total, at least 36 of the 47 cases of alleged unmarked SV order are excluded due to clause type, pragmatic marking or both, leaving just 11 cases of apparently unmarked SV order against 23 unmarked VS clauses.⁴⁹ Applying Holmstedt’s criteria strictly, VS emerges as the numerically dominant order for pragmatically neutral clauses. Though postulating a basic VS word order admittedly leaves a situation of asymmetry between the respective default orders of verbal and verbless clauses, basic order is unified in main and subordinate verbal clauses.⁵⁰

Returning to the question with which this section began, the assumption of basic SV word order in the BH verbal clause is of little help in accounting for the many XV clauses that cannot be explained in terms of information structure. Topic and focus get one only so far; the need for a complementary dimension or dimensions is evident.

4.4 Alternative pragmatic values and word order variation

The greatest problem with positing the all-sufficiency of information structure as an explanation for fronting in the BH verbal clause is that the relevant marking is generally conceived of as applying narrowly to fronted arguments in agreement with their informational status. Yet frequently in BH, elements are fronted for purposes of marking something special about the entire clause. Though some formulations of information structure include the possibility of whole-clause marking by means of a fronted constituent – for example, Lambrecht’s sentence focus,⁵¹ which may usefully explain certain cases of preverbal positioning in BH – this is inappropriate for the vast majority of XV instances in BH in which X is neither topic nor focus.

⁴⁹ This figure should be considered provisional, since it is possible that the SV order in one or more cases may signal pragmatic marking for purposes other than topic or focus; see below.

⁵⁰ Holmstedt himself (2011, pp. 16–18, 28; see also 2016, p. 146 and n. 17) recognises neutral VS word order in subordinate clauses. Indeed, he argues compellingly (2011, p. 16) that this order in subordinate clauses reflects an earlier unmarked order. See also Buth, 1995, pp. 82–83. While the concept of ‘basic’ or pragmatically neutral constituent order is useful for explaining marked patterns, it may be advisable to resist the dogmatism involved in assigning a basic word order. It may be more profitable simply to recognise functional correlations between various orders and their semantic/pragmatic values and effects. I thank Profs. Geoffrey Khan and Christo van der Merwe for discussing this perspective with me.

⁵¹ Lambrecht, 1994, pp. 222–224, 233–235.

4.4.1 Temporal succession (sequentiality)

An obvious candidate for a parameter to complement information structure is temporal succession. *Wayyiqtol* has long been associated with temporal sequence, *X qatal* with departures therefrom, especially anteriority.⁵² See examples (30)–(35).

Examples (30)–(35): X qatal signalling anteriority

- (30) וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבִּימֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלֹם וַיֹּאמֶר לּוֹ הֲיָנָה מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהוּא בְּעֵלְתָּ בָּעַל: וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ
'And God came to Abimelech in a dream. And he said to him, "You're dead on account of the woman you have taken, since she's married." But **Abimelech had not approached** her ...' (Gen. 20:3–4)
(note that relative VS order was possible here, e.g., *וּלֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ אַבִּימֶלֶךְ, but this would be given to a sequential reading, i.e., 'so Abimelech did not approach her')
- (31) וַיִּנְהַג אֶת-כָּל-מִקְנֵהוּ וְאֶת-כָּל-רֶכֶשׁוֹ ... לָבוֹא אֶל-יִצְחָק אָבִיו אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן: וּלְבֹן הָדָף לָגֹזַז אֶת-צִאֲנָנּוֹ וּתְגַנֵּב רְחֵל אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים אֲשֶׁר לְאָבִיהָ:
'And he drove all his livestock and all his possessions ... to come to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. **Meanwhile, Laban had** gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole her father's household gods.' (Gen. 31:18–19)
(cf. the alternative, default לָבָן וַיֵּלֶךְ לָבָן *'and Laban went', likely to give rise to a temporally successive reading)
- (32) וַיִּשָּׂג לָבָן אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹב וַיִּצְלַב תְּקַע אֶת-אֹהֶלֹ בְּהָר ...
'And Laban caught up with Jacob. **Now, Jacob had pitched** his tent in the hill country ...' (Gen. 31:25)
- (33) וַיָּבֹא לָבָן בְּאֹהֶל יַעֲקֹב וּבְאֹהֶל לֵאָה וּבְאֹהֶל שְׁתֵּי הָאֲמָהוֹת וְלֹא מָצָא וַיֵּצֵא מֵאֹהֶל לֵאָה וַיָּבֹא בְּאֹהֶל רְחֵל: וְרָחֵל לָקְחָה אֶת-הַתְּרָפִים וַתְּשַׂמֶם בְּכַר הַגִּמְלָה וַתָּשֻׁב עֲלֵיהֶם ...
'And Laban entered Jacob's tent and Leah's tent and the tents of the two maidservants, but he did not find (them). And he left Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. **But Rachel had taken** the household gods and put them in her saddlebag and sat upon them ...' (Gen. 31:33–34)

⁵² Note, for example, Rashi on אֲשֶׁתוֹ יָדַע אֶת-תְּהֵא אֵשֶׁתוֹ 'and the man knew Eve, his wife' (Gen. 4:1): כבר קודם עניין שלמעלה, קודם שחטא ושנטרד מגן עדן, וכן ההריון והלידה; שאם כתב וידע אדם, (Gen. 4:1): 'Already before the above matter, before he sinned and was banished from the garden of Eden, and so too the pregnancy and birth. For if it had written וידע אדם, it would have meant that after he was banished he had children' (Moshavi, 2010, p. 23).

- (34) ... וַיֹּסֶף הַיֹּרֵד מִצְרַיִם ...
 ‘**And Joseph had been taken down** to Egypt ...’ (Gen. 39:1)
 (chapter 39 continues the narrative of chapter 37; since the events of the intervening chapter extend generations beyond the narrative of chapters 37 and 39, 39:1 marks a retreat in relation to the end of chapter 38)
- (35) וַתִּקַּח הָאִשָּׁה אֶת־שְׁנֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים וַתִּצְפְּנֵן וַתֹּאמְרוּ כֹּן בָּאוּ אֵלַי הָאֲנָשִׁים וְלֹא יָדַעְתִּי מֵאֵין הֵמָּה: וַיְהִי הַשָּׁעַר לִסְגֹר בַּחֹשֶׁךְ וְהָאֲנָשִׁים יָצְאוּ לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֲנִי הִלְכוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים רִדְפוּ מֵהָר אַחֲרֵיהֶם כִּי תִשְׁיָגִימוּ: וְהִיא הִעֲלִתָם הִגָּה וַתִּטְמַנְם בְּפִשְׁתֵּי הַעֵץ הַעֲרֹכוֹת לְהַעֲלִיג: ‘And the woman took the two men and she hid them. And she said “So it is that the men came to me, but I didn’t know where they were from. And the gate was about to close in the dark when the men left. I don’t know where the men went. Hurry, chase after them, so that you catch them!” **But she had taken them up** to the roof and hidden them in the flax-stalks laid out for her on the roof.’ (Josh. 2:4–6)

4.4.1.1 *Non-sequential wayyiqtol*

There is an obvious correlation between *wayyiqtol* and event order,⁵³ but as a semantic property, temporal succession is too narrow and rigid to be comprehensively applicable. Gauged against a strict conception of event sequence, many *wayyiqtol*s prove to flout a precise notion of sequentiality, as shown in examples (36)–(38), which could be multiplied.⁵⁴

Examples (36)–(38): Temporally non-successive wayyiqtol

- (36) ... וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ אַבְרָם ...
 ‘And he blessed him **and said** “Blessed be Abram ...”’ (Gen. 14:19)
 (the speaking and blessing are the same act)
- (37) וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־יוֹנָה וַיַּטְּלֵהוּ אֶל־הַיָּם וַיַּעֲמֵד הַיָּם מִזְעַפּוֹ: וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יָרְאוּ גְדוֹלָה אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־זִבְחֵי לַיהוָה וַיִּדְרוּ נְדָרִים: וַיִּמְנוּ יְהוָה דָּג גָּדוֹל לִבְלַע אֶת־יוֹנָה ...
 ‘And they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. And the sea ceased from its raging. And the men greatly feared Yhwh. **And they made sacrifices** and took oaths. **And Yhwh appointed** a great fish to swallow Jonah.’ (Jon. 1:16–2:1)
 (it is unlikely that the sailors are to be envisioned as having made their sacrifices while on the high seas or, arguably, that God waited till they had got back to shore to sacrifice before appointing the fish to swallow Jonah⁵⁵)

⁵³ Hataf (1997, p. 57) observes that just six per cent of the 2,445 *wayyiqtol* clauses in her corpus of classical Hebrew prose are clearly non-sequential.

⁵⁴ Buth, 1994b; Buth, 1995, pp. 86–87; Cook, 2004, pp. 257–261; Cook, 2012, pp. 289–298; Moshavi, 2010, pp. 29–30.

⁵⁵ Buth, 1994b, pp. 143–144; Buth, 1995, p. 87.

- (38) וַיִּפְתַּח הַגִּלְעָדִי הַזֶּה גִבּוֹר חָלִל וְהוּא בֶן-אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וַיּוֹלֵד גִּלְעָד אֶת-יִפְתָּח:
 ‘And Jephthah the Gileadite was a great warrior. And he was the son of
 a prostitute. **And Gilead fathered Jephthah.**’ (Judg. 11:1)
 (Gilead obviously bore Jephthah before the latter became a mighty
 warrior⁵⁶)

These examples show that *wayyiqtol* is best viewed as the default – that is, unmarked – past narrative form, and that its association with temporal succession, while real, is indirect. In other words, BH writers needed no special reason to utilise *wayyiqtol* in past tense narrative accounts, but did need a special reason to use an alternative.

4.4.1.2 Sequential X qatal

Just as *wayyiqtol* does not automatically entail temporal succession, strictly speaking, only a minority of X *qatal* cases call for translation using the pluperfect.⁵⁷ As long as temporal succession in discourse is linked on a one-to-one basis with real-world temporal sequence, it will prove too rigid a parameter to account for XV instances left unexplained by recourse to information structure. However, even if it is considered a purely pragmatic, presentation-centred property, that is, as being more dependent on a writer’s discretion for purposes of text structure than on actual real-life event sequence, it seems doubtful that the concept of temporal succession is sufficiently broad to encompass the range of meanings and effects associated with *wayyiqtol* and X *qatal* not covered by information structure, some of which, significantly, seem to have nothing to do with sequence or ordering.

4.4.2 Grounding

We turn now to another potential complementary parameter. With specific regard to narrative texts, the notion of grounding – foreground vs background – has been applied to biblical texts. *Wayyiqtol* is seen as carrying forward the sequence of mainline events and actions, with alternative forms and structures used to furnish ancillary information. But there are instances of non-*wayyiqtol* forms and structures – including X *qatal* – ill-suited by the label ‘background’. Examples (39)–(40) present cases of what are arguably mainline sequential events in which fronting does not obviously mark topic or focus.

⁵⁶ Buth, 1995, p. 86.

⁵⁷ According to Moshavi (2010, p. 119), in only 11.2 per cent of clauses with fronting in the prose of Genesis does the fronting mark the entire clause, and in only a portion of these is an anterior reading called for.

Examples (39)–(40): X qatal for foreground eventualities

- (39) נִיָּקַם יוֹנָה לִבְרֹחַס מִרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּרֵד יָפוֹ וַיִּמְצָא אֲנִיָּהּ בָּאָה מִרְשִׁישַׁי וַיִּתֵּן שְׂכָרָהּ
וַיֵּרֵד בָּהּ לְבוֹא עִמָּהֶם מִרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה: וַיְהִי הַטַּיִל רוּחַ-גְּדוֹלָה אֶל-הַיָּם וַיְהִי סֵעַר-
גָּדוֹל בָּגַם וַתִּאָּנֶיֶת הַשִּׁבְיָה לְהִשָּׁבֵר:
‘And Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from before Yhwh. And he went
down to Joppa, where he found a boat headed for Tarshish, gave
payment, and set off to go with them to Tarshish from before Yhwh.
And Yhwh cast down to the sea a mighty wind. And there was a great
storm in the sea. **And the boat threatened** to break up.’ (Jon. 1:3–4)⁵⁸
- (40) הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צָעֵרָה: וַיְהִי הַמָּטִיר עַל-סֹדֹם וְעַל-עֲמֹרָה גְּפָרִית וְאָשׁ
‘**The sun came up** over the land. **And Lot came** (or was coming) to
Zoar. **And Yhwh rained down** upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah
brimstone and fire.’ (Gen. 19:24)⁵⁹

They may be wrapped in the packaging typically associated with supporting information, but, far from being backgrounded, the events they relate are highlighted foreground.⁶⁰ That scholars often differ on distinguishing foreground from background demonstrates the subjectivity of the distinction.⁶¹

4.4.3 Discourse continuity and discontinuity

As a concept that more satisfactorily complements information structure in accounting for BH constituent order variation, the notion of discourse continuity seems useful. So far as I can discern, the first to elaborate on discourse continuity was Givón.⁶² Since then ‘continuity’ as a pragmatic dimension within Hebrew discourse has been variously cited and defined.⁶³ Givón lists three aspects of discourse continuity: thematic, action and topic. Of particular

⁵⁸ Buth, 2005, p. 77 n. 17.

⁵⁹ Buth, 1994a, pp. 226–227.

⁶⁰ Bailey and Levinsohn, 1992, pp. 200–204; Buth, 1995, pp. 85–88; Moshavi, 2010, pp. 27–31.

⁶¹ Heimerdinger (1999, pp. 75–76) is justifiably critical of Longacre’s (1989, pp. 76–78) rather circular identification of foreground with *wayyiqtol*. Bailey and Levinsohn (1992, p. 204) not unreasonably conjecture that Longacre may have confused the notions of ‘backbone’ and ‘foreground’. See also Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 56–60. If the concept of grounding is to be used at all in discourse studies, it may be useful to think in terms of three grounds: background, (neutral) mid-ground and (highlighted) foreground. Conceivably, identical marking could be used to signal either backgrounded or foregrounded entities/eventualities; cf. the helpful, if tentative, discussion in Robar, 2014, pp. 65–67.

⁶² Givón, 1983, pp. 7–8.

⁶³ Bandstra, 1992, pp. 116ff; Buth, 1995, p. 97; Bailey and Levinsohn, 1992; Dooley and Levinsohn, 2001, pp. 37–42; Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 53–78; Robar, 2014, pp. 148–188. It gives me great pleasure to note that the honouree of the present volume himself noted some of the discontinuity functions of XV word order. Already in his 1988 monograph on extraposition in Semitic languages Geoffrey Khan included a section (pp. 86–88) on ‘Other devices for marking span boundaries’, among them SV clauses.

relevance to the present discussion is action continuity, which Givón explicitly relates to temporal sequentiality and adjacency. Since the notion of pragmatic continuity is not directly linked to real-world temporal succession, but constitutes a higher-level discourse property, the application of which is at least partially subject to a language user's discretion, it promises to provide the practical and theoretical flexibility precluded by approaches based on semantic parameters, such as temporal succession, which often fail to comprehend the optionality of pragmatic marking. It is also, arguably, less subjective than the notion of grounding. It seems obvious that the *waw*-consecutive forms encode action continuity in the sorts of discourse in which they feature and, at the same time, that action continuity is a default quality of those types of discourse.

For example, on the assumption that *wayyiqtol* encodes action continuity in narrative and report, it is not surprising that it should correlate highly with real-life sequence, but also not infrequently serve to depict eventualities that are not strictly or even remotely sequential. As long as readers can successfully sequence story events based on content, context and logic, explicit grammatical marking of backtracking is unnecessary. Similarly, the notion of pragmatic discontinuity fits well with a variety of effects associated with *X qatal* that are not covered by information structure, specifically those aforementioned cases of pre-verbal constituents in which the fronting marks the entire clause rather than the fronted element itself: departure from temporal succession; departures from the mainline story for purposes of providing ancillary information; signalling scene and unit boundaries (including the onset of direct speech), where, to be sure, the same structure also frequently indicates an actual change of clause-level or discourse topic and/or a temporal retreat (see below); even, possibly, the use of *X qatal* for such effects as sentence focus, highlighting and dramatic pause.⁶⁴ While some of these are explicable according to the concepts of temporal succession and/or grounding, discontinuity seems a particularly apt concept for uniting them under a single, explanatory heading.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Returning to the marked SV cases in Genesis in which, against Holmstedt (2011, pp. 23–24 n. 53), the fronted element is here understood as marked for discontinuity rather than topic (n. 37 above), the following classification of effects is suggested (note that a few cases have multiple effects): new unit/scene/direct speech or new tack in direct speech – 4:1, 9:2, 13:14, 18:17, 19:15, 21:1, 22:1, 24:1a, 24:35, 24:40, 26:26, 27:6, 28:3, 34:5, 37:36 (end of scene), 41:10, 44:19, 46:31 (sentence focus?), 47:5 (sentence focus?); off-line information (parenthesis, description, summary, restatement, commentary, interruption) – 8:5, 14:3, 21:6, 24:56, 25:34, 31:5, 37:3, 41:56, 41:57 (end of scene); in a subcategory of these are background clauses in which the action should be understood as temporally anterior: 24:1b, 31:19, 31:34, 34:5, 34:7; dramatic pause/highlighting – 7:19, 19:23, 19:24. As noted above, the identification of these effects is subjective.

⁶⁵ The fullest explanation is that of Buth, 1995, pp. 84–93, 95–99; see also Khan, 1988, pp. 86–88; Bailey and Levinsohn, 1992, pp. 188–200; Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 41–78.

Positing continuity as an inherent property of discourse brings with it another benefit. It allows us to slice through the Gordian knot inherent in a system in which all verbal forms have been described as marked. If action continuity represents a default property of certain types of discourse, and if the *waw*-consecutive forms are recognised as encoding continuity, then *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal* emerge as default, unmarked forms within the respective types of discourse in which each figures prominently.

Since both information structure and discourse continuity have been recognised by scholars as pragmatic dimensions signalled by means of BH word order variation, it is appropriate at this juncture to explain how what has been proposed here tallies with other recent proposals. Several approaches to BH constituent order admit only one dimension, most often information structure, which, as we have seen, fails to account for a significant proportion of XV structures.⁶⁶ Other approaches include two (or more) dimensions, usually information structure and either temporal succession or grounding (or a combination of the two),⁶⁷ but the explanation is characterised by the weaknesses highlighted above, such as lack of comprehensiveness, conceptual rigidity (in terms of temporal succession) and/or subjectivity (in terms of grounding).

Happily, several scholars promote approaches that combine information structure and continuity/discontinuity. Yet even among these there is variety, especially concerning the degree to which scholars are willing to group sometimes apparently disparate effects within broader pragmatic categories. One sort of approach, exemplified most comprehensively by Moshavi, presents a taxonomy of constituent order effects representing a spectrum of parameters for which she seeks no common heading. Focusing on clauses with fronted subjects, she boils factors down to those which mark the preposed element itself for the information structure notions of topic or focus⁶⁸ and an assortment of effects having to do with the special marking of the entire clause: anteriority,⁶⁹ simultaneity,⁷⁰ background information,⁷¹ new narrative unit or scene within a narrative.⁷² Moshavi subsequently attempts to deal with a sizable ‘residue’ of clauses, which are especially typical of direct speech, offering such categories as justification, affirmation and boasting.⁷³

Moshavi’s approach is somewhat reminiscent of my own, according to which focal frontings are distinguished from non-focal frontings, the latter being further subdivided into those in which the preposed constituent is itself marked as a topic and those in which the entire clause is set off.⁷⁴ Significantly,

⁶⁶ Heimerdinger, 1999; Holmstedt, 2011.

⁶⁷ Longacre, 1989.

⁶⁸ Moshavi, 2010, pp. 104–112.

⁶⁹ Moshavi, 2010, pp. 112–113.

⁷⁰ Moshavi, 2010, pp. 113–114.

⁷¹ Moshavi, 2010, p. 114.

⁷² Moshavi, 2010, p. 115.

⁷³ Moshavi, 2010, pp. 115–120.

⁷⁴ Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 35–78.

however, I attempted to explain all frontings that mark the entire clause in terms of discourse discontinuity.⁷⁵

Bailey and Levinsohn, joined by Buth, go one step further.⁷⁶ They deal with focal fronting as a function of information structure, but group all other frontings, both those which mark the preposed element as a topic and those in which the preposed element marks off the entire clause, under the umbrella of discontinuities. Bailey and Levinsohn use the terminology associated with information structure, that is, focus versus topicalisation, but it is clear from their discussion that they view topicalisation in terms of discontinuity. For his part, Buth coins the term ‘contextualising constituent’ (to replace his earlier ‘pseudo-topic’) as a broad category that subsumes constituents fronted for their own informational status as well as those preposed to signal something special about the entire clause in which they occur.

Notwithstanding the differences among the approaches just summarised, it is of crucial import for the present study to note that all (a) recognise the explanatory inadequacy of systems that attempt to account for BH constituent order variation on the basis of a single parameter, (b) posit the utility of the information structure values of focus and topic, (c) acknowledge the reality of whole-clause marking by means of fronted elements, and (d) adumbrate similar lists of (especially narrative) effects associated with discourse discontinuity. The studies of these scholars represent a consensus regarding the need for a multidimensional account of BH word order variation encompassing both information structure and continuity/discontinuity.

Even so, the differences between approaches merit consideration. Most significantly, Moshavi wonders

whether Buth is successful in unifying all the different types of discontinuities. By applying the term *Contextualising Constituent* to cases in which the preposed item does not actually function as Topic or Setting, Buth is calling very different things by the same name.⁷⁷

Language users evidently made use of a single multi-functional structure, the XV order, effectively to halt forward progress of the default discourse continuity iconically communicated by the *waw*-consecutive forms for purposes of specially marking both genuine topics and whole clauses. Further, the intersection between information structure and discontinuity is abundantly evident

⁷⁵ The discontinuity effects that I enumerated are similar to some of those mentioned by Moshavi: non-sequentiality (Hornkohl, 2005, pp. 62–66), non-storyline information (circumstantial, parenthetical, explanatory, background, summary; pp. 67–68), start of new literary unit (episode or paragraph; pp. 68–70), intra-episode scene switching (pp. 70–71), dramatic slowing or pause (pp. 71–74), change of tack/start of new theme in direct speech, including restatement, explanation, detailing, and redirection (pp. 74–78).

⁷⁶ Bailey and Levinsohn, 1992; Buth, 1995.

⁷⁷ Moshavi, 2010, p. 40.

in cases in which the marking of a genuine topic (whether sentence topic, discourse topic or both) coincides with a discontinuity effect. The preposing of actual clause- and discourse-level topics also frequently achieves other effects, as can be seen in examples (41)–(44).

- (41) ... וְהַנָּחַשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
 ‘**Now, the serpent** was more cunning than any other beast of the field that Yhwh God had made ...’ (Gen. 3:1)
 (the fronting serves to mark both the serpent as a topic of the ensuing discourse and the start of an episode⁷⁸)
- (42) ... וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ ... אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר ... וּלְאָדָם אָמַר ...
 ‘¹⁴ And Yhwh God said to the serpent ... ¹⁶ **To the woman** he said ...
¹⁷ **And to the man** he said ...’ (Gen. 3:14, 16–17)
 (similarly, the non-subjectival frontings here serve as genuine topics highlighting the addressee of each curse, put also serve to segment the text into paragraphs)
- (43) ... וַיֹּסֶף הַיּוֹרֵד מִצְרָיִם
 ‘**And Joseph** had been taken down to Egypt ...’ (Gen. 39:1)
 (here the fronted element serves as discourse topic, reactivated after the Judah-exkursus of chapter 38; it signals a new literary unit; and it marks a temporal retreat since, as mentioned in example (34), the Judah-oriented events of chapter 38 extend generations beyond the Joseph-oriented events recounted in chapters 37 and 39)
- (44) ... וַיִּעֲקֹב שָׁמַע כִּי טָמְא אֶת־דִּינָה בְתוֹ וּבָנָיו הָיוּ אֶת־מִקְנֵהוּ בַשָּׂדֶה
 ‘**Now Jacob** heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. **But his sons** were with his livestock in the field ...’ (Gen. 34:5)
 (the first fronting may be genuinely topical as well as mark a scene change, while the second arguably serves several purposes at once: to raise the sons to a discourse topic; to heighten the contrast between Jacob’s hearing and the sons’ ignorance; and to avoid the *wayyiqtol* structure וַיִּזְכֹּר בָּנָיו*, which would have sounded like a temporally subsequent situation)

⁷⁸ Cf. וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ (Gen. 4:1), in which the XV structure would seem to mark a new literary unit, but in which the preposed argument ‘the man’ seems in no way fronted on account of its own special informational status, since he is not a topic of the ensuing discourse. Indeed, the only thing that would be different given the alternative VS order וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ* would arguably be that continuity would be maintained with the previous episode. *Pace* Rashi (see above, n. 52), it seems more likely that the discontinuity here signals span onset than anteriority.

Despite the polyvalence of XV constituent order, it seems notionally valid, and indeed preferable, to distinguish between actual discourse topics and elements brought forward for clause marking. The two phenomena exploit the same syntactic structures, but involve different cognitive processes, since an actual topic, like a setting, orients understanding of an utterance around itself in a way that clause-marking frontings do not.⁷⁹

The explanatory power of a continuity/discontinuity approach is largely untested. Moshavi found that by taking into account both information structure and such effects as anteriority, simultaneity, background, scene/unit demarcation, justification, affirmation and boasting, she could account for about 70 per cent of the approximately 400 XV structures in Genesis, with the lion's share (nearly 84 per cent) of the unexplained instances coming in direct speech.⁸⁰ Whether most or many of these can be compellingly explained in terms of discourse discontinuity or whether there is need for another complementary explanation or explanations remains to be seen.⁸¹ However, given the utility of an approach to explain BH word order incorporating an intersection of information structure and continuity/discontinuity, no future study should ignore these parameters.

5 Conclusion

To summarise: Any legitimate treatment of BH word order must include a view of the language's verbal system that incorporates not just semantics (tense, aspect and mood) and syntax, but pragmatics as well. In view of the semantic-functional polyvalence of XV structures, in some of which X is itself marked for topic or focus, and in others of which the fronted X marks the

⁷⁹ Moshavi (2010, p. 39) understandably questions Buth's (1994a, p. 223) claim that a contrastive topic is simultaneously a marked topic and a marked focus. However, on a few other points she seems to have misunderstood Buth. For example, she writes that "[o]ne type of discontinuity concerns a particular constituent in the clause, which is proposed to mark it as Focus or Contextualizing Constituent" (Moshavi, 2010, p. 39). However, Buth clearly distinguishes between focus, on the one hand, and topic/discontinuity/contextualising constituent, on the other (1995, pp. 84–85, 100). Similarly, Moshavi's criticisms (2010, p. 40) regarding the marking of continuous discourse topics by means of discontinuity structures and of foregrounded dramatic pauses by means of constructions typically associated with background arguably stem from confusion born of conceptual complexity and terminological opacity. I can see no logical contradiction in the use of a decelerating/interrupting discourse tool variously to highlight a continuous or resumed topic, to parenthesise ancillary information and to spotlight particularly significant events. For all such effects the author exploits the non-routine XV order, which disrupts normal progress, but leaves the reader to decode the intended effect(s).

⁸⁰ Moshavi, 2010, p. 119.

⁸¹ Since, among other things, languages tend to preserve examples of constituent orders inherited from obsolete stages or borrowed from foreign linguistic systems, orders that are exceptional within contemporary usage rather than representative thereof, the likelihood that any purely pragmatic system can fully account for all word order variation seems small.

entire clause, at least two complementary pragmatic dimensions must be posited. On the relevance of one of these – information structure – to BH, there is broad consensus. The exact nature of the other dimension is disputed. Several potential candidates have been proposed. Here it is argued that the notion of ‘discourse continuity’ is sufficiently flexible, because of its indirect link to real-world semantics, and at the same time broad enough to cover a range of effects associated with fronting employed to mark the entire clause in BH. Finally, the apparent problem of positing a system in which all alternatives are pragmatically marked is resolved through recognising action continuity as an inherent property of various types of BH texts and the encoding of continuity in the so-called *waw*-consecutive forms, whereby they emerge as default, their *waw*-less counterparts as marked.

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Long or Short? The Use of Long and Short *Wayyiqtol*s in Biblical, Parabiblical and Commentary Scrolls from Qumran

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1 The diachrony of Biblical Hebrew verbal morphology and copying practices¹

The Biblical Hebrew verbal system has received much attention in the last century, especially the functions and meanings of the prefix conjugations (i.e. short, long and lengthened *yiqtol*)² vis-à-vis those of the suffix conjugation. The short *yiqtol* was originally perfective and consequently functioned as a preterite in narrative texts.³ This changed, however, when the suffix conjugation was grammaticalised as a perfective or perfect. As a result, the short form was replaced and only remained in volitive forms (i.e. jussives) and in *wayyiqtol*s (i.e. consecutive imperfects). The volitive function is mostly preserved in third person forms and second person negative imperatives. *Wayyiqtol* forms, on the other hand, exist in a complementary system together with the suffix conjugation and dominate the narrative sections of the Hebrew Bible.⁴ This role in narratives was taken over by the suffix conjugation in Rabbinic Hebrew.⁵ In Late Biblical Hebrew and the non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls, the use of *wayyiqtol* reflects its classical usage even though much of the modal system had collapsed.⁶

¹ I would like to thank Holger Gzella, Aaron Hornkohl and Martin Heide for their insightful comments and suggestions during the process of writing this article. All errors remain my own.

² The lengthened *yiqtol* is used in first person forms, primarily for marking volition (i.e. the cohortative) but it is also found in *wayyiqtol* forms (Hornkohl, 2014, p. 159). Discussion of the lengthened form is mostly left out of this article because it is not attested with III-y verbs (cf. Hornkohl, 2014, p. 161 n. 6, 163 n. 15).

³ See Cook, 2012, pp. 256–265 for this function; cf. Gzella, forthcoming for a summary of the North-West Semitic material.

⁴ Cf. Gzella, forthcoming.

⁵ See Geiger, 2013, pp. 740–741 for a short survey of tense in relation to the suffix and prefix conjugations in Rabbinic Hebrew.

⁶ Fassberg, 2013, pp. 666–667; Hornkohl, 2014, pp. 256–257.

Long and short *yiqtol*s were originally distinguished by word-final unstressed short vowels in all singular persons except the feminine. When these vowels disappeared at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, most long and short forms merged.⁷ The distinction was only retained in some weak roots and in the causative stem.

This leads to the topic of this article. Evidence from late biblical compositions indicates that authors or scribes sometimes used long *wayyiqtol*s instead of their short counterparts. For example, the long form *wayya ʾānē* is used in 2 Kings 1:10 while *wayya ʾan* is used in an identical construction two verses later.⁸ Moreover, these long forms are used with different types of verbs and have the same semantic function as distinctly short *wayyiqtol*s.⁹ This pattern points to a process of morphological erosion suggesting that long and short *wayyiqtol*s were becoming interchangeable. At the same time, the text in Chronicles contain several passages where a short form corresponds to the long form used in Kings.¹⁰

The aim of this article is to investigate how this process of morphological erosion influenced the copying practices of the scribes who made the Dead Sea Scrolls. To achieve this goal the following will be addressed:

Was the use of long and short *wayyiqtol*s systematic or incidental?

- a. Were scribes consistent in their use of long and/or short *wayyiqtol*s?
- b. Were long forms used more often with specific verbs or verb types?
- c. Is it possible to determine whether scribes ‘classicised’ long forms (i.e. exchanged long *wayyiqtol*s for short ones)?
- d. Are there observable differences between manuscripts, genres and different kinds of documents (e.g. between biblical texts, rewritten biblical texts or *pesharim*)?

In short, this comparison of long and short *wayyiqtol*s serves as a lens elucidating some scribal habits (especially copying practices).

1.1 Verb types with distinctive short forms

As was noted above, vestiges of the previous distinction between long and short forms only remained in three contexts after the loss of the final short vowels: (1) in all verbal stems of III-y verbs except *pual* and *hophal*; (2) in

⁷ Cf. Gzella, forthcoming.

⁸ For further discussion of these forms see Gzella, forthcoming; cf. Hornkohl, 2014, pp. 171–172.

⁹ Gzella, forthcoming.

¹⁰ 2 Chr. 18:23, 33, 34; 2 Chr. 21:9; and 2 Chr. 34:27 can be compared with 1 Kings 22:24, 34, 35; 2 Kings 8:21; and 2 Kings 22:18. Gzella, forthcoming notes that there is a tendency in Chronicles to classicise the language of Kings; Bloch, 2007, p. 156 notes that if the first of two parallel clauses contains a long *wayyiqtol* from a III-y root, the second clause invariably has a short form; cf. Hornkohl, 2014, p. 177 n. 65.

hollow roots; and (3) in the causative stem of triconsonantal roots.¹¹ Long forms of III-y verbs end in a final short vowel while short forms end with a closed syllable.¹² The presence of the final vowel is indicated by the vowel letter ה; e.g. *wayya* ‘as’ (וַיַּעַשׂ; Gen. 19:3) and *ya* ‘āsε (וַיַּעֲשֶׂה; Gen. 18:25). A ו or ם was often used in long forms of hollow roots to mark the presence of a long vowel (/ū/ or /ī/); e.g. *wayyāmāt* (וַיַּמַּת; Gen. 25:8) and *yāmūt* (וַיָּמוּת; Gen. 38:11) or *wayyāśem* (וַיַּשֶּׂם; Gen. 4:15) and *yāśīm* (וַיַּשִּׂים; Gen. 30:42). Lastly, long and short forms in the causative stem can be distinguished through the length and quality of their theme vowel. Short forms have a short *i*-vowel or an *e*-vowel, the latter being represented by *šere* in the Masoretic text (MT). By contrast, long forms are characterised by a long *i*-vowel.¹³ In the MT, a ו is usually used to mark this /ī/, distinguishing long forms from short ones; e.g. short *wayyabdēl* (וַיַּבְדֵּל; Gen. 1:7) and long *yabdīl* (וַיַּבְדִּיל; Lev. 1:7).

Because the difference between these forms is a matter of vocalisation, it is in many cases impossible to distinguish between long and short forms without the help of vowel points. For a study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which only includes the consonantal text, it is therefore necessary to narrow down the corpus. The focus of this article will be on III-y verbs, as they are the least ambiguous. In the other cases, long and short forms are often indistinguishable. In hollow roots a ו or ם could be used to mark short vowels. Similarly, a ו in the *hiphil* could mark an *e*-vowel rather than /ī/.

Additionally, it is important to note that first person *wayyiqtol*s outside the Torah tend to be long even in the MT.¹⁴ It is, therefore, relevant to investigate whether scribes were more prone to add a ה to first person forms than to other forms; or whether they classicised long first person *wayyiqtol*s.

1.2 The corpus

This article covers relevant *wayyiqtol* forms in three types of Qumran manuscripts:

1. *Biblical texts*. This category consists of the fragments from various books of the Hebrew Bible. It is by far the largest category and contains the bulk of the material.¹⁵

¹¹ See Gzella, forthcoming for further bibliographic references; cf. Waltke and O’Connor, 1990, pp. 543–544 for additional forms with a different vocalisation.

¹² Joüon and Muraoka, 2006, pp. 190–191.

¹³ Joüon and Muraoka, 2006, p. 148.

¹⁴ Cf. Hornkohl, 2014, p. 160–161. The use of short first person forms in the Torah and the Meshah stele show that short first person forms are more ancient than long first person forms.

¹⁵ *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (Ulrich, 2010) has greatly facilitated the collection of the data, serving as the point of departure. References to biblical manuscripts follow the same system as this edition.

2. *Parabiblical texts.* These texts are sometimes termed ‘rewritten bible’, and manuscripts within this category often contain clauses, sentences or paragraphs from biblical texts. Significant parts of these texts, however, do not occur in the Hebrew Bible. Instead, the text has been rephrased and expanded. For this article, the focus will be on quotes in comparison with the MT.
3. *Commentaries and exegetical texts.* The commentaries known as *pesharim* have a basic structure. First a biblical prophecy is quoted and then it is applied to the community at Qumran and/or their adversaries. Apart from these texts, there are also several other types of exegetical works referencing biblical passages and explaining their content. As with the parabiblical texts, this study will focus on quotations from the Hebrew Bible.

2 Long and short *wayyiqtol*s

2.1 III-y

Long *wayyiqtol*s are easily identifiable in the consonantal text because the presence of the final vowel is marked by the vowel letter ה. These forms are used more frequently in Kings, Ezekiel and Jeremiah than in any other part of the Hebrew Bible; especially compared to the Torah, which only contains a few examples (Gen. 25:48; Deut. 1:16, 18).¹⁶ It would therefore be interesting to compare the use of long forms in Qumran manuscripts of these three books with the MT. However, the fragmentary nature of the material preserved at Qumran makes a reliable comparison impossible. Other manuscripts will provide the bulk of the data presented here, most prominently 1QIsa^a.

2.1.1 Biblical texts

היה

Short *wayyiqtol*s of היה are used very frequently in the MT. These forms can therefore be easily found in the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls. In total, there are seventy-one attestations of the third person masculine singular יהיה.¹⁷ The high

¹⁶ See Gzella, forthcoming. He also notes that the concentration of long forms in Ezekiel is higher than in Kings, and that the picture could be skewed by the general lack of *wayyiqtol*s in the former. He writes: “When one compares the situation in 1–2 Kings with other narrative compositions like 1–2 Samuel, it becomes evident that the former is exceptional.” While it is possible that the picture is skewed, it should be noted that the non-narrative style could have contributed to the use of long forms. Cf. Hornkohl, 2014, p. 161 n. 6.

¹⁷ Attestations occur in the following manuscripts: 4QGen^b (1:5, frg. 1i, 5; 1:7, frg. 1i, 8; 1:8, frg. 1i, 9; 1:9, frg. 1i, 11; 1:11, frg. 1i, 13; 1:13, frg. 1i, 15; 1:19x2, frg. 1i, 22; 4:3 frg. 3i, 2); 4QGen^c (40:8, frg. 1ii, 15); 4QGen^d (1:19, frg. 1, 1; 1:23, frg. 1, 6); 4QGen^f (48:1, frg. 1, 1);

frequency of this form is a result of its use as a discourse marker. The third person feminine form *וְהָיָה* is attested seven times in the scrolls, one of which is used instead of the first person form *וְהָיָה*.¹⁸

Since *וְהָיָה* was used with such frequency in the biblical corpus, it is not surprising that some manuscripts contain alternative forms. In one instance the plural *וְהָיוּ* is used instead of *וְהָיָה*: 1QIsa^a (9:18, col. IX, 9).¹⁹ More interesting, though, is the occasional use of *וְהָיָה* instead of *וְהָיָה* (4QSam^a: 2 Sam. 6:16, frgs. 68–76, 21) and the reverse (1QIsa^a: 22:7, col. XVII, 10; 48:18, col. XL, 23;²⁰ 4QPs⁹: 33:9, col. I, 7).²¹ These switches suggest that the classical system of *wəqatal* and *wayyiqtol* had collapsed or was in the process of collapsing.²² Consequently, scribes sometimes failed to use *וְהָיָה* and *וְהָיָה* with the correct function as discourse markers (perhaps conditioned by vernacular Hebrew or Aramaic).²³ Furthermore, it should be noted that the replacement of *וְהָיָה* with

4QGen^s (1:6, frg. 1, 6; 1:7, frg. 1, 8; 1:9, frg. 1, 11; 1:13, frg. 2, 1; 1:15, frg. 2, 4); 4QGen^k (1:15, frg. 2, 4); 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 37:23, frg. 8, 2; 39:18, frg. 9, 7; 39:19, frg. 9, 8; 39:20, frg. 9, 10; Ex. 7:10, frg. 33, 7); 4QpaleoExod^m (6:28, col. I, 5; 8:14, col. III, 26; 32:30, col. XXXVIII, 32); 4QExod^c (7:21, col. I, frgs. 1–4, 17; 9:22, col. II, frgs. 11–19, 31; 12:41x2, col. V, frg. 32, 10, 11; 17:15, col. VIII, frgs. 35–36, 23); 4Exod-Lev^f (Ex. 40:17, col. II, frg. 2ii, 12); 4QNum^b (31:32, col. XXVI, frgs. 55ii, 57–59, 20; 31:32, col. XXVII, frgs. 60–64, 7); 4QDeut^h (1:3, frg. 1, 3; 4:33, frg. 8, 5); 4QDeut^m (5:23, col. V, 3; 5:26, col. V, 8); 4QDeut^j (5:26, col. III, 9); 4QpaleoDeut^r (33:5, frgs. 42–43, 3); 4QJosh^b (17:13, frg. 5, 5); 1QJudg (9:42, frgs. 7–8, 3); 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 5:9, col. V, frgs. b–c, 5; 2 Sam. 3:6, frgs. 55–57a–b, 58, 12; 4:4, frgs. 61i–62, 33; 11:16, frgs. 93–94, 1); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 20:27, frgs. 6–7, 1); 4QSam^c (2 Sam. 15:1, col. II, frgs. 5ii–7i, 21); 1QSam (2 Sam. 21:18, frgs. 4–7, 4); 1QIsa^a (7:1, col. VI, 11; 36:1, col. XXVIII, 29; 37:1, col. XXX, 4; 37:38, col. XXXI, 18; 38:4, col. XXXI, 24; 38:9, col. XXXII, 1; 48:19, col. XL, 24; 63:8, col. LI, 4); 1QIsa^b (48:19, col. XXI, 3; 63:8, col. XXVII, 17); 4QIsa^d (48:19, col. IV, frgs. 6–10, 3); 4QIsa^e (12:2, frgs. 17, 18i, 19, 2); 4QJer^a (13:6, col. VIII, part 1, 5; 33:19, col. XXV, 4); 2QJer (42:7, frg. 1, 1); 4QXII^a (Jon. 1:4, col. V, 9); 4QXII^b (Jon. 1:1, frgs. 76–78i, 79–81, 4; 3:1 frgs. 78ii, 82–87, 10); 4QRuth^a (1:1x2, 1); 2QRuth^a (2:17, col. II, 5); 1QDan^a (1:16, col. I, 8). The first part of the verse in 4QSam^c is inserted above the line as a later addition.

¹⁸ 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 2:17, col. III, frgs. a–e, 5; 5:9, col. V, frgs. b–c, 5); 1QSam (2 Sam. 23:11, frg. 8, 4); 1QIsa^a (23:3, col. XVIII, 7; 59:15, col. XLVIII, 27); 4QIsa^a (23:3, frgs. 11ii, 15, 28). The attestation which corresponds to *וְהָיָה* occurs in 4QPs^a (69:12, col. III, frgs. 19ii–20, 31).

¹⁹ Similarly, the form *וְהָיָה* has been replaced by [...] *וְהָיָה* in 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 8:2, frgs. 80–83, 3). The lone example of the verb *וְהָיָה* might also illustrate this phenomenon. The MT has *וְהָיָה* but in 1QIsa^a (57:3, col. XLVII, 3) it was written *וְהָיָה* or *וְהָיָה*. Parry and Qimron, 1998, p. 95 read it as the former. Formally it could also be *וְהָיָה* since the last two letters are similar to those of the verb *בָּנָה* in the same line.

²⁰ In 1QIsa^a (12:2, col. XI, 8), *וְהָיָה* is used instead of *וְהָיָה*. The same switch from the prefix conjugation to the suffix conjugation also occurs with plural forms. In 1QIsa^a (66:2, col. LIII, 3), *וְהָיָה* is used instead of *וְהָיָה*, which is used in the MT and in 1QIsa^b (66:2, col. XXVII, 10).

²¹ Another example of a switch from *וְהָיָה* to *וְהָיָה* could occur in 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 6:13, frgs. 68–76, 18), but several of the letters are damaged and only the downstrokes are visible on the photograph (frg. 75, pl. XVI in DJD XVII, Cross et al., 2005). From the photograph, it would perhaps be possible to reconstruct *וְהָיָה*.

²² Fassberg, 2013, pp. 666–667 uses Isa. 22:7 as an example of how the “classical system of consecutive tenses had collapsed”.

²³ Cook, 2012, pp. 309–312 notes that these forms were used both as copula predicates as well as discourse markers in narratives; cf. Kutscher, 1974, pp. 350–358, which contains a discussion of the collapse of “consecutive tenses” in 1QIsa^a.

והיה in Isaiah is more common than the reverse, while the opposite is true in 2 Samuel. It is therefore possible that scribes (consciously or unconsciously) switched to the discourse marker that was most common in the book they copied, or failed in their attempt to imitate the classical style (i.e. hypercorrection).²⁴

The Qumran material contains five examples that look like typical long forms. The form ותהי is replaced by ותהיה in both 1QIsa^a (5:25, col. V, 13; 29:11, col. XXIII, 19; 29:13, col. XXIII, 23) and 4QIsa^f (5:25, frg. 8, 1). It is noteworthy that two of these attestations occur in the same verse. However, their use in 1QIsa^a, which also contains several short forms (both ויהי and ותהי), is more important. In addition to the aforementioned long forms, this manuscript also contains ונהיה (64:5, col. LI, 19) and ותהיי (9:5, col. VIII, 23).²⁵ It is important to note that these long forms are third person feminine singular or first person plural. The form יהי is sometimes changed, but never through the addition of the vowel letter ה (יהיה).

עשה

*Wayyiqtol*s of the verb עשה are used frequently in the MT. The biblical scrolls contain seventeen attestations of distinct short forms with a short counterpart in the MT.²⁶ Two manuscripts exhibit three long forms instead of the short ones used in the MT: 1QSam (2 Sam. 23:10, frg. 8, 3) and 1QIsa^a (5:2, col. IV, 14; 5:4, col. IV, 16).²⁷ Three observations are relevant. First, there are no distinct short forms of עשה in these manuscripts. Secondly, the fragment from 1QSam includes four other *wayyiqtol*s, two long (ויכה; see נכה below) and two short (ותהי and ויהי). Thirdly, the two attestations in 1QIsa^a occur in the song of the vineyard, which is a short narrative within the prophetic discourse. Two explanations should be considered: the non-narrative character of Isaiah could have caused the scribe to use long forms; or it is possible that the scribe(s) consistently used the long form ויעשה of this verb.²⁸

²⁴ Cf. Kutscher, 1974, p. 329; Elwolde, 2015, p. 100.

²⁵ Parry and Qimron, 1998, p. 17 note that there is no space between the verb and the following word in 9:5, and they also suggest that someone might have tried to erase the additional י.

²⁶ 4QGen^b (1:16, frg. 1i, 18); 4QpaleoGen-Exod^d (Ex. 18:25, frg. 20, 13); 4QpaleoExod^m (7:6, col. I, 17; 9:6, col. V, 3; 37:10, col. XLV, 3; 37:11, col. XLV, 5; 37:12, col. XLV, 5; 37:12, col. XLV, 6; 37:15, col. XLV, 9); 4QExod-Lev^f (Ex. 39:22, col. II, frg. 1ii, 6; 40:16, col. II, frg. 2ii, 10); 1QJudg (6:20, frg. 1, 2); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 15:1; frgs. 112–114a–b, 1); 1QIsa^a (20:2, col. XVI, 6); 4QIsa^a (20:2, frgs. 10, 11i, 12–14, 18); 4QIsa^b (20:2, frgs. 10–13, 40); 4QChr (2 Chr. 29:2, frg. 1ii, 4). Occasionally, short forms are changed. Verb forms that were changed include 4QSam^c (2 Sam. 15:1, col. II, frgs. 5ii–7i, 21), where the text reads וואבשלום יע[שה] instead of ויעש, which is used in the MT. The text in 4QSam^a is broken after the last letter, so the form could theoretically be long.

²⁷ It is also noteworthy that the verb in Isa. 5:4 is written וישה without the initial root letter ע.

²⁸ Elwolde, 2015, p. 100, following Kutscher, 1974, p. 328, notes the relative frequency of these forms in 1QIsa^a.

ראה

The verb ראה is used frequently in the Hebrew Bible. The Qumran corpus contains thirty *wayyiqtol*s, the clear majority of which (twenty-five of them) have a distinct short form. These short forms are primarily distributed throughout narrative sections of the Hebrew Bible.²⁹

In 4QXII^c (Zech. 5:9, frgs. 14–15, 2) there is one attestation of a long *wayyiqtol* with a short counterpart in the MT. In this instance, it is also noteworthy that this verbal form is added in a smaller script above the line. If this was a later addition, it is possible that the author wrote the verb from memory and therefore used a long form rather than a short one.

Moreover, there are four attestations where long forms are used in both the MT and Qumran.³⁰ 1QIsa^a contains both short and long *wayyiqtol*s of ראה mirroring the MT. One of the short forms also agrees with another example in 4QIsa^c. The long form in 1QIsa^a is a first person *wayyiqtol*, just like the three long forms in 4QEzek^a, 4QDan^a and 4QDan^c. This indicates that these manuscripts exhibit the same tendency as the MT in the use of long first person *wayyiqtol*s.

עלה

The verb עלה is attested fourteen times in the biblical manuscripts, twelve of which are short.³¹ Long *wayyiqtol*s of עלה are rare in the MT. It is therefore not surprising that only one manuscript contains an example of a long form that also corresponds to a long form in the MT: 4QJer^c (10:13, col. V, 2). Additionally, 1QIsa^a (37:14, col. XXX, 19) contains a long form that corresponds

²⁹ 4QGen^b (1:10, frg. 1i, 11; 1:12, frg. 1i, 14; 1:18, frg. 1i, 21; 1:21, frg. 1i, 26); 4QGen^d (1:18, frg. 1, 1); 4QGen^f (48:8, frg. 1, 13); 4QGen^g (1:4, frg. 1, 3; 1:18, frg. 2, 8); 4QGen^k (1:9, frg. 1, 1); 4QExod^b (2:5, frgs. 3i–4, 4; 2:12, frgs. 3i–4, 13); 4QpaleoGen-Exod^l (Ex. 3:4, frgs. 3–4, 12); 4QLev-Num^a (Num. 22:23, frg. 64, 2); 4QNum^b (24:1, col. XVII, 24 ii, 27–30, 12); 4QDeut^h (33:21, frgs. 11–15, 11); 1QJudg (6:22, frg. 1, 4); 4QJudg^a (6:12, frg. 1, 7); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 6:16, frgs. 68–76, 22; 18:10, frgs. 128–132, 19; 20:12, frgs. 144–145, 6); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 16:6, frg. 4, 5); 1QIsa^a (59:15, col. XLVIII, 28; 59:16, col. XLVIII, 28); 4QIsa^c (59:16, frg. 25, 1). The last letter and the beginning of the verbal form in 4QJudg^a is damaged.

³⁰ 1QIsa^a (6:1, col. V, 21); 4QEzek^a (11:1, frg. 2, 10); 4QDan^a (8:2, frg. 14, 12) 4QDan^c (10:8, col. I, 7). The initial ׀ in 1QIsa^a was omitted but the function still indicates that this is a *wayyiqtol*. The beginning of the verb in 4QEzek^a is within brackets in the edition and the last two letters are marked as uncertain. The photograph contains only traces of what could be the combination אה. It is also worth noting that an additional ה is added after verbs ending in א: cf. אשאא instead of אשא in Dan 8:3 (4QDan^b, frgs. 16–18i, 19, 5).

³¹ 4QpaleoGen^m (26:23, 3); 4QpaleoExod^m (24:9, col. XXVI, 31); 4QNum^b (23:30, col. XVII, 24 ii, 27–30, 12); 1QJudg (6:21, frg. 1, 3); 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 11:1, col. X, frg. a, 9; 2 Sam. 6:17, frgs. 68–76, 24); 6QpapKgs (1 Kings 22:29, frg. 5, 2); 1QIsa^a (53:2, col. XLIV, 5); 1QIsa^b (53:2, col. XXIII, 10); 4QXII^a (Jon. 2:7, frg. 21, 2); 4QXII^g (Jon. 2:7, frgs. 78ii, 82–87, 6; 4:6, frgs. 88–91i, 3). The example from 4QpaleoExod^m is probably short, but there is a break in the text partly damaging the ל, so that it is impossible to discern whether the form was long or short. Part of the example in 1 Sam. 11:1 in 4QSam^a was added in smaller letters above the line. The first two letters of the verb in 6QpapKgs are damaged but the last two are intact showing that the form is short. After the ל in 1QIsa^a there is an erased letter that could be a ׀ or the right side of a ה.

to a short one in the MT. The presence of this form and the short one in Isa. 53:2 points to an inconsistency in the use of long and short forms of the same verb in 1QIsa^a. Perhaps this inconsistency was caused by the small number of *wayyiqtol* forms being used in some parts of the scroll.

נטה

The verb נטה is attested seven times, five of which have distinct short forms.³² It is noteworthy that one example is from Isa. 5, which contains several long *wayyiqtol*s.³³ The two long forms are attested in 4QExod^c (10:13, col. III, frgs. 20–29, 15) and 4QpaleoGen^m (26:25, 5).³⁴ These two forms are interesting because they occur in passages of Genesis and Exodus and are the only long forms from Torah manuscripts. These attestations are important because they show that there are occasional long forms even in Torah manuscripts (with which scribes are known to have exercised great caution in terms of preservation).

נכה

There are five *wayyiqtol*s of נכה in the corpus. Three short forms are attested in 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 5:9, col. V, frgs. b–c, 6), 1QIsa^a (37:36, col. XXXI, 16) and 11QPs^a (105:33, col. I, 7³⁵). It is noteworthy that the only *wayyiqtol* of this verb in 1QIsa^a is short, since the MT has the long form ויכה.³⁶ Furthermore, two long forms corresponding to short forms in the MT are attested in 1QSam (2 Sam. 23:10, frg. 8, 2; 23:12, frg. 8, 5).³⁷

ענה

There are ten *wayyiqtol*s of ענה in the corpus, nine of which are short.³⁸ Not surprisingly, the only long form occurs in 1QIsa^a (21:9, col. XVI, 24). The odd spelling of this form is noteworthy (ויעני).

³² 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 35:21, frg. 5, 4; 39:21, frg. 9, 11); 4QpaleoExod^m (10:22, col. VII, 29); 4QNum^b (22:33, col. XV, frgs. 20–22, 29); 1QIsa^a (5:25, col. V, 12).

³³ Note, however, that the long forms occur in the song of the vineyard, unlike the short form of נטה.

³⁴ The long form in 4QpaleoGen^m is written ויטי with the second ך as a vowel letter. Note, however, that this letter is damaged.

³⁵ The first letters of this attestation are gone, but the final ך is visible indicating that it was a short form.

³⁶ Other third person long forms of this verb occur in Josh. 10:40; 1 Kings 22:24, 34; 2 Kings 2:8, 14, 14; 2 Kings 8:21; Jer. 20:2; Jer. 52:27.

³⁷ The second form is written ויה instead of ויכה, with a ך inserted above the line.

³⁸ 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 27:39, frg. 2, 1); 4QExod^c (15:21, col. VI, frg. 33ii, 43); 4QNum^b (22:18, col. XV, frgs. 20–22, 11); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 13:32, frgs. 102ii, 103–106i, 107–109a–b, 29); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 20:28, frg. 6–7, 2; 21:5, frg. 6–7, 16); 4QIsa^a (21:9, frgs. 10, 11i, 12–14, 29); 4QXII^c (Am. 7:14, frgs. 30–33, 15); 4QXII^e (Zech. 6:5, frgs. 14–15, 11). There is a break after the ך in 4QSam^a. The last letter could be a final ך since there is no trace of a ה. The first two letters in 4QSam^b are slightly damaged, but the end of the verb is preserved, showing the distinct short form.

בכה

There are five *wayyiqtol*s of בכה in the corpus, four of which are short.³⁹ One of these short forms is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it is written וּאָך without the initial root consonant ב. Moreover, the MT contains the long form וּאִבְכָה. This could perhaps be an attempt to classicise the psalm. However, if the omission of ב was a scribal mistake, it is less likely that the short form represents a conscious attempt to classicise the text. Lastly, there is one attestation of a long form in 1QIsa^a (38:3, col. XXXI, 23), written וַיִּבְכֵּא rather than וַיִּבְכֵּה.

בנה

The biblical Qumran manuscripts contain four *wayyiqtol*s of the verb בנה, two of which are probably short: 4QGen-Exod^a (Ex. 1:11, frgs. 17–18, 8) and 4QExod^c (17:15, col. VIII, frgs. 35–36).⁴⁰ The other two attestations are distinctively long while the MT has short forms: 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 5:9, frgs. 61 ii, 63–64 a–b, 65–67, 20) and 1QIsa^a (5:2, col. IV, 13). Some observations are in order. First, it is noteworthy that the form in 1QIsa^a is spelled with an א instead of a ה (ויבנא). Moreover, it is interesting that this long *wayyiqtol* occurs in the song of the vineyard together with several other long forms. Lastly, it is noteworthy that the long form in 4QSam^a is the only one in a manuscript which includes short forms of most verbs in this section (including היה, ראה, עשה, עלה, ענה, נכה, חנה and צוה). This suggests that even scribes who consistently used short forms occasionally made use of long ones.

קנה

Only one *wayyiqtol* of קנה is attested in the corpus and occurs in 4QJer^a (13:2, col. VIII, part 1, 3). The form is long just like its counterpart in the MT.

Other III-y verbs

The verbs in this section have two things in common: there are relatively few attestations, and all attestations are short. The verb חרה is attested nine times in the corpus.⁴¹ Furthermore, nine attestations of צוה occur in the biblical scrolls, all of which are in the *piel*.⁴² The verb כסה is attested three times, in

³⁹ 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 27:38, frg. 2, 1); 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 24:17, frgs. 26–27, 6; 2 Sam. 3:32, frgs. 61i–62, 15); 4QPs^a (69:11, col. III, frgs. 19ii–20, 30). The beginning of this verb in 4QGen-Exod^a is missing, but the last two root consonants are visible, indicating that it is a short form.

⁴⁰ It should be noted that the text is broken after the ו of וַיִּבְנֶה.

⁴¹ 4QGen^b (4:5, frg. 3i, 5); 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 39:19, frg. 9, 9); 4QNum^b (12:9, col. I, frgs. 1–4, 15); 4QLev-Num^a (Num. 12:9, frgs. 60–61, 6; 32:13, frg. 68i, 5); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 6:7, frgs. 68–76, 8; 6:8, frgs. 68–76, 9); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 20:30, frgs. 6–7, 4). The first example from 4QLev-Num^a is relatively damaged.

⁴² 4QGen^b (2:16, frg. 1ii, 3); 4QExod^a (5:6, frgs. 22ii, 26, 5); 4QExod^b (5:6, frg. 6ii, 4); 4QDeut^c (27:1, frg. 42, 2); 4QDeut^b (31:25, frgs. 5–8, 1); XJosh (1:10, col. I, 22); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 11:19, frgs. 93–94, 4; 13:28, frgs. 102ii, 103–106i, 107–109a–b, 22); 2QRuth^a (2:15, col. II, 2). The

4QNum^b (22:11, col. XV, frgs. 20–22, 4), 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 19:13, frg. 5, 4) and 1QIsa^a (37:1, col. XXX, 5). The verb מנה is, likewise, attested three times: once in 4QXII^a (Jon. 2:1, col. VI, 18) and twice in 4QXII^g (Jon. 4:6, frgs. 88–91i, 2; 4:8, frgs. 88–91i, 6).

The verb קוה is attested twice in 4QIsa^a (5:2, col. IV, 14; 5:7, col. IV, 20). These examples are especially interesting because they occur in the song of the vineyard, which includes long forms of both ראה and עשה. There is no obvious explanation as to why the scribe used both short and long forms in this passage. Other verbs that are attested twice include: גלה in 1QIsa^a (22:8, col. XVII, 11) and 2QRuth^a (3:7, col. V, 6); הרה in 4QIsa^a (8:3, col. VII, 21) and 4QIsa^c (8:3, frgs. 4–10, 1); חדה in 4QExod^c (18:9, col. VIII, frgs. 35–36, 34) and 4QpaleoExod^m (18:9, col. XVIII, 13); and פנה in 4QExod^b (2:12, frgs. 3i–4, 12) and 4QNum^b (12:10, col. I, frgs. 1–4, 16). Lastly, ten additional verbs are attested once in the biblical scrolls.⁴³

Summary

The pattern that emerges from this survey indicates that short forms were used with relative consistency. Distinctive long forms are found in less than a fifth of the manuscripts that contain *wayyiqtol*s (4QpaleoGen^m, 4QExod^c, 1QSam, 4QSam^a, 1QIsa^a, 4QIsa^f, 4QJer^a, 4QJer^c, 4QEzek^a, 4QXII^c, 4QDan^a and 4QDan^c). Moreover, when long forms are used, short forms of the same or another verb are almost invariably attested in the same manuscript. The main manuscripts that depart from this general pattern are 1QSam, 1QIsa^a, 4QIsa^f and 4QJer^c.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, only a few fragments have been preserved of 1QSam, and all three long forms are attested in the same fragment (frg. 8; 2 Sam. 23:9–12). 4QIsa^f and 4QJer^c are likewise very fragmentary. Consequently, it is impossible to know whether the use of long forms reflects the compositional style of these scrolls or if these forms were restricted to a few passages. On the other hand, the fact that three long forms are attested in the same passage of 1QSam, and that the two short forms are ויהי and ותהי, could indicate that the scribe generally used long forms with other verbs than היה. Alternatively, the manuscript could have contained an equal number of long and short forms (used interchangeably); or long forms could have been used with specific verbs.

example in 4QExod^a is relatively damaged and it is not clear whether a final ה could have been there in the original.

⁴³ שתה in 2QRuth^a (3:7, col. V, 6); שחה in 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 20:41, frg. 6–7, 12); שעה in 4QGen^b (4:4, frg. 3i, 4); שקה in 4QExod^b (2:17, frgs. 3i–4, 20); צפה in 4QpaleoExod^m (37:15, col. XLV, 10); אדה in 8QPs (18:11, frgs. 11–13, 2); רצה in 4QPs^c (50:18, col. II, frgs. 15ii–16, 23); תכה in 4QXII^g (Jon. 4:7, frgs. 88–91i, 5); עטה in 1QIsa^a (59:17, col. XLIX, 1); חנה in 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 11:1, col. X, frg. a, 9). There is a break after the פ of צפה in 4QpaleoExod^m. The same verb also occurs a few lines before in Ex. 37:11, but the break is after the ש. Part of the text in 4QSam^a was first omitted and then added in smaller letters above the line.

⁴⁴ Cf. Qimron, 1986, p. 45 n. 8 who only lists the first two, presumably because he refers to Kutscher's previous study of 1QIsa^a.

While the three manuscripts discussed above are fragmentary, 1QIsa^a is almost complete. The thirty *wayyiqtol*s that are attested can be divided into three categories: ויהי (eight cases), other short forms (eleven) and long forms (ten). The reason for distinguishing between ויהי and other short forms is simple. It is very common and has a distinct function in the discourse, making it less susceptible to change. Moreover, there are no attestations of a form ויהיה in any manuscript from Qumran. The remaining long and short forms fall into two categories of equal size. This use of long *wayyiqtol*s was already noted by Kutscher. He also observed the occasional odd spelling of these forms and compared them with long *wayyiqtol*s in the Samaritan Pentateuch. Of particular interest are forms spelled with י or א instead of ה (Isa. 21:9, ויעני; Isa. 5:2, ויבוא; Isa. 38:3, ויבכא). These spellings are not attested in other Qumran manuscripts, but similar examples exist in other corpora.⁴⁵

As for the use of long forms in manuscripts of the Torah, it is noteworthy that the biblical Qumran scrolls exhibit the same pattern as the MT. There are a total of fifty-eight *wayyiqtol*s in twenty-two manuscripts (not counting attestations of ויהי). Only two of these are long, indicating that scribes were consistent in their use of short forms (although some of the manuscripts are very fragmentary).⁴⁶

As table 1 indicates, most long forms occur in prophetic books. There are two attestations of long forms in manuscripts of the book of Jeremiah, and both correspond to long forms in the MT. Similarly, 4QEzek^a contains an attestation of a long *wayyiqtol* with a long counterpart in the MT. The data from 4QDan^a and 4QDan^c follow a similar pattern. It is important to note that these verbs are first person *wayyiqtol*s. It was noted above that the MT tend to use long first person *wayyiqtol*s outside the Torah.⁴⁷ Long first person forms in Qumran correspond to long forms in the MT, while forms with an additional vowel letter tend to be third person (cf. 1QSam and 1QIsa^a). This pattern underscores the accuracy of the scribes' copying practices.

In short, the Qumran manuscripts contain a larger number of long *wayyiqtol*s than the MT, but the great majority are still short.⁴⁸ In other words, short *wayyiqtol*s were the norm and there is little evidence for the kind of oscillation between long and short forms that can be observed in Kings (see section 1).⁴⁹ It should be stressed, however, that long and short forms of the same verb seldom occur in one and the same manuscript. Moreover, when there is

⁴⁵ Kutscher, 1974, pp. 158–159, 163, 328; cf. Qimron, 1986, p. 20; see also Reymond, 2014, p. 189 n. 130.

⁴⁶ Note also that both are long forms of the doubly weak verb נטה.

⁴⁷ Cf. Hornkohl, 2014, p. 160–161.

⁴⁸ Note, however, 11Q19 (Temple Scroll) contains two attestations of ויעש (56:8, 59:16). What makes these interesting is that Smith, 1991, p. 49 correctly classifies both as “unconverted imperfect” forms. A survey of 11Q19 reveals that the short form only occurs when the verb is preceded by a ו. All other *yiqtol*s of the root עשה have the long form יעשה. Note however the ה in the form ויטה from the root נטה in 11Q19 51:17 (cf. Smith, 1991, p. 49).

⁴⁹ Cf. Gzella, forthcoming.

a long form in the MT there is generally one in the current corpus. The only possible example of a long form being shortened occurs in 1QIsa^a (Isa. 37:36, col. XXXI, 16). The abundance of long forms in this manuscript makes it implausible to interpret this as a classicism. Consequently, it is unlikely that these scribes consciously classicised long forms.⁵⁰ This lack of classicisms is not surprising since they tend to appear more often in original or new compositions.⁵¹

Table 1. Long and short forms in Qumran manuscripts⁵²

Manuscript	Short forms / long forms (1 st person long forms)	Manuscript	Short forms / long forms (1 st person long forms)
4Gen ^b	17 / 0	4QSam ^b	7 / 0
4QGen ^c	1 / 0	4QSam ^c	3 / 0
4QGen ^d	3 / 0	6QpapKgs	1 / 0
4QGen ^f	2 / 0	1QIsa ^a	19 / 10 (2)
4QGen ^g	7 / 0	1QIsa ^b	3 / 0
4QGen ^k	2 / 0	4QIsa ^a	5 / 0
4QGen-Exod ^a	11 / 0	4QIsa ^b	1 / 0
4QpaleoGen ^m	1 / 1	4QIsa ^d	1 / 0
4QpaleoGen-Exod ^l	2 / 0	4QIsa ^e	3 / 0
4QpaleoExod ^m	14 / 0	4QIsa ^f	0 / 1
4QExod ^a	1 / 0	4QJer ^a	2 / 1 (1)
4QExod ^b	5 / 0	4QJer ^c	0 / 1
4QExod ^c	3 / 1	4QEzek ^a	0 / 1 (1)
4QExod-Lev ^f	2 / 0	4QXII ^a	3 / 0
4QLev-Num ^a	3 / 0	4QXII ^c	1 / 0
4QNum ^b	9 / 0	4QXII ^e	1 / 1 (1)
4QDeut ^b	1 / 0	4QXII ^g	7 / 0
4QDeut ^c	1 / 0	4QPs ^a	2 / 0
4QDeut ^h	3 / 0	4QPs ^c	1 / 0
4QDeut ⁿ	2 / 0	8QPs	1 / 0
4QDeut ^j	1 / 0	11QPs ^a	1 / 0
4QpaleoDeut ^f	1 / 0	2QRuth ^a	4 / 0
4QJosh ^b	1 / 0	4QRuth ^a	2 / 0
XJosh	1 / 0	1QDan ^a	1 / 0
1QJudg	4 / 0	4QDan ^a	0 / 1 (1)
4QJudg ^a	1 / 0	4QDan ^c	0 / 1 (1)
1QSam	2 / 3	4QChr	1 / 0
4QSam ^a	22 / 1		

⁵⁰ Cf. Gzella, forthcoming.

⁵¹ Cf. Joosten, 2013, p. 454 who notes that there is an abundance of classicisms in some Qumran scrolls, particularly the Thanksgiving Scroll, 1QH. In an earlier article, Joosten, 1999 restricts his discussion of classicisms to texts composed in the post-biblical era.

⁵² The second and fourth columns contain the total number of short and long *wayyiqtol* forms in each manuscript. Where there is a number in parentheses following this, it refers to the number of long first person forms. For example, in 1QIsa^a there are nineteen short forms and ten long forms, two of which are first person forms.

Moreover, it seems wise to distinguish between classicisms introduced by scribes copying biblical texts and those made by authors of new documents. To correctly copy a short form is very different from removing a final vowel letter, especially if the short form was no longer used at the time. It requires a different kind of awareness on the part of the scribe to “turn back the clock”. A note of caution: The fragmentary nature of the manuscripts (especially of relevant passages in Kings and Ezekiel) makes it difficult to assert that scribes never classicised texts.

Lastly, a study of the use of *wayyiqtol*s in comparison with other features that are typical of manuscripts from Qumran lies beyond the scope of this article. However, a brief comparison should still be made between the use of long *wayyiqtol*s and the distribution of *yiqtol*s and cohortatives. Qimron has argued that the normal *yiqtol* and the cohortative appear in complementary distribution. The latter was used clause-initially and the former was used in all other positions.⁵³ No similar pattern can be observed in the case of long *wayyiqtol*s. But that is expected, since the latter are always clause-initial. Though it is hard to prove, it cannot be ruled out that some long forms were used because of the position they shared with cohortatives.

2.1.2 Parabiblical texts

Attestations in parabiblical texts are restricted to manuscripts containing a re-written form of the Torah. The form ויהי is attested once in 4Q365 (Ex. 14:20, frg. 6a, col. i, 11) and ו[יע]ש is attested in 4Q365 (Ex. 36:33, frg. 12a, col. i, 1). The form וירא is attested twice in 4Q364 (Gen. 38:16, frg. 9a–b, 3; Ex. 14:21, frg. 6a, col. i, 12).⁵⁴ Moreover, the form ויט is attested twice in 4Q364 (Gen. 38:16, frg. 9a–b, 3; Ex. 14:21, frg. 6a, col. i, 12). The verb עלה is also attested twice. The first person long form ונעלה is used in 4Q364 (Deut. 3:1, frg. 24a–c, 15).⁵⁵ This form is interesting because it occurs in a quote from the Torah. A short *wayyiqtol* occurs in 4Q158 (frg. 4, col. II, 4). This is the only short form in either *pesharim* or parabiblical texts that does not occur in a quote.

2.1.3 Pesharim and exegetical texts

The texts in this category provide only a small number of examples relevant for this study. There are two main reasons for this lack of evidence. The first concerns the genres commented on, namely that most *pesharim* are commentaries on prophetic books that contain few *wayyiqtol*s.⁵⁶ Moreover, the quotes

⁵³ Qimron, 1997, pp. 174–181.

⁵⁴ Only the last letter of the second example is preserved: א[ואר].

⁵⁵ Apart from the long form, it is also noteworthy that the text omits the preceding *wayyiqtol* in the MT ונפן.

⁵⁶ A good example is the relatively complete commentary on the book of Habakkuk. Even though most of the book is quoted in 1QpHab, there are only two relevant forms in the book of Habakkuk. Similarly, there are no relevant *wayyiqtol*s in the books of Micah and Nahum.

from these books, as well as the comments, are often concerned with future events. These factors are sufficient to explain the lack of attestations in these documents.

There are, however, ten possible attestations in the corpus, all of which occur in quotes from the Hebrew Bible. Four attestations have the form ויהי.⁵⁷ The form ויהי is attested once in 4Q162 (Isa. 5:25, col. II, 9). Two short forms of ויהי (וייט) are attested in commentaries on Isaiah: 4Q162 (Isa. 5:25, col. II, 8) and 4Q163 (Isa. 29:11, frgs. 15–16, 2). It is possible that another attestation of this form occurs in 4Q254 (Gen. 49:15, frgs. 5–6, 1). Unfortunately, very little is visible on the plates in DJD XXII.⁵⁸ Lastly, the form וירא is attested in 4Q252 (Gen. 8:13, col. I, 22) and וירא in 1QpHab (Hab. 1:14, col. V, 1). It is noteworthy that the MT has the long form וירא in Hab. 1:14. However, it is difficult to use this as evidence that the scribe classicised the text because it is the only relevant form in Habakkuk.

The small number of attestations make any conclusions tentative. Yet the available evidence suggests that the scribes who wrote or copied these manuscripts were either familiar with the short forms (as a written convention) or made sure that they carefully copied the quotes containing these *wayyiqtoles*.

2.2 Hollow roots

2.2.1 Verbs with a medial ו

The data discussed in this section concerns three weak verbs with a medial ו: מוה, קוה and בוה. The biblical manuscripts contain eight clear *wayyiqtoles* of the root מוה. Two of these have the distinct short form וימה, and six have the form וימה.⁵⁹ Two observations are noteworthy: different forms are not attested in the same manuscript;⁶⁰ and forms with ו are more common.

There are thirteen clear *wayyiqtoles* of the verb קוה: six are distinctly short, and seven contain a ו.⁶¹ Again, the sample is relatively small due to the fragmentary nature of the scrolls. It is still noteworthy, though, that there are more

⁵⁷ 4Q252 (Gen. 7:12, col. I, 5; 8:6, col. I, 12), 4QFlor (Isa. 8:11, frg. 1, pl. 286, col. I, 15), and 4Q254 (Gen. 19:17, frgs. 5–6, 4).

⁵⁸ On the top right of frgs. 5–6 on plate XV in DJD XXII (Brooke et al., 1996).

⁵⁹ The form וימה occurs in 4QExod^b (Ex. 1:6, frg. 1) and 4QRuth^a (Ruth 1:3, 3). The form וימה occurs in 4QNum^b (Num. 35:20, col. XXXI, frgs. 80–84, 11; 35:23, col. XXXI, frgs. 80–84, 15) and 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 3:27, frg. 61i–62, 7; 2 Sam. 6:7, frgs. 68–76, 9; 2 Sam. 10:18, frg. 88, 2; 2 Sam. 11:17, frgs. 93–94, 3).

⁶⁰ There are several occasions where the editors of individual manuscripts reconstructed part of the text. One interesting example is וימה in 2 Sam. 17:23 (4QSam^a, frgs 126–27, 2). Since this form is not attested elsewhere in 4QSam^a, it seems reasonable to assume that this reconstruction is a mistake on the part of the editor. Reconstructions are always in the realm of speculation, but all other relevant *wayyiqtoles* of מוה, קוה and בוה in 4QSam^a have ו, so it stands to reason that any reconstructed form should be spelled with ו.

⁶¹ The short forms occur in 4QGen^b (4:8, frg. 3i, 8); 4QExod-Lev^f (Ex. 40:18, col. II, frg. 2ii, 14); 4QJudg^b (19:7, frg. 1, 4); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 21:1, frg. 6–7, 14; 23:13, frg. 10–23, 4); and 2QRuth^a (2:15, col. II, 1). The forms with ו occur in 4QNum^b (11:32, col. I, frgs. 1–4, 1; 16:2,

forms with ו.⁶² Moreover, several of these occur in 4QNum^b and 4QSam^a, where similar forms of מוֹת are attested.

The biblical manuscripts contain twenty-four *wayyiqtoles* of the verb בוֹא, seven of which are distinctly short.⁶³ The other seventeen attestations of this verb have ו.⁶⁴ To summarise, scribes were consistent, in that they either wrote these *wayyiqtoles* with a ו or without it (the only exception is 2QRuth^a, which contains both ויבא and ויבוא).⁶⁵ At first glance the extensive use of ו could be interpreted as an indication that scribes used long *wayyiqtoles*. However, the use of ו as a *mater lectionis* for both long and short vowels in Qumran suggests that these forms remained short while the vowel was written *plene* (especially in the case of בוֹא, where the vowel had been lengthened due to the quiescent א).⁶⁶ Moreover, 4QNum^b, 4QSam^c and 4QXII^g were written in the Qumran scribal practice, which is characterised by an extensive use of vowel letters.⁶⁷ The consistent use of ו within individual manuscripts also indicates that this is a matter of *plene* spelling. If some scribes were using occasional long forms, a less uniform pattern would be expected (as can be seen among III-y verbs).

2.2.2 Verbs with a medial ם

Wayyiqtoles of verbs with a medial ם are rare in both the Hebrew Bible and in Qumran manuscripts. Only two different verbs are attested. The form ויקא from קיא is attested in 4QXII^g (Jon. 2:11, frgs. 78ii, 82–87, 10). Furthermore, there are eleven relevant *wayyiqtoles* of the verb שים. Ten of these have forms without ם and occur in four manuscripts.⁶⁸ The only attestation with a ם occurs

col. VI, frgs. 6–10, 13); 4QSam^a (1 Sam. 28:23, frg. 44, 3; 2 Sam. 12:17, frgs. 100–101, 3; 13:31, frgs. 102ii, 103–106i, 107–109 a–b, 28; 14:31, col. II, frgs. 5ii–7i, 15); and 4QXII^g (Jon. 3:3, frgs. 78ii, 82–87, 12).

⁶² By way of comparison, it could be noted that ויקא is attested in 1QS 5:8 as an “unconverted imperfect” along with two other imperfects of hollow roots: וישם in 1QS 3:18 and ויכן in 1QS 11:13 (Smith, 1991, pp. 41–42).

⁶³ 4QGen-Exod^a (Gen. 35:27, frg. 5, 8); 4QpaleoGen-Exod^l (Ex. 3:1, frgs. 3–4, 9); 4QExod^c (17:8, col. VIII, frgs. 35–36, 15); 4QSam^b (1 Sam. 20:37, frgs. 6–7, 9); 5QKgs (1 Kings 1:28, frg. 1c, 2); 4QIsa^b (39:3, frgs. 24–25, 6); 2QRuth^a (3:7, col. V, 6).

⁶⁴ 4QpaleoExod^m (18:12, col. XVIII, 18); 4QNum^b (13:22, col. II, frgs. 3ii, 5, 13; 22:9, col. XV, frgs. 20–22, 2); 4QJosh^a (10:9, frgs. 19–22, 2); 4QSam^a (2 Sam. 3:35, frgs. 61i–62, 19; 11:4, frgs. 89–92, 5; 12:16, frgs. 100–101, 3; 13:24, frgs. 102ii, 103–106i, 107–109 a–b, 17); 4QSam^c (2 Sam. 14:33, col. II, frgs. 5ii–7i, 20; 15:13, col. III, frgs. 7ii–11, 13); 1QIsa^a (36:22, col. XXX, 3; 37:1, col. XXX, 5; 38:1, col. XXXI, 20; 39:3, col. XXXII, 20); 1QIsa^b (39:3, col. XVI, 15); 4QXII^g (Jon. 2:8, frgs. 78ii, 82–87, 7); 2QRuth^a (2:18, col. II, 6). The form in 2 Sam. 12:16 of 4QSam^a is partially damaged.

⁶⁵ See also Smith, 1991, p. 50 for the forms וימות and וימת in 11Q19.

⁶⁶ For the use of ו for long and short *o/u*, see Qimron, 1986, pp. 17–18; Tov, 2013, p. 670. See Kutscher, 1974, pp. 126–148 for a discussion of ו as a vowel letter in 1QIsa^a.

⁶⁷ Tov, 2004, p. 339. Tov’s table indicates that vowel letters were used consistently in 4QNum^b and 4QSam^c.

⁶⁸ 4QGen-Exod^a (Ex. 2:3, frg. 19i, 7); 4QExod-Lev^f (Ex. 40:18, col. II, frg. 2ii, 13; 40:19, col. II, frg. 2ii, 15; 40:21, col. II, frg. 2ii, 18; 40:24, col. II, frg. 2ii, 21); 1QIsa^a (49:2, col. XL, 29; 51:3, col. XLII, 16); 1QIsa^b (49:2, col. XXI, 9; 51:3, col. XXII, 11; 51:16, frg. 36, 2). The vellum of 4QExod-Lev^f is relatively well preserved but the ink is fading so the manuscript is very difficult to read from the photographs and the plates. Furthermore, there could be another

in 4QExod^b (2:3, frags. 3i–4, 2). The small sample makes it difficult to draw reliable conclusions. The available evidence suggests that scribes typically distinguished between long and short forms of ׀ִשׁ. The form with a ׀ in 4QExod^b may be a scribal mistake. But it is also possible that the orthography was influenced by that of long *yiqtol*s, especially since ׀ does not occur as a vowel letter for /ε/.⁶⁹

2.3 Causative forms of strong roots

A brief note should be added concerning *wayyiqtol*s of strong roots in the *hiphil* stem. Long *yiqtol* forms of these roots typically contain an additional ׀ in both the MT and the biblical scrolls from Qumran. *Wayyiqtol*s in these corpora lack this distinguishing feature. Here, it is sufficient to note that these short forms share this feature with those of the verb ׀ִשׁ.

3 Conclusion

What can be said about copying practices based on this survey? How did the morphological erosion of *wayyiqtol*s influence the scribes who made the Dead Sea Scrolls? The documents in the corpus provide a relatively homogenous picture. Most manuscripts consistently use short *wayyiqtol*s in places where the MT has a corresponding short form. Only 1QSam and 1QIsa^a depart from this pattern, and the latter contains as many short *wayyiqtol*s as long ones. What is the best explanation for this pattern? The use of non-conversive alternatives to *wayyiqtol* in non-biblical compositions suggests that the use of *wayyiqtol* was in decline. Moreover, the occasional long *wayyiqtol* forms in biblical texts and quotes point to a process of morphological erosion. Consequently, it would have been very easy for scribes to add an additional ׀. However, the scribes who copied the manuscripts in the corpus were very consistent in their use of distinct short forms. The same consistency is attested in the accurate copying of long first person forms. Two explanations can account for this pattern: it could point to a carefully executed copying process (particularly in the case of the Torah); or, if the scribes were familiar with the style of the texts they copied, it is also possible that the short form was a part of their literary toolbox (even if it was not used creatively). A combination of these two factors is the best explanation for the consistent copying of short forms. As for 1QIsa^a, it is plausible that the non-narrative style of the book contributed to the higher frequency of long forms.

example in 4QExod-Lev^f (Ex. 40:26, col. II, frg. 2ii, 24). A normal *yiqtol* (׀ִשׁ) is used in Isa. 51:16 of 1QIsa^a instead of the MT form ׀ִשׁ.

⁶⁹ Cf. Qimron, 1986, p. 19; Tov, 2013, pp. 670–671; and Reymond, 2014, pp. 39–43, who note that ׀ primarily represents /ī/ and sometimes /ē/ but not /ε/.

Lastly, a cautionary note. Many manuscripts are fragmentary, and the great Isaiah scroll is the only one that can be studied systematically. It is therefore possible that more long forms were present in passages that have not been preserved.

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Unmarked Modality and Rhetorical Questions in Biblical Hebrew

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1 Modality and systems of modality¹

Modality refers to the mood, opinion or attitude a speaker expresses toward an idea. It may be expressed systematically through the verbal system by modal inflection of verbs, as in Latin and (Classical) Greek:

dat; det; da!
didosin; dói; dós!
'he gives; he should give; give!'

Alternatively, but still within the verbal system, modality may be expressed through auxiliary verbs, as in German and English:

ich darf gehen; ich muss gehen; ich kann gehen; ich soll gehen
I may go; I must go; I can go; I should go

Modality may equally be conveyed outside of the verbal system. In Latin, interrogative modality may be expressed by tone of voice, an interrogative pronoun or the particle *-ne* appended to the first word of the sentence.

mihi dat? quis mihi dat? mihine dat?

1.1 Biblical Hebrew: Foretaste

Biblical Hebrew, like any language, expresses modality, but its full grammatical arsenal has not yet been fully appreciated by scholars. Grammars often

¹ An earlier version was first presented at the conference of the Society of Old Testament Studies in Nottingham on 4 January 2017 as 'Unmarked modality: Rhetorical questions and theological presuppositions'.

mention the inflectional varieties of *yiqtol*, including the ‘volitional’ paradigm, but Biblical Hebrew has more ways of expressing modality. There are lexically modal verbs such as *יוכל* and *אָבָה*:

וְלֹא־נִשְׂאָ אֲתֶם הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁבְתָּם יחדוּ כִּי־הִנֵּה רַב וְלֹא יָכֻלוּ לְשִׁבְתָּם יחדוּ:
‘so that the land could not support both of them dwelling together; for their possessions were so great that **they could not dwell together.**’
(Gen. 13:16, ESV)²

וַיִּחְזַק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה וְלֹא אָבָה לְשַׁלְּחָם:
‘But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and **he was not willing to let them go.**’ (Ex. 10:27, NIV)

There are some idiomatic uses, such as *אין* with a personal pronoun for the person unwilling:

וְאִם־אֵינֶנּוּ מְשַׁלְּחִים לֹא נִבְדָּד כִּי־הָאִישׁ אָמַר אֵלֵינוּ לֹא־תֵרָאוּ פָנַי בְּלִתי אַחֲיָכֶם אִתְּכֶם:
‘But **if you will not send him**, we will not go down, for the man said to us, “You shall not see my face, unless your brother is with you.”’
(Gen. 43:5, ESV)

כִּי־יְהִיֶּה לְאִישׁ בֶּן סוֹבֵר וּמוֹרָה אֵינֵינוּ שֹׁמְעֵ בְקוֹל אָבִיו וּבְקוֹל אִמּוֹ וַיִּסְרּוּ אֹתוֹ וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲלֵיהֶם:
‘If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son **who will not obey** the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them ...’ (Deut. 21:18, ESV)

And particles may also indicate a modal meaning:

אָף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ הַגָּן:
‘Did God **actually** say, “You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?”’
(Gen. 3:1b, ESV)

And, of particular interest, word order may be a linguistic signal that the verb is to be understood as modal.

² In examples throughout this paper, English translations are taken from: *ESV Study Bible*, English Standard Version, Crossway, 2016 (ESV); *New International Version*, Biblica, 2011 (NIV); *A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, The Jewish Publication Society, 1985 (JPS); *New English Translation*, Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005 (NET).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-הָעָם עֵדִים אַתֶּם בְּכֶם כִּי-אַתֶּם בְּחַרְתֶּם לָכֶם אֶת-יְהוָה לְעַבְדוֹ אֹתוֹ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֵדִים:

“Then Joshua said to the people, “**You are witnesses** against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him.” And they said, “We are witnesses.”” (Josh. 24:22, ESV)

“Thereupon Joshua said to the people, “**You are witnesses** against yourselves that you have by your own act chosen to serve the LORD.”

“Yes, we are!” they responded.’ (Josh. 24:22, JPS)

‘Joshua said to the people, “**Do you agree to be witnesses** against yourselves that you have chosen to worship the LORD?” They replied, “We are witnesses!”’ (Josh. 24:22, NET)

The NET translation of this as a question is well justified by the repetition of the עֵדִים, which can be translated as ‘Yes, we will be witnesses’. Biblical Hebrew does not answer yes/no questions in the affirmative with a word for ‘yes’: instead, the affirmative is indicated by repeating the key word or phrase.³ In this case, it also means that Joshua’s initial statement could be understood as a question: ‘Will you be witnesses against yourselves?’ Or, making the modality explicit, ‘Are you willing to be witnesses?’ They answer, ‘Yes, we are willing to be witnesses’.

But, as the ESV and other translations demonstrate, Joshua’s challenge to the people does not have to be understood as a question. A sternly stated ‘You are witnesses against yourselves’ can equally convey the meaning, Joshua is imposing his will on the people and challenging them to accept it. This imposition of will is the definition of *deontic* modality, in which what is at stake is not a proposition itself, but one party imposing its will on another with regard to that proposition. Here is the first of many cases in which there is an overlap between kinds of modality, such as the imposition of will, deontic modality, with the requirement for a response, interrogative modality.

1.2 When modality is significant

Biblical Hebrew modality is not restricted to the volitional *yiqtol* paradigm, which explains why modality presents such a challenge for non-native speakers and grammarians. Comparing Bible translations, let alone interpretations, is sobering, as they can vary so widely in what modality they detect. Deciding on the modality can be an exercise in frustration. Consider Isaiah 1:18:

³ I was vaguely aware of this, but I thank Aaron Hornkohl for making it explicit for me.

לְכוּנָא וְנִבְחָה יֵאמֶר יְהוָה אִם־יִהְיוּ חַטָּאֵיכֶם כַּשָּׁנִים כְּשֶׁלֶג יִלְבִּינוּ אִם־יֵאָדְמוּ כְּתוֹלַע
כְּצֹמֶר יִהְיוּ:

‘Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.’ (Isa. 1:18, ESV)

In this verse, does God promise that crimson sins can be made white as snow? Or does he ridicule that same thought? It all hangs on the modality intended. If assertive modality, ‘though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’, then God is the saviour promising forgiveness. If interrogative modality, ‘though your sins are like scarlet, shall they be as white as snow?’, then God is the judge, dismissing nonsense and anticipating judgment. The modality makes all the difference.⁴

Since our grammars tell us that interrogative modality in Biblical Hebrew is marked by the interrogative particle הָ or by a question word such as מִי or מָה, questions lacking these particles are given the label ‘unmarked’. In other words, these are *possibly* questions, if a grammarian can justify why we ought to analyse them as questions even though they lack the expected marking. This will be the topic of this paper, with a particular focus, eventually, on unmarked *rhetorical* questions.

2 Modality in BH: Function to form

Discussions of modality in Biblical Hebrew usually work from form to function: beginning with the cohortative, imperative and jussive forms, and observing that *wqatal* and *yiqtol* are compatible with many kinds of modality. Hatav’s conclusion is representative: “all the modals (except for the counterfactuals) can be, and usually are, denoted by the two forms *yiqtol* and *wqatal*”,⁵ alongside the volitional paradigm.

Without necessarily disputing this, it may be worthwhile to approach the topic from the other direction: beginning with modal *function*, as best we can determine from the semantics evident in English translation, and then observing what *forms* are involved. What follows is a brief sampling of each of the three main areas of modality: epistemic, deontic and evidential. To protect against special pleading, I employ a few standard translations (ESV, NIV, JPS, NET)⁶ as evidence for the modal semantics claimed.

⁴ There is clearly a nuanced range of possibilities, but these two demonstrate the critical role of modality within the discussion. For a review of proposals, see Williamson, 2006, pp. 103–118.

⁵ Hatav, 1997, p. 150.

⁶ For details of these translations, see n. 2.

2.1 Possibility (epistemic)

Possibility, within what is called epistemic modality, or modality referring to the speaker's knowledge or certainty regarding a proposition, provides one view of the various strategies within Biblical Hebrew for conveying modality. The verb 'to be able' is the first contender, and then the verb stem, or *binyan*, of the *niphal*. In Genesis 13:16, possibility is introduced by אִם-יִוָּכַל 'if anyone can', and then it is continued with the *niphal* stem, in this case passive voice, גַּם-יִרְעָה 'so your seed will be able to be counted'.⁷

וְשָׂמֵתִי אֶת-יִרְעָה כַּעֲפָר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ׀ אִם-יִוָּכַל אִישׁ לִמְנוֹת אֶת-עֲפָר הָאָרֶץ גַּם-יִרְעָה
יְמִנָּה:

'I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that **if one can** count the dust of the earth, your offspring also **can be counted**.'
(Gen. 13:16, ESV)

In Genesis 16:10, the seed 'cannot be counted' for the abundance, וְלֹא יִסְפָּר מְרֹב.

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה הַרְבֵּה אֲרֻבָּה אֶת-יִרְעָה וְלֹא יִסְפָּר מְרֹב:
"The angel of the LORD also said to her, "I will surely multiply your offspring so that they **cannot be numbered for multitude**."
(Gen. 16:10, ESV)

A conditional context, אִם followed by וְהָיָה, can convey possibility: 'if' Esau attacks the first camp, the second camp 'might be able to escape', in Genesis 32:9.

וַיֹּאמֶר אִם-יָבוֹא עֲשׂוֹ אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה הָאֶחָד וְהִכּוּ וְהָיָה הַמַּחֲנֶה הַשֵּׁנִי לִפְלִיטָה:
"... thinking, "**If** Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, the other camp **may yet escape**."
(Gen. 32:9, JPS)

The adverb אִילִי can make possibility explicit: 'maybe I will have children through her', אִילִי אֲבִנָּה מִמֶּנָּה in Genesis 16:2.

וַתֹּאמֶר שָׂרַי אֶל-אַבְרָם הִנֵּה-נָא עָצַרְנִי יְהוָה מִלְדוֹת בְּאִנָּה אֶל-שִׁפְחָתִי אִילִי אֲבִנָּה מִמֶּנָּה:
וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם לְקוֹל שָׂרַי:
'And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; **it may be that I shall obtain children by her**." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.'
(Gen. 16:2, ESV)

⁷ Cf. the Latin future participle.

The conjunction *כִּן* can convey an undesired possibility: ‘he might also die’, *אָבִיָּהוּא כִּן-יָמוּת גַּם-הוּא* in Genesis 38:11.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְתָמָר כְּלִמָּוּת שְׂכִי אֶלמִנָּה בֵּית־אָבִיךָ עַד־יִגְדֹל שְׁלָה בְנֵי כִּי אֲמַר פְּרוּ־יָמוּת
גַּם־הוּא כְּאָחִיו וּתְלֹךְ תִּמְרָ וּתֵשֵׁב בֵּית אָבִיךָ:
‘Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Stay as a widow in
your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up” – for he thought,
“**He too might die** like his brothers.” So Tamar went to live in her
father’s house.’ (Gen. 38:11, JPS)

It is true that, in each case, either a *yiqtol* or *weqatal* form is involved, but it is often not the verbal conjugation that conveys the meaning of possibility. The stem, or *binyan*, or a particle, or a conjunction, or a conditional structure, are all involved as well, and in fact, were it not for these, the *yiqtol* or *weqatal* would likely not be considered modal.

2.2 Permission (deontic)

Permission comes from another side of modality, deontic modality, concerned with obligation and permission, imposing one’s will on another. This is familiarly expressed with the jussive, both in verb-initial and verb-medial clauses, as in Genesis 24:55: *אָחֵר תֵּלֶךְ* followed by *תֵּשֵׁב הַנְּעִר אֶתְנוּ יָמִים אִו עֶשְׂוֹר*.

וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיךָ וְאִמָּה **תֵּשֵׁב הַנְּעִר אֶתְנוּ יָמִים אִו עֶשְׂוֹר אָחֵר תֵּלֶךְ**:
‘Her brother and her mother said, “**Let the young woman remain** with us a while, at least ten days; after that **she may go.**”’ (Gen. 24:55, ESV)

Permission may also be expressed with a non-jussive form, but with a fronted object, as in Genesis 42:37, with Reuben’s desperate plea to his father, and Genesis 47:24, in which the Egyptians are permitted four-fifths of their yield.

וַיֹּאמֶר רְאוּבֵן אֶל־אָבִיו לֵאמֹר **אֶת־שְׁנֵי בְנֵי תְמִית אִם־לֹא אָבִיאָנּוּ אֵלֶיךָ תִּנְהַ אֶתוֹ עַל־יָדִי**
וְאֲנִי אֲשִׁיבֶנּוּ אֵלֶיךָ:
‘Then Reuben said to his father, “**You may kill** my two sons if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my care, and I will return him to you.”’ (Gen. 42:37, JPS)

וְהָיָה בְּתִבּוּאוֹת וְנִמְתָּם חֲמִישִׁית לַפְּרֹעָה וְאַרְבַּע הַיָּדָיִת יִהְיֶה לָכֶם לְזֵרַע הַשָּׂדֶה וְלֶאֱכֹלְכֶם
וְלֶאֱשֹׁר בְּבֵתֵיכֶם וְלֶאֱכֹל לְטַפְּכֶם:
‘But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. **The other four-fifths you may keep** as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children.’ (Gen. 47:24, NIV)

Permission may also be conveyed with a cohortative form, as in Amos 8:5.

לאמר מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שָׁבֵר וְהַשְׁבֵּת וְנִפְתָּחָה-כָּלֵר
 ‘saying, “When will the new moon be over, **that we may sell grain?**
 And the Sabbath, **that we may offer wheat for sale ...**”’ (Am. 8:5,
 ESV)

Every variation of *yiqtol* is compatible with permission, making it clear that there must be more to deontic modality than just volitional forms.

2.3 Certainty and evidential modality

Certainty sits astride epistemic and evidential modality, with evidential modality focused on the grounds for asserting knowledge. ‘Deductive modality’ is Palmer’s⁸ technical term for the certainty that does not identify the evidence, but insists that any and all evidence available leaves as the only possible conclusion the statement at hand. In English, we often prefer intonation, adverbs and punctuation to express the strongest certainty: *I am absolutely dead positive about this!!*

Hebrew has several strategies for conveying evidential modality, among them הֵלֵא, הִנֵּה and the paronomastic infinitive absolute.⁹ In Judges 5:30, Sisera’s mother insists that the only possible explanation for his delay is the abundance of plunder that takes time to gather and divide.

הֵלֵא יִמְצְאוּ יְחֻלְקוּ שְׁלָל הַחַם רַחֲמַתִּים לְרֵאשׁ גִּבֹר שְׁלָל צְבָעִים לְסִיסְרָא שְׁלָל צְבָעִים רַקְמָה צָבַע
 רַקְמָתִים לְצוּאֵי שְׁלָל:

‘**They must be dividing the spoil** they have found:

A damsel or two for each man,

Spoil of dyed cloths for Sisera,

Spoil of embroidered cloths,

A couple of embroidered cloths

Round every neck as spoil.’ (Judg. 5:30, JPS)

In 1 Samuel 21:12, the servants of Achish have recognised David and are exclaiming regarding the mismatch between his current, refugee situation and what everybody knew to be true of his reputation.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ עֲבָדֵי אַכִּישׁ אֵלָיו הֲלוֹא-יָגָה זָנוּד מִלְּפִי הָאָרֶץ הַלּוֹא לָזֶה יַעֲנֶנּוּ בְמַחְלוֹת לֵאמֹר הֲבָה
 שְׂאוֹל בְּאֶלְפוֹ וְדָוִד בְּרֶבֶבָתוֹ

‘The courtiers of Achish said to him, “**Why, that’s David**, king of the land! That’s the one of whom they sing as they dance:

Saul has slain his thousands;

David, his tens of thousands.”’ (1 Sam. 21:12, JPS)

⁸ Palmer, 2001.

⁹ Callaham, 2010.

The word הִנֵּה can function as a sensory evidential, as in Genesis 1:31, where God looked, and, based on the evidence from his senses, he concluded that it was very good.

וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד
'And God saw everything that he had made, and **behold, it was very good**. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.'
(Gen. 1:31, ESV)

The paronomastic infinitive, though still disputed with regard to its details, seems to express a kind of certainty:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְיָ אֱשׂוּב אֵלֶיךָ כָּעֵת חֲזָה וְהִנֵּה-בֵן לְשָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמְעֵת פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהוּא אַחֲרָיו:
'The LORD said, "**I will surely return to you** about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him.' (Gen. 18:10, ESV)

3 Modality in BH: Form inventory

The above overview provides us with a strikingly different inventory of means of indicating modality in Biblical Hebrew than generally assumed. Two phenomena will receive further analysis here: word order and particles.

3.1 Word order

We may begin with word order and recall the usual conclusion that modality is determined by clause-initial, non-consecutive *yiqtol* forms. The difference between יִשְׁפֹּט יְהוָה in Genesis 16:5 and יִשְׁפֹּט יְיָ אֱלֹהִים in Psalms 82:1 is 'let the Lord judge' versus 'God judges' or 'God will judge'.

Of great curiosity, then, is the observation that in the examples below it is the fronting of a constituent *before* the verb, in verbal clauses, or the fronting of a non-verbal predicate *before* a pronoun, in verbless clauses, that seems to indicate modality. This may be what Gesenius meant when he wrote, regarding unmarked questions:

A question need not necessarily be introduced by a special interrogative pronoun or adverb. Frequently the natural emphasis upon the words is of itself sufficient to indicate an interrogative sentence as such.¹⁰

¹⁰ Gesenius, 1910, p. 473, §150a. Gesenius notes, without evaluation, that H. G. Mitchell considered that there are only 39 such examples, however, of which 12 to 17 must be considered corruptions. We can see that Mitchell was not a fan of unmarked questions.

In our first three examples, a redundant pronoun is fronted before the verb, whether inflected or participial. In Joshua 22:18, the ESV uses the earlier question in verse 17 ('Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor ...') as justification for continuing interrogative modality in verse 18: וְאַתֶּם תִּשָּׁבוּ 'that you too must turn away?' As with Joshua 24:22 in section 1.1 above, there is clear deontic modality, 'you must turn away', that may also be considered interrogative, as in the ESV and NIV. The JPS and NET put their own modal twist in their translations, opting for an exclamation point instead of a question mark.

הַמְעַט-לָנוּ אֶת-עֲוֹן פְּעֹר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-הִטְהַרְנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִתִּי הַגָּדִי בַעֲצַת יְהוָה:
וְאַתֶּם תִּשָּׁבוּ הַיּוֹם מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה וְהָיָה אַתֶּם תִּמְרְדוּ הַיּוֹם בְּיַהוָה וּמָחָר אֶל-כָּל-עַצַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל
יִקְצֹף:

‘¹⁷ Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the LORD, ¹⁸ **that you too must turn away** this day from following the LORD? And if you too rebel against the LORD today then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel.’ (Josh. 22:17–18, ESV)

‘¹⁷ Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the LORD! ¹⁸ **And are you now turning away from the LORD?** If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel.’ (Josh. 22:17–18, NIV)

‘¹⁷ Is the sin of Peor, which brought a plague upon the community of the LORD, such a small thing to us? We have not cleansed ourselves from it to this very day; ¹⁸ **and now you would turn away from the LORD!** If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow He will be angry with the whole community of Israel.’ (Josh. 22:17–18, JPS)

‘¹⁷ The sin we committed at Peor was bad enough. To this very day we have not purified ourselves; it even brought a plague on the community of the LORD. ¹⁸ **Now today you dare to turn back from following the LORD!** You are rebelling today against the LORD; tomorrow he may break out in anger against the entire community of Israel.’ (Josh. 22:17–18, NET)

In Judges 11, the Amorites demand that the Israelites return land that allegedly rightfully belongs to the Amorites. In the recital of how the land came to be in Israelite hands comes verse 23, where all four sample translations recognise interrogative modality in וְאַתָּה תִּירָשְׁנוּ; this can be seen in the representative translation from NIV.

וַעֲתָהּ יְהוָה | אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הוֹרִישׁ אֶת־הָאֱמֹרִי מִפְּנֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתָּה תִּירָשָׁנּוּ:
 ‘Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, **what right have you to take it over?**’
 (Judg. 11:23, NIV)

The reason is clear: the context makes nonsense of assertive modality: it cannot be that the text is asserting that the Amorites *will* or *ought* to take possession of the land God has given the Israelites. The context unequivocally denies that the Amorites have any right to the land. The only valid translation, therefore, requires an interrogative, challenging modality: ‘what right have you to take the land?’

An example with such a clear context, that forces all translations to identify interrogative modality, is ideal for analysis: can we discover anything, hitherto unnoticed, that might mark the interrogative modality, syntactically or otherwise? The obvious options are the redundant pronoun and its position in front of the verb.

The founding of Dan (formerly Laish) is recounted in Judges 18. In Judges 18:9, the versions differ on whether to express incredulity or disgust in translating וְאַתֶּם מִחֲשִׁים: if incredulity, a pregnant question is appropriate; if disgust, then negative words in an exclamation are suitable. There is unanimity in recognising that this is not a straightforward assertion.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוֹמָה וְנַעֲלֶה עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי רָאִינוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהִנֵּה טוֹבָה מְאֹד וְאַתֶּם מִחֲשִׁים אֶל־
 תַּעֲצְלוּ לָלֶכֶת לָבֹא לְרֶשֶׁת אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

‘They said, “Arise, and let us go up against them, for we have seen the land, and behold, it is very good. **And will you do nothing?** Do not be slow to go, to enter in and possess the land.”’ (Judg. 18:9, ESV)

‘They answered, “Come on, let’s attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. **Aren’t you going to do something?** Don’t hesitate to go there and take it over.”’ (Judg. 18:9, NIV)

‘They replied, “Let us go at once and attack them! For we found that the land was very good, **and you are sitting idle!** Don’t delay; go and invade the land and take possession of it.”’ (Judg. 18:9, JPS)

‘They said, “Come on, let’s attack them, for we saw their land and it is very good. **You seem lethargic,** but don’t hesitate to invade and conquer the land.”’ (Judg. 18:9, NET)

As mentioned mentioned in section 1.1 above, Joshua 24:22 demonstrates the verbless clause in which the predicate is before the pronoun, עָדִים אַתֶּם.

Four more examples have different constituents fronted. In Genesis 17:12, the subject is fronted: the eight-day-old male *must* be circumcised.

וּבְיָמֵי שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים יִמּוּל לְכֶם כָּל־זָכָר לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם יֶלֶד בְּיַת וּמִקְנַת־כֶּסֶף מִכֹּל בֶּן־גִּזְרָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרְעוֹ הוּא:

‘He who is eight days old among you **shall be circumcised**. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring ...’ (Gen. 17:12, ESV)

‘For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old **must be circumcised**, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner – those who are not your offspring.’ (Gen. 17:12, NIV)

In Judges 15:18, the adverb וְעַתָּה is fronted, when Samson complains to God, ‘does this *have* to happen, that I now die of thirst?’

וַיִּצְמָא מְאֹד וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אִתָּה נָתַתָּ בְּיַד־עַבְדְּךָ אֶת־הַתְּשׁוּעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְעַתָּה אֲמֹת בְּצִמָּא וְנִפְלַתִי בְּיַד הָעֲרָלִים:

‘And he was very thirsty, and he called upon the LORD and said, “You have granted this great salvation by the hand of your servant, and **shall I now die** of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”’ (Judg. 15:18, ESV)

‘He was very thirsty and he called to the LORD, “You Yourself have granted this great victory through Your servant; and **must I now die** of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?”’ (Judg. 15:18, JPS)

In 1 Samuel 22:7, with a fronted indirect object, גַּם־לְכַלְכֶּם, Saul challenges his servants regarding how David would treat them: ‘would he [really] give you fields and vineyards?’

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂאוּל לְעַבְדָּיו הַנֹּצְצִים עָלָיו שְׂמֵעוּ־נָא בְּנֵי יִמְיָנִי גַם־לְכַלְכֶּם יִתֵּן בֶּן־יִשַׁי שְׂדוֹת וּבְרָמִים לְכַלְכֶּם יִשִּׁים שְׂרָרֵי אֱלֹפִים וְשְׂרָרֵי מְאֹת:

‘And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, “Hear now, people of Benjamin; **will the son of Jesse give every one of you** fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds ...”’ (1 Sam. 22:7, ESV)

‘Saul said to them, “Listen, men of Benjamin! **Will the son of Jesse give all of you** fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?”’ (1 Sam. 22:7, NIV)

‘Saul said to the courtiers standing about him, “Listen, men of Benjamin! **Will the son of Jesse give** fields and vineyards to every one of you? And will he make all of you captains of thousands or captains of hundreds?”’ (1 Sam. 22:7, JPS)

‘Saul said to his servants who were stationed around him, “Listen up, you Benjaminites! **Is Jesse’s son giving** fields and vineyards to all of you? Or is he making all of you commanders and officers?”’ (1 Sam. 22:7, NET)

And as seen in section 2.2, a fronted object is used in Genesis 42:37 when Reuben grants permission for his own two sons to be put to death, as compensation for Benjamin, if he were not to return safely from Egypt.

3.1.1 Contrast

Our last example in this section may be illuminating. In 2 Samuel 15:20, an adverbial temporal is fronted, but it is the contrast between two different temporals, תִּמְוֹל ‘yesterday’ and הַיּוֹם ‘today’, that induces the modality: ‘You came only yesterday; how can I make you wander today?’

תִּמְוֹל | בּוֹאָהּ וְהַיּוֹם אֶנּוּעֶה עִמָּנִי לְלֶכֶת וְאֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ עַל אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ שׁוֹב וְהִשָּׁב אֶת-
 אֶתִּידָה עִמָּךְ תִּסַּד וְנִאֲמַת:
 ‘You came only **yesterday**, and shall I **today** make you wander about with us, since I go I know not where? Go back and take your brothers with you, and may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.’ (2 Sam. 15:20, ESV)

Contrast has been present in many of the examples given so far, if most obvious here.

Hebrew linguists are most familiar with word order, that is, constituents fronted before the verb, to mark topic and focus. Default syntax can provide an unmarked topic and focus, but when a constituent is fronted to mark the topic or focus, that is nearly always specifically a contrastive topic or focus. Word order with fronted constituents, and contrast, are highly correlated.

And yet it has been observed that topic and focus account for, at best, half of the instances of marked, or non-default, word order.¹¹ It may be more helpful to see the marked word order as often signalling *contrast*, namely, discontinuity with the previous discourse. Marked topic and focus are one instantiation of this contrast, but are not to be identified with it. Here in 2 Samuel, the semantics of the contrast also require a modal interpretation of אֶנּוּעֶה ‘should I make you wander’. The English translation with a modal verb is a recognition of a contrast present already in the Biblical Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew has no need to doubly mark the modality, as the context is sufficient; it is only English that expresses both the contrast (‘yesterday’ vs ‘today’) and also the modality on the verb (‘should I make you wander’). But the modality is clearly present in BH, even if not marked by a particular verbal form.

¹¹ Referring specifically to Genesis, for example, see Moshavi, 2010, p. 119. See also Hornkohl’s paper in this volume.

If it is contrast, or a similar notion, that motivates the marked word order, then the modality perceived and expressed in English translations may be genuinely grammatical modality in English but *not* in Biblical Hebrew: that is, semantically present in the Biblical Hebrew (and thus justifiably translated) but not explicitly marked in the grammar.

3.2 The particle אף כי

The compound particle אף כי is often recognised as its own unit, meaning ‘furthermore; yea, that!’¹² or ‘how much more/how much less when’.¹³ This latter definition from HALOT is arrived at by combining the ‘also, even’ meaning of אף with the ‘when’ meaning of כי.

הוּן בְּעוֹדִי חַי עִמָּכֶם הַיּוֹם מִמָּרִים הִתְנַחַם עִמִּי הַיּוֹם וְאַף כִּי־אֲחִירִי מוֹתִי:
 ‘Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. **How much more** after my death!’
 (Deut. 31:27, ESV)

אֵף כִּי לוֹא אָכַל אָכַל הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִשָּׂלַל אֲבִיו אֲשֶׁר מָצָא כִּי עָתָה לֹא־רִבְתָּה מְכָה בַּפְּלִשְׁתִּים:
 ‘**How much better** if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great.’ (1 Sam. 14:30, ESV)

כִּי הֲאֵמַנֶּם יֵשֵׁב אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַגִּבּוֹהַּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא יִכְלְפוּדָּ אֵף כִּי־הִבַּיִת
 הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּנִיתִי:
 ‘But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; **how much less** this house that I have built!’ (1 Kings 8:27, ESV)

This selection of examples reveals how contextually determined each translation is: ‘how much more’, ‘how much better’, ‘how much less’, all from the same compound particle. The linguist sees this phenomenon and hopes to find an underlying category that holds true in all instances, even if expressed differently according to context. From the lexica, it is clear a comparison is made, in which the first situation makes the evaluation of the second situation self-evident. That is, this is a kind of deductive modality, in which the proposition is presented as the only possible conclusion from the available evidence.¹⁴

If rebellion happened during a leader’s life, that is cause enough to deduce it would continue after his death. If the people had eaten, that is reason enough to have had strength to fight well. If heaven cannot contain God, there is no cause to believe a house built by man could.

¹² Brown, Driver and Briggs (BDB), 1907, p. 65.

¹³ Koehler and Baumgartner (HALOT), 2000, vol. I, p. 76.

¹⁴ Palmer, 2001, p. 25.

A gloss in casual English that might catch both the comparison and the exclamation might be: ‘[if x,] how could [y]?’ The above translations might then be modified to: ‘if you rebelled during my life, how could you do otherwise after my death?’, ‘if the people had eaten, how could the slaughter of the Philistines not have been great!’ and, lastly, ‘if heaven cannot contain God, how could this house?’

This approach, seeking a valid underlying linguistic meaning, and even, where possible, a translation gloss that captures this, helps makes sense of van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze’s comment in their reference grammar, that

A speaker/narrator uses **אָף** to *introduce a rhetorical question* that must be joined to a preceding statement ...

By using **אָף** **כִּי** the speaker indicates that what has been suggested in the rhetorical question *can only be confirmed* in the light of a preceding situation. As with **אָב** an argument that has been added to another is involved. The second argument is then the one bearing persuasive power.¹⁵

This all comes together in our final example. The lexica and grammars struggle with the use of **אָף** **כִּי** in Genesis 3:1.

וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכָּל־חַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה **אָף כִּי־אָמַר**
אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל־עֵץ הַגָּן:

‘Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “**Did God actually say**, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”’ (Gen. 3:1, ESV)

‘Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “**Did God really say**: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?”’ (Gen. 3:1, JPS)

‘Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “**Is it really true that God said**, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?’”’ (Gen. 3:1, NET)

One can hardly gloss it as ‘how much more’, ‘how much less’ or something similar. What preceding situation is there for comparison to what is being said?

And so, BDB provides an additional meaning for **אָף** **כִּי**, exclusively for Genesis 3:1. It refers to the entry for **הֲאֵין** ‘indeed? really?’ By treating the **אָף** **כִּי** as if it were **הֲאֵין**, BDB is able to create a new definition for **אָף** **כִּי**.¹⁶ I am not sure lexical semanticists would approve. Joüon and Muraoka, on the other hand, consider this particular example not as a case of the compound particle, as that clearly does not fit, but as a simple **אָף** followed by **כִּי** introducing a

¹⁵ Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze, 1999, p. 313.

¹⁶ Possibly influenced by Rashi’s interpretation of **אָף** **כִּי** as **שֶׁמָּא** ‘perhaps’ in Miqra’ot Gedolot?

subject clause, and they insert an implied ‘(is it)’ to make the meaning ‘(is it) also that he said’, which they equate to ‘is it then true that he said?’¹⁷

From the context of Genesis 3, we can intuit that these scholars are close, if not exactly right, in their conclusions. But if we recall the other uses of אָךְ יָ , we might have more to offer. With the gloss of ‘how could’ proposed for the other examples, a possible translation for the second half of Genesis 3:1 might be

‘How could God say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?’

This translation makes clear the deductive modality involved. That is, the serpent is not merely casting doubt on the situation at hand, he is declaring it to be impossible. The shift is from a simple incredulous question, which is the usual interpretation, to a *rhetorical* question. As a rhetorical question, it does not permit a response, but instead asserts the impossibility of God saying any such thing. The implication must be that, based on what we know of God already, it is impossible that he could say something like this. The woman’s response shows her struggle with this, because she knows that, actually, it does very well permit a response. The serpent is wrong! But he is also subtle and devious, and if he does not persuade her to his view, he succeeds in dragging her into doubt. Here is the beauty of literary artistry. And an example of particles requiring that we translate a verb modally, although in BH the particle was sufficient marking.

3.3 The particle אָךְ

Biblical Hebrew has another, largely unrecognised, category of overlapping modality. What we call an imperative by form may in fact be used as a polite interrogative. Note the role of אָךְ in every example below.

In Judges 19, the story of the Levite and his concubine starts with politeness and hospitality, even if it ends otherwise. In verse 6, the father requests that the Levite stay, spend the night and enjoy himself. This is expressed with two imperatives and the functional equivalent, the jussive, for ‘let your heart be merry’. But the function is that of a question, which JPS captures well: ‘Won’t you stay?’ The meaning is not much different from NIV’s ‘Please stay tonight’, but it is more transparent: there is no directive, or command, but instead a request. This becomes clear in the remaining examples.

$\text{וַיִּשְׁבוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתְּוּ יַחְדָּו וַיֵּשְׁתּוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי הַנְּעֻרָה אֶל-הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֲלֵי-נָא וַיָּגֵד וַיֵּטֵב לָבָד:$
‘So the two of them sat down and they feasted together. Then the girl’s father said to the man, “**Won’t you stay** overnight and enjoy yourself?”’ (Judg. 19:6, JPS)

¹⁷ Joüon and Muraoka, 2006, p. 557 §157n2.

In Judges 19:11, the servant must be asking, ‘Shall we stop at this city of the Jebusites, and spend the night?’ because his master replies, ‘No’.

הָם עַם־יְבוּס וְהַיּוֹם כִּד מֵאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּעַר אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו לְכֹה־נָא וְנִסּוּרָה אֶל־עִיר־הַיְבוּסִי
הַזֹּאת וְנָלִין בָּהּ:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנָיו לֹא נִסּוּר אֶל־עִיר נְכָרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה וְעַבְרָנוּ עַד־גִּבְעָה:
‘When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, “**Come, let’s stop** at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night.” His master replied, “**No**. We won’t go into an alien city, whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah.”’ (Judg. 19:11–12, NIV)

Similarly, in the next three examples, the question is proven to be a question by the affirmative replies, in Biblical Hebrew style, repeating the salient part of the question. In 2 Samuel 14:12, after ‘May your servant speak?’, the king answers, ‘Yes’ or ‘Speak’.

וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה תְּדַבֵּר־נָא שְׂפֹתַי אֶל־אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ דַּבֵּר וַיֹּאמֶר דַּבְּרִי:
‘Then the woman said, “Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king.” He said, “**Speak**.”’ (2 Sam. 14:12, ESV)

In 2 Kings 6:3, Elisha is asked, ‘Will you come?’ and he replies, ‘Yes’ or ‘I will come’.

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאֶחָד הוֹאֵל נָא וְלֵךְ אִתְּ־עַבְדֶּיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אֵלֶיךָ:
‘Then one of them said, “**Will you please come along** with your servants?” “**Yes, I will come**”, he said.’ (2 Kings 6:3, JPS)

In Ruth 2:2, Ruth asks permission to go into the fields to gather grain, and Naomi grants her permission, ‘Yes, you may go’.

וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה אֶל־נַעֲמִי אֵלֶיךָ־נָא הִשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקָטָה בַשִּׁבְלִים אַחַר אִשָּׁר אֲמַצְא־תָּן
בְּעֵינָיו וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ לֵךְ לְכִי בְתִי:
‘Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “**I would like to go** to the fields and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone who may show me kindness.” “**Yes, daughter, go**”, she replied.’ (Ruth 2:2, JPS)

In all of these, the imperative with ‘please’ is also acceptable in English, because we can also ask a question with a polite imperative. But we must also recognise the interrogative at play that justifies the answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

What we have is a weak deontic modality, in which the request is a weak imposition of will. The request admits of a refusal as well as an acquiescence, which accounts for the interrogative function and the ease of an interrogative interpretation. Once again, deontic modality and interrogative modality overlap each other.

4 Rhetorical questions

4.1 Literature review (Mitchell, Brongers)

We may now fit this sketch of modality and its signals in with other scholarship on Biblical Hebrew.

Mitchell argued strongly, back in 1907, that the unmarked question, rhetorical or not – what he called omission of the interrogative – is mostly a misidentified creature. Instead, what we mostly have are cases of textual corruption or mistaken exegesis. He concludes:

If, therefore, one were required to make a statement on the subject, one would have to say that in direct single or initial questions הַ is omitted before the article, and sometimes in exclamatory questions for the purpose of indicating more clearly the incredulity, irony, or sarcasm which prompted them, but which can be adequately expressed only by the human voice.¹⁸

In describing these unmarked questions, he considers these three main categories (incredulity, irony and sarcasm) as “so many varieties of what might be called exclamatory questions, and appropriately marked by a double punctuation (!?)”.¹⁹ What he called an exclamatory question, we now call a rhetorical question, having the form of a question but the function of an exclamation or strong assertion.

This is Mitchell’s summation of the twenty-seven cases of genuine unmarked questions, according to his assessment. But he does not include examples which the versions nearly unanimously translate as questions, though there is no interrogative particle in sight. In Exodus 8:22, the apodosis of a conditional sentence, וְלֹא יִסְקְלֵנוּ, is translated by most as a question, even with the interrogative particle הֲלֵא in Targum Onqelos. Targums Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan add their own expressions to convey the modal meaning they sense in these two final Hebrew words.

הֲוֹנֵי אֲתֵּתוּעֵבֶת מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִסְקְלֵנוּ:

‘If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, **will they not stone us?**’ (Ex. 8:22b, ESV)

‘If we sacrifice that which is untouchable to the Egyptians before their very eyes, **will they not stone us!**’ (Ex. 8:22b, JPS)

‘If we make sacrifices that are an abomination to the Egyptians right before their eyes, **will they not stone us?**’ (Ex. 8:22b, NET)

¹⁸ Mitchell, 1907, p. 129.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 1907, p. 129.

ואמר משה לא תקו למעבד כיון ארי בעירא דמצראי דחליו ליה מגיה אנהא נסבין לדכחא
קדם יוי אלהנא הא נדבח ית בעירא דמצראי דחליו ליה ואנון יהון חון הלא יימרין
למרגמנא:

‘... will they not command to stone us?’ (TG Onqelos)

לית אפשר דלא ירגמון יתן:

‘... it is not possible that they not stone us.’ (TG Neofiti, Esther Sheni)

מן דינא הוא לאטלא יתן באבנין

‘... by right they could stone us with stones.’ (TG Ps-Jonathan)

We might even broaden the field of rhetorical exclamations if we listen to Brongers²⁰ argue about those in which הלא and הנה are actually *interchangeable*, both functioning to call attention to the obvious: compare 1 Samuel 9:21 and Judges 6:15, for example.

ויען שאול ניאמר הלא בן-ימיני אנכי מקטני שבטי ישראל ומשפחתי הצערה מקל-
משפחות שבטי בנימן ולמה דברת אלי כדבר הנה:

‘Saul answered, “**Am I not** a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?”’ (1 Sam. 9:21, ESV)

ויאמר אליו בן אדני במה אושיע את-ישראל הנה אלפי הקל במנשה ואנכי הצעיר בבית
אבי:

‘And he said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? **Behold**, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”’ (Judg. 6:15, ESV)

Brongers concludes that, in spite of the interrogative particle in הלא, there can be no interrogative modality involved.²¹ I think we could resolve Brongers’ dilemma, however, by recognising that form and function do not always map consistently between languages. In BH, these exclamations, as Brongers calls them, were appropriately considered rhetorical questions (with interrogative marking) *or* as exclamations (with הנה). In English, the exclamation sounds far more natural than the question. The dilemma, however, is purely one of the target language, English; it is not a problem in the Biblical Hebrew. Consider how many examples there have been so far in which the versions have waffled between question marks and exclamation points. Instead of distinguishing between discrete categories, we have overlapping categories, here of surprise modality and interrogative modality.

²⁰ Brongers, 1981.

²¹ He finds confirmation in the verb שאל never being used in conjunction with הלא, but instead קרא or אמר.

4.2 Summary

What we find, then, is a more complex situation than generally assumed. Modality in BH is far more than the volitional paradigm, and the different kinds of modality can overlap, to the consternation of translators. Also, the reality is that mismatches of form and function are to be expected in human language. Where the interrogative form is not accompanied by the expectation of an answer, either in Biblical Hebrew or in English, we call it a rhetorical question. If either interrogative or exclamatory particles, in BH, or punctuation, in English, seem interchangeable, then we may even call them rhetorical exclamations.

4.3 Identifying questions

How, then, to identify such mismatches? Are there rhetorical questions heretofore assumed to be normal questions? Are there unmarked questions, heretofore assumed to be assertions, that are actually unmarked *rhetorical* questions?

This paper cannot answer any of these questions comprehensively, but some helpful observations have already been made. First, it must be affirmed that there are many cases of interrogative modality in BH that are *not* marked by an interrogative particle. In spite of Mitchell's protestations, the intuition that has led so many versions to nonetheless translate questions, even in the absence of a BH interrogative, is not always misguided. This paper attempts to demonstrate that, although lacking the interrogative particle, there may be *other* forms of marking, that show interrogative modality was indeed intended. We have seen three types of marking:

1. The most obvious evidence for an intended question comes when an answer is supplied. Joshua 24:22 (discussed in section 1.1 above) was one example of this. These are obviously not rhetorical questions, and may bear additional modality, such as deontic modality. Translations may vary in which modality they express in the target language.
2. Some particles, not normally considered interrogative, may in fact indicate interrogative modality, whether rhetorical or not. The particles וְיָאֵל and וְיִשְׁאַל were the two discussed here (in sections 3.2 and 3.3, respectively). The variation in translation between exclamation points and question marks points to the dual nature of this category, as well: both surprise modality (exclamation) and interrogative modality (question).
3. Word order, in particular non-verb-first clauses, are commonly explained pragmatically, as expressing topic or focus. But, as already mentioned in section 3.1.1, marked topic and focus by no means exhaust the cases of non-verb-first clauses. The examples of unmarked

questions above may suggest an explanation for some of these unresolved cases: non-verb-first word order may mark a contrast that induces some kind of modality.

Most examples of modality shown through word order observed above actually fall neatly into Mitchell's categories of incredulity, sarcasm and irony, suggesting that non-verb-first word order may mark interrogative modality for rhetorical questions, or, at times, rhetorical exclamations. Many of these examples include a personal pronoun before the verb, such as:

וַיֹּאמֶר נְתַן אֲדֹנָי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶתְּךָ אֲמִירָתְךָ אַחֲרָי וְהָיָא יֵשֵׁב עַל־כִּסְאִי:
'Have you [really] said, "Adonijah shall reign after me?"' (1 Kings 1:24, ESV)
'... you must have said, "Adonijah shall succeed me as king..."'
(1 Kings 1:24, JPS)

וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲיֹבֵל אִשְׁתּוֹ אַתָּה עֲתָה מַעֲשֵׂה מְלוּכָה עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל קוּם אֲכַל־לֶחֶם וַיַּטֵּב
לְפָדָה אֲנִי אֶתְּךָ לְךָ אֶת־כְּרֹם נְבוֹת הַיְזְרְעֵאלִי:
'Do you now govern Israel? Arise ... [!]' (1 Kings 21:7, ESV)
'You are the king of Israel! Get up ...' (1 Kings 21:7, NET)

כִּלְה אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה אֶת שְׂאֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
'Will you make a full end of the remnant of Israel?!' (Ezek. 11:13, ESV)
'You are wiping out the remnant of Israel?!' (Ezek. 11:13, JPS)

5 Rhetorical questions and theological presuppositions

This brings us, finally, to rhetorical questions. The above observations make some questions more identifiable, but there still remain questions with context as the only clue. For example, 1 Samuel 24:20, with no cultural or literary context, would be read as, 'When a man finds his enemy, and he sends him away safely ...' with no modality at all, but simply a compound temporal clause. But within its context here, it becomes a rhetorical question. David had the opportunity to harm Saul, who had been seeking his life, but David refused. Saul now acknowledges the unexpected nature of David's kindness to him, for to let an enemy go, safe, was contrary to all norms in the ancient Near East.

וְכִי־יִמְצָא אִישׁ אֶת־אֹיְבֹוֹ וְשִׁלְחוֹ בְּכַרְדּוֹ טוֹבָה
'For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe?'
(1 Sam. 24:20, ESV)

Even where there are additional signals, such as word order, we observed above that in Judges 11:23 it was the *context* that made the translations unanimous in detecting a question.

In Isaiah 1:18 (see section 1.2), it is the context and meaning of the verse that make Duhm and followers reject the standard translation, in which God promises that sins can become white as snow.²² For forgiveness is the *removal* of sin, which is forever stained. To change the *colour* of sin, to make sin no longer sinful, is antithetical to all biblical theology. The context, in which God presides in the courtroom, argues for clearing away any pretences: if the sins are as scarlet, shall they appear white as snow in court? If they are as crimson cloth, shall they appear as wool, in court? By no means.

And so Culver makes a strong case that Isaiah 1:18 must be the *denial* that sins can ever be anything but sinful.²³ This does not do away with repentance and forgiveness, but it removes those notions from this particular verse. I think I am persuaded.

This leads to that politically charged notion of theological presuppositions. All interpreters, translators foremost among them, interpret the Hebrew text based on a bewildering array of cues. Context, that is, *their understanding* of context, is necessarily a significant factor. When that understanding is shared by all, no difficulty arises, as in Judges 11:23. But where understanding differs, as in Isaiah 1:18, there is scholarly debate. This is as it should be. We must use our full arsenal of skills and convictions in approaching the biblical text, but we must do so with integrity. Of necessity, we all have theological presuppositions, whether they involve sin and forgiveness or the possibility of miracles. It would impoverish our scholarship to lay these aside. Context, and all the ways in which we understand it, is a critical tool in interpreting the text as we have it. To avoid special pleading, we must not fool ourselves into thinking we can dispense with theological presuppositions. But we can replace naive notions of objectivity with a more mature notion of scholarly integrity.

6 Conclusion

This paper has been exploratory, probing into modality in Biblical Hebrew that goes beyond our usual expectations of marking. And this, indeed, may be the most valuable contribution: Modality in Biblical Hebrew is demonstrably *more* than the verbal system. We do find deontic modality within the volitional paradigm, but we also find it *outside* the verbal system, indicated by phenomena such as word order and particles. We find epistemic modality within and without the verbal system, and the same with evidential modality. The verbal system is only one part of expressing modality in Biblical Hebrew.

²² Duhm, 1892.

²³ Culver, 1969.

But although modality is clearly found outside verbal inflection, this is not to claim there is a grammatical system, or even specific grammatical *markings* of modality. There may be notional modality present that requires no grammatical marking in Biblical Hebrew, but upon translation to English requires an explicit modal rendering.

Another result is the recognition that interrogative modality is not a discrete category. There is an overlap between interrogative modality and other kinds of modality, which may even account for many of the ‘unmarked questions’. Requests may have both deontic and interrogative modality. Exclamations may have both deductive and interrogative modality. As in English, where we can interchange question marks and exclamation points, Biblical Hebrew can behave similarly.

Of particular interest to grammarians will be the observations on word order. Until now, verb-first *yiqtol*, or imperfect, clauses have nearly universally been considered to mark deontic modality. ‘May the Lord judge between us’ is, without a second thought, a verb-first clause. This is certainly common for jussive modality, but now we have seen that verb-*medial* clauses can also be an indication of modality. In most of our examples, it would seem the interrogative modality functions as a challenge: ‘Do you **dare** now turn away?’, ‘Are **you** to take possession of the land?’, ‘Are you doing **nothing**?!’ It may be that when the challenge inherently contrasts with the assumptions it is challenging, there is a natural alignment with syntactic signals for contrast, namely, fronted constituents, or verb-medial clauses. If so, is there then a semantic restriction, along the lines of Mitchell’s incredulity, sarcasm and irony, to what marked word order will indicate? Further research is required to determine how direct or indirect the correlation is between word order and modality.

This leads to the whole concept of unmarked questions. In speech, unmarked sarcasm, that is, non-sarcastic in form but sarcastic in function, is the hallmark of dry humour. One is easily misled in attempting to interpret unmarked sarcasm. When speech is reduced to writing, vocal cues are lost, whereas other cues are gained, for example, orthography and punctuation. There are sufficient examples of unmarked questions in BH to document the phenomenon, and without doubt there are many more, still unrecognised, in the more difficult passages of the prophets and Job. This still remains a challenging area.

Rhetorical questions can be a quick solution to a thorny theological problem. How can sins change colour and become white? If Isaiah 1:18 is a rhetorical question, then the problem disappears: the very thrust of the verse is that sins *cannot* ever change colour, or be anything but sinful. Rhetorical questions have as their very purpose to use rhetoric to challenge people’s assumptions. We’ve seen this multiple times with interrogative modality, particularly as it overlaps with other forms of modality.

As we interpret and translate the text, we must be aware of cues, both inside *and* outside the verbal system, to possible modal meanings. Grammarians must not claim that *yiqtol* is compatible with all manner of modality, but then provide no guidance as to how to identify the various kinds. May this paper be a step in the direction of providing such guidance.

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The *Shewa* in the First of Two Identical Letters and the Compound Babylonian Vocalisation

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1 Introduction¹

The pronunciation of the *shewa* in Tiberian Hebrew is one of the most complicated topics in Hebrew phonology.² One of the traditional categories into which this topic is subdivided relates to the *shewa* in the first of two identical, consecutive, letters (e.g. פִּלְפִּלִּי? ‘he will praise you’, Isa. 38:18), and the circumstances under which this *shewa* is vocal or silent.

The aim of this article is to bring additional data to the discussion from a manuscript that is vocalised with the so-called ‘Compound Babylonian’ vocalisation system. Despite its name, the Compound Babylonian system in this manuscript represents, with very few exceptions, the Tiberian pronunciation tradition.³

2 Pronunciation of the *shewa* in the first of two identical letters

The most widely used rules for distinguishing a vocal from a silent *shewa* are those formulated by Eliyahu Bachur (1469–1549), which state, *inter alia*, that a *shewa* in the first of two identical letters is vocal.⁴ A similar rule is brought by Rabbi Shelomo Almoli (c1490–1542), in his book *Halikhot Shewa*:

¹ I would like to thank the editors of this volume for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² For a updated survey on this topic with additional bibliography, see Khan, 2013a.

³ The manuscript in question is the Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus; the manuscript and its vocalisation will be surveyed in section 4 of this article.

⁴ See a restatement of these rules in Joüon and Muraoka, 2006, pp. 48–49.

two identical letters in one word – if the first is with a *shewa*, a *pataḥ* is always attached to it, e.g. שׁוֹטְטוּ, סוֹכְכִים, סוֹבְבִים, except in Aramaic, where we find only a *shewa* [i.e. silent *shewa*], e.g., ורעיני לרבך [Daniel 20:1].⁵

Vocal *shewa* in these circumstances is also reflected in the pronunciation of most Jewish communities in the Modern Era, both among Ashkenazim and among Sefaradim.⁶

The Tiberian treatises, however, seem to reflect a somewhat different rule. According to *Sefer Diquduq Haṭṭe 'amim*, the nature of the *shewa* depends on the existence of a *ga 'ya* in the preceding syllable: if there is a *ga 'ya*, the *shewa* is vocal, for example, יִלְלַת הַרְעִים, ‘the wail of the shepherds’ (Zech. 11:3); if there isn’t, then the *shewa* is silent, for example, הַקְרִיאָנוּ ‘iniquitous decrees’ (Isa. 10:1).⁷ Several forms are listed as exceptions to this rule (e.g., יִקְרְאוּנִי ‘they will call upon me’, Prov. 1:28; יִכְבְּדוּנִי ‘he glorifies me’, Ps. 50:23). In those exceptional cases the *shewa* follows the stressed syllable, which is deemed to be long, but is nevertheless silent. It should be noted that the term *ga 'ya* in this passage does not denote a particular graphic sign; rather, it has the meaning of a vowel which is lengthened, either because of secondary stress or because of primary stress.⁸

A similar rule, including the exceptional cases mentioned above, is found in the *Anonymous Treatise about the Shewa* which was published by Kurt Levy.⁹ Here too, the *shewa* is vocal if it follows a *ga 'ya*, and silent if it does not. However, the relevant passage is followed by an important addition, stating that if the *shewa* is preceded by a *holem*, it is always vocal, whether there is a *ga 'ya* or not; and also that if the *shewa* is preceded by a *hireq*, there are two exceptional cases where it is silent despite the fact that the *hireq* comes with a *ga 'ya*.¹⁰ These exceptions are: רַבְבוֹת אֶלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ‘ten thousand thousands of Israel’ (Num. 10:36) and בְּרַבְבוֹת נְחָלֵי־יַשְׁמֵן ‘with ten thousands rivers of oil’ (Mic. 6:7). In these two cases, despite the existence of a preceding *ga 'ya*, the *shewa* is silent.

A third source for the Tiberian pronunciation of the *shewa* in the first of two identical letters is the treatise *Hidāyat al-Qāri*.¹¹ According to its author, the *shewa* is vocal if it is preceded by *tatqīl* ‘weighting, burdening’.¹² The author further states that the *tatqīl* is caused by *ga 'ya*, by *ta'am* (i.e. primary

⁵ See Yalon, 1945, p. 45; see also Yalon, 1963, pp. 88–89.

⁶ For Ashkenazi Jews, see Yalon, 1963, p. 89; for Moroccan Jews, see Maman, 1994, p. 97 and Akun, 2010, pp. 192–194; for Syrian Jews, see Katz, 1981, p. 62; for the Jews of Djerba, see Katz, 1977, pp. 105–106; for Italian Jews, see Artom, 1947, p. 59.

⁷ See Dotan, 1967, chapter 5, pp. 115–116 and his analysis on pp. 189–192.

⁸ See Dotan, 1967, §ב, p. 191 and p. 353 n. 18א.

⁹ Levy, 1936, text on p. ט (translation on pp. 15*–16*).

¹⁰ These are on top of the exceptional cases mentioned in *Sefer Diquduq Haṭṭe 'amim*.

¹¹ The author of this treatise is unknown, as are the place where and date when it was written. Eldar argues for Palestine, mid-11th century; he also attributes the work to Abu l-Faraj Harūn. See Eldar, 1994, pp. 19–43.

¹² Eldar, 1987, pp. 15–16, lines 165–169; see also his Hebrew translation on p. 33.

stress) or if the preceding vowel is being ‘produced fully by a king’. Yalon argued, quite convincingly, that the term ‘king’ employed here refers to the *holem*,¹³ meaning that when a *shewa* follows a *holem*, it is always vocal.¹⁴

The fourth and last source that will be reviewed here is *Kitāb faṣīḥ luḡat al-‘Ibrāniyyīna* (‘Book of elegance of the Hebrew language’) by Saadia Gaon (died in 942).¹⁵ According to Saadia, the general rule is that the *shewa* in the first of two identical letters is vocal; as examples he gives וַיִּזְכְּבוּ ‘and they prowl’ (Ps. 59:7), וַיַּעֲלֶהוּ ‘and he made a gleaning of him’ (Judg. 20:45), וַיִּתְרַצְצוּ ‘and they struggled together’ (Gen. 25:22), and יִלְלוּ ‘they will diminish’ (Isa. 19:6). Then he limits the general rule by stating that the *shewa* is vocal “when the vowel that precedes the two letters is long (*mamdūdah*) ... but if the vowel is short (*maqṣūrah*), the *shewa* does not need to be vocal”, and as an example he gives the imperative form וַיִּשְׁרֹף ‘and destroy!’ (Jer. 49:28).¹⁶

The principle that emerges from all four sources is the same: apart from a few exceptions, the pronunciation of the *shewa* in the first of two identical letters is conditioned by the quantity of the vowel that precedes it – when the vowel is long, the *shewa* is vocal, and when the vowel is short, the *shewa* is silent. The question that then arises is how to infer the length of a specific vowel from the vocalisation signs; how do we know, for example, that the *hireq* in one word is long, while the *hireq* in another word is short?

3 The *ga‘ya* and the indication of vowel length in the Tiberian vocalisation system

The standard Tiberian vocalisation system was designed, initially, to indicate two phonemic vowel quantities: vowels of ‘full’ length (*qameṣ*, *pataḥ*, *sere*, *segol*, *hireq*, *qibbuṣ/šureq*) on one hand, and vowels of ‘furtive’ length (the *shewa* and the *hatafim*) on the other hand.¹⁷

At a later point in time, however, it was deemed necessary to mark length differences within the full vowels (which is usually non-phonemic). For this purpose the *ga‘ya* sign was added.¹⁸ However, different Tiberian schools seem to have had different traditions regarding the exact pronunciation of non-phonemic vowel lengths, resulting in considerable differences as to the placement

¹³ Yalon, 1963, pp. 86–87. His argumentation is based on various quotations from the medieval literature, where *holem* is the ‘king of all kings’.

¹⁴ Eldar seems to reach the same conclusion as Yalon; see his analysis of this passage in Eldar, 1994, pp. 151–152.

¹⁵ Published by Dotan, 1997.

¹⁶ Dotan, 1997, vol. II, p. 466. See also Dotan’s analysis in vol. I, pp. 124–125.

¹⁷ See, e.g., the description in *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* (Kautzsch, 1910, §8a–c, §10a–f).

¹⁸ See Yeivin, 2011, p. 211, §367. It is most probable that by the time of the addition of the *ga‘ya*, the furtive vowels did not exist any more as such, i.e., the *shewa* and the *ḥatef-pataḥ* were pronounced as a regular *pataḥ*, the *ḥatef-segol* as a *segol*, and the *ḥatef-qameṣ* as a *qameṣ*; see Khan, 2013b, pp. 98–107.

of the *ga'ya* – both in matters of principle and regarding specific words.¹⁹ It should be emphasised that these inconsistencies exist not only between manuscripts, but also within manuscripts.²⁰

The lack of uniformity regarding the insertion of the *ga'ya* is especially problematic in the case of the *shewa* in the first of two identical letters, where the length of the preceding vowel determines the pronunciation of the *shewa*. For example, in the Aleppo Codex we find the following forms with *holem* before two consecutive identical letters, all of them in Isaiah:

- (1) סוֹרְרִים ‘rebels’ (Isa. 1:23)
(*holem* without *ga'ya*, followed by a *ḥatef-pataḥ*)
- (2) עִוְרָרוּ ‘they have laid bare’ (Isa. 23:13)
(*holem* with *ga'ya*, followed by a *ḥatef-pataḥ*)
- (3) שְׁמָמוֹת ‘devastations’ (Isa. 61:4)
(*holem* without *ga'ya*, followed by a simple *shewa*)
- (4) מָרוּמְמֹתָי ‘when you lift yourself up’ (Isa. 33:3)
(*holem* with secondary cantillation mark – i.e. equivalent to *ga'ya* – followed by a simple *shewa*)

Despite the notational differences in these four cases, we must assume that for our purposes all four forms exhibit one and the same pronunciation, long vowel followed by a vocal *shewa*.²¹

The situation becomes even more complicated in cases of other vowels, as can be seen in (5), for example.

- (5) וַיִּתְהַלְלוּ ‘and they will glory’ (Isa. 45:25), which is vocalised to:
וַיִּתְהַלְלוּ in Codex Aleppo
וַיִּתְהַלְלוּ in Codex New York (JTS 232 / ENA 346, 10th century)
וַיִּתְהַלְלוּ in Codex Cairo to the Prophets (11th century)²²

In these examples we must assume that there were differences across the manuscripts which reflect differences in the actual pronunciation of the *shewa*: in Codex Aleppo, a silent *shewa*, and in the two other codices, a vocal *shewa*. We shall see additional examples of these inner Tiberian differences below.

¹⁹ The best source on those differences is *Kitāb al-Kīlaf* by Mishael Ben Uziel (Lipschütz, 1965). For differences on positioning of the *ga'yot* in later manuscripts, see Cohen, 1982.

²⁰ See the extensive material collected by Yeivin, 1968, chapters 11–20.

²¹ Since the *holem* should be regarded as a long vowel almost by definition; see Dotan, 1967, pp. 256–257.

²² The *variae lectiones* are taken from the fourth apparatus of the *Hebrew University Bible* (Goshen-Gottstein, 1993, p. 210).

4 The compound vocalisation system and Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus

The Fikovich collection in St Petersburg contains a codex of the Later Prophets (shelf mark Heb. B3), which is vocalised with the so-called ‘Compound Babylonian vocalisation system’ and dates to 916 CE.²³ Despite its vocalic inventory – which does not distinguish between *pataḥ* and *segol* – and some other Babylonian features,²⁴ the general pronunciation tradition that is reflected in this manuscript is Tiberian.²⁵

In fact, most Biblical manuscripts with Compound Babylonian vocalisation reflect, to some degree, Tiberian pronunciation.²⁶ This is the result of a long process that saw the Jewish Babylonian communities adopting the Tiberian pronunciation tradition of the Bible, which they came to perceive as the only ‘correct’ pronunciation tradition of the text.²⁷

The main characteristic of the Compound Babylonian vocalisation system is its three different ‘sets’ of vocalisation signs – in total sixteen signs, seen in table 1.

Table 1. The Compound Babylonian vocalisation signs

	<i>pataḥ- segol</i>	<i>qameṣ</i>	<i>šere</i>	<i>ḥireq</i>	<i>qibbuṣ / shureq</i>	<i>ḥolem</i>
Set 1: Signs in an open, or a closed and stressed, syllable	בְּ	בֶּ	בֶּ	בִּ	בִּ	בִּ
Set 2: Signs in an unstressed syllable closed by <i>shewa</i>	בֻּ	בֻּ	בֻּ	בִּ	בִּ	–
Set 3: Signs in an unstressed syllable closed by <i>dagesh</i>	בֶּ	בֶּ	בֶּ	בִּ	בִּ	–

In addition, there is a seventeenth sign which denotes the *shewa*, both vocal and silent: ְ. We also find the Tiberian signs for *dagesh* and *rafe*, and the diacritical dots on the left and right arms of the *shin*. There is, however, no sign for a *ga‘ya* in the compound vocalisation. To demonstrate the system, here are a few examples: מִיָּדְכֶם ‘from your hand’ (Isa. 1:12, Tiberian: מִיָּדְכֶם),

²³ The codex has been reprinted in facsimile; see Strack, 1876.

²⁴ E.g. the lack of furtive *pataḥ*. The main Babylonian features of this manuscript are listed in Yeivin, 1985, vol. I, p. 185.

²⁵ The manuscript is categorised as ‘type II’ by Yeivin, meaning that “in principle, the manuscript reflects the Tiberian pronunciation tradition, with few Babylonian grammatical features” (Yeivin, 1985, vol. I, p. 91).

²⁶ Out of several dozens of manuscripts that are vocalised with the compound system, Yeivin lists only one manuscript of ‘type V’ (i.e. old Babylonian pronunciation) – namely MS Kc 53 (p. 193) – and two manuscripts of ‘type IV’ (i.e. old-middle Babylonian pronunciation) – MS Ka 6 (p. 174) and MS Ka 53 (p. 179).

²⁷ See Eldar, 1985, especially at pp. 229–231.

הַגְּבוֹרִי ‘the mighty man’ (Jer. 9:22, Tiberian: הַגְּבוֹרִי), שֶׁרֶךְ ‘your cord’ (Ezek. 16:5, Tiberian: שֶׁרֶךְ), בְּאַסְרָם ‘when they are bound up’ (Hos. 10:10, Tiberian: בְּאַסְרָם).

The interpretation of the compound signs as denoting vowels in syllables closed by *shewa* and *dagesh*, as shown in table 1, was first put forward by Luzzatto in 1846, followed by Rödiger in 1848 and by Pinsker in 1863.²⁸ However, approximately a century later, in 1958, Bendavid argued that the compound signs denoted different vowel length,²⁹ and his opinion was adopted by Yeivin in 1982, who explicitly rejected the ‘old’ opinion

In forms like תְּשַׁמֵּר, תְּקַרִּיב, שְׁלַחֲנָה, the signs in the first syllables ... do not denote unstressed syllables closed by *shewa* (as was previously assumed), but short vowels, while the non-compound signs are being used to denote long vowels or short vowels when stressed.³⁰

This opinion was also adopted by Khan.³¹

We now return to the main subject of this article – the *shewa*. Since the compound system reflects vowel length,³² and since it represents, on the whole, the Tiberian pronunciation tradition, it is clear that the Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus represents an independent source for the pronunciation of the *shewa* in the first of two consecutive letters in Tiberian.³³

Here follows the material that I collected from the first three books in Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus (hereinafter ‘Petropolitanus’) – Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel – compared with the two main Tiberian codices: Aleppo (‘A’) and Leningrad (‘L’).³⁴ All words which have *pataḥ/segol* or *hireq* before a *shewa* in the first of two identical letters were collected. As will be seen, in most cases the length of the vowel is the same in Petropolitanus and in the Tiberian codices. There are cases, however, where Petropolitanus differs from the Tiberian codices, or where the Tiberian codices do not agree among themselves.

²⁸ See Samuel David Luzzatto’s letter as printed in Polak, 1846, pp. 25–31; Rödiger, 1848; Pinsker, 1863, Hebrew part, p. 12. See also Ewald, 1849, pp. 160–172, who has a similar, but slightly different, description for the signs.

²⁹ Bendavid, 1958, p. 16.

³⁰ Yeivin, 1982, p. 43. In his monumental book on Babylonian vocalisation that was published in 1985 (but written several years earlier), Yeivin is less unequivocal, often using terms like שווא חירק סגור ‘*hireq* closed by *shewa*’ for the sign בְּ alongside חירק קצר ‘short *hireq*’.

³¹ See e.g. Khan, 2013c.

³² It seems to me there can be little doubt that the system, in its initial stages, served to denote syllable structure, as set out in table 1, and only later – due to the fact that syllable structure and vowel length were largely overlapping – started to denote vowel length. It is not impossible that some of the Genizah fragments which are vocalised with the compound system still denote syllable structure.

³³ Khan has used this feature of Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus to demonstrate the long vowels in certain forms of the verbs *haya* and *ḥaya*; see Khan, 1994.

³⁴ The material for A was collected from Cohen, 1996; Cohen, 2012; and Cohen, 2013. The material for L was collected from Dotan, 2001.

4.1 Long *pataḥ*

In the following cases we find long *pataḥ* both in Petropolitanus and in the Tiberian codices A and L (one or both; occasionally A and L do not agree). Note that except for the form חללי, all forms with long *pataḥ* are ones in which a *dagesh* has fallen away in the first of the two letters; the long vowel preserves the vocal *shewa* after this letter.³⁵

- (6) יְהַלְלֶיךָ ‘it will praise you’ (Isa. 38:18), A יְהַלְלֶיךָ, but L יְהַלְלֶיךָ
- (7) וּמְתַפְּלְלִים ‘and they pray’ (Isa. 45:20), A וּמְתַפְּלְלִים, but L וּמְתַפְּלְלִים
- (8) נִגְשָׁשָׁה ‘we shall grope’ (Isa. 59:10), A נִגְשָׁשָׁה, L נִגְשָׁשָׁה
- (9) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain by [the Lord]’ (Isa. 66:16), A הַלְּלִי, L הַלְּלִי
- (10) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain of [the daughter of my people]’ (Jer. 8:23), A הַלְּלִי, L הַלְּלִי
- (11) הַלְּלוּ ‘praise!’ (Jer. 20:13), A and L הַלְּלוּ
- (12) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain by [the Lord]’ (Jer. 25:33), A הַלְּלִי, L הַלְּלִי
- (13) וְהִתְפַּלְּלוּ ‘and pray!’ (Jer. 29:7), A and L וְהִתְפַּלְּלוּ
- (14) תִּתְהַלְּלִי ‘you will boast’ (Jer. 49:4), A תִּתְהַלְּלִי, L תִּתְהַלְּלִי
- (15) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain of [Israel]’ (Jer. 51:49), A and L הַלְּלִי
- (16) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain of [all the earth]’ (Jer. 51:49), A הַלְּלִי, L הַלְּלִי

In the following two cases, however, we find long *pataḥ* in Petropolitanus, but short *pataḥ* in the two main Tiberian codices:

- (17) הַלְּלִי ‘the slain of [the sword]’ (Isa. 22:2), A and L הַלְּלִי
- (18) וְיִתְהַלְּלוּ ‘and they will glory’ (Isa. 45:25), A and L וְיִתְהַלְּלוּ

In example (17), Petropolitanus has an independent primary stress in the word חללי (*viz.* חֶלְלִי חָרֵב, in the equivalent Tiberian signs), while in A and L the word

³⁵ Note that in examples (6), (19)–(23) and (32), the Babylonian *shewa* sign is omitted. In all these cases the *shewa* comes after a *lamed*, and the scribe of the codex probably wanted to avoid writing the *shewa* across the neck of the *lamed*. Writing it to the left or right of the neck is equally problematic, as it would then have made it look like a *rafe* sign.

יִּלְלֵי is attached to the next by *maqfep* (חֲרִיב). This can explain the ‘shortened’ pronunciation in A and L. As for example (18), there seems to be some inconsistency within good Tiberian manuscripts – as already mentioned above in example (5).

4.2 Short *pataḥ*

In all cases of the words מַעֲלֵיכֶם ‘your deeds’ and מַעֲלֵיהֶם ‘their deeds’,³⁶ we find short *pataḥ* in Petropolitanus as well as in the Tiberian codices A and L.³⁷ Here are a few examples:

(19) וּמַעֲלֵיהֶם (Isa. 3:8), A and L

(20) מַעֲלֵיכֶם (Jer. 4:4), A and L

(21) מַעֲלֵיכֶם, in margin: הֵם כֵּחַ (Jer. 21:12),
A and L מעֲלֵיהֶם *Ketib*, מַעֲלֵיכֶם *Qere*

The same is true for חֲלֵיכֶם ‘your slain’ and חֲלֵיהֶם ‘their slain’, as seen, for example, in (22) and (23).³⁸

(22) וְחֲלֵיהֶם (Isa. 34:3), A and L

(23) חֲלֵיכֶם (Ezek. 6:4), A and L

In all the cases (19)–(23) we can safely assume that in both traditions there was no vowel between the two identical letters. There are, however, four cases where we find short *pataḥ* in Petropolitanus, but long *pataḥ* in either A or L:

(24) מִקְלָלוֹנִי: ‘they curse me’ (Jer. 15:10), A מִקְלָלוֹנִי, L מִקְלָלוֹנִי

(25) מִחֲלָלֶיךָ: ‘those who slay you’ (Ezek. 28:9), A מִחֲלָלֶיךָ, L מִחֲלָלֶיךָ

(26) חֲלָלֵי ‘the slain of’ (Ezek. 21:34), A and L חֲלָלֵי

(27) וְהֵמֵמְלֵאִים ‘and those who fill’ (Isa. 65:11), A וְהֵמֵמְלֵאִים, L וְהֵמֵמְלֵאִים

In cases (24) and (25) the Babylonian tradition, unlike the Tiberian, has a *dagesh* in the *lamed* (as expected in a *piel* form), which in turn necessitates a

³⁶ In the books Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel we find thirteen occurrences of מַעֲלֵיכֶם and four occurrences of מַעֲלֵיהֶם.

³⁷ At least, there is no indication for a long *pataḥ*.

³⁸ There are three occurrences of חֲלֵיכֶם in Ezekiel, and two occurrences of חֲלֵיהֶם in Isaiah and Ezekiel, one in each book.

short *pataḥ* before it. The Tiberian form without *dagesh* has a long *pataḥ*, which may indicate a kind of compensation for the lack of this expected *dagesh*.

Case (26) appears in Petropolitanus as correction from הללים, with the final *mem* crossed out. It is not impossible that the short *pataḥ* in Babylonian represents the Tiberian *ḥatef-pataḥ* under the *het* in הללים, as is usual in Late Babylonian, and that this was not corrected when the consonantal form was corrected.

4.3 Long *hireq*

I found one case of long *hireq* in Petropolitanus; A and L also have a long *hireq* in this case:

(28) והללו 'and they will praise' (Isa. 62:9), A והללו, L והללו

4.4 Short *hireq*

We find short *hireq* both in Petropolitanus and in the Tiberian codices A and L in the following forms:

(29) הנני 'here I am' (Isa. 6:8), A and L הנני (frequent in all three books)

(30) חקקי 'decrees of' (Isa. 10:1), A and L חקקי

(31) ולתה 'her wailing' (Isa. 15:8), A and L ולתה

(32) צללי 'shadows of' (Jer. 6:4), A and L צללי

(33) שממות 'waste of' (Jer. 51:26), A and L שממות

There are, however, six cases where we find short *hireq* in Petropolitanus, but long *hireq* in either A or L (usually both):

(34) הללו 'they praised you' (Isa. 64:10), A הללו, L הללו

(35) לשממות 'to waste of' (Jer. 25:12), A and L לשממות

(36) ולתה 'and the wail of' (Jer. 25:36), A ולתת, L ולתת

(37) קננו 'they made their nests' (Ezek. 31:6), A קננו, L קננו

(38) לשממה 'to waste' (Ezek. 35:7), A לשממה, L לשממה

(39) שממות 'waste of' (Ezek. 35:9), A שממות, L שממות

Example (34) has short *hireq* in Babylonian and long *hireq* in Tiberian because of the lack of *dagesh* in the latter; compare the note to examples (24) and (25) above. The short *hireq* in example (36) can be explained by the fact that the Tiberian rule *wāyi-* > *wī-* did not operate in the Babylonian form.

4.5 Note on the form רַבּוֹת in Michah 6:7

An interesting case, although outside the three books which were checked for this study, is the form רַבּוֹת ‘ten thousands of’ in Michah 6:7. This form is mentioned in the *Anonymous Treatise about the Shewa* as being exceptional, in that it has a long *hireq* followed by a silent *shewa*.³⁹ It is interesting that in the Aleppo Codex the vocalisation explicitly contradicts this statement, as we find there the form vocalised as רַבּוֹת (in L we find the ambiguous form רַבּוֹת). However, in Petropolitanus we find בְּרַבּוֹת, with a long *hireq* but without the expected *shewa* sign above the first of the two consecutive *bet* letters. This exceptional vocalisation doesn’t seem to be coincidental, as the vocaliser of Petropolitanus invariably inserts the *shewa* signs above *bet* letters. The lack of *shewa* on this specific *bet* seems to express the pronunciation of the *shewa* as silent, in accordance with the statement of the *Treatise about the Shewa*.

4.6 *Segol*

Finally, two forms should be mentioned which have a *segol* in Tiberian before two identical letters (this *segol* is represented in Babylonian, as expected, by *pataḥ*):

(40) בַּגְּלִי ‘in the dung of’ (Ezek. 4:12), A בַּגְּלִי, L בַּגְּלִי

(41) גַּלְגִּי ‘the dung of’ (Ezek. 4:15), A גַּלְגִּי, L גַּלְגִּי

In the first case, we see a long vowel in both Petropolitanus and the Tiberian codices. In the second case, the vocalisation of the Aleppo Codex seems to reflect a long *segol* while the vocalisation of the Leningrad Codex seems to reflect a short *segol*. This inconsistency is reflected also in other excellent Tiberian manuscripts.⁴⁰ Petropolitanus, like A (and unlike L), has a long *pataḥ*. It is not impossible, therefore, that this is an example of different schools inside the Tiberian pronunciation tradition.

³⁹ See n. 9 above.

⁴⁰ The fourth apparatus of the *Hebrew University Bible* records twelve witnesses for גַּלְגִּי and five for גַּלְגִּי (Goshen-Gottstein and Talmon, 2004, p. 17).

5 Summary

This article has sought to demonstrate how Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus can be used as an early, additional, source for our knowledge about the Tiberian pronunciation tradition, especially with regard to the pronunciation of the *shewa* under the first of two identical letters. Interpreting the Tiberian pronunciation tradition relies on reliable witnesses; the more reliable codices we have, the better our understanding of the system.

Despite its Babylonian vocalisation, the pronunciation tradition that is reflected in Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus is essentially Tiberian, and its Compound Babylonian vocalisation system has the advantage over the Tiberian system in having different signs for long and short variants of, among others, *pataḥ* and *hireq*. These, in turn, determine the nature of the *shewa* (vocal or silent) in cases of two consecutive identical letters. As a result, the nature of the *shewa* is much clearer in Petropolitanus than it is in the Tiberian codices.

The analysis has shown that in the majority of cases there is a uniform tradition common to Petropolitanus and the best Tiberian codices regarding the length of *pataḥ* and *hireq*. However, there are cases where the Tiberian codices don't agree among themselves, and Petropolitanus serves as an important witness for one group of manuscripts against the other. There are also cases where Petropolitanus differs from the Tiberian codices for other reasons, such as a slightly different pronunciation of other segments in the word; these have also been discussed.

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הַחֶמֶל, but הַחֶמֶל:
Some Notes on the Vocalisation of the
Definite Article in Tiberian Hebrew

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1 Introduction

In the Tiberian reading tradition of Biblical Hebrew, the definite article consists of a prefixed ה־ *ha-* followed by the gemination of the initial consonant, e.g. הַמֶּלֶךְ /*hammélek*/ [ham. 'mɛ:.lɛχ] ‘the king’.¹ There are two exceptions to this rule: firstly, in certain words with a word-initial consonant cluster marked by a *shewa* under the first consonant, the initial consonant is not geminated; and secondly, neither the guttural consonants nor /r/ can be geminated,² and this then influences the vocalisation of the article. Although the sound laws involved are well known, to my knowledge no detailed description of the different historical stages has so far been given.³ This article offers a comprehensive account of the development of the vocalisation of the definite article before gutturals⁴ in Biblical Hebrew from the end of the Biblical period to the era of the Masoretes.

2 Prehistory of the definite article in Biblical Hebrew

In Semitic languages, no definite article can be reconstructed for the proto-language. Where they are attested, definite articles are independent innovations of the respective languages. They occur in modern Ethio-Semitic languages, especially Southern Neo-Ethio-Semitic, Modern South Arabian and several daughter languages of Common Semitic, namely North-West Semitic (only Aramaic and Canaanite), Ancient South Arabian and Arabic. In addition, several varieties of Neo-Aramaic have developed new articles after the

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all examples are based on the Westminster Leningrad Codex, available online at <https://tanach.us/Tanach.xml>.

² There are some exceptional cases where geminated /r/ is attested in the Masoretic text; cf. Khan, 2013f, p. 386.

³ Blau, 1980 leaves a number of important cases unmentioned.

⁴ Unless stated otherwise, the term gutturals will be used to refer to the laryngeal and pharyngeal consonants and also /r/.

definite (emphatic) form of nouns (and adjectives) lost its determinative function, at least in Eastern Aramaic.

In Common Semitic, definite articles become attested after the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Neither Amarna Canaanite (14th century BCE) nor Ugaritic (14th–12th century BCE) possess a definite article, although Tropper points to several examples of the Ugaritic presentative particle *hn* being used in an almost article like function.⁵ In Canaanite, a prefixed article *h-* is attested from the early first millennium BCE in Phoenician, and thereafter also in the other Canaanite dialects (Hebrew, Moabite,⁶ Ammonite and Edomite).⁷ In Aramaic, a suffixed definite article *-ʾ* is attested after the middle of the 9th century BCE, occurring in the bilingual inscription from Tell Fekheriye. Neither Samʿalian (9th–8th century BCE) nor the dialect of Deir ʿAllā (c800 BCE) possess a definite article.⁸ In Ancient South Arabian, suffixed definite articles (*-n* with singular, *-hn* with dual and plural nouns) appear from the beginning of the epigraphic record, around 1000 BCE.⁹ The picture presented by Arabic, where a prefixed definite article (*ʾal-*) is attested in Classical and modern varieties, is more complicated; this is due to the previously unclear relationship between Arabic and the Ancient North Arabian languages. Recently, two of these dialects, Safaitic and Hismaic, have been identified as Arabic.¹⁰ Of these, Hismaic possesses no article, while Safaitic attests a plethora of forms (*ʾl-*, *-*, *h-*, *hn-*, *Ø-*). This means that varieties of Arabic also developed a definite article towards end of the first millennium BCE at the latest.

Unlike the definite articles in Indo-European languages, which usually derive from demonstrative pronouns and generally form paradigms inflecting for gender, number and even case, the Common Semitic articles developed from presentative particles.¹¹

Recent research has shown that the presentative particles from which the articles developed originally attached to attributive or nominalised adjectives, participles and demonstratives; only later did agreement rules cause it to be placed on both the head noun and its satellite in attributive constructions.¹² The similarity in function and syntactic development make it likely that the parallel innovation of the definite article is an areal feature.¹³

⁵ Tropper, 2000, pp. 24–25.

⁶ It already occurs in the Meshā Stele, dated to approximately 840 BCE; see Gzella, 2006, p. 15.

⁷ For examples from the epigraphic records, see Garr, 2004, pp. 87–89.

⁸ Tropper, 2000, pp. 21–22.

⁹ Stein, 2011, p. 1024.

¹⁰ Al-Jallad, forthcoming.

¹¹ See Tropper, 2000, pp. 26–27 and Pat-El, 2009, pp. 40–42. Rubin, 2005, pp. 72–76 argues for a demonstrative origin. However, as shown by Pat-El, 2009, pp. 37–38, the elements in question do not show any similarity with demonstrative pronouns, lacking for example gender, number and case inflection.

¹² Pat-El, 2009, pp. 42–46.

¹³ Huehnergard, 2005, p. 186.

3 The form of the definite article in Biblical Hebrew

For Canaanite, the definite article may be reconstructed as **han-* with subsequent assimilation of the *n* to the following consonant.¹⁴ As noted in section 1, in the Tiberian vocalisation tradition of Biblical Hebrew, the definite article usually consists of a prefixed הַ *ha-* followed by the gemination of the initial consonant.

At some point, guttural consonants (including /r/) ceased to be geminated, and this degemination of the initial guttural resulted partially in quantitative changes in the vowel of the article, partially in qualitative changes in the vowel, and partially in no change at all. The exact distribution of the resulting variants of the article depends on several factors: the guttural in question, the quality of the following vowel and also the presence or absence of stress.

In addition, in words which begin with an initial consonant cluster, where the first consonant is marked by a *shewa* in the Tiberian vocalisation, the initial consonant often does not undergo gemination – e.g. חַמְרַגְלִים /hamraggālīm/ [ham.rag.ga'li:im] ‘the spies’, חַיְלָדִים /haylādīm/ [hajlɔ:'ði:im]. Moreover, the initial glottal fricative of the article (*h-*) is syncopated when the article follows one of the three proclitic prepositions בַּ *b-* ‘in’, לְ *l-* ‘to’ and כְּ *k-* ‘like’. This has no influence on its vocalisation.

Regarding the gutturals, the following distribution rules were formulated by Gesenius. Before /ʾ/ and /r/, the *pataḥ* of the article is lengthened to a *qames*. Before /ʿ/, the vowel is lengthened when the /ʿ/ is followed by a stressed *qames*, but changes to a *seghol* when the /ʿ/ is followed by an unstressed *qames*; in all other cases, including where the /ʿ/ is followed by a *ḥatef qames*, the vowel is lengthened. Before /h/, the vowel is also lengthened when the /h/ is followed by a stressed *qames*, but changes to a *seghol* when the /h/ is followed by an unstressed *qames*; in all other cases, the article remains unchanged. Before /ḥ/, the vowel is changed to a *seghol* whenever /ḥ/ itself is followed by a *qames*, whether accented or not, or by a *ḥatef qames*, but remains unchanged in all other cases.¹⁵ Table 1 presents an overview of the distribution. A number of sporadically attested exceptions to these rules are mentioned by Gesenius as well as by Joüon and Muraoka.¹⁶

The lengthening of the vowel has been regarded as a case of compensatory lengthening. The cases where *pataḥ* remains unchanged are referred to by Gesenius as virtual strengthening;¹⁷ this phenomenon has also been called virtual gemination.¹⁸ There is, however, some difference regarding the application of these terms: while Gesenius distinguishes between virtual

¹⁴ Outside of Hebrew, evidence for gemination exists in Late Punic, where the geminated consonant may be written twice, e.g. עממקם [ammaqōm] ‘the place’; see Garr, 2004, p. 87.

¹⁵ Gesenius, 1910, pp. 110–112.

¹⁶ See Gesenius, 1910, p. 111; Joüon and Muraoka, 1991, p. 114.

¹⁷ Gesenius, 1910, pp. 76–77, 111.

¹⁸ Joüon and Muraoka, 1991, pp. 87–88, 113–114.

gemination following an unchanged vowel on the one hand and a modification of the vowel by lengthening or a change in quality on the other, others apparently regard a change in vowel quality as a case of virtual gemination.¹⁹

Table 1. Distribution of article variants before gutturals according to Gesenius

Guttural	Vowel following the guttural			
	Stressed <i>qameš</i>	Unstressed <i>qameš</i>	<i>Ḥatef qameš</i>	Other
א	ֻ			
ך				
ע	ֻ	ֻ	ֻ	ֻ
ה	ֻ	ֻ	ֻ ²⁰	ֻ
ח	ֻ			ֻ

4 The Tiberian vowel system

The Tiberian vowel system²¹ distinguishes between vowels that are inherently long (/ō/ *qameš*, /ō/ *holem*, /ē/ *šere*, /ū/ long *shureq*, /ī/ long *hireq*) and vowels of unspecified length (/a/ *pataḥ*, /ε/ *seghol*, /i/ *hireq*, /u/ *qibbuš/shureq*, /o/, /e/). Since all vowels in stressed or open syllables are long, the former can only occur in these two environments, whereas the latter are realised as long vowels in stressed or open syllables, but realised as short vowels in unstressed closed syllables. Most of these phonemes are represented by a single vowel sign. This means that most vowels of unspecified length when occurring in a stressed or open syllable are phonetically indistinguishable from the corresponding long vowel phonemes, yet are represented by different vowel signs.

However, two vowels of unspecified length, /e/ and /o/, are represented by different signs, depending on whether they occur in syllables bearing the main stress or not. In the first case, they are realised as [e:] and [o:] and are not only phonetically indistinguishable from the phonemes /ē/ and /ō/, but are also written with the same signs as these, *šere* and *holem*. In the latter case, they are realised as [ε] and [ɔ], overlapping in quality with the phonemes /ε/ and /ō/

¹⁹ See e.g. Joüon and Muraoka, 1991, pp. 77, 113–114; Huehnergard, 2015, p. 52.

²⁰ There are no examples of the definite article before /h/ followed by *ḥatef qameš*. This is not surprising, given the relative small number of lexemes derived from roots with initial /h/. In the infinitives of the *hof'al* conjugation, *ḥatef qameš* is not usually to be expected. However, the only attested nominal form with an initial /h/ vocalised with *ḥatef qameš* is apparently such an infinitive, occurring in Lev. 26:34: כָּל־יְמֵי הַשְּׁמֵמָה /kol ymē hošammō/ ['kol ji'me: ho:ʃam'mo:] 'all the days of (its) being desolate'. The phrase reoccurs in the immediately following verse as כָּל־יְמֵי הַשְּׁמֵמָה /kol-ymē hošammō/ [kol-'ji'me: hoʃʃam'mo:]. In the first attestation, the use of the *ḥatef* vowel serves likely to prevent the misinterpretation of *qameš* as a reflection of the long vowel /ō/.

²¹ This section summarises the descriptions by Khan, 2013a, pp. 85–107; Khan, 2013g; Khan, 2013h; Khan, 2013i; Khan, 2013j.

and written with the same signs as these, *seghol* and *qameṣ*. Moreover, due to a secondary stress, /o/ in this environment may be lengthened to [ɔ:], becoming phonetically indistinguishable from the reflex of /ṣ/. In other words, the vocalic signs *qameṣ*, *holem*, *šere* and *seghol* each represent reflexes of two different vowel phonemes.

In addition to these vowels, there are also the *ḥatef* vowels, which are realised as short vowels with a quality identical to the vowel they are combined with; phonologically, they are usually realisations of *shewa* – that is, allophones of /Ø/ – which also has other realisations depending on the environment. Apart from this realisation as epenthetic vowels, *ḥatef qameṣ* and *ḥatef seghol*, when placed under non-guttural consonants, occasionally represent phonologically short vowels representing a syllable nucleus. In this context, they are often also written with the corresponding simple vowel signs. Both epenthetic as well as short *ḥatef* vowels can receive secondary stress and thus be lengthened.

Table 2 lists the various vowel phonemes of the phonological system underlying the Tiberian vocalisation, together with their realisation in different phonetic environments and the respective vocalic signs. To this must be added the various realisation of /Ø/ *shewa* ([Ø], [a], [ɛ], [ɔ], [e], [o], [i], [u]).

Table 2. The Tiberian vowel system and its orthographic representation

Phoneme	Conditioned allophones		
	Stressed	Unstressed open	Unstressed closed
/a/	[a:] (◉)	[a:] (◉)	[a] (◉)
/ɛ/	[ɛ:] (◉)	[ɛ:] (◉)	[ɛ] (◉)
/ṣ/	[ɔ:] (◉)	[ɔ:] (◉)	–
/e/	[e:] (◉)	[ɛ] (◉, ◉)	[ɛ] (◉)
/ē/	[e:] (◉, ◉)	[e:] (◉, ◉)	–
/o/	[o:] (◉), [ɔ:] ²² (◉, ◉)	[ɔ] (◉, ◉)	[ɔ] (◉)
/ō/	[o:] (◉, ◉)	[o:] (◉, ◉)	–
/i/	[i:] (◉)	[i:] (◉)	[i:] (◉)
/ī/	[i:] (◉)	[i:] (◉)	–
/u/	[u:] (◉, ◉)	[u:] (◉, ◉)	[u] (◉, ◉)
/ū/	[u:] (◉)	[u:] (◉)	–

The system of Tiberian vocalisation signs eventually replaced the Palestinian and Babylonian systems, however the pronunciation reflected by it fell into disuse; the surviving Ashkenazi and Sephardi pronunciation traditions go back to the Palestinian reading tradition, whereas the Yemenite pronunciation tradition is ultimately based on the Babylonian reading tradition.²³

²² With secondary stress.

²³ Khan, 2013b, pp. 345–347.

The Western academic tradition is derived from the Sephardi pronunciation tradition²⁴ and is based on a system of five vowels (*a, e, i, o, u*) that may be either short or long. It may be presented in a simplified form as in table 3.²⁵

Table 3. The vocalisation system of Western academia

Quality	Quantity		
	Long	Short	Reduced
<i>a</i>	/ā/ (אָ)	/a/ (א)	/ǎ/ (אֲ), /ə/ (אֱ)
<i>e</i>	/ē/ (עֵ, עֶ)	/e/ (ע)	/ě/ (עֲ), /ə/ (עֱ)
<i>i</i>	/ī/ (יֵ, יֶ)	/i/ (י)	
<i>o</i>	/ō/ (אָו, אֹ)	/o/ (אֶ)	/ɔ/ (אִ)
<i>u</i>	/ū/ (אָו)	/u/ (אִ)	

Here, *qameš* is likewise used to represent two different phonemes, long /ā/ and short /o/. However, they are usually realised quite distinctively. They are also differentiated in terminology, the former being called simply *qameš* or *qameš gadol*, the latter *qameš qatan* or *qameš haṭuf*.

The difference between the Tiberian vowel system and the Western academic tradition regarding the definite article becomes quite evident from the examples in table 4.

Table 4. Comparison between the Tiberian vowel system and the Western academic pronunciation

Attestation	Tiberian vocalisation	Academic tradition ²⁶	Source
חָכְמָן 'the wise man'	/heḥōkōm/ [,he:.ħo:.'χo:om]	/heḥākām/ [,he.xa:.'xa:m]	Eccles. 2:19
חֳדָשִׁים 'the months'	/heḥdōšim/ [ħe:.ħoðo:.'ʃi:im]	/heḥōdāšim/ [ħe.xō.da:.'ʃi:m]	Neh. 10:34
חָכְמָה 'the wisdom'	/haḥokmō/ [,ħa:.'ħoχ.'mo:]	/haḥokmā/ [,ħa.xox.'ma:]	2 Chr. 1:12
כָּל־חָכְמָנִים 'all the wise men'	/kol-haḥkōmim/ [kɔl-ħa:.'ħaχo:.'mi:im]	/kol-haḥākāmim/ [kɔl-ħa.xā.xa:.'mi:m]	Ex. 36:4

In the Tiberian phonetic realisation, the vowels following /ħ/ in the first three examples overlap in quality, being distinguished only partially, by length. In the academic pronunciation, the vowels in the first and last examples overlap in quality, as do the vowels in the two other examples. Also, the difference in the number of syllables is striking: in the academic tradition, the realisations of 'the months' and 'all the wise men' possess an additional syllable when compared with the Tiberian vocalisation.

²⁴ Blau, 2010, p. 109.

²⁵ See e.g. Lambin, 1971, pp. 17–27.

²⁶ This reflects the pronunciation of Biblical Hebrew in many institutions of higher learning, making the relevance of the following remark even more salient: "Much of our current knowledge of this reading tradition ... has not been incorporated so far into the standard textbooks of Biblical Hebrew used by students" (Khan, 2013a, v).

5 The point of departure for the development of the vocalisation of the definite article

The degemination of gutturals and /r/ is a late feature in Biblical Hebrew. It must have occurred after the end of the Late Biblical period. It presupposes certain phonological developments and other phenomena which occurred in the spoken Hebrew of the Second Temple period.

5.1 The general weakening of the gutturals

Originally, Hebrew possessed velar (or uvular) fricatives (/ħ/, /ǧ/) as well as pharyngeal fricatives (/ħ/, /ʕ/). These were not distinguished in writing, since Hebrew used the Phoenician alphabet, where velar and pharyngeal fricatives had merged. The Greek transcriptions in the Septuagint show that these consonants were at least partially still distinguished in the 3rd century BCE, since they use χ and γ to represent the velar fricative /ħ/ and /ǧ/, although not consistently.²⁷ Examples where the Septuagint has χ and γ representing velar sounds that later become pharyngeal are γαζα ‘Gaza’ (Josh. 15:47) for /ǧazzā/ > פָּזַע /ʕazzō/; αχαζ ‘Ahaz’ (2 Kings 15:38) for /ʕāhāz/ > זָחַזְזַ /ʕhōzōz/; γομορρα ‘Gomorrah’ (Gen. 13:10) for /ǧomorrā/ > מֹרְרַ /mōrōr/; and χαρραν ‘Harran’ (Gen. 11:31) for /ħarrān/ > רָרַן /ħōrōn/. However, the latter also often appears as αρραν (e.g. Gen. 11:26), showing the instability of /ħ/.²⁸

The almost contemporary Dead Sea Scrolls and also inscriptions from Judaea similarly attest a weakening of the gutturals by either omitting or interchanging them.²⁹ The Samaritan tradition, which has its roots in the Late Hebrew era, shows an extreme case of the weakening of the gutturals, resulting in their (almost) complete loss.³⁰ Weakening of the gutturals is also attested in the Hebrew epigraphic record of certain vicinities in the Galilee.³¹

On the other hand, the Bar Kochba documents (2nd century CE) show almost no cases of guttural weakening. In the Greek transcriptions of Hebrew by Origen (3rd century CE), the existence and distinction of several gutturals may be inferred from the transcription of the vowels.³² Jerome (late 4th century CE) also clearly attests the preservation of different gutturals.³³

This points not only to diachronic changes, but also to the synchronic co-existence of highly diverse spoken dialects and to differences between urban

²⁷ Khan, 2013b, p. 342; Rendsburg, 2013, p. 102.

²⁸ This form occurs only referring to the proper name Ḥōrōn, not the geographic name. It may indicate that the distinction between velar and pharyngeal fricatives was less pronounced than often assumed and mainly preserved at least in writing regarding the better-known names, both proper names and geographical names. Nevertheless, the phonemes must have been distinguished at least until very close to the making of the Septuagint.

²⁹ Khan, 2013b, p. 342.

³⁰ Macuch, 1969, pp. 132–136; Mor, 2013, pp. 162–163.

³¹ Mor, 2013, p. 163.

³² Mor, 2013, pp. 164–165.

³³ Brønno, 1970.

elites who are influenced by Greek and more rural speakers of Hebrew in the relevant era from around 300 BCE to around 300 CE.³⁴

Not all attestations for preserved gutturals need to be interpreted as reflecting the living dialects, as they may reflect a ritual performance realisation during formal readings.³⁵ This may be compared to Arabic, where, when reciting the Qurʾān, not only professional reciters but also many laypersons are able to realise the interdental fricatives /t̪/ and /d̪/, which in many dialects have either merged with the dental stops /t/ and /d/ or with the sibilants /s/ and /z/, and are also able to distinguish the phonemes /d̪/ and /d̪/, which have both become /d̪/ in Bedouin or /d̪/ in urban dialects.

5.2 The realisation of /r/

In the Greek of the Septuagint, geminated /r/ is still attested – e.g. *τοῦ ἀμορραίου* ‘the Amorite (accusative sg)’ (Gen. 10:16); *γομορρα* ‘Gomorrhah’ (Gen. 13:10); *ἁρραν* ‘Harran’ (Gen. 11:26); *χαρραν* ‘Harran’ (Gen. 11:31); *τοὺς χορραῖους* ‘the Horites (accusative pl)’ (Gen. 14:6); *σαρρα* ‘Sarah’ (Gen. 17:17). There are even examples in relatively late books; for example, *ἀμορραίων* ‘of the Amorites (genitive pl)’ (Neh. 9:8).

In the Greek transcriptions of Hebrew in Origen’s Hexapla (3rd century CE) and also in the Latin transcriptions of Jerome (late 4th century CE), geminated /r/ is no longer attested in forms where it was found historically. For example, Origen has *οὐβαρεχ* ‘and bless (msg)’ (Ps. 28:9), where the /r/ must originally have been geminated, since gemination of the middle consonant is the characteristic marker of the *piʿel* stem.³⁶ The fact that /r/ shares the loss of gemination with the pharyngeal and laryngeal consonants makes it likely that it was realised as a uvular.³⁷ Indeed, in Tiberian Hebrew, /r/ has a uvular realisation with an emphatic apico-alveolar roll [r̥] as a conditioned allophone.³⁸ In isolated cases, where the Tiberian tradition has a geminated /r/, this was realised as uvular trill [R].³⁹ Furthermore, the frequent loss of /r/ in the environment of gutturals⁴⁰ should be taken as an additional indication for a uvular realisation.

In this context, it is important to note that in the Samaritan tradition, the gemination of /r/ has been retained and /r/ is realised as an apical consonant.⁴¹

³⁴ Khan, 2013b, p. 342; Mor, 2013, pp. 162–164.

³⁵ Mor, 2013, p. 162–164.

³⁶ Khan, 2013f, p. 388.

³⁷ This was already being suggested in 1953 by Gumpertz; see Mor, 2013, p. 161. Although a guttural-like realisation was dismissed by others (e.g. Jolion and Muraoka, 1991, pp. 29–30), its primarily uvular realisation is clearly described in medieval Masoretic treatises; see Khan, 2013f, p. 384.

³⁸ Khan, 2013i, p. 773.

³⁹ Khan, 2013f, p. 386.

⁴⁰ Khan, 2013f, p. 388.

⁴¹ Macuch, 1969, pp. 115–118; Stadel, 2017.

Since the laryngeals in Samaritan Hebrew have become considerably weakened and shifted in most cases to /ʔ/, the realisation of /r/ is probably not a secondary development under the influence of Arabic, but rather represents a more original realisation.

5.3 Consonant changes prior to degemination

From what has been said above, the degemination of both gutturals and /r/ strongly suggests there was a uvular realisation of /r/. It also seems likely that the degemination follows the merger of the velar (or uvular) fricatives with the pharyngeal fricatives. If the degemination of the gutturals had preceded the merger of velar and pharyngeal fricatives, an even more variegated picture of conditioned allomorphs of the definite article might have been expected than was seen in table 1. The following phases may therefore be postulated:

1. /ħ/ and /ħ/ > /ħ/; /ġ/ and /ʕ/ > /ʕ/
2. /r/ [r] > [ʁ]

To allow sufficient time for the merger of the velar and pharyngeal fricatives and the subsequent uvular realisation of /r/, the process of degemination is likely to have started no earlier than the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd century BCE.

5.4 Lengthening and reduction of vowels

5.4.1 The Canaanite shift

In the development of Biblical Hebrew, several phases of vowel lengthening must be distinguished. The first of these concerns the so-called Canaanite sound shift during which original /ā/ and /ā/ < /ā/ (with loss of the laryngeal stop in syllable final position) shifted to /ō/. Examples are **lašānu* > **lašōnu* (> לִשׁוֹן /lišōn/ [la'ʃo:ɔn]) 'tongue'; **rā'su* > *rāšu* > *rōšu* (> רֹאשׁ /rōš/ ['ʁo:ɔʃ]) 'head'.

This change is very early; although it must be assumed to have occurred before the beginning of guttural degemination, it is relevant in so far as some monosyllabic nouns may have restored the original long /ā/ due to the levelling with the unaccented construct form, e.g. in אָב 'āb > /'āb/ [ʔʁɔ:ɔv] 'cloud'.⁴²

5.4.2 Tonic lengthening

The Canaanite shift was followed by the loss of final vowels successively on nouns in the construct state, finite verbs and nominal forms in the absolute

⁴² Blau, 1993, p. 35.

state. The dropping of these vowels resulted in the lengthening of short vowels that had originally stood in a stressed open penultimate syllable – e.g. **dayyánu* > **dayyán* > *dayyán* (> דַּיְיָן /dayyōn/ [dajˈjɔːɔn]) ‘judge’.

This phenomenon is theoretically relevant given the abstract possibility of biradical nouns with original vowel /a/ having become /ā/ and thus prone to cause a change in the vowel of the definite article in certain cases.

In this context also, the lengthening of stressed open /a/ in the pause forms of *segholate* nouns of the type *qaṭl* should be mentioned, e.g. *málk* ~ *málek* > *málek* (> מֶלֶךְ /mōlek/ [ˈmɔːləχ]) ‘king’. The long vowel here conditions the occurrence of the respective variant of the definite article. Pausal lengthening thus predates the degemination of gutturals.

5.4.3 Pretonic lengthening

Later, short vowels in open syllables immediately preceding the accent were lengthened. This so-called pretonic lengthening did not influence all vowels, but rather depended on sonority and to a certain extent on the prosodic weight of the noun in question.⁴³ It occurs, for example, in (**ḥakámu* > **ḥakám* >) **ḥakám* > **ḥākām* (> חָכָם /ḥōkōm/ [ħɔːˈχɔːɔm]) ‘wise man’.

This change has been regarded by many as due to Aramaic influence on the Hebrew spoken during the Second Temple period.⁴⁴ Both the transcription of lengthened /i/ by *eta* in the Septuagint and the representation of lengthened /a/ in pretonic position by *alef* in the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate that this sound shift indeed took place during the Second Temple period when Hebrew was still a spoken language.

The dating of pretonic lengthening is important, since most cases of unstressed ֶ influencing the vocalisation of the article before /ʕ/, /h/ and /ħ/ originated from pretonic lengthening of /a/. This means that pretonic lengthening must have occurred before the degemination of gutturals, or at least of /ʕ/, /h/ and /ħ/. While other dates have been suggested,⁴⁵ the evidence from the Septuagint as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls gives an important *terminus ad quem* for establishing the date of this lengthening.

5.4.4 (Pro)pretonic reductions

In syllables further removed from the accent, /a/ in open syllables was reduced. Together with pretonic lengthening, this change accounts for the vocalic variations in the inflectional paradigms of nominals – e.g. /ḥōkōm/ [ħɔːˈχɔːɔm] ‘a wise man’ (msg) versus /ḥkōmīm/ [ħaχɔːˈmiːim] ‘wise men’ (mpl) – and thus for the distribution of the article variants across inflection patterns – /heḥōkōm/ [ħɛː.ħɔːˈχɔːɔm] ‘the wise man’ (msg) versus /haḥkōmīm/ [ħaː.ħaχɔːˈmiːim] ‘the wise men’ (mpl).

⁴³ Blau, 1993, p. 31; Blau, 2010, pp. 123–132; Khan, 2013e, p. 225.

⁴⁴ Blau, 1980, p. 33; Blau, 2010, pp. 128–129; Khan, 2013e, pp. 224–225.

⁴⁵ Blau, 2010, pp. 126–129.

In addition, in most cases where short stressed vowels were occurring in open penultimate syllables, the stress moved to the ultimate syllable, usually resulting in a reduction of the short, now unstressed, vowel in the penultimate syllable.

5.4.5 Compensatory lengthening

Compensatory lengthening occurs when a vowel is spread to occupy the slot vacated by the loss of a consonantal segment and presents a means to keep the previous prosodic structure intact.⁴⁶ According to Blau, due to the occurrence of compensatory lengthening, a relative chronology can be established for the successive degemination of the gutturals:⁴⁷

1. Degemination of /r/, /ʾ/ followed by compensatory lengthening of a preceding vowel: /VGG/ > /V:G/.
2. Degemination of /ʿ/, /h/ followed by compensatory lengthening of a preceding vowel in some cases: /VGG/ > /V:G/ or /VG/.
3. Degemination of /h/, without compensatory lengthening of a preceding vowel: /VGG/ > /VG/.

The attested exceptions from the established rules mentioned by Gesenius as well as by Joüon and Muraoka mainly involve nouns with initial /ʿ/.⁴⁸

Blau emphasises that this lengthening is of a purely quantitative nature and the realisation of vowels in open syllables in the Tiberian vocalisation systems is a purely phonetic realisation.⁴⁹ Khan, however, makes the important observation that compensatory lengthening was a recurring feature in Biblical Hebrew, and suggests that in the later pre-Masoretic stages a distinction must be made between an earlier phase where compensatory lengthening was paralleled or associated with a qualitative shift (/aGG/ > (/a:G/ >) /5G/) and a later phase where no concomitant change in vowel quality was operative. He suggests that the slot of the lost consonantal segment may have been left empty for some time.⁵⁰ This observation also indicates that the raising of /ā/ to /5/ is a late feature, postdating at least the early stages of guttural degemination. The assumption that compensatory lengthening in the early phase was accompanied or followed by qualitative modification as well does not change the established relative chronology for the loss of gemination of the individual gutturals.

⁴⁶ Khan, 2013c, p. 500.

⁴⁷ Blau, 2010, pp. 82–83. However, Blau, 1980, p. 35 posits two waves of degemination, differentiated by whether syllable structure did not yet allow short vowels in open syllables or already allowed them.

⁴⁸ Gesenius, 1910, p. 111; Joüon and Muraoka, 1991, p. 114.

⁴⁹ Blau, 2010, p. 82. However, Blau, 1980, pp. 37–39 argues very strongly for a quantitative and qualitative change.

⁵⁰ Khan, 2013c, pp. 501–503.

5.5 Other phonological changes

Neither the Law of Attenuation (an unaccented /a/ in a closed syllable before the accent shifts to an /i/) nor Philippi's Law (an accented /i/ in a closed syllable, especially when penultimate, shifts to an /a/) are relevant for the development of the definite article before degeminated gutturals. Consequently, the dating of these does not matter here. In addition, the spirantisation of *bgdkpt* and the question of the anaptyctic vowels in *segholates* are irrelevant.⁵¹

It should also be noted that nouns derived from geminate roots in the derivational patterns *qall*, *qill* and *qull* were influenced by neither tonic lengthening nor compensatory lengthening;⁵² the loss of gemination of their final consonants did not lead to a perceived change in the prosodic structure of the syllable.

5.6 The vowel system in the Late Biblical or early Second Temple era

Table 5 shows the vowel system which may be posited as existing at the time when the gutturals started to degeminate.

Table 5. Vowel system when gutturals started to degeminate

Quality	Quantity ⁵³	
	Long	Short
a	ā < a	a < a
e	ē < i, ay	e < i
o	ō < u, aw	o < u
i	ī < ī	i < i
u	ū < ū	u < u

6 The degemination of the individual gutturals and subsequent vowel changes

The preceding discussion shows that loss of gemination was preceded by various modifications of the following vowel, such as pretonic lengthening and proretonic reduction, and that this had already begun when Hebrew was still a spoken language. The occurrence of exceptions to the rules, mainly with nouns derived from roots with initial /ʕ/, together with the general observation

⁵¹ In the examples adduced, the anaptyctic vowel in *segholates* is assumed, but the spirantisation of *bgdkpt* is not.

⁵² On the lack of tonic lengthening, see Blau, 1993, p. 31; for the lack of compensatory lengthening, see Khan, 2013c, p. 503.

⁵³ It is not certain that /e/ and /o/ should already be posited as independent phonemes by this point, rather than as allophones of /i/ (in the case of /e/) and /u/ (in the case of /o/); however, in this account they will be treated as phonemes.

that compensatory lengthening is not entirely regular, is indicative of spoken language. This is also true for the sporadically attested gemination of /r/.

More precisely, these phenomena are indicative of a language undergoing change. Given that the Tiberian reading tradition is remarkably homogenous – even though it differs from the dialect (or dialects) underlying the consonant text and apparently makes recourse to different earlier dialect forms – the occurrence of these exceptions shows that the orally transmitted text became increasingly frozen as the language ceased to be spoken. The various stages of the loss of gemination accompanied by modification of the preceding vowel, or at least the initial stages of this process, may be some of the last changes connected to the use of Hebrew as a spoken language in antiquity.

6.1 Degemination /r/ and /ʾ/

When gemination of /r/ and /ʾ/ is lost and the preceding vowel is lengthened, this results in the definite article having the vowel /ā/. Since there are no conditioned variants of the definite article when it precedes /ʾ/ and /r/, it is not strictly necessary that pretonic lengthening was occurring or had already been completed. However, the transcription of lengthened /i/ by *eta* and the occurrence of geminate /r/ in the Septuagint make clear that pretonic lengthening had most likely already taken place, although this cannot be determined for all spoken Hebrew dialects.

From the evidence of these two gutturals alone, it is impossible to determine if the loss of gemination was immediately followed by compensatory lengthening or whether the slot vacated by the lost consonantal segment remained empty for some time before the vowel was lengthened; likewise, it is impossible to determine if this lengthening was accompanied by a qualitative change immediately or when this took place.⁵⁴

Note the following examples: /ha.ʾōr/ > /ha.ʾōr/ > /haa.ʾōr/ > /hā.ʾōr/ > אֹרֶךְ /hōʾor/ [hɔ:ʔo:ɔʁ] ‘the light’ (Gen. 1:4); /ha.ʾādām/ > /ha.ʾādām/ > /haa.ʾādām/ > /hā.ʾādām/ > אָדָם /hōʾādōm/ [hɔ:ʔo:ʾdɔ:ɔm] ‘the human being’ (Gen. 2:19); /ha.ʾiššā/ > /ha.ʾiššā/ > /haa.ʾiššā/ > /hā.ʾiššā/ > אִשָּׁה /hōʾiššō/ [hɔ:ʔiʃʃɔ:] ‘the woman’ (Gen. 3:2); /ʾet-har.rāʾā/ > /ʾet-ha.rāʾā/ > /ʾet-haa.rāʾā/ > /ʾet-hā.rāʾā/ > אֶת־הָרָעָה /ʾet-hōrōʾā/ [ʔeθ-hɔ:ʁo:ʾɔ:] ‘the evil thing (fsg, direct object)’ (1 Sam. 6:9); /har.rōš/ > /ha.rōš/ > /haa.rōš/ > /hā.rōš/ > אֵת־רֹשׁ /hōrōš/ [hɔ:ʁo:ʃ] ‘the head’ (1 Sam. 13:17); /har.rīšōn/ > /ha.rīšōn/ > /haa.rīšōn/ > /hā.rīšōn/ > אֶת־רִשׁוֹן /hōrīšōn/ [hɔ:ʁi:ʔo:ɔn] ‘the first’ (Ezra 7:9).

Although several sporadic examples of geminated /r/ are attested, these do not include any cases with the definite article. There are also a few instances of initial /ʾ/ having been lost with the article showing compensatory lengthening.⁵⁵ In these cases, *ʾalef* is occasionally preserved in writing, while at other

⁵⁴ However, see the following section.

⁵⁵ Gesenius, 1910, pp. 110–111.

times it is lost: מִן־הַזִּקְיִם /min-hōzikkīm/ [ˌmin-ho:ziqˈqi:im] ‘from the chains’ (Jer. 40:4) < /min-haˈʔāzikkīm/; הַסּוּרִים /hōsūrīm/ [ho:su:ˈvi:im] ‘of the prisoners’ (Eccles. 4:14) < /haˈʔāsūrīm/, compare לַאֲסוּרִים /laˈʔāsūrīm/ [ˌlaʔasu:ʁˈi:i:im] ‘to prisoners’ (Isa. 49:9); הָרַמְמִים /hōrammīm/ [ˌho:ʁamˈmi:i:im] ‘the Arameans’ (2 Chr. 22:5) < /haˈʔārammīm/, compare אֲרַמְמִים /ʔārammīm/ [ʔaʁamˈmi:i:im] ‘Arameans’ (2 Kings 9:15); and הַשַּׁפּוֹת /hōšpōt/ [ho:ˈʃafo:oθ] ‘(gate) of the dung’ (Neh. 3:13) < /haˈʔāšpōt/, compare הַשַּׁפּוֹת /hāʔāšpōt/ [ho:ʔaʃˈpo:oθ] ‘(gate) of the dung’ (Neh. 3:14).

These examples include both cases where the vowel following the laryngeal stop was originally a short /a/ in an open unstressed syllable that underwent propretonic reduction (e.g. /haˈʔārammīm/) and one case of a short /a/ in a closed unstressed syllable where it should have been retained (/haˈʔāšpōt/). In the former cases, it is easy to imagine that propretonic reduction leading to vowel elision and thus ultimately a syllable initial consonant cluster with /ʔ/ as the first consonant might result in the loss of the laryngeal; however, this does not occur usually, as can be seen from אֶגְדֵּי הָאֶגַּתִּית /hōˈgōgī/ [ˌho:ʔaγo:ˈʕi:] ‘the Agatite’ (Est. 8:3). Moreover, propretonic reduction did not lead to the sudden loss of a vowel, but is rather a slow process – *haˈʔagāgī > *haˈʔāgāgī > *haˈʔāgāgī > *haˈʔāgāgī > haˈʔōgāgī – with the insertion of an epenthetic vowel to break up the syllable initial cluster /ʔg/ in the Tiberian reading tradition: [ho:ˈʔaγo:ˈʕi:].

These cases where an initial /ʔ/ is lost are not restricted to books written in Late Biblical Hebrew. However, the phenomenon of dropping the *ʔalef* also in writing seems to be; the additional cases of preserved *ʔalef* mentioned by Gesenius belong to Classical Biblical Hebrew.⁵⁶

This seems to suggest two things. Firstly, the weakening of /ʔ/ in the spoken language may occasionally have gone further than mere degemination, leading instead to a complete loss of the glottal stop after compensatory lengthening took place. Secondly, degemination and loss of the glottal stop were an ongoing process during the canonisation of some of the later books, resulting in the phenomenon showing up even in the consonant text. This is especially easy to imagine with common ethnonyms (‘the Arameans’) or well-known landmarks such as ‘the dung gate’.

6.2 Degemination of /ʔ/

Degemination of /ʔ/ has two outcomes: where /ʔ/ is followed by an unstressed /ā/, the vowel of the definite article changes its quality, /a/ > /ε/; elsewhere, the vowel of the article undergoes compensatory lengthening, /a/ > /ā/. Examples of the first of these processes can be seen in /ʔel-haˈʔāpār/ > /ʔel-hε.ˈāpār/ > ʔֶל־הַ־עָפָר /ʔel-hεˈʔpōr/ [ʔel-hε:ʕo:ˈfɔ:ʁ] (Eccles. 3:20) ‘to the dust’; /haˈʔānān/ > /ha.ˈānān/ > /hε.ˈānān/ > ְהַ־עָנָן /hεˈʔnōn/ [hε:ʕo:ˈno:ʔn] ‘the

⁵⁶ Gesenius, 1910, pp. 110–111.

cloud' (Neh. 9:19). Examples of compensatory lengthening include /'ad-ha. 'éreb/ > /'ad-ha. 'éreb/ > /'ad-haa. 'éreb/ > /'ad-hā. 'éreb/ > אֲדָחָה עַד עֶרֶב /'ad-hō 'ereb/ [ʔað-ho: 'ʕe:βeβ] 'until the evening' (Lev. 17:15); /'ad-ha. 'āreb/ > /'ad-ha. 'āreb/ > /'ad-haa. 'āreb/ > /'ad-hā. 'āreb/ > אֲדָחָה עַד עֶרֶב /'ad-hō 'ōreb/ [ʔað-ho: 'ʕo:βeβ] 'until the evening (pausa)' (Lev. 15:16); /ha. 'ūmārīm/ > /ha. 'ūmārīm/ > /haa. 'ūmārīm/ > /hā. 'ūmārīm/ > חֵמְרֵי מִדְּבָרִים /hō 'mōrīm/ [ħo: 'ʕomō: 'βi:im] 'the sheaves' (Ruth 2:15).

This process may be explained as follows. In the first case, where there is a change in quality, the vowel following the guttural is /ā/, resulting mainly from pretonic lengthening of /a/; occasionally it is due to tonic or pausal lengthening or else continues an original /ā/. Following degemination, the slot of the lost consonantal segment remains unfilled for some time. Given the increased weakening of /'/, the vowel of the definite article undergoes dissimilation: /a. 'ā/ > /aØ. 'ā/ > /ε. 'ā/. This serves to prevent further weakening of the guttural and eventually the merger of the two original syllables; that is, it avoids a scenario such as /a. 'ā/ > /aØ. 'ā/ > /a.ā/ > /aā/ > /ā/.

In other environments, where degemination leads to compensatory lengthening, the slot of the lost consonantal segment remains likewise unfilled for some time before the vowel of the article spreads to the empty slot. The occurrence of a long /ā/ before the guttural likewise helps to prevent its loss between non-homorganic vowels; the weakening of /'/ has not yet progressed sufficiently to facilitate its loss in front of a stressed homorganic vowel.

The dissimilation⁵⁷ from /a/ to /ε/ to prevent the loss of a laryngeal or pharyngeal between homorganic /a/ and /ā/ occurs not only with /'/ and the remaining gutturals in this environment, but elsewhere as well, such as in the nominal derivation pattern *qaṭṭāl* – e.g. **lahhabat* > **leḥābā* > לֶהָבָה /leḥōbō/ [le:ħo: 'vo:] 'flame' and **naḥḥamat* > **neḥāmā* > נְחָמָה /neḥōmō/ [ne:ħo: 'mō:] 'comfort' – and possibly also in **aḥḥāw* > אֶחָיו /'eḥōw/ [ʔe: 'ħo:ɔβ] 'his brothers' and **aḥḥād* > אֶחָד /'eḥōd/ [ʔe: 'ħo:ɔð] 'one'.⁵⁸

The fact that this dissimilation does not take place with the article before degeminated /'/ shows that it is a feature connected to the ongoing, progressive weakening of the gutturals that dates to a later point than the loss of gemination of /'/ following the definite article.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ According to Blau, 2010, p. 181 this should be regarded as a case of assimilation. However, this is only the case of assimilation of vowel quality in Tiberian Hebrew, and it is doubtful that both vowels would have been sufficiently raised to an equal height by this point in the historical development. Blau, 1980, pp. 35–36 also argues very strongly for assimilation.

⁵⁸ Blau, 1980, p. 33–34; Blau, 1993, p. 38; Huehnergard, 2015, p. 52.

⁵⁹ Blau, 1980, p. 36 argues that the change /a/ > /ε/ cannot be a case of dissimilation, because it did not occur following the degemination of /'/ . However, he overlooks the fact that in one phase, degemination may have caused compensatory lengthening in order to keep the prosodic structure intact, while in a subsequent phase, further weakening may have caused dissimilation in the environment /aGā/ > /εGā/, irrespective of whether the environment was the result of degemination of additional gutturals or original.

Dissimilation of /a/ > /ε/ also takes place in the interrogative particle *h*, which is generally vocalised with *ḥatef pataḥ* (*hā-*); before gutturals it is vocalised with *pataḥ* (*ha-*), unless the guttural is vocalised with *qameṣ*, in which case the vowel dissimilates to *seghol* (*he-*). Since these gutturals were never geminated, it confirms that this is a phenomenon connected to the progressive weakening of all gutturals, which occurred only after the degemination of /ʾ/ following the definite article. It also suggests that *וְיָרִיב* /ʾεḥḏw/ [ʔε:ʾħo:ɔv] ‘his brothers’ < *ʾahhāw and *וְיָרִיב* /ʾεḥḏd/ [ʔε:ʾħo:ɔð] ‘one’ < ʾahhād may have only ever been virtually geminated; that is, for some reason they did not undergo pretonic lengthening.⁶⁰

In *וְיָרִיב* /hḏʾmōrīm/ [ħo:ʾɔmo:ʾvi:im] ‘the sheaves’, the /ʾ/ vocalised with *ḥatef qameṣ* was possibly still occupied by the reduced reflex of */u/ which was sufficiently distinct from the realisation of /ā/ to preclude the possible intervocalic loss of /ʾ/ in this environment.

The exceptions from the rule attested for this consonant all have *pataḥ* as the vowel preceding the degeminated guttural – e.g. *וְיָרִיב* /ʾet-haʾbōt/ [ʔε:θ-ha:ʾɔavo:ot] ‘the pledge (direct object)’ (Deut. 24:13); *וְיָרִיב* /haʾiwrīm/ [ħa:ʾivʾvi:im] ‘the blind’ (2 Sam. 5:6); *וְיָרִיב* /haʾōzebət/ [ħa:ʾo:ʾzε:vεθ] ‘the one who is leaving (fsg)’ (Prov. 2:17).⁶¹ This is an additional indication that compensatory lengthening did not occur immediately following degemination, but only a certain time later, suggesting that perhaps the maintenance of the original prosodic structure was regarded as a sufficient means to preserve the weakening guttural.

The second *qameṣ* in *וְיָרִיב* /hḏʾōm/ [ħo:ʾɔ:om] ‘the people’ is not the expected outcome of the loss of final gemination (*ʾamm > *ʾam) but rather due to pause lengthening. A few nouns have turned their pausal forms into the form following the definite article, e.g. *וְיָרִיב* /hḏʾōreṣ/ [ħo:ʾʔo:ʁεṣ]. As it happens, *וְיָרִיב* is frequently found with disjunctive accents (more than 66 per cent of all attestations).

6.3 Degemination of /h/

Degemination of /h/ results initially in an empty slot following the loss of the consonant component. The dissimilation rule /aGā/ > /εGā/, operative since the previous stage, now affects also the environment /ahā/ < /ahhā/, causing the vowel of the definite article before /h/ followed by an unstressed /ā/ to dissimilate to /ε/. Examples are /ʾel-hah.hārīm/ > /ʾel-ha.hārīm/ > /ʾel-he.hārīm/ > *וְיָרִיב* /ʾel-hehōrīm/ [ʔel-he:ħo:ʾvi:im] ‘to the mountains’ (Ezek. 31:12); /hah.hāmōn/ > /ha.hāmōn/ > /he.hāmōn/ > *וְיָרִיב* /hehōmōn/ [ħe:ħo:ʾmo:ɔn] ‘the multitude’ (2 Kings 25:11).

⁶⁰ The form *וְיָרִיב* /neʾšṣḏt/ [ne:ʔo:ʾɔ:ɔθ] ‘contempt (fpl)’ (Neh. 9:18, 26) should perhaps be regarded as a newly derived form or as a by-form of *וְיָרִיב* /nʾšṣḏ/ [nɔʔo:ʾɔ:ɔ]; cf. Huehnergard, 2015, p. 52.

⁶¹ Gesenius, 1910, p. 111.

In other environments, the possibility of undergoing compensatory lengthening is becoming increasingly restricted. With degeminated /'/, lengthening was possibly before any vowel following the guttural, but with /h/, this has become restricted to long, accented low and mid-high vowels; that is, it only occurs before stressed /ā/ and /ē/. After the context of unstressed /ā/ (where dissimilation happens), these two environments would seem to be the most likely to result in a further weakening of /h/, which would potentially lead to a complete loss of /h/ and then a possible syllable merger; that is, the following might hypothetically occur: /ahhāC/, /ahhēC/ > /ahāC/, /ahēC/ > /aāC/, /aēC/. To avoid this, the first /a/ is lengthened: /ahhāC/, /ahhēC/ > /a:hāC/, /a:hēC/ > /āhāC/, /āhēC/. Examples of this are הַהָרַי /hōhōr/ [hɔ:'hɔ:ɔʁ] ‘the mountain’ (Ex. 19:20); הַהָרָה /hōhōr/ [hɔ:'hɔ:ɔʁ] ‘to the mountain (terminative)’ (Deut. 10:1); הָהֵם /hōhēm/ [hɔ:'he:em] ‘those (mpl)’ (Gen. 6:4); and הַהֵמָּם /hōhēm̄m/ [hɔ:'he:emmɔ:] ‘those (mpl)’ (Jer. 14:15).⁶²

Traditionally, compensatory lengthening has been regarded as only occurring regularly before stressed /ā/, with the other cases being regarded as exceptions.⁶³ However, a closer look at the different stages of compensatory lengthening following the degemination of gutturals after the definite article reveals that what is happening is an ongoing restriction of the environments where lengthening (followed by qualitative change) can occur.

Where the vowel following a degeminated /h/ is anything else – that is, where it is neither an unstressed /ā/ nor a stressed /ā/ or /ē/ – whether in a stressed open syllable or a closed syllable, the vowel of the definite article remains unchanged and the empty slot resulting from the loss of gemination remains unoccupied. For example, /hah.hēkāl/ > /ha.hēkāl/ > הַהֵקָל /hahēkāl/ [ha:he:'χɔ:ɔl] ‘the palace’ (1 Kings 6:17); /hah.hīn/ > /ha.hīn/ > הַהִינִי /hahīn/ [ha:'hi:in] ‘the hin’ (Num. 28:14); /hah.hū/ > /ha.hū/ > הַהוּ /hahū/ [ha:'hu:] ‘that one (msg)’ (Isa. 2:11); /hah.hī/ > /ha.hī/ > הַהִי /hahī/ [ha:'hi:] ‘that one (fsg)’ (Dan. 12:1); /hah.hōlkīm/ > /ha.hōlkīm/ > הַהֹלְקִים /hahōlkīm/ [ha:ho:ol'χi:im] ‘those who walk (mpl)’ (Ex. 10:8).

⁶² Historically, the third masculine plural personal pronoun *hēm/hēm̄m* developed from **hum*; the vowel /u/ changed to the vowel /i/ by analogy with the third feminine plural form **hinmā*, with a subsequent development of /i/ > /ē/. It would seem at first sight that this should be the phoneme /e/ of unspecified length, with the allophones [e:] in stressed and [e] in unstressed environments. However, apart from a single attestation in Eccles. 3:18, a form [hem] does not occur. On the other hand, the third masculine plural possessive suffix is always /-hem/, despite having the same origin and likewise being always stressed, [hɛ:m]. The development of the allophones of /e/ occurs late, and it seems that the independent and the suffix pronoun have ended up with different phonemes. However, if a thorough investigation were to show that the vowel in the independent personal pronoun is to be analysed as the conditioned allophone, the above environment can be equally restated as stressed [ā] and [ē].

⁶³ Blau, 1980, p. 37 discusses only /hōhōr/ [hɔ:'hɔ:ɔʁ], which he regards as a case of complete assimilation caused by the stress (/hōr/). In his view, the form should actually have /a/ in the article.

6.4 Degemination of /h/

The last guttural to lose gemination was /h/. When occurring before an /h/ followed by stressed or unstressed /ā/, the vowel of the definite article dissimilates. For example, this occurs in /wkol-haḥ.ḥārāš/ > /wkol-ha.ḥārāš/ > /wkol-he.ḥārāš/ > וְכָל־הַחָרָשׁ /wkol-heḥōrōš/ [vaχol-he:ħo:'ʕo:ɔ] ‘and every craftsman’ (2 Kings 24:14); /haḥ.ḥāšēr/ > /ha.ḥāšēr/ > /he.ḥāšēr/ > הַחֵצֵר /heḥōšēr/ [he:ħo:'ʂe:ɕ] ‘the court’ (Ex. 38:31); /haḥ.ḥāreb/ > /ha.ḥāreb/ > /he.ḥāreb/ > הַחֶרֶב /heḥōreb/ [he:'ħo:ɕev] ‘the sword’ (2 Sam. 11:25).

Where /h/ is vocalised with *ḥatef qameš* in Tiberian Hebrew, it may be assumed that the original vowel /u/ has been completely reduced to Ø by this point in time. In other words, it is the vowel on the following consonant which can trigger dissimilation of the vowel of the definite article. In most of the attested cases, the vowel on the second stem consonant is indeed /ā/ – e.g. /haḥ.ḥrābōt/ > /ha.ḥrābōt/ > /he.ḥrābōt/ > הַחֲרוּבוֹת /heḥrōbōt/ [he:ħo:ɕo:vɔ:ɔθ] ‘the ruins’ (Ezek. 33:24); /haḥ.ḥdāšīm/ > /ha.ḥdāšīm/ > /he.ḥdāšīm/ > הַחֳדָשִׁים /heḥdōšīm/ [he:ħo:ðo:'ʃi:im] ‘the months’ (Neh. 10:34).

The only exception seems to be /haḥ.ḥrēbōt/ > /ha.ḥrēbōt/ > /he.ḥrēbōt/ > הַחֲרוּבוֹת /heḥrēbōt/ [he:ħo:ɕe:vɔ:ɔθ] ‘which are ruined (fpl)’ (Ezek. 36:35).⁶⁴ This may possibly be an indication that following the loss of the ability to undergo compensatory lengthening, the environment conditioning the dissimilation has begun to be enlarged to include mid-high long vowels. Given that possibly around this time Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, this state became frozen and the development discontinued.

In all other environments, the vowel of the definite article remains unchanged following degemination. This is attested in /haḥ.ḥōl/ > /ha.ḥōl/ > הַחֹל /haḥōl/ [ha:'ħo:ol] ‘the sand’ (Prov. 27:3); /haḥ.ḥōšek/ > /ha.ḥōšek/ > הַחֹשֶׁק /haḥōšek/ [ha:'ħo:ʂɛχ] ‘the darkness’ (Eccles. 11:8); /haḥ.ḥokmā/ > /ha.ḥokmā/ > הַחֹכְמָה /haḥokmā/ [ha:ħoχ'mo:] ‘the wisdom’ (1 Chr. 1:12); /'et-haḥ.ḥéleb/ > /'et-ha.ḥéleb/ > אֶת־הַחֶלֶב /'et-ha.ḥéleb/ [ʔeθ-ha:'ħe:lɛv] ‘the fat (direct object)’ (Lev. 7:31).⁶⁵

Following this stage, /ā/ was raised further to /ɔ/, while /e/ and /o/ developed their respective allophones; this resulted in the qualitative overlap of /ɔ/ [ɔ:] and /o/ [ɔ]/[ɔ:]. Following the lengthening of all vowels in open syllables, including the virtually geminated /a/ in the definite article, the state prevailing in Tiberian Hebrew has been reached.

⁶⁴ It is not clear why the first consonant should be vocalized with *ḥatef qameš*. On the basis of the attested fsg /ḥrēbō/ [ħaɕe:'vo:] (e.g. in Lev. 7:10) one would have expected /heḥrēbōt/ [he:ħaɕe:vɔ:ɔθ].

⁶⁵ There are a small number of attestations of what looks like compensatory lengthening involving /h/, namely וְכָל־הַחַיִּים /umikkol-hōḥay/ [umikkol-'ħo:ħaj] ‘and of every living thing’ (Gen. 6:19); וְהַחֲמִיץִים /whōḥrīṭīm/ [voho:ħaɕi:'ti:im] ‘and the girdles’ (Isa. 3:22); and וְהַחֲמִיץִים /whōḥammōnīm/ [voho:ħam.mo:'ni:im] ‘and the sun idols’ (Isa. 17:8); see Gesenius, 1910, p. 111.

Since all virtually geminated /a/ vowels have now undergone lengthening, lack of gemination of the gutturals can be said to result in compensatory lengthening in Tiberian Hebrew from a synchronic point of view, albeit accompanied by additional qualitative changes in certain cases.

7 Summary

The different stages of the degemination of the gutturals and the development of variants of the definite article for different vocalic environments can be summarised as follows:

1. Degemination of /r/, /ʕ/ followed by compensatory lengthening /a/ > /ā/.
2. /aGā/ is no longer a stable environment, whether derived from degemination or some other source, resulting in dissimilation: /aGā/ > /εGā/.
3. /ʕ/ degeminates, with subsequent dissimilation of the vowel of the article (/a/ > /ε/) before a following unstressed /ā/; in all other cases, the vowel of the article is lengthened, /a/ > /ā/.
4. The environment for compensatory lengthening is becoming restricted to long stressed low and mid-high vowels (/ā/, /ē/).
5. /h/ degeminates, with subsequent dissimilation of the vowel of the article (/a/ > /ε/) before a following unstressed /ā/; before /ā̇/ and /ē̇/, the vowel undergoes compensatory lengthening (/a/ > /ā/); in all other environments, the vowel is virtually geminated and undergoes no changes following degemination.
6. The environment permitting the dissimilation of /a/ > /ε/ is broadening beyond unstressed /ā/ to include stressed /ā̇/ as well as long (unstressed) mid-high vowels (/ē/).
7. /ħ/ degeminates, with subsequent dissimilation of the vowel of the article (/a/ > /ε/) before /ā̇/, /ā̇̇/ and /ē̇̇/; in all other environments, the vowel is virtually geminated and undergoes no changes following degemination.
8. Virtually geminated /a/ is lengthened, as are all unstressed vowels in open syllables; certain vowel phonemes are raised and/or develop conditioned allophones, resulting eventually in the vowel system of Tiberian Hebrew.

It seems likely that these changes, excluding the last one, took place at least partially while Hebrew was still a spoken language. The occurrence of various exceptions to the rules, as mentioned in the previous sections, are a hallmark of language change becoming frozen.

Table 6 presents a synopsis of the changes which the vowel of the article undergoes depending on the environment. It also highlights the gradual restriction of compensatory lengthening, with the development and spread of new environments conditioning different changes.

Table 6. The changes of the vowel of the definite article

Guttural	Environment				
	Unstressed /ā/	Stressed /ā/	Unstressed /ē/	Stressed /ē/	Other vowels
r, ʾ	a > ā	a > ā	a > ā	a > ā	a > ā
ʿ	a > ε	a > ā	a > ā	a > ā	a > ā
h	a > ε	a > ā	?	a > ā	a > a
ḥ	a > ε	a > ε	a > ε	a > a	a > a

The description of the synchronic distribution of the variants of the definite article will always be somewhat cumbersome. However, I believe that the description given here of the different changes in the vocalisation of the definite article as ways in which the spoken language dealt with the ongoing weakening of the gutturals and prevented their merger or loss, as happened in the Samaritan reading tradition, presents a convincing account of the diachronic processes involved. Further research is needed to verify the suggestions made in this paper. It is especially important to see whether similar or identical explanations can be applied to other environments affected by the loss of gemination where compensatory lengthening did or did not occur.

This account has the distinct advantage of describing the dynamics involved in the development of the different conditioning environments. It also presents, I believe, a more accurate description of these environments by showing that vowels other than stressed and unstressed /ā/ may have been involved.

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The Use of *Dageš* in the Non-Standard Tiberian Manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible from the Cairo Genizah

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1 Introduction¹

The Tiberian Masoretes developed the Tiberian vowel and accentuation signs in order to represent their own inherited pronunciation and vocalisation tradition of biblical Hebrew (i.e. Standard Tiberian, abbreviated as ST in what follows). Besides the system of the Tiberian Masoretes, there were three other vocalisation systems (Babylonian, Palestinian and Samaritan), each of which had their own set of vowel and accentuation signs to represent their respective pronunciation traditions. While it became the preferred vocalisation system, after the death of the last Tiberian Masorete (Aharon ben Asher)² the Tiberian vocalisation system and its pronunciation were separated, so that the Tiberian vowel signs were now used to represent pronunciation traditions other than the Tiberian.³ Biblical manuscripts where the Tiberian vowel signs are used to represent other pronunciation traditions will be referred to here as Non-Standard Tiberian (NST) manuscripts.⁴

¹ I am delighted to be able to congratulate Professor Geoffrey Khan on the occasion of his 60th birthday with this paper. I am indebted to him for his constant support as supervisor and his inspiring scholarship. This paper was written during my post-doctoral appointment at the University of Zurich funded by the Forschungskredit of the University of Zurich, grant. no. FK-16-004.

² See Ben-Hayyim, 2007, pp. 319–321.

³ Note that the Tiberian system was also used to vocalise the Mishnah and the Talmud, and is today the official vocalisation system used in Israel for Modern Hebrew. Its use, although defined by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, is no longer observed by the majority of Hebrew speakers. This is most likely due to colloquial speech (cf. Neudecker, 2017).

⁴ For the initial classification of manuscripts as NST, I used the Davis catalogue, which introduced this classification and also the term NST (Davis, 1978). Previous scholars have used the terms ‘Palestino-Tiberian’, ‘fuller Palestinian’, ‘extended Tiberian’, ‘non-traditional’, ‘non-conventional’ and ‘textus non-receptus’. Other terms used previously which connect to the Tiberian Masorete Ben-Naftali, however, are no longer justifiable, as the differences between him and the other Tiberian Masoretes were on minor issues and not at all as extensive as the differences in the NST manuscripts (Blapp, 2017, pp. 26–32).

The value of the NST manuscripts lies in the fact that they are primary witnesses for the pronunciation of the Hebrew language in the Middle Ages. As such they can help us to understand the development of the pronunciation of biblical Hebrew, and especially the developments which led to the loss of the ST pronunciation tradition. Additionally, they provide first-hand information about the use of the vocalisation system which can help us to explain and relate non-standard features in ST manuscripts, including the Leningrad Codex (abbreviated here as L),⁵ the Aleppo Codex (A) and manuscript BL Or 4445 (B).⁶

In this article I look at the use of the Tiberian *dageš* sign in NST manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. The data presented here comes from my PhD thesis,⁷ and is based on six Non-Standard Tiberian Bible manuscripts from the Taylor-Schechter Genizah collection at Cambridge University Library. The manuscripts analysed here are T-S A11.1, T-S A12.1, T-S A12.10a, T-S A13.18, T-S A13.20 and T-S A13.35, all written on vellum between the 11th and the 13th centuries CE. I have used manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah here, since they are among the earliest witnesses for the use of the Tiberian system in a non-standard way. These manuscripts are most likely written in various different types of Oriental hand, and hence allow a glimpse into the Eastern manuscript tradition, as opposed to previous research on NST manuscripts which has mainly focused on medieval European manuscripts.⁸

Dageš, a single diacritical dot, has two main functions in ST: it indicates the doubling of a consonant, and it indicates the plosive pronunciation of the *bgdkft* letters (i.e. as /b/, /g/, /d/, /k/, /p/, /t/).⁹ The first function is often known as *dageš forte*, while the second function is *dageš lene*. These are Latin translations of the Hebrew terms *dageš ḥazaq* and *dageš qal*, which were first used by the medieval European Hebrew scholar David Qimḥi.¹⁰ There is a further function, *dageš conjunctivum*, which is not as well defined as the previous two and occurs much less frequently, though like *dageš forte* it can appear in all letters apart from the gutturals. Research on *dageš conjunctivum* is still very much undecided as to what it really indicates. Since it occurs in the first letter of a word, it is often argued that it has a conjunctive function (i.e. gemination due to prosody) or alternatively a disjunctive function (i.e. syllable division). Apart from a few minor differences, ST manuscripts use all types of *dageš* in the same way.¹¹

⁵ These manuscripts are more formally: (L) National Library of Russia Evr. I B19a, see https://archive.org/details/Leningrad_Codex; (A) The Ben-Zvi Institute Jerusalem Israel Ms. 1, see <http://www.aleppocodex.org/>; (B) British Library Oriental Manuscript no. 4445, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_4445.

⁶ Blapp, forthcoming.

⁷ Blapp, 2017.

⁸ Blapp, 2017, pp. 26–32.

⁹ Golinets, 2017.

¹⁰ Golinets, 2017.

¹¹ Golinets, 2017.

NST *dageš*¹² is defined here as the use of the *dageš* sign in a way in which it is not used in ST manuscripts, in particular, in L.¹³ The most recent research into the history of the pronunciation of *dageš* shows that by the 11th century at the latest, *dageš forte* and *dageš lene* were both realised with gemination (i.e. as *dageš forte*), and thus their distinctive pronunciations had been lost.¹⁴ Since the NST manuscripts start to emerge around this time at the earliest, it is very likely that NST *dageš* was also realised with gemination.

Such secondary gemination already occurs in isolated cases in ST manuscripts such as L,¹⁵ A or B. Some previous publications,¹⁶ however, did not differentiate between Tiberian vocalisation traditions, and thus missed the different developments of the usage of the Tiberian vowel signs and the implications of this.¹⁷ Additionally, it has to be noted that even the latest research on the use of *dageš* in Standard Tiberian is only conducted on the basis of a single manuscript, in most cases L. It has been shown, however, that L sometimes deviates from other ST manuscripts regarding the use of *dageš*.¹⁸ Thus, it will be necessary to compare a representative number of the available manuscripts, as well as medieval grammatical treatises, in order to gain a thorough understanding of *dageš* in the ST tradition in general, and to identify the tradition of marking *dageš* of each manuscript.

Medieval European scholars such as David Qimḥi (11th–12th century CE) and Yequti'el ha-Naqdan (13th century CE) already mention the use of *dageš* in non-*bgdkft* letters in contexts which are not related to morphology; that is,

¹² I will not deal with *mappiq* in this paper. Nor will I deal with NST *dageš* in *bgdkft* letters (i.e. plosive for spirant pronunciation), since its interpretation is not directly related to the scope of this paper (cf. Blapp, 2017, pp. 91–93, 115, 168, 194), and the evidence for it is very limited and thus its interpretation remains uncertain. NST *dageš* is marked in all *bgdkft* letters, and thus cannot be considered unilaterally to be influence from the Arabic speaking environment, since *beth* (*bā* in Arabic) did not have a corresponding spirant in the Arabic alphabet.

¹³ Since my data have been compared to L, for this paper (and my PhD) NST *dageš* is a *dageš* which specifically does not occur in L.

¹⁴ Professor G. Khan will soon publish a paper on the history of the pronunciation of *dageš* which he made available to me in draft form (Khan, forthcoming). In that paper he gives translations of the relevant passages from the medieval grammatical treatises on this issue.

¹⁵ Golinets, 2017.

¹⁶ Blake, 1943 and Prätorius, 1883.

¹⁷ These scholars did not distinguish between the ST and the NST manuscripts. They accepted the latter as of the same value as the ST manuscripts. As my research shows, the NST manuscripts no longer reflect the ST tradition, although they are vocalised with the Tiberian vowel signs. We can possibly use the NST manuscripts to explain developments in the ST tradition, but we cannot treat them equally when it comes to reliability, since the NST manuscripts reflect the individual pronunciation of each scribe, whereas the ST tradition reflects an inherited authoritative pronunciation tradition. Additionally, as I show in a forthcoming publication (Blapp, forthcoming), the use of the Tiberian vowel signs even in the ST manuscripts was not entirely consistent. Some of these cases reflect ST variants, whereas other cases reflect features which do not reflect the ST grammatical tradition. Thus, I believe that every manuscript has to be examined in terms of its purity in reflecting the ST tradition. The results of such an examination will show that every ST manuscript is different, and that developments within late ST manuscripts already show some non-standard features.

¹⁸ Golinets, 2017.

they mention NST *dageš*. Qimḥi says that all letters besides the *bgdkft* letters are pronounced either soft or hard according to whether or not they are preceded by a *šəwa*.¹⁹ Yequti'el ha-Naqdan explains that the pronunciation of *dageš lene* (דגש קל),²⁰ as he calls NST *dageš*, in the non-*bgdkft* letters was no longer heard, since people did not know how to pronounce it.²¹ Since *dageš forte* has a morphological or etymological implication,²² it is possible that Yequti'el chose the term *dageš lene* to refer to NST *dageš* because it has neither morphological nor etymological implications, and thus it is entirely secondary. This classification of Yequti'el, however, does not define the nature of the pronunciation of NS *dageš* (see below), since he and his contemporaries, as mentioned, no longer know how to pronounce any of the *dageš* at all.

2 The use of *dageš* in the NST manuscripts

Examination of the data has shown that there are at least two different groups of manuscript in terms of the use of NST *dageš*. Based on an evaluation of their pronunciation features, the manuscripts in the corpus are divided into what I call the Tiberian-Palestinian²³ manuscripts and a Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript, since the former show many Palestinian pronunciation features, whereas the latter shows many Babylonian pronunciation features.²⁴ Based on

¹⁹ Chomsky, 2001, 18, §5b. Note that Qimḥi also refers in other places to the euphonic *dageš*, which supposedly occurs in pause or in letter with *šəwa*; see Chomsky, 2001, 18, §6b.

²⁰ Like Qimḥi, Yequti'el ha-Naqdan uses the terms *dageš ḥazaq* (*dageš forte*) and *dageš qal* (*dageš lene*). While he does not mention Qimḥi, it is likely that Yequti'el borrowed these terms from him, since they were introduced in Qimḥi's *Sefer Mikhlol* (cf. Golinetz, 2017).

²¹ אבל זילטמנשקש הדגש הקל לא נשמע בהן ברוב מקומות כגון ... ורוב אנשי ארצנו לא ידעו להשמיע את הדגש האלה בזאתיות האלה, 'but [in the letters] *dageš lene* is not heard in them in many places, for example שְׁמַרְךָ (Ex. 34:11), וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ (Josh. 7:9), נִבְקַעוּ (Gen. 7:11), רָאִתְּהוּן (Ex. 28:19), רָתַמְתָּ (Gen. 29:31) and בְּעַלְתָּ (Deut. 24:4) [these examples can be found on p. 165 with the addition ודומיהם רבים 'and many similar cases'], and many people from our land do not know [how] to realise *dageš lene* which occurs in these letters' (Yarqoni, 1985, pp. קה and 165, my translation). Note that Yarqoni does not mark the *dageš* about which Yequti'el is talking, and so it is not entirely clear to which *dageš* Yequti'el is referring. It is, however, most likely that in his manuscript *dageš* was marked, at least in the examples two to five, after the silent *šəwa* in one of the letters he mentioned earlier in the same sentence (i.e. זילטמנשקש). In the first example it was most likely marked after the *maqef* in *lamed*.

²² Golinetz, 2017.

²³ Note that the term 'Palestino-Tiberian' (e.g. Heijmans, 2017b) is the most commonly used term to refer to all these manuscripts in recent research. As I have shown in my PhD, however, this does not take into account that there are manuscripts with a majority of Babylonian features, and that the number of ST pronunciation features in any manuscript is significant, so that we cannot simply say that these manuscripts reflect the Palestinian pronunciation tradition with Tiberian vowel signs. The data is much more diverse (cf. e.g. Blapp, 2017, pp. 202–207).

²⁴ Further research of the Palestinian tradition especially is needed in order to understand and situate it in the history of the development of the vocalisation systems of Hebrew. The Palestinian vocalisation tradition exhibits a significant number of Tiberian as well as Babylonian pronunciation features, which calls into question its status as an independent tradition (Blapp,

the evaluation of the vocalisation of these manuscripts, it is also possible to state that every manuscript reflects the pronunciation of its scribe, since none of these manuscripts exhibit the exact same vowel interchanges. While each manuscript is very different, the manuscripts of the Palestinian group share features such as frequent interchanges of *qamaš* with *pataḥ* and *seghol* with *šere*.²⁵ The single manuscript from the Babylonian group mainly shows interchanges of *pataḥ* with *seghol/šere*.²⁶ Despite the fact that we are able to identify these two groups, it is important to note that there are also a limited number of Palestinian features found in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript, as well as Babylonian features in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts.

In what follows the data are arranged according to the features of the preceding syllable (closed or open, in the preceding word or the same word) and the accent (after a disjunctive or conjunctive accent, when *dageš* occurs after an open syllable in word-initial position). Note that according to the ST tradition, *dageš lene* was only marked in *bgdkft* letters after closed syllables and after open syllables with a disjunctive accent.²⁷ At a secondary level the data here are categorised according to the manuscript and the phoneme in which NST *dageš* occurs. I will only give a single example for each category because of the limitations of space.²⁸ However it is important not only to see the distribution of NST *dageš* in the different letters, but also the respective frequency of occurrence, and therefore data is given in the appendices to provide an overview of the distribution and frequency of the features related to *dageš* in each manuscript.

2.1 The Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts

The frequent replacement of the vowel *qamaš gadol* with *pataḥ* and vice versa in these manuscripts, and similarly the frequent replacement of *seghol* with *šere* and vice versa, suggest a Palestinian background for the scribes, since the interchange of these sounds is an important characteristic of the Palestinian

2017, pp. 224–225). Note that I chose to place ‘Tiberian’ in front of ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Babylonian’ in naming these categories. I did this for two reasons: first, these manuscripts are vocalised with Tiberian vowel signs, and second, many features in both manuscript groups still reflect the ST pronunciation, and thus they seem to be only influenced by the ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Babylonian’ pronunciation traditions.

²⁵ The reason for these interchanges is that *qamaš gadol* was pronounced like *pataḥ* and vice versa, and *seghol* was pronounced like *šere* and vice versa (Heijmans, 2017a). Note that in ST every vowel was pronounced differently (Khan, 2017a).

²⁶ The reason for this interchange is that *pataḥ* and *seghol*, and sometimes *šere*, were pronounced alike (Khan, 2017b).

²⁷ Thus Yequti’el ha-Naqdan’s use of the term *dageš lene* (see note 21) no longer reflects the ST tradition, and shows that he himself most likely no longer knew how to pronounce it properly.

²⁸ See my PhD for the full list of examples (Blapp, 2017).

pronunciation tradition.²⁹ Additionally, the data provided by Fassberg³⁰ on the use of the Palestinian sign for *dageš* in the Palestinian reading tradition is similar to the use of NST *dageš* in the NST manuscripts. The Palestinian sign for *dageš* occurs where ST uses a dot to indicate *dageš forte* and sometimes *dageš lene*, *dageš conjunctivum*, and also *mappiq*, or to denote the diacritical dot above ST *sin*. It also occurs in letters other than the *bgdkft* letters when these are the first letters of a syllable (the syllable onset), both word-initially and word-internally, and this occurrence cannot be identified as any kind of ST *dageš*, *mappiq* or other diacritical dot.³¹ Most of the occurrences are either in the first letter (syllable onset) of a word-initial syllable, or else word-internal in the first letter of a syllable (syllable onset) which follows a closed syllable.³² Similarly, in the NST manuscripts analysed here, NST *dageš* is most frequently marked in the first letter of a syllable in either word-initial or word-internal position (see the appendices for frequencies).

The data³³ below have been selected in order to give an overview of the use of NST *dageš* in the manuscripts in the corpus. In this paper, I will show that:

- In the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts, NST *dageš* is marked in the first letter following a syllable within the same word which is closed (e.g. נְהָרָה from T-S A11.1); see section 2.1.2.
- NST *dageš* does, however, also occur in the first letter of a word following a word with an open or closed final syllable (e.g. שְׁמֵרָה from T-S A13.18); see section 2.1.1.
- Unlike in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript, there are only a few occurrences of NST *dageš* in the first letter of a syllable following an open syllable in the same word (e.g. שְׁמֵרָה from T-S A12.1); see section 2.1.3.
- There are also examples of NST *dageš* in the last letter of a word-final closed syllable which follows a vowel (e.g. שְׁמֵרָה from T-S A12.1); see section 2.1.4.

2.1.1 NST *dageš* in the initial letter of a word

The following data have been selected out of a larger set of data, in order to outline the use of NST *dageš* in the first letter of a word. NST *dageš* in the first letter of a word-initial syllable can occur in all letters apart from the gutturals in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts.³⁴ ST *dageš* in an initial *bgdkft*

²⁹ See e.g. Heijmans, 2017a.

³⁰ Fassberg, 1987, pp. 75–103.

³¹ Fassberg, 1987, pp. 78–89.

³² Fassberg, 1987, pp. 80, 85–86 (3a–c), 88 (2–3).

³³ See section 1 for details of the corpus.

³⁴ Note that in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript, NST *dageš* occurs sometimes in this position in the gutturals *he* and *heth* (see section 2.2). NST *mappiq*, on the other hand, is marked in consonantal *'alef* regardless of the syllabic environment in both the Tiberian-Babylonian and the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts (Blapp, 2017, pp. 207–209).

letter (i.e. not a *dəhiq*)³⁵ occurs only after a closed syllable or a final open syllable with a disjunctive accent. On the other hand, a *dəhiq* in ST manuscripts occurs only after an open syllable with conjunctive accent.³⁶ The use of NST *dageš* in the corpus analysed here exceeds both of these limitations, since it occurs in initial positions after all kinds of syllables and accents (see sections 2.1.1.1–2.1.1.3 below). There is no evidence that stress influenced the placing of NST *dageš*. It rather marks syllable boundaries to guide the correct understanding and reading of the text. This marking was most likely accompanied by enforcing the pronunciation (i.e. gemination) of the letter with NST *dageš*. Based on the fact that either *rafe* or NST *dageš* is used on all letters which are the first letter of a word-initial syllable, it is likely that there was a phonetic distinction between NST *dageš* and *rafe*, and thus NST *dageš* is more than just a graphical syllable boundary marker.³⁷

2.1.1.1 NST *dageš* after a closed syllable³⁸

In the ST tradition, the *bgdkft* phonemes would receive *dageš lene* in these cases.³⁹

T-S A11.1

וְלֹא ⁴⁰	(L וְלֹא Job 40:23 ‘not’)
לְוִיָּתָן	(L לְוִיָּתָן Job 40:25 ‘Leviathan’)
יֶאֱבֵר גִּזְיָו	(L יֶאֱבֵר גִּזְיָו Job 39:26 ‘the hawk will fly’)

T-S A12.1

זְרַעֲתֶיהָ:	(L זְרַעֲתֶיהָ: Prov. 31:17 ‘her arms’)
לְנַפְשֶׁךָ:	(L לְנַפְשֶׁךָ: Prov. 29:17 ‘to your (msg) soul’)
מִבְּיֹשׁ	(L מִבְּיֹשׁ Prov. 29:15 ‘he, who will bring shame to’)
נִפְגְּגוּ	(L נִפְגְּגוּ Prov. 29:13 ‘they met together’)
סָדֵן	(L סָדֵן: Prov. 31:24 ‘linen garment’)
צַדִּיקִים	(L צַדִּיקִים Prov. 29:27 ‘righteous’)
קָמוּ	(L קָמוּ: Prov. 31:28 ‘they rose up’)
שָׁל	(L שָׁל Ruth 2:16 ‘to pull out’)

³⁵ For *dəhiq* see section 2.1.1.3 below.

³⁶ Ofer, 2017.

³⁷ Khan, forthcoming.

³⁸ I shall not distinguish whether a closed final syllable was stressed with a conjunctive or a disjunctive accent, since in either case the following *bgdkft* phoneme would already have received *dageš* in the ST tradition.

³⁹ Golinets, 2017.

⁴⁰ Note the extra conjunctive *waw*, which is not attested in the ST tradition. This is one of the rare cases where the NST consonantal text deviates from ST consonantal text, apart from defective and *plene* spellings.

T-S A12.10a⁴¹

- מְבוֹרָה* (L מְבוֹרָה מֵיִם שְׁתֵּה־מִים Prov. 5:15 ‘your cistern’)
- :נְכָרִי* (L בְּרִית נְכָרִי: Prov. 5:10 ‘foreign’)
- []צ* (L כְּמִהַר צְפוּר Prov. 7:23 ‘bird’)

T-S A13.18

- ־רֹעִי (L אֶרְוֶה־רֹעִי Ps. 89:22 ‘my arm’)
- טוֹב (L הַשְּׂבֹתָ: טוֹב Ps. 92:2 ‘good’)
- *לִיהוָה (L יַעֲרֶךְ לִיהוָה Ps. 89:7 ‘to the Lord’)
- ־מִי (L מִי־צָבְאוֹת מִי־ Ps. 89:9 ‘who’)
- בְּעֶרְץ (L אֶל בְּעֶרְץ־ Ps. 89:8 ‘he, who is feared’)
- :סֵלָה (L נֶאֱמַן סֵלָה: Ps. 89:38 ‘Selah’)
- צָפוֹן (L צָפוֹן: יְסֻדֹתָם: Ps. 89:13 ‘north’)
- :קְדוֹשִׁים (L בְּקִנְיָן קְדוֹשִׁים: Ps. 89:6 ‘the saints’)
- שִׁנִּיתִי (L וְהִאֲמַר שִׁנִּיתִי Ps. 89:20 ‘I have levelled’)

T-S A13.35

- זֹאת (L זֹאת לְדַעַת Ps. 73:16 ‘this (fsg)’)
- *מִשְׁפָּט (L מִשְׁפָּט אֵלֶיךָ Ps. 37:28 ‘judgement’)
- נִשְׁמְדוּ (L נִשְׁמְדוּ נִשְׁמְדוּ Ps. 37:38 ‘they (mpl) were destroyed’)
- צָר (L צָר יִתְרָךְ Ps. 74:10 ‘adversary’)
- קַרְנִי (L וְכַל־קַרְנִי Ps. 75:11 ‘my horn’)

2.1.1.2 NST dageš after an open syllable with disjunctive accent⁴²

In the ST tradition the *bgdkft* phonemes would receive *dageš lene* in these cases.⁴³

T-S A12.1

- זֶה (L זֶה וְעַד־עֵתָה זֶה Ruth 2:7 ‘this (m)’)
- טִעַמָּה (L טִעַמָּה זָרְעוּתֶיהָ: Prov. 31:18 ‘she perceived’)
- לְעַד (L לְעַד כָּסְאוֹ לְעַד Prov. 29:14 ‘forever’)
- מְאִיר (L מְאִיר נִפְגְּשׁוּ מְאִיר־ Ps. 29:13 ‘he, who gives light’)
- נַפְשׁוֹ (L שׁוֹנֵא נַפְשׁוֹ Prov. 29:24 ‘his soul’)

T-S A12.10a

- מִזְרֹר* (L מִזְרֹר מִשְׁכָּבִי מִר Prov. 7:17 ‘myrrh’)
- *נִלְכַדְתָּ (L נִלְכַדְתָּ יְהוָה אֱמִיר־יְהוָה Prov. 6:2 ‘you are caught’)
- נִגַע (L נִגַע־נִגַע: יַעֲשֶׂנָה: Prov. 6:33 ‘wound’)

⁴¹ The asterisk on examples below indicates that only the consonants are legible, while accentuation and vocalisation are not legible.

⁴² Yeivin lists similar cases as ‘conjunctive’ *dageš* (Yeivin, 1980, p. 292, §407).

⁴³ Golinets, 2017.

T-S A13.18

זָכֹר	(L בָּאֶמּוֹנֶתְךָ: זָכֹר Ps. 89:51 ‘remember! (msg)’)
לֹא	(L וְגִדְרֵי עֵלְוָה לֹא Ps. 89:23 ‘not’)
מְאֹד*	(L יְהִי מְאֹד Ps. 92:6 ‘very’)
מְצִיבֵי	(L וְזָרִיתִי מְצִיבֵי Ps. 89:29 ‘it (fsg), which is made firm’)
:סְבִיבוֹתַי*	(L :וְאֶמּוֹנֶתְךָ סְבִיבוֹתַי Ps. 89:9 ‘round about you (msg)’);
צָנָה	(L תְּחַסֶּה צָנָה Ps. 91:4 ‘shield’)
שְׂאֵתִי	(L עֲבֹדְיָ שְׂאֵתִי Ps. 89:51 ‘my bearing’)
שָׁפוּהוּ	(L מִחֲתָהּ: שָׁפוּהוּ Ps. 89:42 ‘they plundered him’)

2.1.1.3 NST dageš after an open syllable with conjunctive accent (NST dəḥiq?)

In general, *dəḥiq* is a case of *dageš* after a word with a final open syllable which is stressed on the penultima with a conjunctive accent.⁴⁴ In ST it usually occurs in the initial stressed syllable of a new word following an unstressed *seghol* or *qamaš*.⁴⁵ There may be further cases, but this is still uncertain – since scholarship on biblical Hebrew has not taken into account that Tiberian manuscripts have to be classified according to their stage of development of the Tiberian system,⁴⁶ they have not yet been able to clearly define *dəḥiq*. The use of *dageš* in the examples below thus may reflect an extension of the *dəḥiq* rules, and we could define NST *dəḥiq* as occurring after a conjunctive accent following all kind of vowels (the NST extension), while NST *dageš* occurs after closed syllables and open syllables with disjunctive accents.

T-S A12.1

טוֹב	(L כִּי־טוֹב Prov. 31:18 ‘good’)
לִמְדֵתִי	(L לֹא־לִמְדֵתִי Prov. 30:3 ‘I learned’)
:בְּנֵי־נֶשֶׁר:	(L :בְּנֵי־נֶשֶׁר: Prov. 30:17 ‘the children of the eagle’)

T-S A12.10a

לְגַנֵּב*	(L לֹא־יָבוֹזוּ לְגַנֵּב Prov. 6:30 ‘(preposition +) the thief’)
נִרְגָה	(L לְקַח נִרְגָה Prov. 7:18 ‘let us take our fill’)

T-S A13.18

יִגַּשׁ	(L לֹא יִגַּשׁ Ps. 91:7 ‘it (msg) will approach’)
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⁴⁴ Ofer, 2017; Yeivin, 1980, pp. 289–290, §403.

⁴⁵ Ofer, 2017.

⁴⁶ Blapp, forthcoming. Note that Yeivin gives further examples (Yeivin, 1980, pp. 290ff.), where it occurs after vowels other than *seghol* and *qamaš*, but it is not clear from which manuscripts he has taken them. This is a very important question, since he sometimes gives examples from late ST manuscripts such as the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, where the use of *dageš* is similar to the NST manuscripts. The Hebrew Bible manuscripts with Babylonian vocalisation (Yeivin, 1985) and those with Palestinian vocalisation (Revell, 1970) have already been categorised according to their stage of development.

T-S A13.35

- לֹא* (L בְּלֹא Ps. 37:31 ‘not’)
- לְפִי (L אֶשְׁמְרָה לְפִי Ps. 39:2 ‘my mouth’)
- נִקְלָה (L מְלֹא נִקְלָה Ps. 38:8 ‘he, who burns’)

2.1.2 NST *dageš* in the first letter of a syllable after a closed syllable word-internally

In ST manuscripts, the *bgdkft* letters after a closed syllable word-internally would have receive *dageš lene* in many cases.⁴⁷

T-S A11.1

- וְתִלְכְּדוּ* (L וְתִלְכְּדוּ Job 38:30 ‘they are frozen’)
- וְלֹהֲצַמִּיחַ* (L וְלֹהֲצַמִּיחַ Job 38:27 ‘to cause to grow’)
- וְנָחְרוּ* (L וְנָחְרוּ Job 39:20 ‘his snorting’)

T-S A12.1

- בְּבַרְזֵל (L בְּבַרְזֵל Prov. 27:17 ‘with iron’)
- יִבְטַח: (L יִבְטַח: Prov. 28:1 ‘he will trust’)
- יִשְׁמַע (L יִשְׁמַע Prov. 29:24 ‘he will hear’)
- אִל־תִּמְנַע (L אִל־תִּמְנַע Prov. 30:7 ‘do not deny’)
- מִחֶסֶר (L מִחֶסֶר Prov. 28:27 ‘lack’)
- וַיִּצַו (L וַיִּצַו Ruth 2:15 ‘and he commanded’)
- חֶלְקָה (L חֶלְקָה Ruth 3:18 ‘a portion of land’)
- לְנַפְשְׁךָ (L לְנַפְשְׁךָ Prov. 29:17 ‘to your (msg) soul’)

T-S A12.10a

- יִמְצֵא (L יִמְצֵא Prov. 6:33 ‘he shall get’)

T-S A13.18

- אֶבְטַח־ (L אֶבְטַח־ Ps. 91:2 ‘I will trust’)
- וְנִשְׂמְחֶה (L וְנִשְׂמְחֶה Ps. 90:14 ‘and let us rejoice’)
- תִּחְסֶה (L תִּחְסֶה Ps. 91:4 ‘you (msg) will take refuge’)
- וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ (L וּבְצִדְקָתְךָ Ps. 89:17 ‘and in your (msg) righteousness’)
- מִחֻשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ (L מִחֻשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ Ps. 92:6 ‘your (msg) thoughts’)

T-S A13.35

- אֶבְטַח* (L אֶבְטַח Ps. 44:7 ‘I will trust’)
- נִקְלָה (L נִקְלָה Ps. 38:8 ‘he, who burns’)
- מְזֹמֹר (L מְזֹמֹר Ps. 38:1 ‘Psalm’)
- וּמִתְנַקֵּם (L וּמִתְנַקֵּם Ps. 44:17 ‘he, who avenges’)
- נַפְשִׁי (L נַפְשִׁי Ps. 41:5 ‘my soul’)

⁴⁷ Exceptions are the cases where the *bgdkft* letter is preceded by the so-called *šawa* medium (Blau, 2010, 114–115, §3.5.6.3.6) which is, however, not a phonetic reality but rather a term used to describe this phenomenon (Blau, 2010, 115, §3.5.6.3.6n).

2.1.3 Exceptions: NST *dageš* in the first letter of a syllable after an open syllable word-internally

There are only a few examples of this phenomenon in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts where NST *dageš* occurs after open syllables within a word. There is no consistent theory of how this phenomenon could be explained. Two of these cases in T-S A12.1 (בְּעֵלָהּ and וּמְעֵלִים) could be explained as the result of a change in the syllable structure, since ST silent *šəwa* could have been confused with the actual preceding vowel, thus resulting in a new syllable structure. A further example in T-S A12.1 occurs in a morpheme whose morphological form has been changed (וּתְרָד). All of the other examples are unique, and so it is also possible that they are mistakes or that *dageš* in these cases is just a speck on the vellum.⁴⁸ The addition of *rafe* on some examples could support the theory that they were mistakenly marked with NST *dageš*.⁴⁹ The statistics suggest that the marking of NST *dageš* in this context relates to sonority, since the majority of cases are attested in the sonorant letters *lamed* and *mem*.

T-S A11.1

וּיִחַלֵּק* (L יִחַלֵּק Job 38:24 ‘it is divided’)

T-S A12.1

בְּעֵלָהּ (L בְּעֵלָהּ Prov. 31:11 ‘her husband’)
וּמְעֵלִים (L וּמְעֵלִים Prov. 28:27 ‘he, who hides’)
בְּשָׁמַיִם (L בְּשָׁמַיִם Prov. 30:19 ‘in the skies’)
וּתְרָד (L וּתְרָד Ruth 3:6 ‘and she went down’)

T-S A12.10a

שׁוֹטֵר (L שׁוֹטֵר Prov. 6:7 ‘officer’)

T-S A13.18

יִשְׁמְרוּ (L יִשְׁמְרוּ Ps. 89:32 ‘they will keep’)

2.1.4 NST *dageš* in the last letter of a word-final syllable

NST *dageš* is marked only rarely in word-final syllables. The evidence shows that it mainly occurs in the sonorant letters *lamed* and *mem*.

T-S A12.1

בְּיוֹם (L בְּיוֹם Ruth 4:5 ‘at a day’)

T-S A13.35

כָּל* (L כָּל-יְיָ Ps. 38:7 ‘all of’)
תִּבְהַלְּם: (L תִּבְהַלְּם: Ps. 83:16 ‘you (msg) will terrify them (mpl)’)

⁴⁸ Such misleading specks have led to misinterpretations, for example in the editing of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Golinets, 2013, p. 248).

⁴⁹ Morag, 1959, p. 225, §2.351.

2.2 The Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript T-S A13.20

As noted above, manuscript T-S A13.20 has been classified as Tiberian-Babylonian on the basis of its major vowel interchanges (i.e. replacement of *pataḥ* with *seghol* and vice versa).⁵⁰ It is the only manuscript in the corpus examined here which shows a distinctive number of Babylonian features. Like in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts, in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript the use of NST *dageš* in word-initial position after a closed syllable is more frequently attested than the use of NST *dageš* after a closed syllable word-internally, and indeed this latter is attested only sporadically in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript. A far greater number of examples of NST *dageš* occur after open syllables within a word. (As before, only a single example per letter and context is given here in the text; for frequency data, see appendix B.)

2.2.1 NST *dageš* in the first letter of a word-initial syllable

Like in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts, the marking of NST *dageš* in the first letter of a word-initial syllable is also attested in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript across a wide variety of letters. The number of cases, however, is lower than that of examples of NST *dageš* after an open syllable morpheme-internally (see appendix B).

2.2.1.1 NST *dageš* after a closed syllable

T-S A13.20

וְאָרֶץ	(L שְׁמַיִם וְאָרֶץ Ps. 69:35 ‘and earth’)
חַיִּים	(L מִסְפָּר חַיִּים Ps. 69:29 ‘of the living’)
לָךְ*	(L יְרִוּשָׁלַיִם לָךְ Ps. 68:30 ‘for you (msg)’)
שֹׁעֵר מִתְהַלֵּךְ	(L שֹׁעֵר מִתְהַלֵּךְ Ps. 68:22 ‘he, who walks about’)
צִוָּה	(L נִפְתָּחֵלִי: צִוָּה Ps. 68:29 ‘he commanded’)
קִדְקֹדֶךָ	(L אֵיבֹי קִדְקֹדֶךָ Ps. 68:22 ‘scalp of’)
שֵׁי:	(L מְלָכֵימָּהּ שֵׁי: Ps. 68:30 ‘gift’)

2.2.1.2 NST *dageš* after an open syllable with disjunctive accent

T-S A13.20

וְיָצֵא	(L וְתִפְלְטֵנִי הַטָּהַר Ps. 71:2 ‘stretch out! (msg)’)
וְאֶחְוָה	(L וְאֶחְוָה וְאֶחְוָה Ps. 69:21 ‘and I hoped’)
יִסָּגוּ	(L יִסָּגוּ יִסָּגוּ Ps. 70:3 ‘they (mpl) will be turned’)
לְמָוֶת*	(L אֶדְוֶי לְמָוֶת Ps. 68:21 ‘from death’)
מֵאֵיבֹיִם	(L קְלָיִיךָ מֵאֵיבֹיִם Ps. 68:24 ‘from the enemies’)

⁵⁰ Blapp, 2017, pp. 149–151. For more details on the Babylonian vocalisation features, see Khan, 2017b.

2.2.1.3 NST *dageš* after an open syllable with conjunctive accent

T-S A13.20

- מֶלֶךְי (L אֱלֹהֵי מֶלֶךְי Ps. 68:25 ‘my king’)
- וְיִשְׁמְרֶנִּי (L וְיִשְׁמְרֶנִּי אֱלֹהֵי Ps. 71:6 ‘I braced’)

2.2.2 NST *dageš* in the first letter of a syllable after a closed syllable word-internally

This feature is attested on a larger number of letters in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts (see section 2.1.2), but it is not frequently attested in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript.

T-S A13.20

- תְּקוּוּתִי (L תְּקוּוּתִי Ps. 71:5 ‘my hope’)
- וְיִכְלַמְנִי* (L וְיִכְלַמְנִי Ps. 69:20 ‘my disgrace’)
- וְיִשְׂמְחוּ (L וְיִשְׂמְחוּ Ps. 69:33 ‘and they will be glad’)
- נִגְנְוּם (L נִגְנְוּם Ps. 68:26 ‘those, who play music’)

2.2.3 NST *dageš* in the first letter of a syllable after an open syllable word-internally

This feature occurs only sporadically in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts (see section 2.1.3), but it is very frequently attested in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript.

T-S A13.20

- הַלִּיכֹוּתֵיךָ (L הַלִּיכֹוּתֵיךָ Ps. 68:25 ‘your ways’)
- וְתִפְדֶּנִּי (L וְתִפְדֶּנִּי Ps. 71:2 ‘and you (msg) shall rescue me’)
- יִמְחֹץ (L יִמְחֹץ Ps. 68:22 ‘he will shatter’)
- עָנִי (L עָנִי Ps. 70:6 ‘poor (msg)’)
- מְבַקְשֵׁיךָ (L מְבַקְשֵׁיךָ Ps. 70:5 ‘those, who seek you (msg)’)
- אֲשִׁיב (L אֲשִׁיב מִבְּשׂוֹן אֲשִׁיב Ps. 68:23 ‘I will bring’)

2.2.4 NST *dageš* in the last letter of a word-final syllable

This feature occurs in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript only rarely, and then almost exclusively in the sonorants *lamed* and *mem*; this is also the case with the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts (see section 2.1.4).

T-S A13.20

- יִגְדֹל (L יִגְדֹל אֱלֹהֵים Ps. 70:5 ‘he shall be great’)
- כָּל* (L כָּל-צִוְרֵיךָ Ps. 69:20 ‘all of’)
- בְּדָם (L בְּדָם לְשׁוֹן Ps. 68:24 ‘in blood’)

3 Conclusions

The major difference in the use of NST *dageš* in the Tiberian-Palestinian and Tiberian-Babylonian manuscripts is within a word, since the latter marks it more frequently after open syllables within a word and only a few times after closed syllables within a word, whereas the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts attest NST *dageš* within a word mainly after closed syllables. The use of NST *dageš* in initial position is roughly the same in both groups, apart from the fact that the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript attests it once in a guttural letter. The use of NST *dageš* in word-final letters is similar in both groups, attested only rarely and then in the letters *lamed* and *mem*.

The major problem with the interpretation of NST *dageš* is that it is difficult to explain simply, since it occurs in many different contexts. While it is indeed difficult to interpret the findings above, they could all be interpreted as extensions of ST features. Thus, the marking of *dageš* after a closed syllable as well as after an open syllable with disjunctive accent in a non-*bgdkft* letter could indicate an extension of the use of so-called ST *dageš lene*. The use of NST *dageš* after an open syllable with non-final conjunctive accent could reflect an extension of *dəḥiq*. Based on recent scholarship, however, I believe that it is very likely that NST reflects a phonetic *dageš*, which can only be identified as *dageš forte*.⁵¹ There are three points which support this thesis. First, there is no evidence that the use of NST *dageš* suggests that a letter could be realised in two different ways (i.e. with and without *dageš*) as was the case for the *bgdkft* letters in the ST tradition.⁵² Second, the marking of NST *dageš* indicates a phonetic realisation, as all other pronunciation features of these manuscripts do.⁵³ And third, as Khan will show in a forthcoming publication, the *dageš* dot was always realised from at least the 11th century CE onwards with a doubling of the consonant, whether it was *dageš forte* or *dageš lene*.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Cf. Fassberg, 1987, p. 79 n. 14 on the scholarly discussion of whether *dageš euphonicum* reflects gemination or not. Note that the data supplied by Bergsträsser on this issue in his grammar (Bergsträsser, 1918, pp. 64–69 (§100–y)) are not exclusively from L or A, meaning that some of his examples do not reflect the ST tradition, e.g. Jer. 22:22 תִּרְעָה־רִיחַ (Bergsträsser, 1918, p. 66, §10s), as opposed to L and A תִּרְעָה־רִיחַ; and also Ps. 99:4 כּוֹנְנֹת מִיִּשְׁגָּרִים (Bergsträsser, 1918, p. 66, §10r), in contrast to L and A כּוֹנְנֹת מִיִּשְׁגָּרִים. It is, however, crucial to distinguish between the different stages of the development of manuscripts with Tiberian vocalisation, if the scope of our research concerns the ST tradition (Blapp, 2017, pp. 9–19; see also Blapp, forthcoming).

⁵² For instance, the letter *beth* was realised according to ST as /b/ when marked with *dageš* and as /v/ when no *dageš* was marked (in many cases, *rafe* was also added to indicate its fricative pronunciation as /v/).

⁵³ See Blapp, 2017, pp. 206–207. Note that the use of *rafe* also supports this theory. It is used in the same context as NST *dageš*, and thus they could indicate the different realisations of the phonemes (i.e. geminated and ungeminated). This reflects a purely phonetic transcription of the reading tradition of each scribe, and is supported by the inconsistent use of the vocalisation signs. None of the use of the diacritical signs is entirely in accordance with the ST tradition, though the phonetic transcription sometimes bears vestiges of this (Blapp, 2017, 206–207).

⁵⁴ Khan, forthcoming.

Due to the fact that NST *dageš* was always realised as *dageš forte* and also because the Tiberian Masoretic knowledge had been neglected or even lost after the death of the last Masorete in the late 10th century, there was no longer theoretical knowledge available of the different *dageš*, so that their distinctive pronunciations became detached from their original functions.⁵⁵ Consequently NST *dageš* could be used where gemination for the sake of emphasis of the syllable boundary was needed. The main reason for using NST *dageš* was thus to ensure the precise reading of the text according to each scribe's own pronunciation.⁵⁶ This thesis is supported by the evidence presented above, since most of the examples of NST *dageš* occur in the word-initial letter or after closed syllables word-internally. Further evidence for the individuality of each manuscript can be found in other features of the NST manuscripts, such as the use of the vowel signs.⁵⁷ Why the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript in particular marks NST *dageš* after open syllables word-internally remains a subject for further investigation.

On a different but no less important issue, I believe that we can no longer simply take the evidence from any manuscript with Tiberian vocalisation in order to do research on Tiberian biblical Hebrew, since the evidence might not represent the original standardised vocalisation system.⁵⁸ I believe, rather, that we must examine and distinguish between different manuscripts and the traditions they reflect in order to gain a more precise picture of the development of the Tiberian vocalisation tradition.⁵⁹

An important observation is that NST *dageš* throughout both classes and all the manuscripts is most frequently attested in the continuant sonorants *lamed*, *mem* and *nun*. It will be important to gather more data from NST as well as ST manuscripts in order to evaluate this observation in a more detailed way.

⁵⁵ The NST manuscripts are one of the main witnesses for the loss of the knowledge of the ST reading tradition. Additionally, we have increasing activities to preserve the ST reading tradition in the late 10th century and early 11th century CE, since the last Tiberian Masorete, Aharon ben-Asher, died in the late 10th century (see Ben-Hayyim, 2007, pp. 319–321). Late ST manuscripts like L already exhibit a number of non-standard features, which could reflect the fact that its scribe no longer had primary knowledge of the ST tradition nor access to entirely reliable sources, so that he had to consult Masoretic treatises and his own pronunciation (see Blapp, forthcoming).

⁵⁶ Khan, forthcoming.

⁵⁷ Blapp, 2017, pp. 206–207.

⁵⁸ Blapp, forthcoming. Neither Blake (Blake, 1943) nor Prätorius (Prätorius, 1883) distinguish between the different manuscripts. They often do not even indicate which manuscripts they are using. Israel Yeivin has remarked on the fact that there are different kinds of manuscript. However he still sometimes uses evidence from manuscripts with non-standard features in comparison to ST. Thus, for instance, he uses data from the Cairo Codex of the Prophets (e.g. Yeivin, 1980, pp. 286–287, §398) despite his conclusion that “In most of these ‘developed’ features, C shows relationship to the MSS of the ‘expanded’ Tiberian tradition, but in most features it resembles A” (Yeivin, 1980, p.20, §32). I believe that we have to be more cautious, and only use data from such manuscripts if we are comparing ST and NST data. We should not use this data as evidence for the ST tradition, since it reflects rather an intermediate stage between the ST and NST manuscripts.

⁵⁹ Blapp, forthcoming.

It is possible that the high frequency of NST *dageš* on these three letters relates purely to their general high frequency, as they might appear more frequently than other letters in an appropriate context. A further possibility is that NST *dageš* in these letters indicates that their pronunciation had to be reinforced in order to preserve their proper pronunciation. Note that in the Tiberian-Babylonian tradition, NST *dageš* in medial position occurs almost exclusively after these three letters. All manuscripts of the Tiberian-Palestinian class use *dageš* similarly to the manuscripts with Palestinian vocalisation, apart from the use of *dageš* on guttural letters.⁶⁰

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⁶⁰ Cf. Fassberg, 1987, p. 84.

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Appendices

A The use of NST in the Tiberian-Palestinian manuscripts⁶¹

		T-S A11.1	T-S 12.1	T-S A12.10a	T-S A13.18	T-S A13.35	Total
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ֿ		4		3	1	8
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ֿ		1				1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ט		7		1		8
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ט		2	1	1	1	5
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	י				1		1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ל	1	25	3	17	2	48
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ל	2	2			2	6
NST <i>dageš</i> in final	ל					1	1
NST <i>dageš</i> initial	מ		34	5	10	2	51
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	מ	3	7		1	8	19
NST <i>dageš</i> in final	מ		1			2	3
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	נ	2	7	5	6	4	24
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	נ		2			2	4
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ס		2		2		4
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ס		2		1		3
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	צ		5	1	6	1	13
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	צ		4	1			5
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ק		2		1	1	4
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ק		5		1		6
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ר	1	1				2
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	שׁ				1		1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	שׂ		3		7		10
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	שׂ		1		2	1	4
NST <i>dageš</i> for <i>rafe</i> in the <i>bgdkft</i> letters			9				9
NST <i>dageš</i> after originally closed syllable		4	18	1	5	12	40
NST <i>dageš</i> after secondarily closed syllable		1	1			2	4
NST <i>dageš</i> after two <i>šəwas</i> that merged			1	1			2
NST <i>dageš</i> after original vocalic <i>šəwa</i>			1				1
NST <i>dageš</i> after open syllable			2				2

⁶¹ Note that the manuscripts are of different sizes, and thus the amount of evidence (i.e. the number of possible deviating forms) increases with the size of the manuscript. For this paper, this difference is not the main issue, and thus I have not indicated the sizes of the manuscripts. For details, see Blapp, 2017, pp. 21–23.

B The use of NST in the Tiberian-Babylonian manuscript

		T-S A13.20
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ה	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ט	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after closed syllable	ט	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after open syllable	ט	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	י	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ל	12
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after closed syllable	ל	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after open syllable	ל	7
NST <i>dageš</i> in final	ל	7
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	מ	18
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after closed syllable	מ	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after open syllable	מ	12
NST <i>dageš</i> in final	מ	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	נ	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after closed syllable	נ	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after open syllable	נ	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position of the 1sg suffix of verbal forms	נ	3
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	א	2
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ק	3
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial position after open syllable	ק	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in initial	ש	1
NST <i>dageš</i> in medial	ש	3
NST <i>dageš</i> after originally closed syllable		6
NST <i>dageš</i> after secondary closed syllable		1
NST <i>dageš</i> after two <i>šawas</i> that merged		1
Medial NST <i>dageš</i> after medial open syllable		16+

The Ashkenazic Hebrew of Nathan Nata Hannover's *Yeven Meşula* (1653)

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1 Introduction¹

This study will investigate the main grammatical features of *Yeven Meşula* 'Miry Depths' or 'Abyss of Despair',² a 17th century Hebrew historical work describing the events of the Chmielnicki Uprising that swept the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1648–1649. *Yeven Meşula* was written by the prominent Ashkenazic preacher and kabbalist Nathan Nata Hannover. Hannover was born and raised in Volhynia, a region in Eastern Europe corresponding to parts of present-day Poland, Ukraine and Belarus, but was forced to flee his homeland during the Chmielnicki Uprising and spent the next few years as an itinerant preacher in Poland, Germany and Holland. He wrote his account of the Chmielnicki pogroms during this period, and published it upon arriving in Venice in 1653. He subsequently travelled to Prague, and then settled in Jassy (present-day Iaşi in eastern Romania), where he became the head of the yeshiva and president of the rabbinical court. He remained in Jassy for approximately ten years, before relocating to Ungarisch Brod in Romania (present-day Uherský Brod in the Czech Republic), where he was killed by raiding Turkish soldiers in 1689.³

During his lifetime Hannover published three other works in addition to *Yeven Meşula*: a homiletic sermon about the festival of Sukkot called *Ta'ame Sukka* (Amsterdam, 1652), a Hebrew-German-Latin-Italian phrasebook called *Safa Berura* (Prague, 1660) and a collection of prayers according to the Lurianic kabbalistic rite called *Sha'are Şiyyon* (Prague, 1662). He also wrote a collection of homiletical sermons on the Pentateuch which were never published. Hannover's published writings had a long-lasting impact on Ashkenazic Jewry: his prayer collection *Sha'are Şiyyon* enjoyed widespread popularity in Italy, Holland and Eastern Europe, and was reprinted in more than fifty

¹ I am very grateful to Nadia Vidro and Esther-Miriam Wagner for their numerous insightful comments on a draft of this article.

² A citation of Ps. 69:3.

³ See Halpern, 2007 for further details of Hannover's life.

editions over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. Likewise, *Safa Berura* was used among Jews for foreign language instruction until the 19th century.

Hannover's *Yeven Meşula* is a relatively short work of 20 pages that provides an account of the 1648–1649 mass uprising of Ukrainian and Cossack peasants under the leadership of the Ukrainian Bogdan Chmielnicki against Polish rule in Ukraine. The uprising resulted in the destruction of many Ukrainian and Polish Jewish communities and the deaths of at least an estimated 18,000–20,000 Jews.⁴ Hannover's work includes chronicles of the massacres that took place against the Jews in various places over the course of the two-year period between 1648 and 1649 in various locations throughout present-day Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania, such as Tulczyn, Zamość and Lwów/Lviv, as well as an account of the life of the Jews of the Kingdom of Poland. The work contains little information about Hannover's personal experiences during the pogroms, although he did witness some of the events, but rather is based on eyewitness accounts and information gathered from others, both orally and from printed sources.⁵

Yeven Meşula is a unique and ground-breaking piece of early modern Jewish historical writing,⁶ and has played a hugely influential role in Ashkenazic society and culture since its publication. The traumatic events of the Chmielnicki Uprising came to assume a central position in the Ashkenazic historical consciousness,⁷ and Hannover's work dominated this consciousness well into the 20th century.⁸ It was reissued in its Hebrew and Yiddish versions in nearly every generation,⁹ and was also translated into a number of other languages, including French, German, Russian, Polish and English.¹⁰ The fact that *Yeven Meşula* was the only source of information on the events of 1648–1649 told from a Jewish perspective and accessible to readers without knowledge of Hebrew contributed to its authoritative status.¹¹ Hannover's text was also accepted as a reliable account of the pogroms by pioneering modern Jewish historians such as Heinrich Graetz and Simon Dubnow,¹² and it remains an important historical source today, though it is no longer treated uncritically.

Despite the prominent position which *Yeven Meşula* has occupied in Central and Eastern European Jewish society and the importance which historians have accorded it as a key witness to the Chmielnicki Uprising, it has never been the subject of linguistic analysis. Given its status as a unique and influ-

⁴ Stampfer, 2003, p. 221.

⁵ Halpern, 2007, p. 327.

⁶ Bartal, 2005, p. 7.

⁷ Stampfer, 2003; Ettinger, 2007; Stampfer, 2010.

⁸ Bacon, 2003, pp. 182–186.

⁹ Halpern, 2007, p. 327.

¹⁰ This study is based on the first edition of *Yeven Meşula* (Hannover, 1653).

¹¹ Bacon, 2003, p. 184.

¹² Bacon, 2003, p. 183.

ential piece of early modern Ashkenazic Hebrew historical writing, examination of the grammatical composition of this text can shed valuable light on the 17th century Eastern European narrative and discursive use of the language. From a diachronic perspective, it can be instructive to analyse the influences of earlier strata of Hebrew on Hannover's narrative and ascertain the extent to which it resembles the biblical, rabbinic and medieval forms of the language. It is also important to establish the relationship between Hannover's 17th century historical writing and other forms of Central and Eastern European Hebrew which have been analysed, namely 19th century Maskilic Hebrew, Hasidic Hebrew and the language of the *Kišur Shulhan* 'Aruk,¹³ as well as early modern and modern responsa literature.¹⁴ Comparison of Hannover's writing with these other Central and Eastern European types of Hebrew is particularly important as it can help to ascertain the extent to which all of these authors were drawing on a shared Ashkenazic linguistic heritage which has not been adequately mapped. Moreover, in certain cases parallels can be observed between *Yeven Meşula* and more distant Diaspora Jewish linguistic varieties such as medieval Ashkenazic writings, the Hebrew of Judaeo-Spanish speakers and Judaeo-Arabic, which can tentatively point towards possible broader trends. The present study thus seeks to provide an analysis of the characteristic orthographic, morphosyntactic and syntactic features of Hannover's seminal narrative work and to place it within its diachronic context. Due to space constraints this study cannot provide an exhaustive survey of the linguistic features of *Yeven Meşula*, but will give an overview of a number of representative features.¹⁵ It is hoped that this analysis will lead to a clearer understanding of the composition and chronological spread of Ashkenazic Hebrew and its relationship to other Diaspora forms of the language.

2 Orthography

The orthography in the first edition of *Yeven Meşula* is largely consistent with that of canonical forms of Hebrew, with a tendency to employ *plene* spelling in accordance with the post-biblical standard. The main area in which the spelling in *Yeven Meşula* differs from that of earlier convention is in the widespread tendency to employ *yod* following *şere* in singular nouns with a 1cpl or 3msg possessive suffix, as illustrated in (1)–(3). This orthographic practice is likely rooted in the fact that in Ashkenazic Hebrew pronunciation, the vowel *şere* and the combination *şere* plus *yod* in stressed open syllables are both pronounced identically (generally as the diphthong [ej] or [aj]). The use of *yod*

¹³ Kahn, 2009; Kahn, 2012b; Kahn, 2015; Kahn, in press.

¹⁴ Betzer, 2001.

¹⁵ Comparison of Hannover's narrative work with his non-narrative writings is likewise beyond the scope of the present examination.

in these contexts suggests that the author's own pronunciation had more impact on his orthography than the canonical written texts. The same phenomenon is widely attested in 19th century Hasidic Hebrew narrative, for the same reasons.¹⁶ The practice in both Eastern European forms of Hebrew may have been reinforced by the fact that some individual forms with non-standard *yod* are occasionally attested in medieval literature (for example, the form עמינו 'amenu¹⁷ 'our people' shown in (1) below appears several times in the writing of the prominent 15th century biblical commentator Isaac Abarbanel).

- (1) עמינו
'amenu
'our people'¹⁸
- (2) מחניהו
maḥanehu
'his camp'¹⁹
- (3) אדונינו המלך
'adonenu ham-melek
'our lord the king'²⁰

3 Nominal morphosyntax

3.1 Definite article with inseparable prepositions

A common feature of *Yeven Meşula* is the retention of the definite article following the inseparable preposition ל־ *la-* 'to, for', as shown in (4)–(7). This type of construction contrasts with the standard in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew, where elision of the definite article following a prefixed preposition is the norm; cf. Biblical Hebrew הָעִיר *ha'ir* 'the town'²¹ vs לְעִיר *la'ir* 'to the town',²² and Mishnaic Hebrew הַבַּיִת *hab-bayit* 'the house'²³ vs לַבַּיִת *lab-bayit* 'to the house'.²⁴ In Biblical Hebrew there are only rare exceptions to this rule,²⁵ and the same is true of Rabbinic Hebrew.²⁶ However the phenomenon

¹⁶ See Kahn, 2015, pp. 20–22.

¹⁷ The transcription system used in this study follows the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics* standard for post-biblical Hebrew; see Khan et al., 2013.

¹⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

¹⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 15.

²⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

²¹ Gen. 19:4.

²² 1 Sam. 9:12.

²³ Mishnah *Ohalot* 3:2.

²⁴ Mishnah *Nega'im* 13:3.

²⁵ Joüon and Muraoka, 2009, p. 104.

²⁶ Betzer, 2001, p. 86.

is a characteristic feature of prominent varieties of 19th century Eastern European Hebrew texts composed by Hasidic and Maskilic authors as well as Shlomo Ganzfried's popular work of practical halachah (Jewish law), the *Kišur Shulḥan 'Aruḳ*,²⁷ and is also attested in early modern and modern Ashkenazic and Sephardic responsa literature.²⁸ The fact that the same phenomenon is commonly attested both in Hannover's work and in these other varieties suggests that all of these Eastern European authors may have been drawing on a common Ashkenazic Hebrew legacy, which may in turn have had links to other forms of Diaspora Hebrew. This point will be discussed further throughout this study.

- (4) להכומרִי
lə-hak-komərim
 'to the priests'²⁹
- (5) להדוכסים
lə-had-dukkasim
 'the dukes'³⁰
- (6) להשר
lə-hasś-śar
 'to the lord'³¹
- (7) להיונים
lə-hay-yəwanim
 'the Ukrainians'^{32, 33}

3.2 Indefinite article

While Hebrew lacks a true indefinite article, Hannover regularly employs the numeral אחד *eḥad* 'one' in this sense, with the meaning of 'a' or 'a certain', as in (8)–(11). While this use of the numeral has occasional precedent in Biblical Hebrew and other historical varieties of the language,³⁴ these writings are unlikely to be the sole or chief source for Hannover as he utilises it much more systematically. Rather, any influence from earlier Hebrew texts is likely to

²⁷ Kahn, in press.

²⁸ Betzer, 2001, p. 86.

²⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

³⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

³¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

³² Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

³³ The Hebrew word יונים *yəwanim* literally means 'Greeks', but Hannover uses it as a label for 'Ukrainians'. This is a metonym based on the Ukrainians' Greek Orthodox faith; see Plokhy, 2015, p. 99.

³⁴ Rubin, 2013b.

have received synchronic reinforcement from Hannover's native Yiddish, which has a true indefinite article.³⁵ As in the case of the definite article with prefixed prepositions discussed in section 3.1, the use of אַהד *'eḥad* 'one' as an indefinite article is also a prominent feature of 19th century Eastern European varieties of Hebrew.³⁶ Moreover, the existence of a similar use of the numeral 'one' is attested in medieval and later Judaeo-Arabic,³⁷ which may suggest that there is a more widespread trend towards such a development in Semitic languages generally regardless of influence from a spoken substratum.

- (8) וּשְׁם הָיָה מוֹשֵׁל וּפְקִיד עַל הָעִיר הַנִּזְכָּר וְשֵׁם זָכְרֵיָהּ
wə-šam haya mošel u-pāqid 'al ha- 'ir hana"l yəhudi 'eḥad u-šmo
zəḳarya
 'and there was a governor and officer over the above-mentioned city, a certain Jew named Zechariah'³⁸
- (9) וְהָיָה בְּנֵיהֶם חֶזֶן אֶ' וְשֵׁם ר' הִירֶשׁ
wə-haya benehem ḥazzan 'eḥad u-šmo reb hirš
 'and among them there was a certain cantor whose name was Reb Hirsh'⁴⁰
- (10) וְהִתְאַרְחָה אֶצֶל בַּעַל הַבַּיִת אַהֲד כַּמָּה יָמִים
wə-hit 'areah 'ešel ba 'al hab-bayit 'eḥad kama yamim
 'and he stayed with a certain home owner for a number of days'⁴²
- (11) לָקְחוּ עֲשִׂיר אַהֲד לְבֵיתוֹ
laḳḥu 'asir 'eḥad lə-beto
 'they took a rich man to his house'⁴³

3.3 Definiteness discord in noun-adjective phrases

Hannover's writing typically exhibits definiteness concord between a noun and its associated adjective. However, in a significant minority of cases the noun takes the definite article but the associated attributive adjective does not,

³⁵ Jacobs, 2005, p. 174.

³⁶ Kahn, in press.

³⁷ Blau, 1980, p. 165; Wagner, 2010, p. 191.

³⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

³⁹ *Sic*; = בנייה'.

⁴⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

⁴¹ Note the use of a definite construct chain as an indefinite noun. This is attributable to the fact that the phrase בעל הבית *ba 'al hab-bayit* exists in Yiddish as an indefinite noun. The same phenomenon is widely attested in 19th century Hasidic Hebrew; see Kahn, 2015, pp. 62–63 for details. Similar constructions are also found in medieval Judaeo-Arabic; see Blau, 1980, p. 156.

⁴² Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

⁴³ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

as in (12)–(16). This phenomenon has occasional precedent in Biblical Hebrew,⁴⁴ and appears more frequently in rabbinic literature.⁴⁵ It is also a widespread feature of responsa literature⁴⁶ and of 19th century Hasidic Hebrew.⁴⁷ Hannover seems to have tended to employ it when the noun and adjective comprise a common collocation, as in (13) and (14), and therefore may have subconsciously regarded the phrase as a single unit.

- (12) האשה חדשה אשר לקח
ha- 'iša ḥadaša 'ašer laqah
 'the new wife whom he had taken'⁴⁸
- (13) הגזרה רעה
hag-gəzera ra 'a
 'the evil decree'⁴⁹
- (14) הבשורה רעה
hab-bəšora ra 'a
 'the evil tidings'⁵⁰
- (15) והנשים יפות לקחו לשפחו'
wə-han-našim yaḗot laqḥu li-špāhot
 'and they took the beautiful women as servant girls'⁵¹
- (16) החיל גדול של קאזקין
haḥayil gadol šel qozaqin
 'the great army of Cossacks'⁵²

3.4 Non-standard definiteness of construct chains

Hannover frequently forms definite construct chains by prefixing the definite article to the construct noun, as in (17)–(19). This differs from the biblical standard, in which the definite article in construct chains is prefixed to the absolute noun;⁵³ this same convention has remained the norm in Mishnaic and

⁴⁴ Waltke and O'Connor, 1990, p. 260; Williams, 2007, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Sarfatti, 1989, pp. 161–165; Pérez Fernández, 1999, pp. 26–27; Pat-El, 2009, pp. 35–36; Rubin, 2013a.

⁴⁶ Betzer, 2001, p. 90.

⁴⁷ Kahn, 2015, pp. 87–88.

⁴⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

⁴⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

⁵¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

⁵² Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

⁵³ Williams, 2007, p. 8.

later varieties of Hebrew. However, Hannover's usage has precedent in medieval and early modern responsa literature.⁵⁴ Moreover, as in many of the other phenomena discussed in this study, it has a parallel in 19th century Eastern European forms of Hebrew.⁵⁵ It is likely that the non-standard construction in all of these forms of Hebrew is attributable to influence from Yiddish, in which many of the construct chains in question exist independently as set phrases and which are made definite by placing the definite article at the beginning of the phrase.⁵⁶ The same type of construction is also attested in the Hebrew writing of Judaeo-Spanish speakers.⁵⁷ Because Judaeo-Spanish makes noun phrases definite by placing a definite article at the beginning of the phrase, as in Yiddish, the similarity between Hannover's writing and that of the Judaeo-Spanish speakers suggests that in both cases the syntactic structures of the authors' vernaculars had an influential role in the development of their Hebrew.⁵⁸

- (17) האנשי מקומות
ha- 'anše məqomot
 'the people of the places'⁵⁹
 (cf. standard Hebrew אנשי המקומות *'anše ham-məqomot*)
- (18) הגבורי חיל
hag-gibbore ḥayil
 'the warriors'⁶⁰
 (cf. standard Hebrew גבורי החיל *gibbore ha-ḥayil*)
- (19) הראש ישיבה
ha-roš yəšīḇa
 'the head of the yeshiva'⁶¹
 (cf. standard Hebrew ראש הישיבה *roš hay-yəšīḇa*)

This phenomenon extends to definite construct chains with a numeral: according to the standard Hebrew convention, the definite article in such constructions is prefixed to the absolute noun, but Hannover often prefixes it to the numeral, as in (20). This type of construction is also attested in medieval and

⁵⁴ Betzer, 2001, p. 91.

⁵⁵ Kahn, in press.

⁵⁶ See Kahn, 2015, pp. 60–61 and Kahn, in press for further details.

⁵⁷ Bunis, 2013, pp. 50*–51*.

⁵⁸ Note that a similar phenomenon is occasionally attested in medieval Judaeo-Arabic (see Blau, 1980, p. 157) but this seems to be much more restricted than that found in the Hebrew of Yiddish and Judaeo-Spanish speakers.

⁵⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

⁶¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 18.

later Judaeo-Arabic,⁶² which hints at the possibility of a more widespread internal Semitic developmental pattern requiring further investigation.

- (20) השני שרי צבא
hašəne šare šaḇa
'the two army commanders'⁶³
(cf. standard Hebrew שני שרי הצבא *šəne šare haš-šaḇa*)

It also extends to construct chains whose second member is a proper noun that would not be expected to take the definite article in any type of Hebrew. This particular usage, which is shown in (21)–(23), does not seem to have a clearly documented precedent in earlier or later forms of the language. Further research is required in order to ascertain whether it is attested in other varieties of Ashkenazic Hebrew.

- (21) בכל המקומו' רוסי"א
bə-kol ham-məqomot rusya
'in all the places of Russia'⁶⁴
(cf. standard Hebrew בכל מקומות רוסי"א *bə-kol məqomot rusya*)
- (22) המלך פולין
ham-meleḵ polin
'the king of Poland'⁶⁵
(cf. standard Hebrew מלך פולין *meleḵ polin*)
- (23) בת המלך צרפת
bat ham-meleḵ šarḫat
'the daughter of the king of France'⁶⁶
(cf. standard Hebrew בת מלך צרפת *bat meleḵ šarḫat*)

In addition, Hannover sometimes makes construct chains definite by prefixing the definite article to both the absolute noun and the construct noun, as in (24)–(27). This convention lacks precedent in the canonical forms of Hebrew, but is attested in the writing of the prominent 11th century commentator Rashi⁶⁷ as well as in responsa literature.⁶⁸ It is also a common feature of 19th century

⁶² Blau, 1980, p. 167; Wagner, 2010, pp. 206–210.

⁶³ Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 17.

⁶⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Betzer, 2001, p. 108.

⁶⁸ Betzer, 2001, p. 91–92.

Eastern European Hebrew,⁶⁹ and in the writing of Ashkenazic Jerusalem community leader Joseph Rivlin.⁷⁰ Taken together with the phenomena discussed previously in this study, this similarity may suggest that all of these Ashkenazic Hebrew authors were drawing on a shared linguistic heritage.

- (24) השר הצבא
haś-śar haṣ-ṣaba
 ‘the army commander’⁷¹
 (cf. standard Hebrew שר הצבא *śar haṣ-ṣaba*)
- (25) על המפתן הבית
‘al ham-miṭtan hab-bayit
 ‘on the threshold of the house’⁷²
 (cf. standard Hebrew על מפתן הבית *‘al miṭtan hab-bayit*)
- (26) השר העיר
haś-śar ha-‘ir
 ‘the city commander’⁷³
 (cf. standard Hebrew שר העיר *śar ha-‘ir*)
- (27) הבעל הבית
hab-ba ‘al hab-bayit
 ‘the house owner’⁷⁴
 (cf. standard Hebrew בעל הבית *ba ‘al hab-bayit*)

3.5 Use of masculine plural ending in *nun*

Hannover typically follows the biblical standard by employing the masculine plural noun ending ים *-im* on nouns and *qoṭel* forms. However, he sometimes opts for the variant ין *-in*, which is typical of Rabbinic Hebrew. The rabbinic variant is particularly common with *qoṭel* forms. This is illustrated in (28)–(31). Like many other aspects of Hannover’s writing, his fluctuation between the *mem* and *nun* endings has a direct parallel in 19th century Maskilic and Hasidic Hebrew.⁷⁵ As in the other cases discussed in this study, this close resemblance between these various forms of Eastern European Hebrew points to the existence of a shared underlying variety of the language spanning several centuries.

⁶⁹ Kahn, 2015, pp. 62–65; Kahn, in press.

⁷⁰ Wertheimer, 1975, pp. 159–160.

⁷¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 15.

⁷² Hannover, 1653, p. 7.

⁷³ Hannover, 1653, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 18.

⁷⁵ Kahn, 2012b, p. 185.

- (28) צדדין
ṣədadin
 ‘sides’⁷⁶
- (29) שולחין
šoləhin
 ‘they send’⁷⁷
- (30) הולכין
holəhin
 ‘they go’⁷⁸
- (31) שותין
šotin
 ‘they drink’⁷⁹

The use of the *nun* ending instead of the more frequently attested *mem* variant is not systematic. In some cases Hannover employs both endings on the same form within close proximity to each other, as in (32) and (33), which contain a *nun* and a *mem* respectively and are only five lines apart from each other in the text. This type of fluctuation between the *mem* and *nun* endings is also attested in medieval Ashkenazic copies of Hebrew manuscripts (e.g. the 14th century halachic code *Arba ’ah Turim*),⁸⁰ which suggests a much earlier origin for the phenomenon.

- (32) והם היו פטורין מן מס המלך
wə-hem hayu pəturin min mas ham-melek
 ‘and they were exempt from the king’s tax’⁸¹
- (33) ולכן היו פטורים מן המס
wə-laken hayu pəturim min ham-mas
 ‘and therefore they were exempt from the tax’⁸²

The *nun* variant is particularly commonly attested on periphrastic verbs (see section 4.4), possibly because such verbs are a typical feature of Rabbinic Hebrew, and commonly appear with a *nun* ending in that form of the language. This is illustrated in (34) and (35):

⁷⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 12.

⁸⁰ N. Vidro, personal communication.

⁸¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

⁸² Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

- (34) ואם היו רוצים לילך לדרכם היו נותנין להם צדה לדרך
*wə-’im hayu rošim lelek lə-darkam hayu notānin lahem šeda
lad-derek*
‘and if they wanted to go on their way, they would give them provisions
for the road’⁸³
- (35) והמחנה עם פולין לא היו יודעין מה השמחה הזאת
wə-ham-maḥane ‘am polin lo hayu yod’in ma haš-šimḥa haz-zot
‘and the Polish camp did not know what this rejoicing was for’⁸⁴

However this is likewise inconsistent, so that periphrastic verbs are not uncommonly attested with the *mem* ending, as in (36) and (37):

- (36) בכל המקומו אשר היו מגיעים שמה
bə-ḵol ham-məqomot ‘ašer hayu maggi’im šamma
‘in all the places that they reached’⁸⁵
- (37) והם היו יושבים בטח
wə-hem hayu yošəḥim beṭaḥ
‘and they dwelled in safety’⁸⁶

3.6 Long form numerals with feminine nouns

Hannover’s writing exhibits a blurring of the gender distinction between long and short form numerals, whereby he frequently employs long form numerals in conjunction with feminine nouns; see examples (38)–(42). This differs from the standard convention in the canonical forms of Hebrew, which exhibit gender polarity with numerals (with the long forms employed in conjunction with masculine nouns, and the short forms employed in conjunction with feminine nouns). Like many of the other phenomena discussed in this study, this has a parallel in later Eastern European Hebrew writing.⁸⁷ It may be ascribable to influence from the Yiddish vernacular, which has only one set of numerals that is used with nouns of all genders.⁸⁸ As in several other cases discussed in this study, the same usage is also found further afield in Judaeo-Arabic,⁸⁹ perhaps suggesting a more widespread tendency to shift away from gender polarity in Semitic languages.

⁸³ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

⁸⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

⁸⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Wertheimer, 1975, p. 157; Kahn, 2015, pp. 137–139; Kahn, in press.

⁸⁸ Katz, 1987, pp. 201–203.

⁸⁹ Wagner, 2010, pp. 191–206.

- (38) ששה מאוי גבורי חיל
šišša me 'ot gibbore ḥayil
 ‘six hundred warriors’⁹⁰
 (cf. standard Hebrew שש מאות גבורי חיל *šeš me 'ot gibbore ḥayil*)
- (39) ושני בנותיו
u-šne bənotaw
 ‘and his two daughters’⁹¹
 (cf. standard Hebrew ושתי בנותיו *u-šte bənotaw*)
- (40) שלשה שורות סוסים
šaloša šurot susim
 ‘three rows of horses’⁹²
 (cf. standard Hebrew שלש שורות סוסים *šaloš šurot susim*)
- (41) חמשה מאות אלף איש
ḥamišša me 'ot 'elep 'iš
 ‘five hundred thousand men’⁹³
 (cf. standard Hebrew חמש מאות אלף איש *ḥameš me 'ot 'elep 'iš*)
- (42) יותר משבעה מאות קהילות
yoter miš-šib 'a me 'ot qəhillot
 ‘more than seven hundred communities’⁹⁴
 (cf. standard Hebrew יותר משבע מאות קהילות *yoter miš-šeba 'šəba ' me 'ot qəhillot*)

3.7 Avoidance of the dual

The canonical varieties of Hebrew have a dual form of nouns used with paired body parts, time words and numerals; for example, יומי(ים) *yomayim* ‘two days’, חודשי(ים) *ḥodšayim* ‘two months’ and אלפי(ים) *alpayim* ‘two thousand’. Hannover typically avoids the dual with reference to time words and numerals, instead using the numeral שני/שתי *šəne/šte* ‘two’ in conjunction with a plural noun, as in (43)–(46). This practice can likewise be seen in 19th century Eastern European Hebrew.⁹⁵ As in the case of the later writings, it is likely that Hannover’s avoidance of the dual is attributable to the fact that his Yiddish vernacular lacked such a form, instead using the plural in conjunction with the numeral ‘two’. Moreover, as in several instances discussed above, the

⁹⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 6.

⁹¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 7.

⁹² Hannover, 1653, p. 9.

⁹³ Hannover, 1653, p. 10.

⁹⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

⁹⁵ Kahn, 2015, pp. 51–53; Kahn, in press.

same phenomenon is also attested in Judaeo-Arabic⁹⁶, where there is no clear influence from a substratum lacking the construction; this may hint at a more widespread developmental pattern common to certain Semitic languages.

- (43) כשני אלפי יהודי
ki-šne 'alapim yaħudim
 ‘about two thousand Jews’⁹⁷
 (cf. standard Hebrew כאלפי(ים) יהודים *kə-’alpayim yaħudim*)
- (44) ובשתי שעות ביום
u-bi-šte ša ‘ot bay-yom
 ‘and for two hours a day’⁹⁸
 (cf. standard Hebrew ובשעתי(ים) ביום *u-bi-š ‘atayim bay-yom*)
- (45) שני ימים
šəne yamim
 ‘two days’⁹⁹
 (cf. standard Hebrew יומי(ים) *yomayim*)
- (46) שני חדשים
šəne ħodašim
 ‘two months’¹⁰⁰
 (cf. standard Hebrew חדשי(ים) *ħodšayim*)

There is only one example of a dual numeral in *Yeven Mešula*, shown in (47). Note that this same phrase appears a few pages later in the more common plural construction, as shown in (48).

- (47) מאתים אלף זהובים
matayim 'elep zəħubim
 ‘two hundred thousand gold pieces’¹⁰¹
- (48) שני מאות אלף זהובים
šəne me ‘ot 'elep zəħubim
 ‘two hundred thousand gold pieces’¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Blau, 1980, p. 99.

⁹⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 6.

⁹⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 9.

⁹⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

¹⁰⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 12.

¹⁰² Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

4 Verbal morphosyntax

4.1 Use of *wayyiqtol*

Hannover very commonly constructs past narrative sequences by means of the quintessentially biblical *wayyiqtol* form, as in (49)–(51). In this respect his writing resembles that of later Maskilic and Hasidic narrative literature, which likewise is replete with *wayyiqtol* forms.¹⁰³ Hannover’s use of this form, like that of the later Hasidic and Maskilic writers, is likely rooted in a desire to evoke in his readers echoes of the venerable biblical narrative tradition, thereby lending his writing an air of authority and significance.¹⁰⁴ However Hannover employs the *wayyiqtol* more systematically than his 19th century counterparts: while the Maskilic and Hasidic authors often round off a sequence of *qatal* forms with a single *wayyiqtol*, which serves almost as a decorative flourish rather than an essential element of the verbal system, Hannover tends to employ it much more regularly. This suggests that he may have been more at ease with the function of the *wayyiqtol* than the later authors were. Further research is required in order to ascertain whether other 17th century authors share this comparative familiarity with the biblical narrative preterite form. (Note, however, that Hannover does not employ the *wayyiqtol* exclusively in his presentation of past narrative, but rather alternates it with the *qatal*; this will be discussed in section 4.2.)

- (49) וישיבו לו יהיה כדבריך וילך חמיל י"מש עם כל חילו אל מלך הקדרי
way-yašību lo yihye ki-dḥareka way-yeleḵ ḥmil yimaḥ šəmo 'im kol
ḥelo 'el meleḵ haq-qədarim
‘and they answered him, “may it be as you say”, and Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – went with his whole army to the king of the Tatars’¹⁰⁵
- (50) ויכתירו לפאולוק שם ויעשו לו כסא של ברזל והושיבו עליו ויעש הסרדיוט כתר של ברזל בראשו
way-yaktiru lə-pawluq šam way-ya'asū lo kisse šel barzel wə-hošību
'alaw way-ya'as has-sardioṭ keter šel barzel bə-rošo
‘and they crowned Pawliuk king there and made an iron throne for him and set him upon it and the army officer put an iron crown on his head’¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Kahn, 2009, pp. 241–243; Kahn, 2012b, pp. 181–183; Kahn, 2015, pp. 172–174.

¹⁰⁴ See Kahn, 2012a for further discussion of this suggestion.

¹⁰⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

- (51) ויקומו וינוסו כולם ויעזבו את אהליהם את סוסייהם ואת חמוריהם וישליכו על הדרך
כסף וזהב

*way-yaqumu way-yanusu kulam way-ya'azbu 'et 'ohalehem 'et
susehem wə-'et ḥamorehem way-yašliḳu 'al had-dereḳ keseḅ
wə-zahaḅ*

‘and they all arose and fled, and they abandoned their tents, their horses,
and their donkeys, and they threw silver and gold on the road’¹⁰⁷

In some cases, Hannover’s *wayyiqtol* sequences may be introduced by the characteristically biblical construction *wayehi*, as in (52), which begins with *wayehi* and contains a sequence of another two *wayyiqtol*s.

- (52) ויהי כשמוע הדוכסי' והשרים ויטב בעיניהם הדבר וימליכו עליהם למלך את קאזימר
ירה בן שני של המלך זיגמונד

*wa-yhi kišmoa ' had-dukkasim wə-ḥaś-šarim way-yiṭaḅ bə-'enehem
had-daḅar way-yamliḳu 'alehem lə-meleḳ 'et qazimer yarum hodo
ben šeni šel ham-meleḳ zigmund*

‘and when the dukes and the lords heard, the matter was good in their
eyes, and they made His Majesty Casimir the second son of King
Sigmund, king over them’¹⁰⁸

4.2 Use of *qaṭal* in narrative sequences

While Hannover typically employs the *wayyiqtol* in past narrative sequences, he occasionally employs *qaṭal* forms in such cases, as in (53)–(55). This type of sequence is ultimately traceable to Rabbinic Hebrew.¹⁰⁹ Like many other features of Hannover’s writing, this fusion of biblical and rabbinic past narrative verbal structures is also a standard feature of 19th century Maskilic and Hasidic Hebrew.¹¹⁰ This practice of drawing on both the biblical and rabbinic methods of conveying past narrative in the same text may be a function of the author’s desire to adhere to the biblical historical narrative convention while simultaneously harbouring an intimate knowledge of the rabbinic model as well; this is likely to have been compounded by the fact that Hannover’s native Yiddish lacks a construction like the *wayyiqtol*, rendering the rabbinic use of the *qaṭal* in past narrative intuitively more familiar.

¹⁰⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ Pérez Fernández, 1999, pp. 115–116.

¹¹⁰ Kahn, 2009, pp. 87–89 and Kahn, 2015, p. 146 respectively.

- (53) וכן עשה אסף כל חילו רכבו ופרשיו והלך עם אשתו אל מקומות שיש לו אחורי הנהר
ניפ"ור
wə-ken 'aša 'asaḅ kol ḥelo riḳbo u-ḅarašaw wə-halak 'im 'išto 'el maqomot šey-yeš lo 'aḥore han-nahar niper
'and thus he did; he gathered all his forces, his chariots and his horsemen, and he went with his wife to the places that he had behind the river Dnieper'¹¹¹
- (54) ומשם נסעו לק"ק סטאריי"דוב והרגו ביהודי' הרג רב
u-miš-šam nas 'u lə-qəhilla qədoša staridub wə-hargu bay-yəhudim hereg rab
'and from there they travelled to the holy community of Starodub and killed many Jews'¹¹²
- (55) חתרו חתירה תחת העיר והכניסו הפוחזים בעיר בלילה והתחילו להרוג בעם
ḥatru ḥatira taḥat ha- 'ir wə-hiḳnisu hap-poḥazim ba- 'ir bal-layla wə-hiḥilu la-harog ba- 'am
'they tunnelled under the city and let the scoundrels into the city at night, and they started to kill the people'¹¹³

In many cases, Hannover's *qaṭal* forms are preceded or followed by a *way-yiqtol*, as in (56) and (57) respectively.

- (56) ויערוך המלך מערכה גדולה ותקע אהלו בבית הכומרים
way-ya 'arok ham-meleḳ ma 'araka gədola wə-taqa ' 'ohalo bə-ḅet hak-komarim
'and the king waged a large battle, and pitched his tent in the priest's house'¹¹⁴
- (57) והיהודי הנ"ל ישב בשלחן אחר והשב השבנותיו ושמע הדבר וגילה הדבר להשר וישם השר לחמיל י"מש בבית האסורים
wə-ha-yəhudi hana"l yašab bə-šulḥan 'aḥer wə-ḥašab ḥešbonotaw wə-šama ' had-daḅar wə-gila had-daḅar lə-ḥaš-šar way-yašem ḥaš-šar lə-ḥmil yimaḥ šəmo bə-ḅet ha- 'asurim
'and the above-mentioned Jew sat at another table and made his calculations, and heard the matter and revealed the matter to the minister, and the minister put Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – in prison'¹¹⁵

Hannover also frequently initiates past narrative sequences with the typically biblical temporal construction *wayehi* plus a prefixed infinitive construct, and

¹¹¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

¹¹² Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

¹¹³ Hannover, 1653, p. 12.

¹¹⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

then continues them with *qaṭal* forms, as in (58)–(60). This contrasts with Biblical Hebrew, in which *wayehi* is followed by *wayyiqṭols*.¹¹⁶ As in many other cases discussed in this study, this fusion of biblical and rabbinic usages has a direct parallel in 19th century Hasidic Hebrew.¹¹⁷

- (58) ויהי כשמוע הצורר המי"ל י"מש עשה תחבולה ושלה ספרים אל השר הצבא
wa-yhi ki-šmoa ' has-šorer ḥmil yimah šəmo 'aša taḥbula wə-šalah
səp̄arim 'el haš-šar haš-šaba
 'and when the enemy Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out –
 heard, he concocted a plot, and sent letters to the army commander'¹¹⁸
- (59) ויהי כשמוע אנשי העיר הדבר הזה הקדימו נעשה לנשמע
wa-yhi ki-šmoa ' anše ha- 'ir had-dabar haz-ze hiqdimu na 'aše
lan-nišma '
 'and when they heard this matter, they acted quickly'¹¹⁹
- (60) ויהי אחר הדברים האלה חזרו הקדרים והיונים לביתם
wa-yhi 'aḥar had-dəḅarim ha- 'elle ḥazru haq-qədarim
wə-hay-yəwanim lə-ḅetam
 'and after these things, the Tatars and Ukrainians went home'¹²⁰

Only rarely is a new narrative sequence introduced by a *qaṭal* of the root ה.י.ה. *h.y.h.* instead of *wayehi*:

- (61) והיה בתוכם איש אחד חכם ונבון
wə-haya bə-toḱam 'iš 'eḥad ḥaḱam wə-nabon
 'and there was a clever and wise man among them'¹²¹

Often Hannover alternates between the *wayyiqṭol* and the *qaṭal* seemingly interchangeably in the same sequence, as illustrated in the following example:

- (62) ונסעו משם ויצורו על ק"ק זאלקווי"א ובקשו לגשת אל החומה להעמיד סולמות
 וישפכו עליהם מים רותחין מן החומה וינוסו הפוחזים מפניהם
wə-nas 'u miš-šam way-yašuru 'al qəhilla qədoša zolqiewa u-ḥiqqəšu
lag-gešet 'el ha-ḥoma lə-ha 'amid sulamot way-yiṣpəḱu 'alehem
mayim roṭḥin min ha-ḥoma way-yanusu hap-poḥazim mip-pənehem
 'and they travelled from there and besieged the city of Żółkiew, and
 they tried to approach the wall in order to put up ladders, and they
 poured boiling water on them from the walls and the scoundrels fled
 from them'¹²²

¹¹⁶ van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze, 1999, pp. 166–167.

¹¹⁷ Kahn, 2015, pp. 176–177.

¹¹⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

¹¹⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

¹²⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

¹²¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 9.

¹²² Hannover, 1653, p. 13.

4.3 Use of *qaṭal* with present reference

Hannover occasionally employs the *qaṭal* form of stative *qal* root .ע.ד.י *y.d. '.* with present reference, as in (63) and (64). This is a characteristic feature of Biblical Hebrew,¹²³ in contrast to Rabbinic Hebrew, which uses the *qoṭel* in such cases.¹²⁴ Hannover's usage has an exact parallel in later Maskilic Hebrew,¹²⁵ as well as in Hasidic Hebrew, in which its use is likewise restricted to the root .ע.ד.י *y.d. '.*¹²⁶ Further research is required in order to ascertain whether other 17th century Eastern European writers of Hebrew narrative employed this type of construction with a wider variety of roots, and that the lack of examples in Hannover's text is due to its restricted size.

(63) אתה ידעת את האי"ש חמ"ל י"מ ואת מעשהו
'*atta yada 'ta 'et ha- 'iš ḥmil yimah šəmo wə-et ma 'ašehu*
'you know the man Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – and his deed'¹²⁷

(64) אתם ידעתם שעם פולין הם חזקים יותר ממנו
'*attem yada 'tem še- 'am polin hem ḥazaqim yoter mimmennu*
'you know that the Polish people are stronger than us'¹²⁸

4.4 Periphrastic verbal constructions for past progressive and habitual

Hannover frequently employs a periphrastic verbal construction consisting of a *qaṭal* of the root .ה.י.ה *h.y.h.* followed by a *qoṭel* to convey past progressive actions, as in (65)–(68). In some cases, the construction is used with stative verbs whose progressive sense is not evident in the English translation, as in (67) and (68). This type of construction is a characteristically post-biblical phenomenon; it appears frequently in Mishnaic Hebrew¹²⁹ and in various types of medieval Hebrew texts.¹³⁰ Hannover's use of this construction can be contrasted with his use of the typically biblical *wayyiqṭol* discussed above. Like other elements of the verbal system in *Yeven Mešula*, the use of the periphrastic construction has a direct parallel in 19th century Maskilic and Hasidic Hebrew.¹³¹

¹²³ Waltke and O'Connor, 1990, pp. 364–373.

¹²⁴ Pérez Fernández, 1999, p. 133.

¹²⁵ Kahn, 2009, pp. 90–91.

¹²⁶ Kahn, 2015, pp. 151–152.

¹²⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

¹²⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

¹²⁹ Pérez Fernández, 1999, pp. 108–109; Sharvit, 2004, p. 50; Mishor, 2013.

¹³⁰ Rabin, 1968, p. 115; Sarfatti, 2003, p. 87; Rand, 2006, pp. 341–342.

¹³¹ Kahn, 2009, pp. 178–181; Kahn, 2015, p. 190.

- (65) ויהי היום היו יושבי קאזקין חמי"ל י"מש ואוהביו במשתה היין [...] וסיפר חמי"ל י"מש לפני אוהביו
wa-yhi hay-yom hayu yošəḇim qozaqin ḥmil yimaḥ šəmo wə-’ohəḇaw bə-mište hay-yayin [...] wə-sipper ḥmil yimaḥ šəmo li-ḡne ’ohəḇaw
 ‘and one day the Cossacks were sitting, Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – and his friends, at the wine banquet [...] Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – said to his friends’¹³²
- (66) בכל מקומו' שהיו יהודי' דרים שם ובמקומות הקאזקין שלא היו יהודים דרים שם
bə-ḳol maqomot še-hayu yəhudim darim šam u-ḡi-maqomot haq-qozakin šel-lo hayu yəhudim darim šam
 ‘in all the places where Jews were living, and in the places of the Cossacks, where Jews were not living’¹³³
- (67) ויהי כשמוע הצורר חמי"ל י"מש את הדב' היה מתירא לנפשו
wa-yhi ki-šmoa ’ haš-šorer ḥmil yimaḥ šəmo ’et had-daḇar haya mityare la-nəpšo
 ‘and when the enemy Chmielnicki heard the matter, he feared for his life’¹³⁴
- (68) והשר ההו' היה מכיר את האיש
wə-haš-šar ha-hu haya makkir ’et ha-’iš
 ‘and that lord knew the man’¹³⁵

The construction can also be used to convey a habitual sense, as in (69) and (70). This is likewise a feature of Rabbinic Hebrew¹³⁶ in addition to medieval forms of the language such as the *piyyuṭim*.¹³⁷ Again, this is also a feature of 19th century Maskilic and Hasidic Hebrew.¹³⁸

- (69) והיו נותנים לנערים אכיל' מקופה של צדקה
wə-hayu notənim lan-nə’arim ’aḳila miq-quppa šel šədaqā
 ‘and they would give the boys food from the charity fund’¹³⁹

¹³² Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

¹³³ Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

¹³⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 17.

¹³⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

¹³⁶ Pérez Fernández, 1999, pp. 108–109; Mishor, 2013.

¹³⁷ Sáenz-Badillos, 1993, p. 210.

¹³⁸ Kahn, 2009, pp. 181–182; Kahn, 2015, p. 189.

¹³⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 18.

- (70) ופרנסים דארבע הארצות היו בוררין להם דיינים
u-ḡarnesim dā-ʿarba ha-ʿaraṣot hayu borərin lahem dayyanim
 ‘and community leaders of the Four Lands would choose judges for themselves’¹⁴⁰

4.5 Verb-subject gender discord

Hannover has a strong tendency to use the 3msg form of a *qaṭal* verb in conjunction with a feminine noun if the verb precedes the noun, as in (71)–(74). This has direct precedent in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴¹ However, the fact that there are numerous instances of this phenomenon in the relatively short text of *Yeven Meṣula* suggests that, though the phenomenon is ultimately traceable to the Hebrew Bible, Hannover was not inspired solely by its occasional attestation there. This usage is not exhibited to the same extent in later Eastern European Hebrew writing, though it is sometimes found in Hasidic narrative literature.¹⁴² Further research on other types of early modern Eastern European Hebrew is needed in order to ascertain whether it was part of a more widespread tradition.

- (71) והיה דירתו בעיר טשהארין
wə-haya dirato bə-ʿir tšehirin
 ‘and he lived in the town of Czehryń’¹⁴³
- (72) ומעולם היה שנאה גדולה בין הקדרים והיונים
u-me-ʿolam haya šinʿa ḡdola ben haq-qədarim wə-hay-yəwanim
 ‘and there had always been a great hatred between the Tatars and the Ukrainians’¹⁴⁴
- (73) ואם היה קהילה של חמישי בעלי בתים היו מחזיקין לא פחות משלשים בחורים ונערים
wə-ʿim haya qəhilla šel ḡamišša baʿale battim hayu maḡaziqin lo paḡhot miš-šəloša baḡurim u-nəʿarim
 ‘and if there was a community of fifty house owners, they would maintain no less than thirty young men and boys’¹⁴⁵
- (74) בא לפעמים עשיר אחד שהיה לו בת קטנה
ba li-ḡʿamim ʿašir ʿeḡad še-haya lo bat qəṭanna
 ‘there came sometimes a rich man who had a small daughter’¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

¹⁴¹ Waltke and O’Connor, 1990, p. 109; Williams, 2007, p. 92.

¹⁴² Kahn, 2015, pp. 254–255.

¹⁴³ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 18.

¹⁴⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

5 Syntax

5.1 Temporal constructions

Hannover employs two different methods of forming temporal constructions. In some cases he uses the temporal conjunction **כִּאֲשֶׁר** *ka'ašer* 'when' or its prefixed variant **כַּשֶׁ-** *kə-še-* followed by a finite verb. The temporal construction may be introduced by *wayehi*. The following examples illustrate this.

- (75) ויהי **כִּאֲשֶׁר נָסַע** הצורך חמי"ל י"מש עם מחנהו לכבוש ק"ק לובלי"ן הבירה ולא היה רק ארבע פרסאות מק"ק לובלי"ן בא אליו כתב המלך
wa-yhi ka'ašer nasa' haš-šorer ḥmil yimah šəmo 'im maḥanehu li-kboš qəhilla qədoša lublin hab-bira wə-lo haya raq 4 parsas 'ot miq-qəhilla qədoša lublin ba 'elaw katab ham-melek
'and when the enemy Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – travelled with his camp to conquer the holy city of Lublin, the capital, and he was no more than four parasas from the holy city of Lublin, the king's edict reached him'¹⁴⁷
- (76) אבל הם לא חמלו עליהם **כַּשֶׁנִּפְלוּ** עם פולין בידם
'abal hem lo ḥamlu 'alehem ka-šen-naplu 'am polin bə-yadam
'but they did not have pity on them when the Poles fell into their hands'¹⁴⁸
- (77) ויהי **כִּאֲשֶׁר בא** השר הנ"ל עם אשתו לעיר טש"הרין קבלו אותו אנשי המקום בשמחה גדולה
wa-yhi ka'ašer ba haš-šar hana'l 'im 'išto lə-'ir tšehirin qibbalu 'oto 'anše ham-maqom bə-šimḥa gədola
'and when the above-mentioned lord came with his wife to the town of Czehryń, the local people received him with great joy'¹⁴⁹

However he also forms temporal constructions by means of an inseparable preposition prefixed to an infinitive construct, as in Biblical Hebrew, as in (78)–(80). Such temporal constructions are typically preceded by *wayehi*. The inseparable preposition **כַּשֶׁ-** *kə-* is used to denote the sense of 'just after', as in Biblical Hebrew. This type of construction is quite common, but is most frequently attested with the root **ש.מ.ע.** *š.m.ʿ* 'hear', as in the first two examples. This may suggest that the construction was not extremely productive for Hannover but rather that this particular collocation was an almost fossilised expression with which he was particularly familiar. Alternatively, it may simply

¹⁴⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

¹⁴⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

indicate that the expression ‘and when X heard’ is a high-frequency expression for a historical narrative such as *Yeven Meşula*.

- (78) ויהי כשמוע הדוכוס¹⁵⁰ הנ"ל הדב' הזה ויחרד
wa-yhi ki-šmoa ‘had-dukkas hana”l had-daḅar haz-ze way-yeherad
 ‘and when the aforementioned duke heard this matter, he was afraid’¹⁵¹
- (79) ויהי כשמוע חמיל י"מש שהדוכוס¹⁵² ווישני"עצקי הולך וקרב אל מחניהו [...] שלח
 לנגדו שר הצבא שלו
wa-yhi ki-šmoa ‘ḥmil yimah šəmo še-had-dukkas wišniyeşqi holek
wə-qareḅ ‘el maḅanehu [...] šalaḅ lə-negdo šar haş-şaḅa šello
 ‘and when Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – heard that Duke
 Wiśniowiecki was approaching his camp [...] he sent out his general’¹⁵³
- (80) ויהי כשבת המלך על כסא מלכותו כתב מיד ספרים אל הצורר חמיל י"מש שילך וישוב
 לביתו
wa-yhi ka-šeḅet ham-melek ‘al kisse malḅuto katab miy-yad səḅarim
 ‘el haş-şorer ḥmil yimah šəmo šey-yelek wə-yaşub lə-ḅeto
 ‘and as soon as the king was sitting on his royal throne, he immediately
 wrote letters to the enemy Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out
 – telling him to go home’¹⁵⁴

5.2 Conditional clauses

There are several real conditional clauses attested in *Yeven Meşula*. Some have a future sense, as shown in (81) and (82), and the others have a past habitual sense, shown in (83) and (84). All protases are introduced by the subordinator אם *’im* ‘if’. The future conditionals have *yiqtol* verbs in both the protasis and apodosis. Of the past habitual conditionals, the first is comprised of a periphrastic construction in both the protasis and apodosis, while the other has a *qaṭal* in the protasis and a periphrastic construction in the apodosis. All of these constructions are traceable to Mishnaic Hebrew.¹⁵⁵

- (81) אם אנו נמתין עד שיבואו היונים לעיר יעשו בנו כלה ונחרצה
’im ‘anu namtin ‘ad šey-yabo ‘u hay-yəwanim la-‘ir ya ‘aśu banu kalla
wə-neḅraša
 ‘if we wait until the Ukrainians arrive in the city, they will destroy us
 completely’¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Sic; = דוכס.

¹⁵¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

¹⁵² Sic; = דוכס.

¹⁵³ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 14.

¹⁵⁵ Pérez Fernández, 1999, pp. 213–216.

¹⁵⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 4.

- (82) אם תשלהו יד בשרים ושמעו כל מלכי אדום וינקמו נקמתם מכל אחינו שבגולה
'im tišlāḥu yad baš-šarim wə-šam 'u kol malḵe 'edom wə-yinqəmu
niqmatam mik-kol 'aḥenu šeb-bag-gola
 'if you lay a hand on the lords and all the Catholic kings hear of it, they
 will take revenge on all our brethren in exile'¹⁵⁷
- (83) ואם היו רוצים לילך לדרכם היו נותנין להם צדה לדרך
wə-'im hayu rošim leleḵ lə-darkam hayu notənin lahem šeda lad-dereḵ
 'and if they wanted to go on their way, they would give them provisions
 for the road'¹⁵⁸
- (84) ואם באו מארץ מרחקי' או ממקומו' אחריו' [...] היו מלבישים אותם
wə-'im ba 'u me'ereš merḥaqim 'o mim-məqomot 'aḥerim [...] hayu
malbišim 'otam
 'and if they came from a faraway land or from other places [...] they
 would provide them with clothes'¹⁵⁹

In one case, Hannover employs a fusion of biblical and post-biblical constructions in his real conditional: the apodosis is introduced by a *yiqṭol*, but this is prefixed by the *waw*-conjunctive, which echoes the biblical use of the *waw*-consecutive in real conditional apodoses.¹⁶⁰ As discussed elsewhere in this study, this mix of biblical and rabbinic elements is a common feature of Hannover's writing, and is also a common feature of 19th century Eastern European Hebrew, though this precise feature is not attested in Maskilic or Hasidic narrative literature. Further research is needed in order to ascertain whether it is an element of other types of Ashkenazic Hebrew.

- (85) אם אנו הורגים לכולם ויהמלו עם פולין על היונים
'im 'anu horəgim lə-ḵulam wə-yahməlu 'am polin 'al hay-yəwanim
 'if we kill them all, the people of Poland will have pity for the
 Ukrainians'¹⁶¹

There is also an irreal conditional, with a verbless protasis introduced by לולא *lule* 'if not' and an apodosis with a *qaṭal* of the root ה.י.ה. *h.y.h.*, shown in (86). Interestingly, in contrast to the real past habitual conditionals shown above, this construction most closely resembles biblical irreal conditionals, which are likewise introduced by לולא *lule* 'if not'.¹⁶² This is further evidence of the fusion of biblical and post-biblical elements present throughout Hannover's text.

¹⁵⁷ Hannover, 1653, p. 7.

¹⁵⁸ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

¹⁵⁹ Hannover, 1653, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ See Waltke and O'Connor, 1990, pp. 526–527.

¹⁶¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 11.

¹⁶² Waltke and O'Connor, 1990, 637–638.

- (86) כי לולא זאת לא היה תקומה חלילה לשארית ישראל
ki lule zot lo haya taquma ḥalila li-še'erit yiśra'el
 'and were it not for that, there would, God forbid, have been no survival
 for the remnant of Israel'¹⁶³

5.3 Inconsistent use of the accusative marker את 'et

A characteristic feature of Hannover's syntax is the inconsistent use of the accusative marker את 'et. This marker is a standard feature of the biblical and rabbinic strata of Hebrew.¹⁶⁴ However, it is commonly omitted in a variety of medieval Hebrew texts, including Rashi's commentaries, the *Sefer Ḥasidim*, Spanish-Provençal Hebrew prose¹⁶⁵ and Arabic translations.¹⁶⁶ Rabin¹⁶⁷ suggests that the medieval tendency to omit the particle is rooted in Paytanic Hebrew,¹⁶⁸ and that this is itself based on Biblical Hebrew poetry, in which את 'et is much less common than in biblical prose. Any such tendencies are likely to have been compounded by the fact that the medieval authors, like Hannover, spoke vernaculars lacking such a particle. As in the case of most other features discussed in this study, 19th century Hasidic Hebrew authors also frequently omit the particle.¹⁶⁹ There are no clear patterns governing Hannover's employment of the marker. It is likely that, as in the case of other varieties such as Hasidic Hebrew, which make use of the marker in a similarly inconsistent manner, Hannover consciously recognised it as an intrinsic element of the Hebrew prose style, but often unintentionally omitted it because such a form was not a feature of his Yiddish vernacular and therefore did not come naturally to him. Examples (87)–(89) illustrate cases where Hannover did employ the marker:

- (87) ויהי כשמוע המלך והשרים את הדבר הזה היה כמצחק בעיניהם
wa-yhi ki-šmoa 'ham-meleḵ wə-haś-šarim 'et had-dabar haz-ze haya
kə-miṣḥaq bə-'enehem
 'and when the king and the minister heard this matter, it was like a joke
 to them'¹⁷⁰
- (88) ולאבד את כל היהודי ואת כל חיל עם פולין
u-lə-'abbed 'et kol ha-yhudim wə-'et kol ḥel 'am polin
 'and to destroy all the Jews and all the might of the people of Poland'¹⁷¹

¹⁶³ Hannover, 1653, p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Rabin, 2000, p. 117.

¹⁶⁵ Rosén, 1995, pp. 64–66; Rabin, 2000, p. 117.

¹⁶⁶ Goshen-Gottstein, 2006, p. 111.

¹⁶⁷ Rabin, 2000, p. 117.

¹⁶⁸ See Rand, 2006, pp. 258–259.

¹⁶⁹ Kahn, 2015, pp. 280–282.

¹⁷⁰ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Hannover, 1653, p. 5.

- (89) ובין כך ובין כך שלח המלך את השר אוסליינסקי משנה שלו אל המלך הקדרים
u-ben kaḳ u-ben kaḳ šalah ham-meleḳ 'et haš-šar oslinsqi mišne šello
'el ham-meleḳ haq-qədarim
 'and meanwhile, the king sent his aide, the Lord Ossoliński, to the Tatar king'¹⁷²

By contrast, (90)–(92) exemplify cases where he neglected to include it:

- (90) ויהי כשמוע הדוכוס¹⁷³ הדב' הזה ויהרד
wa-yhi ki-šmoa 'had-duḳkas had-daḅar haz-ze way-yeherad
 'and when the duke heard this matter, he was afraid'¹⁷⁴
- (91) לשמור העיר מן השונא
li-šmor ha-'ir min haš-šone
 'to guard the town from the enemy'¹⁷⁵
- (92) עד שלכדו המבצר ויהרגו כל היהודים
'ad šel-laḳdu ham-miḅšar way-yahargu kol ha-yhudim
 'until they captured the fortress and killed all the Jews'¹⁷⁶

5.4 Use of ל- *la-* as accusative marker

A striking and very common feature of Hannover's writing is the use of the inseparable preposition ל- *la-* 'to, for' as a direct object marker. The preposition is attested with this function in conjunction with a variety of verbs and seems to be relatively productive, though its use is not uniform. A noteworthy aspect of this construction is that it seems to be used only with reference to animate objects and cities (which can be regarded as a sort of collective concentration of animate objects). Examples (93)–(96) illustrate this noteworthy construction. The phenomenon extends to the employment of ל- *la-* in conjunction with a pronominal suffix, as in (97).

This feature has some precedent in Late Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew;¹⁷⁷ in both cases it is thought to be ascribable to influence from Aramaic, in which ל- *la-* is a standard accusative marker.¹⁷⁸ However, it does not appear to be a feature of medieval forms of Hebrew, which use the accusative marker את *'et* or leave direct objects unmarked.¹⁷⁹ Notably, it also appears to be absent

¹⁷² Hannover, 1653, p. 16.

¹⁷³ *Sic*; = דוכס.

¹⁷⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

¹⁷⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 8.

¹⁷⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 12.

¹⁷⁷ Gesenius, 2006, p. 366; Segal, 1927, p. 168.

¹⁷⁸ Rabin, 2000, p. 117–118; see also Nicolae and Tropper, 2010, pp. 30–31 and Bar-Asher Siegal, 2013, pp. 201–202 for details of the particle in Aramaic.

¹⁷⁹ Rabin, 2000, pp. 117–118.

from 19th century Eastern European forms of Hebrew, in contrast to many of the other constructions discussed in this study. The fact that *Yeven Mešula* does not exhibit any direct grammatical influence from Aramaic¹⁸⁰ suggests that the historical basis for Hannover's use of this construction is its appearance in Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew. However, the fact that the use of *ל־* *la-* as an accusative marker is not a prominent feature of either of these strata of Hebrew, combined with the fact that Hannover's restriction of the construction to animate objects lacks clear precedent in biblical or rabbinic literature, raise the possibility that the canonical strata are not the sole source of the phenomenon in *Yeven Mešula*. Perhaps unexpectedly, the most direct parallel for Hannover's usage can be found in the pre-modern Hebrew writing of Judaeo-Spanish speakers from the Ottoman Empire, which exhibits precisely the same phenomenon, including the restriction to animate objects.¹⁸¹ This intriguingly specific apparent link between Hannover's text and that of Ottoman Judaeo-Spanish-speaking writers requires further investigation in order to ascertain the extent of the similarities between these two forms of Diaspora Hebrew. Likewise, further research needs to be done into the language of other early modern and modern Ashkenazic Hebrew textual sources in order to determine whether this phenomenon was rooted in a more widespread usage in Eastern Europe as well.

- (93) והיה משפיל להדוכסים והשרים שהיו מדת היונים
wə-haya mašpil la-had-dukkasim wə-haš-šarim še-hayu mid-dat
hay-yəwanim
 'and he would bring down the dukes who were of the Greek Orthodox religion'¹⁸²
- (94) ויכתירו לפאולוק שם
way-yaktiru la-pawluq šam
 'and they crowned Pawliuk king there'¹⁸³
- (95) והרב בתי תפלותם והרג לכומריי שבהם
wə-ḥarab batte təpīllotam wə-harag lak-komərim/la-komərim
šeb-bahem
 'and he destroyed their churches and killed (the) priests that were in them'¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Aramaic features in *Yeven Mešula* are limited to a number of set phrases such as נטורי קרתא *naṭore qarta* 'guardians of the city' (Hannover, 1653, p. 8) and the use of the possessive particle *ד-* *da-* 'of' on one occasion, חילו רכב ופרשים דעם פולייין *ḥelo rekeḇ u-parašim da-'am polin* 'his Polish army, chariots and horsemen' (Hannover, 1653, p. 10).

¹⁸¹ Bunis, 2013, p. 60*.

¹⁸² Hannover, 1653, p. 1.

¹⁸³ Hannover, 1653, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Hannover, 1653, p. 5.

- (96) ונתן לו העצה שאוהביו יוציאו לחמיל י"מש מביי האסורי'
*wə-natan lo ha- 'eša še- 'ohabaw yoši 'u li-ḥmil yimah šəmo mib-bet
 ha- 'asurim*
 'and gave him the advice that his friends should take Chmielnicki – may
 his name be blotted out – out of prison'¹⁸⁵
- (97) ומהר אנו מביאים לכם אל אחיכם שבקוסטנטיניא
u-maher 'anu məḥi'im laḱem 'el 'aḥekem šeb-bə-qostantina
 'and we shall quickly take you to your brothers who are in
 Constantinople'¹⁸⁶

6 Conclusion

The Hebrew of *Yeven Mešula* exhibits a fusion of characteristically biblical features (the *wayyiqṭol*, stative *qatals* with present reference and temporal constructions composed of a prefixed infinitive construct) and typically rabbinic elements (the masculine plural in *nun*, the *qatal* in past narrative sequences and periphrastic verbal constructions), in many cases employing the biblical and rabbinic features alongside each other. It also contains a number of features without clear precedent in Biblical or Rabbinic Hebrew (the retention of the definite article with inseparable prepositions, the indefinite article, definiteness of construct nouns and doubly definite construct chains, the avoidance of the dual, and erratic use of the definite direct object marker), but which are attested in other Eastern European forms of the language, specifically the writings of 19th century Maskilic and Hasidic authors as well as the *Kišur Shulḥan 'Aruḱ* and rabbinic responsa literature. Moreover, at least one of these features (fluctuation between the *nun* and *mem* plural endings) is found in medieval Ashkenazic Hebrew. Some of them also have parallels in the Hebrew composed by Judaeo-Spanish speakers and, more distantly, in Judaeo-Arabic. Finally, *Yeven Mešula* exhibits a single feature (the use of the prefixed preposition ל- *lə-* 'to, for' as a definite direct object marker in addition to the standard אֵת *'et*) whose closest parallel seems to be in the Hebrew of Ottoman Judaeo-Spanish speakers. The overall similarity between *Yeven Mešula* and other Eastern European forms of Hebrew, particularly those composed by 19th century adherents of the Maskilic and Hasidic movements, suggests that all of these authors may have been heirs to a shared Ashkenazic variety of Hebrew whose roots stretch back to at least the 17th century and possibly much earlier. Further research is needed to determine the geographical and chronological boundaries of this form of Hebrew and establish its links with other types of early modern and modern Diaspora Hebrew, as well as more broadly with Judaeo-Arabic and other Semitic languages.

¹⁸⁵ Hannover, 1653, p. 3.

¹⁸⁶ Hannover, 1653, p. 5.

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Medieval Jewish Exegetical Insights into the Use of Infinitive Absolute as the Equivalent of a Preceding Finite Form

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Various aspects of the origin, use and semantics of the infinitive absolute in Biblical Hebrew have puzzled modern grammatical researchers. Contemporary scholarship has offered a variety of solutions to the problem, but none seem entirely satisfactory. However the interpretation of the infinitive absolute was also considered by medieval exegetes including Rashi, Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Qimḥi, and while their interpretations are unfortunately often disregarded by modern scholars, they can be productively used for our own understanding of the infinitive absolute.

Modern grammarians discuss verbal uses of the infinitive absolute. For example, Joüon and Muraoka comment on “the infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form” as follows:

The infinitive absolute quite often (especially in the later books) continues a preceding form. The Waw, which usually precedes the infinitive absolute sometimes has the value of a simple ‘and’, and sometimes that of an ‘and (then)’ of succession. The reasons which have motivated the choice of the infinitive absolute are not clearly understood: sometimes there is probably a desire for variety or a stylistic affectation; sometimes the author wished to use a form with a vague subject like ‘one’ or ‘they’. The infinitive absolute virtually has the same temporal or modal value as the preceding verb.¹

Joüon and Muraoka bring examples of infinitive absolute after *qatal*, *weqatal*, *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol*, jussive, imperative, participle and infinitive construct.

We should take note of the parenthetical comment of Joüon and Muraoka, “especially in the later books”, when discussing this use of infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form. This diachronic aspect is especially emphasised by Ohad Cohen where he explains that the most frequent use (73.5%) of the infinitive absolute in the period of the First Temple was as the ‘tautological infinitive’ which emphasised the idea expressed in the verb. However,

¹ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123x.

in the Hebrew of the Second Temple period there are only nine occurrences of the tautological infinitive, whereas in 80% of the occurrences of this form in the Second Temple period it is used as a replacement for a conjugated verb; in most cases it is used as a sequential form and may come in sequence after various different verbal forms, so that it may be described as an “unmarked sequential form that receives its chronological and modal meaning from the context”.² Steven Fassberg also states that

the data show clearly that the phenomenon is less frequent in books from the First Temple Period than in compositions from the Second Temple Period and from the period of transition between the First and Second Temple Periods (Jeremiah).³

Given that this phenomenon is far more prevalent in the later books of the Old Testament, it is of great interest to note that scholars trace the origin of this usage to ancient Semitic languages. Steven Fassberg discusses this use of “the infinitive absolute with the conjunctive *waw* functioning as a finite verb, a use that is also known in El-Amarna, Ugaritic, and Phoenician”, and he asks the question

why did the number of occurrences of the infinitive absolute as a finite verb increase in the late books of the Old Testament at a time when other uses of the infinitive absolute were disappearing?⁴

Fassberg summarises the views of modern scholars to date, among whom we may note C. H. Gordon who

connected the early northern Canaanite evidence with the data from the post-exilic period and attributed the phenomenon in part to the ‘reunion of far-northern Jews with their Judean coreligionists during the Restoration’.⁵

Fassberg also cites Hammershaimb, who points out how rare this usage is in the Hebrew Bible (between 45 and 58 instances, depending on whether textual errors are taken into consideration or not) and states that “according to the old principle of always preferring the more complicated reading, I consider the infinitive to be the original form”.⁶

Fassberg is not convinced by the idea that the increased use of the infinitive absolute as finite verb reflects the spoken Hebrew of the period, because the phenomenon is “absent from Ben Sira, the Bar Kokhba letters and Tannaitic Hebrew, and it is infrequent in the Dead Sea Scrolls”.⁷ Fassberg concludes

² Cohen, 2010, unit 22.

³ Fassberg, 2008, p. 50.

⁴ Fassberg, 2008, pp. 49–50.

⁵ Fassberg, 2008, p. 54 and n. 37 there; see also Jöüion and Muraoka, 1996, § 123x n. 1.

⁶ Hammershaimb, 1963, p. 91 n. 1.

⁷ Fassberg, 2008, p. 57.

that “the feature is a classicism”, that is, a borrowing from the First Temple Period, and that “some scribes chose to imitate this classicism. It, like other *waw*-consecutive syntagms, must have been viewed as elegant and elevated style”.⁸

Fassberg finds support for his theory in the high number of examples of the infinitive absolute as finite verb in Jeremiah, where the language

reflects the beginning of a transitional stage between the Hebrew of the pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods, and as such, is full of classical as well as some post-classical features.⁹

Fassberg also cites the book of Esther (where there are comparatively many examples of *waw* plus infinitive absolute sequential to a finite verb) since “it has been demonstrated that its author deliberately imitated the language and literary motifs of the Joseph cycle, which was written in pure classical Hebrew”.¹⁰ The only example in Genesis of infinitive absolute as finite verb is in the Joseph cycle, Genesis 41:43, which we discuss in the context of medieval exegesis below.

A noteworthy contribution to this discussion of infinitive absolute was made by A. Rubinstein,¹¹ who is quoted by Waltke and O’Connor in their discussion of this phenomenon:

The purpose served by this construction can just as well be served by other constructions; its use has been explained as an expression of a desire for stylistic variation, but this explanation does not account for its predominance in late Biblical Hebrew. Rubinstein suggests that it is the result of the disappearance of *waw*-consecutive forms in Late Hebrew: ‘it is at least significant that in the preponderant majority of our instances the [infinitive absolute] occurs precisely at the point where one would expect a transition to the appropriate consecutive form of the verb. His further thesis that the substitution belongs not to the original text but to the work of scribes and copyists lacks convincing evidence.’¹²

Overall we see that although modern scholars have demonstrated that the infinitive absolute form in place of a finite verb represents an ancient Semitic usage, opinions differ on the reasons for the increased use of this phenomenon in Late Biblical Hebrew. Although Fassberg’s argument that this is a classicism is convincing, we are still left with the ultimate question of why this construction is used in specific contexts.

Rubinstein refers to this construction (finite verb continued by infinitive absolute) as VIA and argues that it occurs in forty-five passages.¹³ He states

⁸ Fassberg, 2008, p. 58.

⁹ Fassberg, 2008, p. 58.

¹⁰ Fassberg, 2008, p. 58.

¹¹ Rubinstein, 1952, pp. 362–367.

¹² Waltke and O’Connor, 1990, pp. 595–596, §35.5.2, para b.

¹³ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 363.

that “there can be little doubt that the purpose which the VIA construction serves, is normally effected in Biblical Hebrew by other syntactical means” and he chooses six biblical verses which in his view best illustrate this idea.¹⁴

The present article seeks to examine the verses discussed by Rubinstein, as well as some other verses quoted in Joüon and Muraoka,¹⁵ and to examine comments of the medieval Jewish exegetes on these verses where they occur, since, in our view, the answers provided by contemporary philology are not totally satisfactory and the insights from medieval exegetes are useful despite the fact that they are not based on the critical methodology of today’s research. It could then be possible to use the linguistic insights of the medieval exegetes to shed light on the use of infinitive absolute sequential to a finite verb even in verses where the medieval comments are not available to us. We will see that these medieval comments shed light specifically on the semantic value of the use of infinitive absolute in context, regardless of the origin of the construction. The semantic value in such a context is often one of continuity and/or repetition. The context here may refer to the action expressed by the infinitive absolute itself, or to the permanence of the state brought about by the action expressed in the infinitive absolute, or even for a different action than that expressed by the infinitive absolute, but nevertheless for an action that is evident within the narrative context.

We begin our study with a discussion of Isaiah 6:10:

הַשְׁמֵן לֵב-הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאַזְנוֹתָם הַקָּבֵד וְעֵינֵיהֶם הַשְׁעַ פֶּן-יִרְאֶה בְּעֵינָיו וּבְאַזְנוֹתָיו יִשְׁמַע וּלְבָבוֹ יִבִּין וְשָׁב וְרָפָא לוֹ:

There is an exegetical problem in understanding the three *hifil* imperatives in this verse – הַשְׁמֵן, הַקָּבֵד and הַשְׁעַ – since one wonders why the prophet would be asked to ‘fatten’ the hearts of the people, ‘harden’ their ears and ‘smear’ their eyes. Why should the prophet be asked to increase their obstinacy?

Rashi comments as follows:

כמו: (שמות ה יא): וְהַקָּבֵד אֶת-לְבוֹ. לשון הִלּוּף לשון פְּעוּל. לָבָם הוּלָף וְהַשְׁמֵן וְאַזְנוֹתָיו הוּלְכִים הוּלָף וְהַקָּבֵד מְשֻׁמָּע
‘Like Exodus 8:11: “and (he) hardened his heart”, an expression of continuity. Their heart continually becomes fatter and his ears are becoming heavier and heavier so that they do not hear.’¹⁶

Rashi explains that these forms are not imperatives but are *hifil* infinitive absolute forms; he labels them לשון הִלּוּף לשון פְּעוּל. They could have been taken

¹⁴ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 363.

¹⁵ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123x.

¹⁶ Translations of biblical verses and medieval Hebrew commentaries are partly based on those of the *Jewish Study Bible* (Berlin and Brettler, 2004) and Silberman’s *Pentateuch with Rashi’s Commentary*, but are also partly my own translations.

as *hifil* imperative forms (in the masculine singular) since these have the same morphological form as *hifil* infinitive absolute forms, but in the light of the exegetical problem mentioned above, Rashi prefers to avoid the exegetical problem and to take these forms as infinitive absolutes which express continuous action.¹⁷

The infinitive absolute forms in Isaiah 6:10 are not in the category of continuing a preceding form¹⁸ but rather in the category of being equivalent to a finite form at the beginning of a sentence,¹⁹ but the important point here (with regard to ensuing discussion) is the resort to infinitive absolute to express ‘continuity’.

It is worth noting however that Ibn Ezra takes a different view from Rashi here and prefers to understand the three forms as imperatives because infinitives could not be the verbal form of a main clause followed by a subordinate clause introduced by פֶּן ‘lest’. Ibn Ezra implies that the people are being deprived of the ability to repent as punishment for their sins.

David Qimḥi brings both views, that of Rashi as well as that of Ibn Ezra. In bringing the view that is similar to that of Rashi, Qimḥi relates to the imperative forms in Isaiah 6:9 as well as in Isaiah 6:10.

Isaiah 6:9 reads as follows:

וַיֹּאמֶר לְךָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לְעַם הַזֶּה שְׁמַעוּ שְׁמוּעַ וְאַל-תִּבְיִנוּ וְרֵאוּ רְאוּ וְאַל-תִּדְעוּ:
 ‘And He said, “Go, say to this people: Hear, indeed, but do not understand and see, indeed, but do not know.”’

Qimḥi’s comment relates to verses 9 and 10 as follows:

ויש לפרש שְׁמַעוּ וְרֵאוּ – ציווי במקום איתן, כלומר: אם תשמעו ותראו; כלומר: אתם שומעים באזניכם דברי הנביאים המוכיחים אתכם, ואין אתם מבינים; ותראו נפלאות הבורא, ואין אתם יודעים; כלומר: לא תשימו לב, ואין אתם משגיחים אלי ואתם משמינים בכוונה לבבכם ומכבידים אזניכם ומשיעים עיניכם, שלא תשמעו ולא תראו ולא תבינו ולא תדעו, כי אינכם חפצים בתשובה

‘Some interpret “hear” and “see” as imperative forms functioning as *yiqtol*s, that is: if you hear and see; that is, you listen with your ears to the words of the prophets who rebuke you, but you do not understand, and you see the wonders of the Creator, but you do not know; that is, you do not lay it to heart and you do not pay attention to Me, but you fatten your hearts on purpose and make heavy your ears and smear your eyes, that you will not hear and will not see and will not understand and will not know, for you do not wish for repentance.’

¹⁷ See Englander, 1939, pp. 391–392, 408–409. Englander explains the terminology and the grammatical elements in Rashi’s commentaries. He states that Rashi uses no special term for infinitive absolute but frequently identifies infinitive absolute by the term פֶּעוּל which “sometimes has the force of a customary or frequentative act”.

¹⁸ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123x.

¹⁹ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123u–v.

We see that Qimḥi understands the imperatives in verse 9 – שְׁמְעוּ and וַיִּרְאוּ – as well as the imperatives in verse 10 – הִשְׁמֵן, הִכְבֵּד and הִשַׁע – as *yiqtol* forms, and here we can see a small difference between Rashi and Qimḥi. Rashi understood ‘the heart of this people’ as the subject of the verb ‘becomes fat’, that is, ‘the heart of this people becomes fatter and fatter’, and similarly ‘his ears become heavier’ where ‘his ears’ are the subject of ‘become heavier’, and also ‘his eyes become smeared’.²⁰ However, from the wording of Qimḥi’s comments, it seems that he understood ‘heart’ as the object of the verb ‘fatten’ and he took ‘this people’ as the subject of the verb ‘fatten’; he also took ‘your ears’ and ‘your eyes’ as the objects of the verbs ‘make heavy’ and ‘smear’. According to Qimḥi’s interpretation, the *hifils* would be causative *hifils*.

Rashi opened his comment on Isaiah 6:10 by quoting Exodus 8:11:

וַיִּרְא פַרְעֹה כִּי הִיָּתָה הַרְוָחָה וְהִכְבֵּד אֶת-לִבּוֹ
וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֲלֵהֶם

‘And Pharaoh saw that there was relief and he hardened his heart and did not listen to them.’

In this verse, the infinitive absolute form וְהִכְבֵּד indeed fits the category discussed by Joüon and Muraoka of “the infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form”²¹ since it is sequential to the *wayyiqtol* form וַיִּרְא ‘and he (Pharaoh) saw’. So let us study the comments of Rashi on this verse:

לְשׁוֹן פְּעוּל הוּא, כְּמוֹ:
[בראשית יב ט]: וַיִּסַּע אַבְרָם הַלּוֹדִי וַיְנַסּוּעַ הַנְּגִבָה:
וְכֵן [מלכים ב ג כד]: [ויכז]-בָּהּ וְהַכּוֹת אֶת-מוֹאָב:
[שמואל א כב יג]: לָמָּה קִשְׁרַתְּם עָלַי אַתֶּם וְכֵן-יִשְׂי בְּתַתֶּךָ לּוֹ לְחֵם וְהָרַב וְשִׂאוֹל לוֹ
בְּאֵלֵהֶם:
[מלכים א כ לז]: וַיִּכְהוּ הָאִישׁ הַכֹּהֵן וּפָצַע:

Rashi opens his comment here with the expression לְשׁוֹן פְּעוּל, which reflects his comment on Isaiah 6:10 – לְשׁוֹן הַלּוֹדִי לְשׁוֹן פְּעוּל – and may be translated as ‘an expression of continuity’. The full translation of Rashi’s comments on וְהִכְבֵּד here are as follows:

‘This is an expression of “continuity” like: Genesis 12:9: and Abraham journeyed continually towards the South; II Kings 3:24: and they smote Moab with great force; I Samuel 22:13: why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, by your giving him bread and a sword and you consulted G-d for him; I Kings 20:37: and the man smote him, smiting and wounding.’

²⁰ See Gesenius, 1910, §53d for this ‘inwardly transitive’ use of *hifil*.

²¹ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123x.

We see that Rashi brings examples from four different biblical verses. It is noteworthy that three of Rashi's examples do not illustrate the use of infinitive absolute instead of an inflected form, but rather have infinitive absolute used after the finite verb for emphasis; the use of infinitive absolute after the finite verb may emphasise the nuance of continuity, and it seems to be this aspect of the function of infinitive absolute that Rashi is keen to highlight here: 'Pharaoh continued hardening his heart'. Only in one of Rashi's examples (I Samuel 22:13) is it possible that the infinitive absolute is used in place of the finite verb.

We can therefore conclude at this stage that the comments of Rashi and Qimḥi on Isaiah 6:9–10 and of Rashi on Exodus 8:11 indicate clearly that these scholars discerned the desire to emphasise a nuance of continuity and also repetition in the context.

However, this insight is not mentioned at all in the analysis presented by Rubinstein,²² where he cites Exodus 8:11 as his very first example to illustrate the "redundancy of function" of the VIA construction. He points out that in the Hebrew Pentateuch of the Samaritans we find the *wayyiqtol* form וַיִּקְבֹּד in Exodus 8:11 instead of the infinitive absolute form הִקְבֹּד.

Rubinstein brings a second example of VIA from Isaiah 37:18–19, where the infinitive absolute form וַנִּתֵּן in verse 19 follows the *qatal* inflected form הִקְרִיבוּ in verse 18:

הִקְרִיבוּ מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר אֶת-כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת ... וַנִּתֵּן אֶת-אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ
 'The kings of Assyria destroyed all the lands ... and put their gods to fire.'

Rubinstein points out that the parallel text to the Isaiah in II Kings 19:17–18 has the finite form with *waw* and *qatal* וַנִּתְּנוּ and the Dead Sea Isaiah scroll (DSI) has the *wayyiqtol* ויתנו. Rubinstein ascribes this use of infinitive absolute "to scribes or copyists, who resorted to it when they could not be certain of the form of a finite verb".²³ Such uncertainty might arise from a manuscript being indistinct in places, or if a copyist had before him divergent readings, or if he was writing from memory. Thus the reading with infinitive absolute in Isaiah 37:19 "may well have been a scribe's way of resolving the difficulty created by alternative readings like those of DSI and II Kings".²⁴

Just as Rashi's insights on Exodus 8:11 were not included in Rubinstein's analysis, similarly Rashi's comments on Isaiah 37:19 are not included. Here are Rashi's comments on Isaiah 37:19:

וַנִּתֵּן כְּמוֹ וַנִּתּוֹן אֹתוֹ עַל-כֵּל-אֲרָיִם מִצָּרִים (בראשית מא) לִשׁוֹן פְּעוּל אֲמֹר זָכוֹר

²² See discussion above; Rubinstein, 1952, pp. 362–367.

²³ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 365.

²⁴ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 365.

Rashi has found another example of the use of the infinitive absolute form *וַיִּתֶּן* in Genesis 41:43, where the infinitive absolute form is used in place of the finite form following two *wayyiqtol* forms as follows:

וַיַּרְכֵב אֹתוֹ בַּמְרֻכָּבֹת הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ
וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם
וַיִּתֶּן אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

‘And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had and they called out before him Avrek and they placed him over the whole land of Egypt.’

In his comment on Isaiah 37:19 where he quotes Genesis 41:43, Rashi uses his customary terminology *לשון פעול אמור זכור*, which indicates that the use of infinitive absolute here concerns the nuance of continuity. This nuance of continuity certainly fits the context in Genesis 41:43, since the intention behind the appointment of Joseph was surely that he would be in charge of the whole land of Egypt on a continual basis; here, the idea of ‘continuity’ seems to apply more to the result of the action expressed by the infinitive absolute than to the actual process of appointment, although one could suggest that Joseph’s position would also depend on continued vigilance on the part of those who could influence events in Egypt at the time. Here again Rubinstein does not mention this insight in his comments:

Similarly, if a copyist had before him the reading *וַיִּקְרְאוּ* in Gen 41:43, he might be tempted to use the [infinitive absolute] *וַיִּתֶּן* rather than commit himself to a finite tense, even if such a tense were present in the document before him; this would leave it to be inferred whether the subject of the verb-substitute is again Pharaoh as in the first verb of the series or is to be understood in an impersonal sense as in the second verb.²⁵

Rubinstein picks up on the fact that the first verb – *וַיַּרְכֵב* – is third person masculine *singular* ‘and he made to ride’ but the second verb is third person masculine *plural* – *וַיִּקְרְאוּ* – ‘and they called out’, and the third verb in the sequence – *וַיִּתֶּן* – is infinitive absolute.

We saw above that Fassberg sees significance in the fact that the only example of infinitive absolute as finite verb in Genesis occurs in the Joseph cycle, since the author of Esther deliberately imitated the language of the Joseph cycle and we find the same infinitive absolute verb form *וַיִּתֶּן* in Esther 6:8–9.

Rashi’s use of the term *זכור* is also significant because the learned reader will immediately recall Exodus 20:8:

זָכוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.’

²⁵ Rubinstein, 1952, pp. 365–366.

In this verse we note the use of the infinitive absolute form זָכוֹר and not the imperative form זָכֹר, and Rashi's comment on Exodus 20:8 again highlights the continuous nature of remembering the Sabbath day:

לשון פֿעול הוא, כמו: ישעיה כב יג: אָכּוּל וְשָׂתוּ כִּי מִקֵּר נָמוּת. שמואל ב ג טז: וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתָּהּ אִישָׁה הַלֹּוֹף וּבָכָה. וכן פתרונו, תנו לב לזָכוֹר תמיד את יום הַשַּׁבָּת שָׂאם גַּנְדְּמָן לָךְ הַפֶּן זָכָה, תהא מְזַמֵּינוּ לְשַׁבָּת:

‘זָכוֹר is an expression of continuity, like Isaiah 22:13: “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die”'; II Samuel 3:16: “and her husband went with her, weeping as he went”. This is the explanation; pay attention to remember continually the Sabbath day, that if something nice comes your way, set it aside for the Sabbath.’

We see here that Rashi compares זָכוֹר with two examples. In Rashi's first example (Isaiah 22:13), the two infinitive absolute forms אָכּוּל and וְשָׂתוּ are used in place of finite verbs, ‘let us eat and drink’. In Rashi's second example (II Samuel 3:16), the infinitive absolute forms הַלֹּוֹף וּבָכָה coming after the finite verb וַיֵּלֶךְ emphasize the nuance of continuity, ‘her husband went with her weeping as he went’ (Phalti went with Michal when David insisted on her return to him). It is noteworthy that the function of זָכוֹר in Exodus 20:8 is not the same as the function of the infinitive absolute in either of the examples brought by Rashi, since זָכוֹר in Exodus 20:8 comes in place of imperative, but it is the nuance of continuity and repetition that Rashi wishes to illustrate.

Rubinstein's third example to illustrate redundancy of function of the VIA construction is Jeremiah 19:13,²⁶ but in the absence of any relevant medieval exegesis on this verse we will postpone discussion of it until later.

Rubinstein's fourth example²⁷ cites Ecclesiastes 9:11, which employs the VIA construction, whereas similar passages in Ecclesiastes 4:1 and 4:7 do not. This lack of consistency is insufficient to discount the validity of the insights of the medieval commentators, and indeed we do find a comment by Rashi on Ecclesiastes 9:11 which accords with his comments cited earlier. In Ecclesiastes 9:11 we find the infinitive absolute form with *waw* וַיֵּרְאֵה following the *qaṭal* שָׁבַתִּי as follows:

שָׁבַתִּי וַיֵּרְאֵה תַּחַת-הַשָּׁמַשׁ כִּי לֹא לַקְּלַיִם הַמְּרוֹץ

‘I have further observed under the sun that the race is not won by the swift.’

Rashi comments on וַיֵּרְאֵה שָׁבַתִּי with the words זָכוֹר. We have already seen the significance of the comment זָכוֹר, and accordingly Rashi here discerns that the Preacher's wisdom was surely based on continuous and prolonged observation and contemplation.

²⁶ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 364.

²⁷ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 364.

There is also a relevant comment by Rashi on Ecclesiastes 8:9, where the infinitive absolute *qatal* follows the *qatal*:

אַת-כָּל-זֶה רְאִיתִי וְנָתַחַן אֶת-לְבִי לְכֹל-מַעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַשׁ
 ‘I saw all this and I put my mind to all that is done under the sun.’

Rashi comments here that history repeats itself: “whenever a man overpowers another, it turns to his own harm; so it was with ‘Amaleq, with Pharaoh and with Nevuḳadne’šsar”. Prolonged contemplation by the Preacher leads him to the conclusion that his observations will never change.

Rubinstein’s fifth example is from I Chronicles 5:20, and his sixth example – the final example of the six he chooses whereby “this redundancy of function can best be illustrated”²⁸ – is Ezekiel 23:47. Once again, in the absence of relevant medieval comments we will postpone discussion of these verses until later.

As stated above, Rubinstein²⁹ argues that the VIA construction (*waw* plus infinitive absolute as equivalent of a preceding form) occurs in forty-five passages, and so far we have discussed three of his examples where we have also found medieval exegesis. Joüon and Muraoka³⁰ also present a list of examples, and from examination of these passages it emerges that one may uphold the idea that the nuance of continuity and repetition may be discerned in the great majority of the examples, although not in all of them. I would like to discuss a selection of these examples, beginning with examples where we find medieval exegesis.

In Exodus chapter 18 we read of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who gives advice regarding the adjudication of disputes. Verse 22 reads as follows:

וְשֹׁפְטוּ אֶת-הָעָם בְּכֹל-עֵת
 כָּל-הַדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל יָבִיאוּ אֵלַי
 וְכֹל-הַדָּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפְּטוּ הֵם
 וְהַקָּל מֵעֲלֵיךָ וְנִשְׂאוּ אִתָּךְ:

‘They shall judge the people at all times, and they shall bring every major matter to you, and every minor matter they shall judge, and it will ease from upon you, and they shall bear with you.’

Here we find the *waw* plus *hifil* infinitive absolute *וְהַקָּל* sequential to the *yiqtol* *וְשֹׁפְטוּ* which is sequential to the *yiqtol* *יָבִיאוּ* which is sequential to the *weqatal* *וְנִשְׂאוּ*, so the five verbs in the verse present a sequence of *weqatal*, *yiqtol*, *yiqtol*, *waw* plus infinitive absolute and *weqatal*. Rashi comments on the *waw* plus infinitive absolute as follows:

²⁸ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 363.

²⁹ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 363.

³⁰ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123x.

והקל, כמו וְהִקְבֵּד אֶת-לִבּוֹ (לעיל ח: יא) וְהִכּוֹת אֶת-מוֹאָב (מלכים ב: ג: כד) לשון הווה. וְהִקְבֵּד denotes ongoing action,³¹ like the word וְהִקְבֵּד in the phrase “and he kept hardening his heart” (Exodus 8:11) and like the word וְהִכּוֹת in the phrase “and he kept smiting Midian” (II Kings 3:24).’

We may also note Rashi’s consistency here, since he refers back to our starting point of Exodus 8:11, ‘and Pharaoh continued hardening his heart’, where he also quoted II Kings 3:24. In the context of Exodus 18:22 it is absolutely clear that Jethro’s advice is intended for the long term!

In Leviticus chapter 25 we read about the Sabbatical Years and the Year of the Jubilee. In verse 14 we read:

וְכִי-תִמְכְּרוּ מִמְכָּר לְעַמִּיתְךָ אוֹ קָנָה מִיַּד עַמִּיתְךָ אֶל-תּוֹנֵי אִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו:
 ‘When you make a sale to your fellow or when you buy land from the hand of your fellow, do not victimise one another.’

In the Hebrew, the verb ‘when you buy’ is קָנָה, which is *qal* infinitive absolute, apparently coming in place of *yiqtol* since it is sequential to a *yiqtol* וְתִמְכְּרוּ and not preceded by *waw*, since it follows אוֹ ‘or’.

Here, the commentary by Ibn Ezra presents a different approach from that of Rashi. Ibn Ezra comments as follows on the infinitive absolute form קָנָה:

שם הפועל. ויחסר מקור (מקום) קניתם קנה. וכן זכור את יום השבת. ורבים כמוהם

Note the disputed reading³² – מקור (מקום). We may translate as follows:³³

‘This word is a verbal noun. Scripture here employs brevity, instead of supplementing the infinitive with a verb in the indicative mood. The same construction appears in “Remember the Sabbath day” (Exodus 20:8) as well as in many other places.’

In other words, Ibn Ezra takes the view that we have here an elliptical expression, where we would have expected the infinitive absolute to be followed by the *yiqtol*, קָנָה תִּמְכְּרוּ. This use of infinitive absolute before or after a finite verb usually marks some kind of emphasis³⁴ and not necessarily just a nuance of

³¹ See Englander, 1939, 408–409. Englander is aware of only one instance when the term הווה is used by Rashi for a participle form (Genesis 15:17) and he explains that “R very frequently applies the term הווה to various verbal forms when he believes that such forms have the force of customary action” (p. 392). Englander further explains that the term הווה “is applied very often to a form in the perfect and imperfect tense, to an infinitive absolute, or to a participle when R deems such forms to have the force of a frequentative or customary action, or to a verb that R deems to have the force of long continuance”. Furthermore, surprisingly, Rashi seldom refers to the participle as having the הווה force, but in his comments Rashi sometimes equates the force of an infinitive absolute (or of an imperfect or perfect) with the force of a participle.

³² Benyowitz, 2006, pp. 222–223 and n. 37 there.

³³ Shachter, 1986, p. 138.

³⁴ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123.

continuity and repetition; note here the comment of Joüon and Muraoka: “it is only from the context that the nuance added by the infinitive can be deduced in each case”.³⁵ However Ibn Ezra’s reference here to Exodus 20:8 ‘Remember the Sabbath day’ (see discussion above) may indicate that in this verse (Leviticus 25:14) he does indeed discern some nuance of continuity or repetition in the command not to oppress one’s brother in the actions of buying and selling.

Ibn Ezra is consistent in this approach to the infinitive absolute because he comments also on Daniel 9:5, where the *waw* plus infinitive absolute follows a series of *qaṭals*:

קָטָאנוּ וְעָוִינוּ וְהִרְשָׁעָנוּ וּמָרְדָנוּ וְסוֹר מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ
 ‘We have sinned and we have gone astray and we have acted wickedly
 and we have been rebellious and have turned aside from Your
 commandments and Your judgments.’

Here, Ibn Ezra comments as follows:

וסור שם הפועל כמו זכור את יום השבת והטעם סור סרנו

Ibn Ezra explains that the word *וסור* is the infinitive absolute form and has the same force as *זכור* in Exodus 20:8 ‘Remember the Sabbath day’; as we saw above, Rashi explained that the use of infinitive absolute here implies the continuous nature of this command. Ibn Ezra also suggests that here too the infinitive absolute is elliptical and we should understand it as if it were followed by the *qaṭal* *סור סרנו* ‘we have indeed (continually and repeatedly) turned aside’.

Ibn Ezra’s approach is evident also in his comment on Zechariah 7:5, which is part of an oracle by Zechariah on the lack of value in fasting in the absence of social virtues.

אָמַר אֵל-כָּל-עַם הָאָרֶץ וְאֵל-הַכֹּהֲנִים לֵאמֹר כִּי-צַמְתֶּם וְסָפַד בְּחִמְיָשִׁי וּבִשְׁבִיעִי וְזֶה שְׁבָעִים
 שָׁנָה הַצּוֹם צַמְתִּי אָנֹכִי:
 ‘Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, saying: when you
 fasted and mourned in the fifth (month) and in the seventh (month) even
 these seventy years, did you fast for Me, even for Me?’

The Hebrew has the *qal qaṭal* form *צַמְתֶּם* ‘you fasted’ followed by *waw* plus infinitive absolute *וְסָפַד*, and again Ibn Ezra comments that *וְסָפַד* is an abbreviated expression and should be understood as *qaṭal* *וְסָפַדְתֶּם סָפַד* followed by infinitive absolute:

שם הפועל וככה הוא וספדתם ספוד והנה אחז דרך קצרה

³⁵ Joüon and Muraoka, 1996, §123d.

Ibn Ezra does not add a specific comment hinting at a nuance of continuity in the context here, but we do see the consistency of his approach to the occurrence of infinitive absolute forms without finite forms, and the context itself clearly implies that the people were accustomed to fasting on a regular basis, every fifth and seventh month.

Jeremiah 14:1–10 describes a prayer to G-d to end the prolonged drought, and verse 5 describes the effect of this drought on the animal kingdom.

כִּי גַם-אֵילַת בְּשָׂדֶה יִלְדֶה וְעִזּוֹב כִּי לֹא-הָיָה דָּשָׂא:

‘Even the hind abandons her young in the open at birth, for there is not a blade of grass anywhere’.³⁶

We see here *waw* plus infinitive absolute וְעִזּוֹב sequential to the *qal qatal* יִלְדֶה ‘she gives birth’, that is, ‘she gives birth and abandons’.

David Qimḥi comments on וְעִזּוֹב as follows:

מקור במקום עבר כאילו אמר וְעִזָּבָה וכן (יחזקאל א יד) וְהִסִּיזוּ רְצוּא נְשׁוּב כֵּאִילוֹ אָמַר רְצוּ וְנָשׁוּב:

Qimḥi here explains that the infinitive absolute וְעִזּוֹב is used in place of *qatal* יִלְדֶה and he compares this to Ezekiel 1:14, which describes the Living Beings (Ḥayyot) in Ezekiel’s vision as ‘running and returning like the appearance of a lightning flash’ and where there are two infinitive absolute forms רְצוּא and נְשׁוּב instead of *qatal* forms רָצוּ and נָשְׁבוּ. In both contexts (Jeremiah and Ezekiel) we can discern the nuance of continuity and repetition. Jeremiah describes a prolonged and agonising period of drought, while Ezekiel describes the repeated movements of the Ḥayyot. Qimḥi himself does not say anything specific here about the nuance of continuity, but he does refer the reader to Ezekiel 1:14, for which Rashi describes the continuous and repeated movements of the Ḥayyot as follows:

פִּירְשׁוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ רְצוּא נְשׁוּב כְּלֶהֱבֵת הַכְּבִשָּׁן שִׁיּוּצָאָה תְּמִיד מִפִּי הַכְּבִשָּׁן וּמִמְהֵרֹת לְחִזּוֹר וְלִכְנֹס

‘Our Sages explained (BT Ḥagigah 13b): “they would run and return like the flame of a furnace, which constantly shoots out of the mouth of the furnace and hastens back to enter”.’

It is now time to return to the examples of infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form brought by Rubinstein and Joüon and Muraoka where we did not find any medieval exegesis. We argue that it is possible to apply the insights of the medieval exegetes as described above to other examples in the biblical narrative. The medieval exegetes demonstrated a marked tendency to

³⁶ McKane, 1986, p. 315.

discern a nuance of continuity and/or repetition in contexts where the infinitive absolute occurs. As the medieval comments are not based on the critical methodology of today's research, it is possible to suggest that this nuance of continuity or repetition could apply to the action expressed by the infinitive absolute itself, but it could also apply to other actions or situations in the immediate context, including the situation which results from the action expressed by the infinitive absolute form.

Rubinstein's third example to illustrate redundancy of function of the VIA construction is Jeremiah 19:13 where he points out that Jeremiah 32:29 "uses finite verbs only to express a similar idea".³⁷ In the absence of any relevant medieval exegesis on Jeremiah 19:13, it is nevertheless feasible to apply the linguistic insight of continuity and repetition of action to the use of the *hifil* infinitive absolute form with *waw* וְהִסֵּךְ 'poured libations' which follows the *piel qatal* קָטְרוּ 'made offerings':

לְכֹל הַבָּתִּים אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל-גִּגְתֵיהֶם לְכֹל צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהִסֵּךְ נְסֻכִים לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
 'all the houses where they made offerings on their roofs to the whole
 host of Heaven and poured libations to other gods'

The infinitive absolute form following the *qatal* here clearly refers to a prolonged and continuous period of repeated idolatrous behaviour by the Judeans for which Jeremiah rebukes the people, threatening to make these very houses (where idolatry had been practiced) into 'Tophet'.³⁸

Rubinstein sees significance in the fact that in Jeremiah 32:29, where this information is repeated, the infinitive absolute וְהִסֵּךְ is not used again, but the *hifil qatal* וְהִסְכּוּ:

אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל-גִּגְוֹתֵיהֶם לְבַעַל וְהִסְכּוּ נְסֻכִים

However, here it could be argued that this is a repetition of information already given, a situation where *qatal* is customarily used.³⁹ In any event, lack of complete consistency in use of infinitive absolute is not a convincing argument to disregard the medieval insights here.

Rubinstein's fifth example is from I Chronicles 5:20:

וַעֲקוּ בְמִלְחָמָה וַנְּעַתּוּר לָהֶם כִּי-בָטְחוּ בּוֹ
 'for they cried to G-d in the battle and He was entreated by them,
 because they put their trust in Him.'

³⁷ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 364.

³⁸ See II Kings 23:10 when Josiah defiled Tophet, which was a large place of fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom where children were burned in the Molek rite.

³⁹ Cohen, 2009, unit 26.

In this case, the infinitive absolute *nifal* נִפְעָתוֹר follows the *qal qatal* זָעַקוּ, and in the absence of relevant medieval comments we can apply the linguistic insight of continuity and repetition and suggest that after repeated calls for help by the East Jordanian tribes and their prolonged trust in Him, G-d allowed Himself to be entreated; this was a continuous and prolonged process rather than a quick one-time event. However in II Chronicles 33:13 we find similar phraseology in the account of the repentance of the wicked king Manasseh, and here we find *wayyiqtol* rather than the VIA construction⁴⁰ וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר ‘(Manasseh) prayed to Him and He allowed Himself to be entreated’. Here it is perhaps difficult to suggest that the linguistic insight of continuity and repetition could be applied to the former example of the prayer of the people but not to the latter example of the prayer of the wicked Manasseh, although just maybe there was a reluctance to credit Manasseh with as much sincerity as the East Jordanian tribes; in the immediately preceding verses (11–13) we learnt that Manasseh entreated the Lord only when he was in great distress, suffering imprisonment and great humiliation. Commentators have noted that this passage about Manasseh’s captivity and repentance in II Chronicles has no parallel in the book of Kings and may even be “pure invention”.⁴¹ Also, Peake comments that “the unqualified condemnation of the apostate Manasseh in 2Kg 21:10ff and by his contemporary Jeremiah (15:4) raises doubts about the historical probability of his repentance and restoration to divine favour”.⁴²

Rubinstein’s sixth example (the final of the six he chooses whereby “this redundancy of function can best be illustrated”⁴³) is Ezekiel 23:47, where the VIA וַיִּבְרָא follows the *qal weqatal* וַיִּרְגְּמוּ. Rubinstein compares this to Joshua 17:15, where the same root letters occur in *piel weqatal* וַיִּבְרָא following the *qal* imperative עֲלֶה. There is no relevant medieval exegesis here, but the very different contexts in Ezekiel and Joshua are relevant.

Joshua chapter 17 relates the complaint of the Josephites to Joshua that their allotment was not sufficient for their numbers, and in Joshua 17:15 comes Joshua’s suggestion to the Josephites, ‘if you are a numerous people, go up to the forest country and clear an area for yourselves there’, where the Hebrew has *qal* imperative followed by *weqatal* וַיִּבְרָא עֲלֶה to express a specific one-time immediate command.

Ezekiel chapter 23 presents the harlotrous sisters Oholah and Oholibah as a metaphor for the idolatrous population of Samaria and Jerusalem who merit destruction. In verse 46, the VIA וַיִּתֵּן follows the *hifil* imperative הִעֲלֶה; then in verse 47, which is Rubinstein’s sixth example, the VIA וַיִּבְרָא follows the *weqatal* וַיִּרְגְּמוּ:

⁴⁰ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 364.

⁴¹ Curtis and Madsen, 1910, pp. 497–498.

⁴² Peake, 1962, p. 368 n.

⁴³ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 363.

וְרָגְמוּ עָלֵיהֶן אֲבָן קָהֵל וַיִּבְרָא אוֹתָהֶן בְּחַרְבוֹתָם

‘Let the assembly pelt them with stones and cut them down with their swords.’

Here, in contrast to the passage in Joshua (where the *weqatal* וַיִּבְרָא expressed the one-time command to clear a forest), the VIA construction וַיִּבְרָא suggests the permanent nature of the annihilation of the adulterous/idolatrous sisters. Of course, it is true that the forest would also be permanently cleared, but one might suggest that the medieval exegetes were sensitive to the implied constant vigilance required to keep Israel far from idolatry. Again, Rubinstein’s discussion takes no account of the linguistic insight suggested by the medieval exegetes to account for the use of infinitive absolute in place of a finite verb.

Another example of the infinitive absolute occurs in Jeremiah chapter 37, where we learn of the imprisonment of the prophet Jeremiah during the reign of King Zedekiah. In 37:21 we learn that Jeremiah is placed in the court of the guard and receives a daily allowance of bread; in this verse the *waw* plus infinitive absolute וַיִּתֵּן is sequential to the *wayyiqtol* וַיִּפְקְדוּ as follows:

וַיִּפְקְדוּ אֶת-יְרֵמְיָהוּ בְּחֹצֵר הַמַּטְרֵה וַיִּתֵּן לוֹ כֶּכֶר-לֶחֶם לַיּוֹם

‘They placed Jeremiah in the court of the guard and gave him a daily loaf of bread.’

There is no relevant medieval exegesis on this verse, but the action of giving a daily allowance of bread was clearly a repeated and continuous action, although we can also observe that the use of infinitive absolute here does leave open the question of who exactly delivered the bread.

The prophet Haggai (chapter 1) describes desolate conditions after the Return from Exile, which prevented the people from embarking on the rebuilding of the Temple. Haggai clearly describes a prolonged period of desolation, urging the people to embark on the rebuilding because then their condition would improve. In Haggai 1:6 we find the *hifil* infinitive absolute and *waw* וַיִּבְרָא sequential to the *qatal* וַיִּרְעֲתֶם, and then we find three more infinitive absolute forms in succession in place of the *qatals* אָכַל, שָׁתוּ and לְבוֹשׁ:

וַיִּרְעֲתֶם הַרְבֵּה וַיִּבְרָא מְעַט אָכַל וַיִּבְרָא לְשִׁבְעָה שָׁתוּ וַיִּבְרָא לְבוֹשׁ וַיִּבְרָא לֶחֶם לֹא:

‘You have sown much and bring in little. You eat without being satiated. You drink without getting your fill. You dress, and it has no warmth.’

There is no relevant medieval exegesis on the use of these infinitive absolute forms in Haggai 1:6, but they can be understood as expressing continuity by analogy with the above-quoted medieval interpretations and given that the context was clearly one of a prolonged period of desolation.

So far this article has presented the insights of medieval Jewish exegetes on the use of infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding finite form. We also observed that even in the absence of medieval comments, this insight is often relevant.

However we cannot assert that this linguistic insight is in all cases applicable and we may illustrate this point with a couple of examples as follows.

The cycle of Gideon stories (Judges chapters 6–8) includes Gideon’s battle against the Midianite camp when ‘they sounded the horns and smashed the jars’ (7:19) in an effort to frighten the enemy. In this verse, the *waw* plus infinitive absolute *וַיִּתְקְעוּ* ‘and they smashed’ is sequential to the *wayyiqtol* *וַיִּתְקְעוּ* ‘and they blew’.

וַיִּתְקְעוּ בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת וַיִּנְפְּוּ הַכַּדִּים

‘They blew the trumpets and smashed the jugs.’

It is true that blowing the trumpets and smashing the jugs perhaps involved a series of repeated short actions, but overall this was clearly a one-time battle, so the reason for the use of the infinitive absolute here in the book of Judges is debatable. We may note here that Fassberg cites Judges 7:19 to illustrate Tur-Sinai’s theory that the original wording would have included two infinitive absolute forms functioning adverbially – *וַיִּתְקְעוּ בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת תְּקוּעַ וַיִּנְפְּוּ* – but the second infinitive absolute *תְּקוּעַ* was subsequently deleted.⁴⁴

Our second example is in the book of the prophet Zechariah. Zechariah 3:1–10 contains the fourth vision of Zechariah, which describes the purification of the high priest Joshua. In 3:4 we find the *waw* plus infinitive absolute *וַיִּהְיֶה* sequential to the *qatal* *וַיִּהְיֶה*:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו רְאֵה הַעֲבֹרְתִי מֵעֲלֶיךָ עֹנֶה וְהִלְבַּשׁ אֹתָךְ מַחְלָצוֹת

‘[the angel] answered and said to those standing before him, “remove the filthy clothes from upon him” and he said to him: “see, I have removed your guilt from you, and I will clothe you with robes”.’

The use of the *waw* plus infinitive absolute *וַיִּהְיֶה* actually avoids the question of whether the angel or those standing before him clothe Joshua. “Indeed, so neutral a form is the infinitive absolute that in the case of Zechariah 3:4 it may even have the force of a passive, i.e. ‘and you shall be clothed’.”⁴⁵ Here we could argue that the clothing of Joshua was a one-time action and that the nuance of continuity is absent. On the other hand, we could argue that Joshua would now be in a permanent state of purity.

These latter examples (Judges 7:19 and Zechariah 3:4) illustrate that the medieval insights contribute greatly to our discussions and understanding of

⁴⁴ Fassberg, 2008, p. 55 and n. 42 there; Tur-Sinai, 1954, p. 323.

⁴⁵ Rubinstein, 1952, p. 366.

the use of infinitive absolute in place of a finite verb, but their insights cannot be taken to answer all of our questions. We have seen that in many examples the nuance of continuity and/or repetition can certainly be discerned in a context where infinitive absolute is used in place of a finite verb and that it was the medieval Jewish exegetes who were sensitive to this feature. However, this insight cannot be definitively applied in every case.

In conclusion it is our hope that the voices of the medieval exegetes of the biblical narrative will not be forgotten despite the fact that they lacked the critical methodologies of modern scholars. Modern scholars have indeed successfully traced the ancient origin of the use of infinitive absolute as the equivalent of a preceding form, but they have agreed neither on the reasons for its relatively frequent appearance in the biblical narratives of the Second Temple Period and for its less frequent appearance in the narratives of the First Temple Period, nor on the construction's semantics. These modern scholars have, however, ignored the sensitivity and insights of the medieval exegetes who discerned the addition of a nuance of continuity and/or repetition in the context of the narratives concerned, if not in every case, nevertheless in a notable number of cases.

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Implementation as Innovation: The Arabic Terms *Qiṣṣa* and *Ḳabar* in Medieval Karaite Interpretation of Biblical Narrative and its Redaction History

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1 Preface¹

The notion that the Hebrew Bible was formed, in its entirety, as the result of a lengthy and complex process of literary composition and redaction is typical of the era that ushered in modernity and its critical revision of religious dogmas, beginning around the middle of the 18th century. This era led the way to our current understanding that the biblical text embodies a collection of varied, contradictory and inter-polemical strands and sources, which reflect different currents of thought as well as circles and periods of creativity in the history of ancient Israel, put together by generations of redactors, until they reached their final canonised form. Modern criticism, especially from the late 19th century, introduced a new focus on biblical genres (and subgenres), and their connection to social functions (*Sitz im Leben*), such as the relationship between biblical law, the priesthood and Temple; biblical historiography, the royal court and its scribes; epic and popular story-tellers; prophetic circles and prophetic texts. Novel tools were developed for analysing these genres, especially for comparing them with those of other Semitic languages and Ancient Near Eastern texts which were discovered during the same period, and for tracing the influence of these on the biblical corpus.

The history of modern biblical scholarship is generally well known and has been charted out in many surveys, guides and monographs.² I mention it by

¹ To Geoffrey, dear and admired scholar and teacher, may you prosper and double your wisdom עד מאה ועשרים, leading us, your students, in its path. For you are to us, as always, the ideal embodiment of “the teacher who [if he] is indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of his wisdom but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind” (Gibran Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*).

² For recent works relating to biblical genre and social functions, and a re-evaluation of Herman Gunkel’s pioneering notions see Carr, 2005; Kawashima, 2004; Polak, 1999; Polak, 2003; Polak, 2011; Schniedewind, 2004.

way of introduction, in order to stress that medieval Jewish exegetes of the Islamic world provide an interesting precedent in paving a unique path of understanding the Hebrew Bible as a distinct literary product. They too seem to have realised that its text was the outcome of a long and complex literary process, even though their comparative tools were far more limited, and confined to the Arabic and Aramaic languages and literatures alone.

The medieval pairing of Bible and literature occurred due to the rapid change experienced by these Jews, especially between the 9th and the 12th centuries, through which they experienced a transition from oral modes of Jewish learning and study to written modes. This resulted from their encounter with a highly literate medieval Arabic culture at large, and their growing use of Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic (Arabic written in Hebrew letters) compositions, in day-to-day discourse and intellectual exchange. In various discussions, I have tried to elucidate the wider theory through which the Judaeo-Arabic exegetes conceived of the various components incorporated into the composition of the biblical text and its editing process.³ This article focuses on the use of the Arabic term *qiṣṣa* as a technical term for biblical ‘story/narrative’ in Judaeo-Arabic exegesis, and so contributes to a more detailed understanding of the medieval exegetes’ conceptualisation of the biblical story as a structural-thematic unit that forms part of the final form of the biblical text.

As is well known, terms such as ‘literature’, ‘narrative’, ‘prose’, ‘text’, ‘literary text’ and ‘discourse’ hold different meanings in different periods, cultures and languages, but they also share a common denominator. In classical Arabic literature a ‘narrative’ is usually named by terms such as *ḵabar*, *ḥikāya* and *qiṣṣa* (pl. *qiṣaṣ*) and some biblical characters mentioned in the Qur’ān are already associated, generically, with particular ‘stories’. The plural *qiṣaṣ* designates narratives in the Qur’ān. It appears in Sura 3 verse 62, in reference to the stories of Jesus; in Sura 7 verse 176, in reference to the stories of the Prophet Muhammad, and most notably in Sura 12, the ‘Joseph Sura’, which actually begins with the self-referential observation “*naquṣṣu ‘alayka aḥsan al-qiṣaṣ*” (‘let us tell you the most beautiful of stories’). The narrative on the birth of Moses, reflected in Sura 28, gives that sura its name, Surat al-Qiṣaṣ. Verbal forms of the same root appear in other places. The term *ḵabar*, on the other hand, appears five times in the Qur’ān, in the broader sense of ‘news’, ‘information’, ‘rumours’ or ‘traditions’. In traditional Islamic Hadith literature, the term *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*’ designates a subgenre of stories connected with Jewish characters, also known from the Bible or the Midrash.⁴

In the medieval period, the genre of story or novelette (short novel) gained a place of honour in Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic culture (as can be seen, for example, in texts such as *One Thousand and One Nights*). Jews for whom

³ See Polliack 2005; Polliack, 2008; Polliack, 2012.

⁴ Examples of discussions of these common stories and elements are, for instance, Firestone, 1989; Firestone, 1990; Neuwirth, 2006.

Arabic gradually became the main language of speech and writing are known to have read genuine Arabic prose from an early period, as reflected by Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic script copies of parts of *One Thousand and One Nights*, *Sirat Antar* and *Kalila wa-Dimna*. It appears that Jews began to compose stories and novellas in Hebrew from this epoch due to the influence of Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic forms, and so innovated a genre that had hardly any precedent in ancient rabbinic literature.⁵ In their Judaeo-Arabic compositions, Jews used the term *qiṣṣa* as a generic title for literary works relating to biblical characters, as in קצת אברהם (the story of Abraham) and קצת יוסף (the story of Joseph). They also applied it to other figures from Jewish history, for example קצת חנה (the story of Hanna and her seven sons). Parts of these stories have been preserved in fragments from the Cairo Genizah, including the opening term '... קצת'. Such stories were also incorporated in various medieval anthologies, re-workings or adaptations, wider collections of stories, the most famous of which is *Kitāb al-faraj ba'd al-shidda* known in its medieval Hebrew translation as חיבור יפה מן הישועה (*The Book of Comfort*) by Rabbi Nissim Gaon, or to give him his Arabic name, Ibn Shahīn. This composition, widely attested in the Genizah, incorporates narrative re-workings of Talmudic and Muslim sources, and its structure is reliant upon the established Arabic genre *faraj ba'd al-shidda* ('success after hardship').⁶ Such works show a fine level of combination between elements taken from aggadic literature, especially of the late midrash, often widened into full narrative plot structures, and elements from the Arabic story or novelette. They also demonstrate a new openness and receptiveness on the part of Jewish audiences to the independent story genre. This change occurred following the Jews' initial adoption of Arabic literary models in Judaeo-Arabic works, and hence it permeated into their Hebrew compositions.

⁵ With regard to the way in which medieval stories, disconnected from Bible exegesis or halachic discussion, are differentiated as an independent literary genre from the genre of rabbinic Aggadah, which served as an illustration to exegesis or halachic discussion, consider the observations of Dan, 1974, pp. 15–16 (my emphasis):

דפי התלמוד והמדרשים מלאים וגדושים סיפורים ... ואולם כל השפע הזה אינו אלא בן־לווייה לתכלית העיקרית של התלמוד והמדרש – פסיקת הלכה ומדרש הכתובים. הסיפור הוא רק אילוסטרציה, דוגמה, עיטור וסטייה מן העניין, ואינו תכלית לעצמה, עניינם של החכמים בסיפור לא היה רב ... המצב השתנה שינוי גמור בראשית ימי הביניים. מבחינה ספרותית התהליך העיקרי שהתחולל במאות הראשונות של ימי הביניים, בתקופת הגאונים ובראשית התרבות היהודית באירופה, הוא התגבשותן של מסגרות ספרותיות נפרדות לחיבורים הדנים בענייני הלכה, עיון, מוסר, לשון, פרשנות, שירה, מדעי הטבע וכדומה. כך נשברה האחדות החיצונית של הספרות התלמודית-מדרשית והחלו להתפתח תחומי יצירה שונים כגופים עצמאיים. התפתחותן של הסיפור וגיבושו כדי סוג ספרותי עצמאי הוא אפוא חלק מתהליך כולל, ובודאי היתה השפעה הדדית בין תחומי הספרות השונים בהתפתחות זו.

See also further discussions on this issue by Yasif, 1994, pp. 271–310; Hasson Kenat, 2012; Lavee, 2010; Lebedev, 1993; Tobi, 2010.

⁶ See Nissim, 1970 and cf. Rotman, 2010.

This general background makes it clearer why in the systemic Bible exegesis, which flourished as a distinct field of writing and expertise in medieval Judaeo-Arabic literature, commentators frequently use the term *qiṣṣa* in order to define wide discourse units in the biblical text (which nowadays we would term sagas, cycles, narratives, stories or plots). Often, these units have a connection to the life and actions of a particular biblical character (as they would in *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*). Sometimes these exegetes also employ the term *qiṣṣa* in relation to smaller thematic units or narrative excursuses, which we would identify with chapters and subchapters. In the 10th–11th century commentaries of Saadia Gaon and Shemuel ben Hofni Gaon and later Rabbanite exegetes, as well as in those by Salmon ben Yerhuam, Yefet ben ‘Eli and later Karaite exegetes, we find many occurrences of the term *qiṣṣa*. It often serves as a proper title or as a heading of narratives about central biblical heroes – such as קצת משה, קצת מרים, קצת מע אכותה, קצת יוסף מע אכולם,⁷ קצת אבשלום, קצת יואב צרויה, קצת בני שאול – or narratives on more secondary characters – such as קצת בני שאול and קצת יואש.

In general, it seems that the Jewish exegetes of the Islamic milieu applied to the Hebrew Bible a wide literary category with which they were familiar both from general Arabic literature as well as from the Qur’ān and its exegesis, and even from Judaeo-Arabic literary, non-biblical compositions. Yet, this is not only a question of terminology transference. These exegetes also appear to have cast the biblical sources into a narrative mould and perceived it in terms of narrative and storytelling, which were highly developed in their Arabic milieu. Thus, *qiṣṣa* came to designate, in their working definition, a genre relaying credible historical or historiographical information, on the one hand, while still being fashioned by artistic design and ornament, on the other hand, in the ways of fiction.

In this context, we should also go back to discuss the additional Arabic term *aḵbār* (the plural of *ḵabar*), which often appears in conjunction with *qiṣaṣ* in Islamic sources, designating ‘narrative’ in a wide sense. However there are times when in Islamic sources the terms remain distinct: *qiṣṣa* more often designates historical narrative materials, while *ḵabar* denotes general information related in tradition or oral tales. The Judaeo-Arabic sources appear to reflect some awareness of this distinction. They employ the term *qiṣṣa* in describing a thematic unit within the story, or the entire narrative unit and its boundaries, in connection with a specific biblical character (as explained above). The term *ḵabar*, however, may indeed describe more ephemeral traditions, probably oral, which were received by the biblical authors and transcribed or transformed into written form.

⁷ Note that in the Qur’ān (Sura 12:7) the reference is to يوسف وإخوته (Joseph ‘and his brothers’ as opposed to ‘with his brothers’). For manuscript sources of these and further examples, see Polliack, 2014.

2 Discussion of selected examples

In the following, I offer a short discussion of a few examples of the use of *qiṣṣa* culled from various biblical commentaries by the great Karaite commentator, Yefet ben 'Eli, who was active in Jerusalem in the second part of the 10th century. Since Yefet's work tends to anthologise the opinions of earlier and contemporary Karaite exegetes, as well as deliver his own analysis, it serves as an indication of the wider usage of the *qiṣṣa* terminology in this period. Nevertheless, an additional study into the surviving works of his contemporaries, which lies outside the limits of this article, is necessary in order to establish the wider frequency of these concepts as elaborated in Yefet's work.

2.1 Moses narrative⁸

In the introduction to his commentary on Exodus, Yefet explains that the whole of Exodus includes the continued presentation of the history of the people of Israel, which began in the days of Noah and the patriarchs. Exodus continues a historic chain of events that also explains the dependence between fulfilling the covenant and promise made to Abraham (Genesis 15) and the test encompassing four hundred years of exile and enslavement. At a later stage, Yefet elaborates five major themes of the book of Exodus, which represent major narrative focuses, in his view, including:

- a. the background of the enslavement and its reasons;
- b. the details of the journeys of Israelites upon leaving Egypt;
- c. the revelation at Sinai and the plans for the tabernacle;
- d. the golden calf incident and the covenant with Israel;
- e. the building of the tabernacle and the Shekinah entering it.

Yefet goes on to identify small narrative units that feed the wider narrative focuses, like circles within circles. Hence, he explains that Moses' naming of his son Gershom (Exodus 2:22), due to his grief over losing connection with his native country and people, represents a wider narrative feature or theme, as follows:

אשתק לה אסם מן גנס קצתה ווגמה עלי מפארהק מולדה ועשירה ליערף אנהו כאן
מגמום עלי מפארהקה

'The name (Gershom) is derived **from the nature/type of his narrative** (*qiṣṣa*, i.e. Moses' personal story) and his sorrow over being severed from his clan and family, in order to indicate that he (Moses) was woeful over this separation.'

⁸ For the Arabic original of the examples in this section, see MS RNL Yevr.-Arab I 0054; further discussion is in Polliack, 2014.

Beyond this insight into the ‘typical’ storyline of the Moses narrative, namely, one involving communal as well as personal exile, this comment also shows Yefet’s understanding of the methods of character portrayal in biblical narrative, which include the naming of offspring as an indirect expression of (and way of moulding) the character’s psychological situation, inner life and aspirations.

At a later point in the commentary, Yefet refers to the whole narrative of the life of Moses with the expression קצת משה *qiṣṣat moše*. The personal story of Moses, and particularly the story of his birth, he explains, is a foreshadowing of the collective story of the Israelites. The narrator/editor (termed מְדַוֵּן *mudawwin* here and in many other works by Yefet) created a linking between the narrative of the life of Moses and the narrative of the salvation of Israel from Egypt.⁹

According to Yefet, the intricate interlacing of the two *qiṣaṣ* was intended to show that the birth of a saviour (Moses) will make good the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15 (wherein it is revealed to the Patriarch that Israel will be redeemed from Egypt after four hundred years of slavery), as is partly explained in the following:

כאן אלמדוון אדכלל פי וסט קצה ישראל קצה משה ליורי אן גזרת כל הבן הילוד זאלת בולאדה משה תם תמם קצה משה מקדמה למעאני יחתאג אליהא פימא בעד תם רגע אלמדוון אלי קצה ישראל ליורי כיף אסתחקו אלגאלה מן מצרים.

‘The narrator/editor inserted the **story (*qiṣṣa*) of Moses** in the middle of the **story (*qiṣṣa*) of Israel** to show how the edict concerning the (killing of the) firstborn male came to an end with the birth of Moses. Then he completed the **story (*qiṣṣa*) of Moses** as an introduction to issues he needed to relate later on. Then the narrator/editor went back to the **story (*qiṣṣa*) of Israel** to show how they were worthy of being redeemed from Egypt.’

2.2 Jethro narrative¹⁰

Yefet explains, in a similar way, the incorporation of the story of Jethro (‘קצת יתרו’) within the Moses/Exodus sequence, in his comment on Exodus 18:1:

ואכתלף אלעלמא פי תדוין הדה אלקצה פי הדא אלמוצע.

‘(Know that this story was written/included (*dawana*) in the Torah in order to relate some important ideas ...) there is a dispute between scholars about the inclusion/writing (*tadwīn*) of this story (*hadīhi al-qiṣṣa*) in this place.’

⁹ On the narrator/editor’s use of truncating devices, which enable detailed and deliberate forms of elision (*ikṭiṣar*), see Polliack, 2012.

¹⁰ For the Arabic original of the examples in this section, see MS RNL Yevr.-Arab I 0054; further discussion is in Polliack, 2014.

Yefet then continues, in his lengthy commentary on the story of Jethro, to explain it as a separate unit, which originally existed on its own or as part of a separate narrative cycle, but that the narrator/editor (designated here again by the term *mudawwin*) incorporated the Jethro narrative in its current place within the Moses/Exodus sequence “for a specific reason”. Yefet partly elaborates on this reason by describing the disagreement among exegetes about the considerations that led the *mudawwin* to edit the story of Jethro into the main narrative strand (Israel’s salvation from Egypt) at this particular point, thus truncating it and inserting an episode that juts out because of its separate theme and hero.

Commenting on Exodus 18:27 (“Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and he went off to his own country”), Yefet emphasises that the words “and he went off to his own country” make reference to a matter which “the Torah (text) ‘skipped’ recounting at this place, and which was written/redacted elsewhere” (מעני אלתצרתה אלתוראה האהנא ודונה פי מוצע אכר). The elided matter Yefet wishes to refer to seems to be the information recounted in Numbers 10:29–33, for Yefet goes on, “and that is what he [Moses] says at the time of their setting out [to the Promised Land]” (והו קולה פי וקת רחילהם) – “Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, ‘We are setting out for the place which God said I will give to you. Come with us ... and he said, no, I will go back to my own country and clan.’”

So, it seems that the material which the ancient narrator/editor(s) had about the character of Jethro challenged them as to how it would best be disseminated in the Pentateuch. Their solution was to incorporate it as a subtheme of the story of the salvation from Egypt, in a deliberately truncated manner, and refrain from fully developing it as a separate continuous strand, perhaps in an additional composition or book, as they might have done in other circumstances. The “specific reason” for this seems to have been the paramount importance of the salvation theme in their editorial considerations. Hence, Jethro’s interactions with Moses as part of this theme are centred upon when necessary, while other details and stories about Jethro are omitted.

Who is the redactor responsible for the distribution of the narrative material about the character Jethro between the Books of Exodus and Numbers? From Yefet’s discussion, it seems unlikely he thought Moses was describing himself in the verse above in the third person, especially since he attributes the elision to “the Torah (text)”. The ambiguity about the identity of the Jethro narrative’s narrator/editor(s) becomes even more intriguing in Yefet’s continued pursuit of the editing process behind the Exodus narrative materials. In this wider context, he explains that the biblical histories or traditions – that is, *akbār* such as those attested in the Books of Judges, Chronicles, Jeremiah and Samuel – were also subject to elision. In Samuel, in particular, Yefet points to a phrase which he says suggests, according to some scholars (he does not specify whom), the existence of a detailed tradition about Jethro’s acts of kindness

towards the Israelites, which was not included in the final form of the biblical text:¹¹

ולם תדכר אתורה רגועה בל וגדנא פי **אלאכבאר** יקול וּבְנֵי קִינִי חָתָן מִשָּׁה עָלוּ מְעִיר הַתְּמָרִים [אֶת־בְּנֵי יְהוּדָה מְדָבֵר יְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר בְּנִגְבַּ עָרְד וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשָׁב אֶת־הָעָם] (שופטים א,טז) פערף אנה רגע בעיאלה וסכן פי יריחו פבעד אנצראף יתרו צעדו אלי מדבר יתרוה ואקאמו תם וענהם קאל ומשפחהו ספריים ישבו (יִשְׁבִּי) וַעֲבָדן תַּרְעֵתִים שְׁמַעְתִּים שׁוֹכְתִים הַמָּה הַקִּינִים הַבָּאִים מִחַמַּת אָבִי בֵּית־רֶכֶב (דברי הימים א, ב, נה) פקאל אלעלמא אן קולה הַמָּה הַקִּינִים ישיר בה אלי בית הרכבים אלדיו הם בני יונדב בן־רכב עמד לפני כל־הַיָּמִים (ירמיהו לה, יט) ופי גמלה הדה **אלאכבאר** טהרת פצאיל יתרו ואולאדה אעני חבר הקיני יונדב בן רכב ואעלם אן בעץ אלעלמא קאל אן יתרו פעל מע ישראל חסד גדול למ תדפעה אלינא אלאכבאר בשרח ונעלם דלך מן קול שאול וְאֵתָה עֲשִׂיתָה חֶסֶד עִם־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵלוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם (שמואל א טו,ו).

‘The Torah/Pentateuch does not mention/describe where he (Jethro) returned to (after accompanying Moses), but we find in the **traditions/histories** (*al-akbār*) that it is said, “the descendants of the Kenite (i.e. Jethro), Moses’ father-in-law, went up with the people of Judah from the city of Palms” (Judges 1:16). It thus lets it be known that he returned with his descendants and lived in Jericho. After Jethro passed away, they came to the desert, where they wandered and lived there, and about them it is said, “The families of the scribes that lived at Jabez, these are the Kenites.” (1 Chronicles 2:55). The scholars say that his saying “these are the Kenites” points to the house of the Rechabites, who are the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab (of whom it is said), “Jonadab son of Rechab shall not lack a descendant to stand before me for all time” (Jeremiah 35:19). All of these **traditions/histories** (*al-akbār*) reveal the noble qualities of Jethro and his children, that is, Heber the Kenite and Jonadab son of Rechab. You (the reader) should know that one of the scholars says that Jethro performed a great act of kindness, which the **traditions/histories** (*al-akbār*) do not report to us in detail/explicitly, but of which we know from Saul saying, “For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt” (1 Samuel 15:6).’

Finally, in this context, we find Yefet’s insightful remark:

וקצה עמלק ועמידת הר סיני וסאיר כלמא תוסט דלך ללהדה **אכבאר** אתצלת בה
‘The story (*qišša*) of Amalek and the standing at (Mt) Sinai (stories that come after the Jethro narrative in Exodus) and all that intercedes/comes between, are all related to these **traditions/histories** (*akbār*).’

In these examples concerning the Jethro narrative, when Yefet mentions *akbār*, he refers to traditions/histories preserved in the biblical historiographic

¹¹ See MS RNL Yevr.-Arab I 0054.

literature, as distinct from stories/narrative units, for which he prefers the term *qiṣṣa*. These *aḵbār*, which were probably preserved and transmitted orally, were used by the *mudawwin* in the Pentateuch books of Exodus and Numbers as well as in other biblical books (Judges, Samuel, Jeremiah and Chronicles), which preserve data about the descendants of Jethro the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law. One source (Samuel) even suggests that the *mudawwin* excluded existing information related to a specific act of kindness that the Kenites showed the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt, a matter which Yefet learns from Saul's reported speech.

These examples show that the differentiation between these terms, *qiṣṣa* and *aḵbār*, as reflected in Yefet's work, is close to the distinction in Arabic Muslim sources (see section 1). They also show the flexibility of the concept of the *mudawwin* that Yefet and his peers implement in their discussions about the crystallisation and redaction of the Bible. As far as they are concerned, these narrators/editors had diverse historical source materials at their disposal, which they recorded, copied or redacted in different contexts, and they did not necessarily concentrate them in one narrative sequence. The Arabic term *aḵbār* was suited, therefore, to their conceptualisation of the mainly oral 'tales/traditions', that is, the unhindered and yet unshaped narrative materials of ancient Israel, which were transmitted by generations of informants and storytellers, and which the biblical *mudawwins* committed to writing, fashioned or edited in different ways. These materials took on the shape of distinct stories (*qiṣṣa*), as we know them from the biblical text, through the work of these narrators/editors.

This may be the reason that Yefet sees no point in identifying the historical figure behind the *mudawwin*. If the raw materials, the *aḵbār*, about Jethro (and other biblical figures), were adapted into stories and segments of information, *qiṣṣa*, truncated and spread out from the Pentateuch to Chronicles, it is clear why the *mudawwin* of the Jethro episodes cannot be a known biblical figure, such as Moses or Samuel. If Yefet were to pinpoint such a *mudawwin* at any given point he would undoubtedly be asked: How did he live for so long? So he preferred to leave his/their historical-biographical identity unknown and collective. These were the writers and redactors of the Bible text who worked behind its scenes, through history, fashioning traditions into stories and so creating the intricate (and sometimes strained at the seams) tapestry, which eventually became the canonised twenty-four books.

The examples above and similar ones, relating to other biblical compositions, supply sufficient evidence for the way in which Yefet understood the *aḵbār* as a wide category, perhaps the widest, of raw 'sources' and not necessarily written ones, such as were common at the time of the biblical narrators/editors, who were active throughout biblical times. The preservation, transcription, documentation, filtering, organisation and shaping of the *aḵbār* as written stories – *qiṣṣa* – were, in fact, the major tasks of the biblical *mudawwins*.

2.3 Abraham and Joseph narratives¹²

In the final three examples which conclude this article, this time from Yefet's commentary on Genesis, we find the same distinction between the terms *qiṣaṣ* and *aḵbār* applied to the figures of Abraham and Joseph. Just as in the case of Jethro, where Yefet conceived of fluid traditions which became fashioned and fixed into story units and saw evidence for this in the wider biblical array regarding this character, so too in the case of these patriarchal characters.

There are contexts in which *qiṣṣa* and *ḵabar* (the singular forms) are used as synonyms for one narrative unit. However, a close examination shows a different semantic hue. Thus, while explaining Genesis 20:1, Yefet ben 'Eli uses *ḵabar* alongside *qiṣṣa* when referencing the status conferred by the *mudawwin* to different narrative materials.

בעד פרג מן כָּבַר סדום וּכְבַר לוֹט רָגַע אֵלַי קִצָּה אַבְרָהָם אֱלֵלֵדֵי הוּא אֶלְגֵרָץ.
'After completing the Sodom **tradition/account** (*ḵabar*) and the Lot **tradition/account** (*ḵabar*), he returns to the **story** (*qiṣṣa*) of Abraham, for he is the goal (of the narration).'

According to Yefet, this introductory verse shows that the story of Abraham is actually the guiding principle story, while the record of the events that happened to Lot in Sodom is an account/tradition rather than a full-fledged narrative. Thematically and narratively, its status is secondary to that of the guiding narrative, and it is shaped differently, and so remains less smooth and stylised in the biblical text.

The same distinction is found in Yefet ben 'Eli comment on Genesis 25:19 ("These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son"). Yefet describes different stages in the work of the *mudawwin*, whose main purpose is to sift, organise and connect (*yansuqu*) the general traditions (*aḵbār*) into full-fledged stories (*qiṣaṣ*) about the patriarchs. In doing so, the *mudawwin* uses his anthological judgment to determine which stories to include and which to omit (*iḵtaṣara*) from the writing process of the living traditions (*tadwīn al-aḵbār*):

'After he (the *mudawwin*) completed the stories of Abraham, he connected to them the stories of Isaac, and for this reason he narrated/edited them (*dawwanahum*) by (use of) the connective *waw* ("and these are the stories of Isaac son of Abraham"). And he omitted (*iḵtaṣara*) recording the (full) traditions/accounts/histories (*aḵbār*) of the sons of Qeturah and Ishmael since the purpose of the *mudawwin* was to connect the traditions of our (i.e., the Jews') forefathers (*wa-kāna ḡard al-mudawwin yansuqu aḵbār abāhatina*). Furthermore, he did not wish to preoccupy us with the (fully-fashioned) stories (*qiṣaṣ*) of those (other

¹² For the Arabic source of these examples, see MS RNL Yevr.-Arab B221 and B217. For further discussion of these examples, see Polliack, 2012 and Polliack, 2014.

descendants), who are like the stories of the rest of the world. Rather, he mentioned for us the stories of the forefathers which are of benefit to us (as Jews), and for this reason he elided (*iktasara*) mentioning (the stories of) those (others) and he mentioned (only) the stories of Isaac.’

In his comment on Genesis 47:13, Yefet analyses the structure of the wider Joseph narrative. According to his analysis, this narrative contains several stories narrated/edited by the Genesis *mudawwin*. One such story (*qiṣṣa*) in the wider narrative is that of the seven year famine that afflicted the Egyptians, and the long-term preparations for it (roughly, Gen. 41 and 47:14–26). Another story, which is inserted into this famine-story background, is that of the famine’s effect on Jacob’s sons in Canaan and their journey down to Egypt in search of food, consequently meeting their brother Joseph there (Gen. 42:1–47:13 and 47:27–50:26). This is the foreground story. Yefet draws attention to a continuation technique (modern biblical study would define it as ‘resumption repetition’) used by the *mudawwin* in controlling the flow of information and connecting the two narratives. After the *mudawwin* finishes the account of Joseph’s brothers going down to Egypt, he ‘returns to conclude’ (רגע יתמם) the background narrative on the happenings in Egypt itself during the seven years of famine (Gen. 47:14–26). Yefet considers this wider famine narrative as a background story that the *mudawwin* used and truncated in order to highlight the more important story materials about Joseph and his brothers – only after these materials are given their due place, is the wider background narrative duly resumed and briefly related.

‘He (the *mudawwin*) was preoccupied with the story of Joseph and his Brothers (כאן אשתגל פי קצצה יוסף מע אכותה) וירא יעקב כי יש (ולחם אין בכל הארץ” (Gen. 47:13, “שבר במצרים (Gen. 42:1) up to here (Gen. 47:13, “ולחם אין בכל הארץ”). Only after he (the *mudawwin*) ends their **story** (*qiṣṣa*), does he return to conclude the **story** (*qiṣṣa*) of Egypt during the years of famine (47:14–26). This is in order to demonstrate the difference between Jacob and his sons and Egypt and the rest, in that Jacob’s relative prosperity was retained (by God, despite the worldwide famine).’

Later on, in his comment on Genesis 47:27 (“ווישב ישראל בארץ מצרים”), Yefet continues to explain his line of thought:

בעד אן תמם קצצה אלסבע סנין אללדי אערף כף גרי מצרים פיהא רגע אלי גרצה יעריפנא אכבאר אלאבא לינסקהא שיא בעד שיא ...

‘After he (the *mudawwin*) ended the **story** (*qiṣṣa*) of the seven years of famine, in which he informed us of how the Egyptians managed, he returned to his goal, that is to let us know about the **traditions/accounts** (*akbār*) of the Patriarchs, so that they would be connected to each other (in sequence), one after the other.’

Here too the emphasis is, as in Genesis 25:19, on the main goal guiding the narrator/editor in constructing narrative materials and sifting them out from more general traditions/accounts in order to inform his audience and properly arrange the tales/histories (*aḳbār*) of the patriarchs into individual stories (*qiṣaṣ*).

3 Conclusion

As pointed out in section 1, it may well be that the Karaite distinction between *qiṣṣa/qiṣaṣ* and *ḳabar/aḳbār* was appropriated from Islamic Hadith literature or the genre of historiographic writing (*ta'rikh*), wherein *aḳbār* is used to describe traditions in the sense of 'oral tales'. It is also possible that the notion of narrative materials going through a process of transformation into a written medium, thereby becoming structured stories (*qiṣaṣ*), was in vogue during the 9th–11th centuries. After all, this was the time of the editing and consolidation of the major Hadith collections.¹³

Nevertheless, there is no evidence in Islamic sources of the application of these terms to the question of the formation of the Qur'ān, not to its general study or exegesis. Were the Karaites aware of these trends in Arabic literary productivity, and did they try to apply them in their independent understanding to the formation of the Hebrew Bible? More research has to take place before we can give a definitive answer. It is certainly possible at this stage to suggest that this was not an accidental occurrence in the multicultural intellectual history of the medieval Islamic period. Jewish, Christian and Muslim notions of scripture and its formation interacted in various conscious and unconscious ways.

Since we have no knowledge of the use of the terms *aḳbār* and *qiṣaṣ* in Islamic sources in reference to the Qur'ān's formation as a text, this is yet another manifestation, in my view, of the Karaite movement's immense innovativeness and radical thinking on the nature of scripture. I consider this aspect an independent development, therefore, in Karaite thought. Islamic terms in general, and *qiṣaṣ* and *aḳbār* in particular, are appropriated and remodelled at the same time, by the Karaites, and are used in an inventive way, as demonstrated above, in order to illuminate what for the Karaites became the only revealed source of Jewish tradition: the Hebrew Bible. Breaking away from rabbinic tradition enabled them to see its formation in historical-literary terms which were unwitnessed in Jewish tradition.

Was the Karaites' scientific and critical distancing from the biblical text the result of their philological training and tendencies? This is what Geoffrey Khan seemed to suggest to me on a memorable walk from his office at Sidg-

¹³ See further discussion of these aspects in Polliack, 2015 and Polliack, 2016.

wick Site to St John's College in August 2013: "At heart they were true philologists; they were driven by their interest in how language works", I recall as the general gist of his words.¹⁴ In that case, it was their linguistic training and commitment which channelled their vision into the fabric, the actual linguistic make-up, of the biblical text. Or was it their relative immersion in the Arabic intellectual milieu of their time, and their confidence within it, that freed them, as break-away Jews, to wander in new directions, a matter which I tend to see as no less instrumental in this development?¹⁵

However complex the answer, the works the Karaites left us are a clear testimony of the high level of interaction and interconnectedness between Arabic/Islamic and Hebrew-Aramaic/Jewish cultures, and the fertile notions and intellectual breakthroughs achieved due to this interaction and despite the tensions it undoubtedly aroused. In this article, I examined a mere segment of this complex interaction, which receives expression in the innovative Karaite application – or, as I would prefer to say, implementation – of two important Arabic terms, *qiṣṣa/qiṣaṣ* and *kabar/aḳbār*, in biblical exegesis. By 'implementation', I mean to emphasise an aspect of the transition, namely, that these terms are not just borrowed and applied simplistically (as calques), but are refined and adapted to the specific world-view and literary and intellectual needs of the Karaite Jews. This, in my view, is generally typical of the transference process of terminology and other lexical aspects from Arabic to Judaeo-Arabic, wherein the intercultural adaptation becomes effectively a tool for innovation. In this case, the novelty lies in the ability to recognise layers and strands of redaction in the biblical corpus, due to their perception through the lenses, as it were, of Arabic literature, an aspect that is not bound to these concepts in their immediate and original Arabic setting.¹⁶

It seems natural for us, in post-modern times, to use the term 'story' to describe biblical narratives connected with the characters of Jacob, Moses, Balaam, David or Ruth. The strong emphasis of biblical scholarship, especially since the second half of the 20th century, on the 'art of biblical narrative' and character portrayal has certainly contributed to this tendency. Nevertheless, the medieval period witnessed a development that should not be underestimated in the evolution of the Bible's reception history and reception exegesis: for it was then that biblical texts began to be widely perceived, in Jewish circles (both Karaite and Rabbanite), as intentionally 'fashioned' stories or narrative units. This insight did not undermine, at first, the sacred or religious

¹⁴ Karaite innovativeness in structural thinking on the Bible's linguistic and literary forms, and their proximity in certain respects to modern formalist and structural methods, has been stressed by Khan, 2000, pp. 128–133 and by Goldstein, 2010, pp. 466–469.

¹⁵ See Polliack, 2015; Polliack, 2016.

¹⁶ This issue has been partly addressed in Drory's seminal 1988 Hebrew work on the early contacts between Arabic and Jewish literature. Nevertheless, more work is needed in refining her model in respect of specific genres, and in addressing the detailed mechanisms of innovation that operate in the intercultural zone, as I have tried to indicate here. See also Polliack, 1998.

value of the biblical texts, but rather re-positioned them in the literary consciousness of the time, which was adept in the treasures of prose, in an acceptable rhetorical and aesthetic framework. It was the Karaites, in particular, who developed a detailed theory of the biblical stories as the outcome of a selection process undertaken by narrators/editors, who sifted through many oral traditions, tales, histories and written records in order to create the Bible, similar to a literary collection of an anthological nature (*diwān*). In their frequent usage of the Arabic term *qiṣṣa*, the Karaite exegetes wished to focus on the distinct narrative element and on its inner structural and textual meaning within the biblical sequence. They therefore tended to interpret a story from beginning to end and especially in relation to its plot.

Another aspect of our discussion on the conceptualisation of biblical narrative is that it relates not only to the medieval recognition of the genre of prose narrative, as part of the textual biblical array, but also to furthering its prestige. For the new *qiṣṣa* terminology flourished in the context of a literate culture that increasingly valued, read and wrote stories. As is well known, unlike the Qur'ān, the Bible is not self-referential in commenting on its genres and literary composition. The literary consciousness that obviously existed during biblical times, without which such complex compositions and literary techniques would not have been possible, is not apparent in biblical sayings through which the Bible's authors and editors reflect openly upon such issues. Moreover, the Bible does not have a distinct Hebrew word for 'story' as opposed to 'song', 'law' or 'prophecy', all of which have distinct Hebrew terms, designating literary types in the Bible itself. The book of Genesis utilises the title *אלה תולדות* for narrative materials which include genealogical lists, yet in most cases narrative is not defined in any way but flows naturally, as a routine account, using narrative formulae such as *ויהי אחר* or *ויהי בימי הדברים האלה*. It is likely the Karaites sought to strengthen the narrative element within the Bible, as original and authentic to it, by introducing terms and notions which bolstered the usage of narrative, its role and its purpose as an integral part of the Hebrew Bible, and strengthened the place of this element within Jewish thought on the Bible. In Rabbinic Hebrew, we find terms such as *ma'aseh* and *aggadah/haggadah* designating non-legal issues or tales (either as found in the Bible or as composed by the sages themselves). However the noun familiar in modern Hebrew for 'story', *sippur* (and similarly 'composition', *hibbur*), is mostly documented in medieval Hebrew sources, possibly in imitation of Arabic or Judaeo-Arabic terms, precisely against the background and needs typical of the medieval era, as charted above.¹⁷

The new medieval hermeneutic also explains the relative ease with which the Judaeo-Arabic exegetes, most notably among them the Karaites, adopted the Arabic terms for story (*qiṣṣa*) and account/tradition/history (*kabar*) and applied them with no hesitation to Jewish scripture, as neutral terms. It was

¹⁷ For further discussion and references see Polliack, 2014, pp. 117–118 n. 24–26.

clear to them that their readers would find no fault in the matter, not only because the Bible and ancient rabbinic exegesis are bereft of a distinct generic term for 'biblical narrative', but also because of the centrality of this concept in their host culture and Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic literature in general. The Arabic generic terms for 'story/narrative' are used in Judaeo-Arabic Bible exegesis of the age, most extensively by Karaite commentators such as Qirqisani, Salmon, Yefet ben 'Eli, Yeshuah ben Yehudah and 'Ali ben Sulaiman, from the end of the 9th century until the late 13th century. They are also, though less intensively, found in the works of Rabbanite commentators, such as Saadiah Gaon, Shemuel ben Hofni Gaon, Shemuel al-Kinzi and Tanhum ben Joseph Ha-Yerushlami. All of these writers attest to the growing interest among the medieval Jewish literati of the Islamic milieu in the biblical 'story' as a distinct narrative genre, likened to the short story, romance, novelle or *maqāma* that they recognised in Arabic literature, and distinct from ancient midrash *aggada*.

In parallel to the development of narratives in Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew medieval literature, the medieval Bible exegetes erected a bridge to the biblical model of the story, by treating biblical narrative, first and foremost, as a fashioned literary unit, with an integral plot and major and minor characters, imbued with inner logic, artistic devices and structure. These same medieval exegetes also succeeded in conceptualising and categorising a historical-literary biblical genre, which is not defined as a distinctive genre in the Bible itself or in ancient rabbinic sources (excluding Hellenistic sources with which the medieval authors were generally unfamiliar). This was an era in which new narrative developments in Jewish literature occurred in conjunction with or as a continuation of breakthroughs in the understanding of biblical narrative among biblical exegetes. This understanding may have germinated in Jewish literature before the rise of Islam. Nevertheless, it was the encounter with Arabic literature and its strong inclination to stories and tales (folk and religious tales, as in the Hadith, or story anthologies and early novels such as *A Thousand and One Nights*), that heightened the narrative acumen and prestige of the story in Jewish Bible exegesis, as well as in Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew works.

These two trends (namely, exegesis of biblical stories as stories and story writing) contributed conjointly to the recognition of the art of biblical narrative in medieval times. They became fused into an understanding unique to medieval Judaeo-Arabic culture, that one of the most important achievements of the biblical endeavour, if not the most important one, is actually narrative (no less than law).¹⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that the possible oral roots of biblical narrative were also beginning to become clearer in the same Ju-

¹⁸ This phenomenon will later also become a recognised feature of Jewish Bible exegesis in Spain and Provence, in the work of commentators such as David Kimḥi and Nahmanides.

daeo-Arabic milieu. No medieval treatise has yet been found to define the theories through which the Karaite exegetes tackled the question of authorship of the traditional materials or the raw oral tales (*kabar/aḳbār*) or the way these were transcribed in various biblical stories (*qiṣṣa/qiṣaṣ*) and strung together into books. In this sense, the Karaites were primarily philologists, as Geoffrey Khan so astutely pointed out to me in the above-mentioned conversation, and as he has demonstrated in his ground-breaking studies of their grammatical works. By ‘primarily philologists’, I mean that their discoveries on the Hebrew Bible were communicated mainly through a straightforward and sincere pursuit of the study of its language and text, in works devoted to the Bible *per se*. The Karaite exegetes referred very frequently to the *mudawwin*, also discussed above, the anonymous biblical authors/editors operating behind various biblical books and different parts therein. It is evident that there exists a connection, still to be further explored, between the functions of the *mudawwin* and the different ways in which these exegetes understood the crystallisation process of biblical narrative and its composite elements, as part of the Hebrew Bible’s redaction history.

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Patterns of Diffusion of Phonological Change in the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Azran

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1 Introduction

Phonological changes often appear as far from regular on the synchronic level since we can only observe one of the stages through which they gradually progress. The lack of regularity is especially perceptible in the field of language documentation, where newly recorded varieties may display a higher or lesser degree of diversity. Dealing with internal variation and ironing out the inconsistencies in order to arrive at a systematic grammatical description is certainly a task faced while documenting the dialects of Neo-Aramaic.

Geoffrey Khan has been active in the field of Neo-Aramaic dialectology, especially of the North-Eastern subgroup (NENA), for at least twenty years, with his first NENA grammar of the Jewish dialect of Arbel appearing in 1999.¹ It can safely be said that thanks to his publication of a series of articles and full-blown grammars, all based on extensive and meticulous fieldwork, as well as his management of the NENA Database Project, Geoffrey Khan has saved many of the dialects from falling into eternal oblivion. Moreover, as a result of his contribution to the field of Neo-Aramaic, combining language documentation with theoretical linguistics, we now have a fine-grained map of the features of the NENA subgroup contextualised within the linguistic diversity of the area. Geoffrey Khan's work is, and with all certainty will remain, an exemplar of academic performance; with this humble inquiry into NENA phonology I wish to express my gratitude for all that I have had the privilege to learn from him during my time in Cambridge and beyond.

In this paper, I will address the patterns of diffusion of phonological changes in the NENA dialect of Azran. Needless to say, any shortcomings are entirely my own.

¹ Khan, 1999.

2 Community, variation and change

The speakers of the NENA dialects, being a minority in the Middle East, have experienced displacement and extensive migration, and they have also been exposed to heavy contact with other linguistic varieties. These include other NENA dialects, on the one hand, and languages from entirely different families, such as Iranian, European and Turkic, on the other. No wonder that within any particular NENA community one may find a greater or lesser amount of internal variation.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that a given variety should be considered as a mixture rather than as a genuine dialect; more likely, such variation is indicative of changes in progress, changes that the dialect is undergoing as a living, spoken variety. These changes are induced by different, sometimes competing, factors, and they result from both internal and external conditioning. The overall dialect profile may appear as irregular and the changes as unpredictable; however, by identifying particular factors and specifying the role played by them we can bring clarity to this seemingly irregular profile.

Here I will make such an attempt, depicting the pattern of diffusion of some phonological changes in the NENA dialect of Azran which have been brought about through different mechanisms.

3 Phonological challenges in NENA

Within the domain of phonology, two phenomena have proved to be especially challenging in NENA, namely phonological emphasis and palatalisation.

Different typological outlines of emphasis for particular NENA dialects have been proposed, such as a largely segmental analysis for Alqosh or Jewish Betanure, and a suprasegmental analysis for Jewish and Christian Urmi.² These different types of emphasis can be considered in the light of their geographical distribution, whereupon the influence of neighbouring languages can be seen. Thus the segmental type is found among NENA dialects from Iraq, which have been impacted by Arabic, whereas the suprasegmental type is characteristic of varieties from Iran, where the influence of Iranian and Turkic language varieties can be postulated.³

Similarly, there are several different outcomes from the process of palatalisation as it has applied in NENA varieties to the historical velar stops **k* and **g*. These include:

² For Alqosh, see Coghill, 2003; for Jewish Betanure, see Mutzafi, 2008; for Jewish and Christian Urmi, see Khan, 2008a and Khan, 2016 respectively.

³ See Napierkowska, 2015b.

- lack of palatalisation of *k* and *g* (e.g. Alqosh);⁴
- slight palatalisation of the stops, resulting in *k* [kʲ] and *g* [gʲ] (e.g. Maha Khtaya d-Baz);⁵
- heavy palatalisation, resulting in affrication of the former stops *k* and *g*, followed by the advancement of the place of articulation of the former affricates *č* and *j*, i.e. this includes a push-chain shift: *k* > *č* [tʃʰ], *g* > *j* [dʒ]; and consequently original *č* > *c* [tʃʰ], *j* > *ʝ* [dʒ] (e.g. Christian Urmi, Sardārid).⁶

In the same vein that we may observe geographical clustering of dialects with a similar emphasis profile, so too palatalisation processes can be correlated with a dialect's location. Palatalisation clearly gains intensity while moving from west (Alqosh, Betanure) to east (Urmi).

An interesting case in this context is the Christian NENA dialect of Azran, now situated in north-eastern Iraq. Azran displays palatalisation of the historical velar stops; however, the process is nowhere as regular as in Christian Urmi. In Azran, rather than inducing a chain shift as described above, palatalisation results in mergers or near-mergers of phonemes. Moreover, the dialect also has an innovative high front rounded vowel /ü/, which is largely a reflex of the former back vowel **u*, but the correspondence is, once more, far from consistent. The two developments may be included under one common term of fronting; however, the two display different degrees of variation. In what follows I will discuss the factors which may have led to the irregular distribution of fronting. The role that language contact might have played in shaping these features will also be considered.

4 Consonant fronting in Azran

4.1 Palatalisation and affrication

As noted in section 3, it is possible to observe how the changes in the pronunciation of the former velar stops progress across the NENA area. First, the velar stops are slightly palatalised, that is, a secondary articulation approaching the vowel /i/ or the glide /y/ is imposed on the consonant, resulting in *k* [kʲ] and *g* [gʲ]. This phenomenon is naturally triggered in environments where the segment following the velar stop is a palatal glide or a high front vowel /i/ or /e/, as can be seen in the Christian Barwar word *kepa* 'stone' [ˈkʲe:pʰæ ~

⁴ See Coghill, 2003. The sound /k/ in Alqosh is in fact more fronted than the IPA [k] (Coghill, 2003, p. 31), but it is nevertheless not palatalised. I am grateful to Eleanor Coghill for pointing this out, as well as for her help with an earlier draft of this paper.

⁵ See Mutzafi, 2000.

⁶ For Christian Urmi, see Khan, 2016; for Sardārid, see Younansardaroud, 2001.

'cie:p^hæ].⁷ This patterning of segments has been analysed within the framework of Articulatory Phonology as a source of the development of the palatalisation of velar stops in Azran.⁸ The retiming of the articulatory gesture for the vowel /i/ influences the setting of the articulators for /k/, resulting in post-alveolar /č/ and then further in alveolar /c/, so *kīpa* [ˈkʰi:p^ha] > *čīpa* [ˈtʃ^hi:p^ha] > *cīpa* [ˈts^hi:p^ha] ‘stone’. The same holds for the voiced stop /g/, developing in Azran into /j/ and /j/, as in *gība* [ˈgʰi:ba] > *jība* [ˈdʒi:ba] > *jība* [ˈdʒi:ba] ‘side, flank’.

4.2 Variation and creation of near-mergers

The palatalisation in Azran is found beyond the most widespread contexts mentioned above; that is, it is not restricted to cases where *k* or *g* precedes a high front vowel or a palatal glide. As has been mentioned, it is also not a regular process. In certain words, only the post-alveolar variant has been attested, e.g. **gnāhā* > *jnaħa* ‘fault, mistake’, not **jnaħa*; in a yet smaller number of words, exclusively the velar stops occur, e.g. *guma* ‘barn’ (from Kurdish), not **juma* or **juma*.

Interestingly, since the development of the alveolar segments in Azran does not induce a chain shift similar to one in Christian Urmi described in section 3, native Aramaic words feature the same segments as borrowings from Kurdish and Arabic, and the difference between them is neutralised in Azran, as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Neutralisation of velar and post-alveolar segments in Azran⁹

Original word	Azran	Christian Urmi ¹⁰
Aram. * <i>kēpā</i> ‘stone’	<i>cīpa</i>	<i>cīpa</i>
Kurd. <i>čeltik</i> ‘stalk of a crop’	<i>cəlduč</i>	<i>čaltuc</i>
Aram. * <i>garmā</i> ‘bone’	<i>jarma</i>	<i>jarma</i>
Kurd. <i>ciwan</i> ‘beautiful’	<i>jwanqa</i>	<i>jwanqa</i>

Although no systematic phonological or morphological pattern can be observed which conditions the fronting in Azran, I would like to argue that the phenomenon is by no means random.

⁷ See Khan, 2008b, p. 30. This palatalisation phenomenon is widespread across languages. Compare, for instance, the alternation of the realisation of the English letter *c*, where the consonant is normally a velar stop before back vowels and an alveolar fricative before front ones, e.g. *car* [ˈk^ha:] vs *ceiling* [ˈsi:lɪŋ]. A similar morphophonemic correlation obtains in Polish, where [k] alternates with [tʃ] in the corresponding environments, e.g. *mak* [ˈmak] ‘poppy seed’ vs *maczek* [ˈma.tʃɛk] ‘poppy seed (diminutive)’ vs *makowy* [ma.ˈko.vu] ‘of poppy seed’.

⁸ See Napiorkowska, forthcoming.

⁹ The following abbreviations are used for language names in examples: Ar(abic); Aram(aic); Azer(i) Turkish); CBarwar, Christian Barwar; CŪrmi, Christian Urmi; Engl(ish); Pers(ian); Rus(sian).

¹⁰ A similar distribution of /č/ and /c/ and /j/ and /j/ is also found in the dialects of Tazakand (Coghill, 2009) and Sardārid (Younansardaroud, 2001).

4.3 Distribution and frequency

4.3.1 Gangs

As suggested above, the fronting of the former velar stops may have occurred in Azran first in the environment of high front vowels. This explanation addresses the phonetic nature of how the palatalisation would develop; however, the frequency of occurrence of the sounds /c/ and /j/ is currently not significantly higher before high front vowels than before other segments. We find these sounds in words such as *caļu* ‘bride’ < **kālō*, *cu-jyaje* ‘every time’ < **kud-gaye* (< Kurd. *gaw*), *janta* ‘bag’ < Kurd. *čente* and *jumile* ‘he gathered (it)’ < **jumile* (*j-m-Ø* < Ar. *j-m-*), all of which have back vowels following the relevant segment. The distribution of the fronted consonants /c/ and /j/, rather than being conditioned solely by the nature of the following vowel, appears to be correlated with frequency of use. Joan Bybee has argued that certain high-frequency words with a particular phonological makeup form ‘gangs’ with other words which may not be entirely similar in structure, but which share certain phonological or morphological properties. Thus, for instance, the dialectal past tense of the English word *sneak* is *snuck*, by analogy with other verbs with an initial /s/ and a nasal, such as *swim*.¹¹ Here, *swim* is as a high-frequency verb with original ablaut in the past tense, and it attracts new lexical members and forms a gang of items of similar phonological and morphological behaviour.

I would like to suggest that a similar phenomenon of high-frequency words forming gangs may be responsible for the diffusion of the fronted realisation of the alveopalatal series in Azran. A possible scenario for the distribution of the fronted segments would entail, as the first step, the cross-linguistically and cross-NENA attested shift of a velar stop or post-alveolar affricate into an alveolar affricate before a high front vowel, i.e. the retiming of gestures (see above). The gangs would thus include:

cipa ‘stone’ < **kēpā*, *ciri* ‘autumn month’ < **tšīrī* < **tišrī*,
cista ‘pocket’ < **kistā*, *citwa* ‘thorny plant’ < **kiṭwā*, etc.

jiba ‘side, flank’ < **gībā*, *jizdan* ‘wallet’ < Pers. **juzdan*,
jičče ‘he walked’ from *j-y-k* (cf. *j-w-j* in CBarwar), etc.

These gangs could be defined as short, mostly disyllabic, words with a front vowel following a former velar stop or a post-alveolar affricate, which has shifted to an alveolar affricate. At the second stage of gang formation, the tendency to render short words containing a (former) velar stop with an alveolar affricate would spread to other high-frequency words. These, in turn,

¹¹ Bybee, 2001, p. 127.

<i>düčta</i> ‘place’ < * <i>dukṭā</i>	never <i>dücta</i>
<i>gura</i> ‘big’ < * <i>gōrā</i>	never <i>juṛa, juṛa</i>
<i>jərəj</i> ‘have, must, modal particle’ < Azer. <i>gəṛək</i>	never <i>jərəj</i>
<i>ju-</i> ‘in, at’ < * <i>gaw-</i>	never <i>ju-</i>
<i>kuma</i> ‘black’ < * <i>kōmā</i>	never <i>čuma, cuma</i>

These items could be regarded as a special class of words whose high rate of occurrence, and often their grammatical function, grants them a special status in the lexicon. They would, thus, constitute a separate class within the speakers’ cognitive system, rendering them opaque to the sweeping phonological change.

A situation where high-frequency words are an exception to regular phonological change is not uncommon in other languages. As an example from Neo-Aramaic, the case of Jewish Urmi may be cited, where common words such as *ḥudaa* ‘Jew’ < **hūdāyā* or *ida* ‘hand’ < **ʾidā* resisted the otherwise regular shift of **t* and **d* to /l/.¹⁵ Equally, one can consider the modern English word *one* which has a unique phonological shape and underwent a different shift from other words with the same historical vowel, such as *stone*.¹⁶

4.3.3 Low-frequency words

One may connect the frequency rate of some of the Azran lexical items with the sociolinguistic realities of life. Former generations of speakers were mainly villagers, whose occupation was farming and husbandry. Over time, they were forced to give up their land and move from villages to towns in search of a safer life. As a result, nowadays the knowledge of many agricultural activities and processes survives only with the older members of the community. These former activities, as well as artefacts associated with them, are not very frequently referred to in current times, as they are less relevant to the present lifestyle. This is not to say that the words referring to these activities have disappeared from community discourse altogether, but rather they are characterised by a low frequency of use.

We could consider that such lexical items have not been reached by the phonological shift of fronting: the rarer the occurrence of a lexeme, the rarer the opportunity to implement the phonological shift. Consider, for example, the following words, which have not been attested with any type of fronted

¹⁵ Khan, 2008a.

¹⁶ Hopper and Traugott, 2003, p. 119.

articulation, or have only been marginally observed as having undergone the initial step of palatalisation:

**garōpā* > *gariūpa* ‘oven shovel’ (marginally *jariūpa*, never *jarūpa*)

**gədyā* > *gidya* ‘young male goat’ (marginally *jidyā*, never *jadya*)

There are also similar words that are borrowings, although the lack of expected shift in them could alternatively be explained by their loan status (see section 4.3.4 below):

guma ‘barn’ < Kurd. *gom* (never *juma*, *juma*)

koplina ‘wooden collar that forms part of a yoke’ < ? Kurd. *qapal* ‘stick’ (never *čoplina*, *coplina*)

These words have been gathered from speakers who otherwise consistently render the former velar stops with /c/ and /j/. It seems hardly reasonable to consider the relationship between the low occurrence rate of these words, their low relevance to modern life and their velar articulation as accidental.

An apparent internal paradox may seem to arise from the analysis of the two groups of words above. On the one hand, we have very high-frequency words which resist phonological change; on the other, it is low-frequency words that prove immune to the same process. This seeming contradiction is solved by the fact that the two groups of words have a special position in speakers’ cognitive storage systems. A very high rate of occurrence allows words to maintain their present shape, since the constant input and use of these forms solidifies their current phonological form. A very low rate, in turn, forces speakers to put effort into memorising such words separately, along with all their peculiarities such as a conservative pronunciation. It is the special position which these words have that places them on a separate tier where fronting fails to operate.

4.3.4 Loan-words

The last group of words with irregular renditions of the palatalisation of velars are loan-words. These undergo adaptation to the native phonology and morphology to varying degrees, thus palatalisation also displays irregular patterns. Loans from Kurdish in most cases undergo palatalisation (e.g. Kurd. *kade* > *čade* ‘type of pastry’, Kurd. *řeng* > *ranja* ‘colour’). In loans from Arabic, on the other hand, there is a tendency to retain the voiceless velar stop, whereas the voiced post-alveolar affricate is frequently rendered as /j/ – for example, *akkid* ‘sure, certain’ vs *jensiya* ‘citizenship’. This tendency includes words which are so well integrated with the language that they form verbs according to the native morphological patterns.

'akkid 'sure, certain' < Ar. (also as a verb *'akkude* 'to make sure')

blok 'block; a pile of banknotes' < Engl.

glas ~ *gəlas* 'glass, cup' < Engl.

kábina 'car, wagon' < Engl.

šárika 'company, firm' < Ar. (also as a verb *šaruke* 'to team up')

markaz 'city centre' < Ar.

šapka 'hat' < Rus.

One may suggest that such high-frequency loans achieved a similar status to some of the native high-frequency words, that is, they became lexicalised with their phonological form and are stored in the part of the lexicon where the palatalisation process is not active.

4.4 The role of language contact

It has been noted that palatalisation is a natural phonetic propensity of velar stops before high front vowels. However, if this were the sole and sufficient motivation for palatalisation, the shift of /k/ > /č ~ c/ and /g/ > /j ~ j/ should surely be more widespread among the NENA dialects. However palatalisation appears to be limited to the north-eastern pocket of Iraq and to the Urmi region. This suggests that another factor is responsible for the diffusion of an otherwise natural phonetic tendency. This factor is most likely the input from the language varieties spoken in the area, such as Kurdish and Azeri Turkish, where palatalisation of velar stops and the presence of alveolar fricatives is widely attested,¹⁷ with this spreading as far as the Caucasus.¹⁸ The palatalisation process appears to be radiating from this region towards the west, affecting different varieties of NENA and gradually fading out. Which factors should then be regarded as the main sources of the diffusion of fronting in Azran?

Some contact linguists assume an extreme stance in evaluating the role that language contact may play in inducing changes by stating that language features can be regarded as contact-induced only when it can be demonstrated that they would not have occurred without external influence. This extreme stance is not adopted here in evaluating the role of language contact in NENA; however, it does signal some considerations to be borne in mind. In particular,

¹⁷ Khan, 2016, p. 38; Kapeliuk, 2011, p. 739.

¹⁸ Stilo, 1994; Chirikba, 2006; Johanson, 2006.

it places great emphasis on how much inherent potential for a given change already exists in a language. In this way, internal motivation is recognised along with external. Geoffrey Khan has often stressed that in NENA dialects, many changes are an effect of converging factors.¹⁹ The situation with the (post-)alveolar consonants in Azran presents itself as another example of inherent potential and external input combining to produce a phonetic change.

It should be stressed that palatalisation in Azran is a change in progress, affecting different groups of words to varying degrees. It impacts very high-frequency and grammatical words to a limited degree, and has no effect on very low-frequency words. It mostly targets words with high- and middle-range rates of occurrence, including also many adapted loans, especially from Kurdish. These loans were probably borrowed into Azran together with the pronunciation of the donor language, strengthening the fronting process. On the other hand, Arabic, which does not undergo palatalisation or fronting of velars, provides a constant input of velar stops and affricates, with words containing the phonemes /k/ and /j/.

To conclude this discussion of the fronting of velars, then, through ascribing particular roles to phonetics, contact and also frequency of use we have obtained a much clearer account of the seemingly random distribution of the velar, post-alveolar and alveolar consonants in Azran.

5 Vowel fronting

As indicated in section 3, the fronting in Azran is not limited to consonants. Vowels have also undergone a development towards an articulation in the front of the mouth, resulting in the emergence of the high front rounded vowel /ü/ [u~y], undocumented in previous stages of Aramaic. The phoneme /ü/ generally corresponds to the **u* of earlier Aramaic, both short and long,²⁰ which is normally reflected as the high back rounded vowel /u/ in other dialects; for example, **būmā* ‘owl’ > Christian Barwar *buma*, Azran *büma*. Nonetheless, not all instances of /ü/ are traceable to **u*, and neither is every **u* rendered in Azran as /ü/. In other words, the phonological shift is once again irregular. In the following, a proposal is outlined for the way in which this shift unfolded.

5.1 The shift **u* > /ü/

The shift **u* > /ü/ is a part of the larger push-chain shift in the vowel system of Azran, where the former vowel **o* changed to /u/. Thus:

¹⁹ See, for example, Khan, 2008b, p. 18.

²⁰ This is different from the diphthong /uy/ of Christian Urmi, which developed from long vowels only. The short vowel remained as /u/ (Khan, 2016, p. 190); compare **urhā* > Christian Urmi *urxa* vs Azran *ürxa* ‘way, road’.

**o* > /u/, e.g. **mōḥā* ‘brain’ > Azran *muxa* (cf. CBarwar *moxa*)

**u* > /ü/, e.g. **nūnā* ‘fish’ > Azran *nūna* (cf. CBarwar *nune* (pl))

The raising and fronting of the back vowels in Azran is most likely connected to the phenomenon of phonological emphasis. In emphatic contexts, most vowels tend to be pronounced with a constriction of the pharynx²¹ and a retraction of the tongue root. As a result, the back vowels /o/, /u/ and /a/ in Azran developed ‘back’ allophones for emphatic contexts, next to the existing ‘plain’ qualities. The appearance of the new vowel qualities resulted in quite a concentration of allophones in the back region of the mouth; as a remedy for the overload of back vowels, the chain shift of raising and fronting the basic, that is, non-emphatic vowel qualities took place in Azran.²²

5.2 Other sources of /ü/

The high front rounded vowel is, however, found in other contexts, of which most can be traced to the sequence **iw* in a closed syllable, or to historical **o*. In the former case, the shift was regular, for example:

k-t-w ‘to write’: CBarwar *kθiwle* vs Azran *čtüle* ‘he wrote’

Azran *qariwa* ‘best man; godfather’:

CBarwar *qariwta* vs Azran *qariüta* ‘maid of honour; godmother’

In the case of /ü/ from **o*, the shift was restricted. It appears in a handful of words, all of which share a high frequency of occurrence. It thus seems that, similar to the situation with consonant fronting, the vowel shift also correlates with frequency of word usage. Examples where **o* became /ü/ in Azran include:

glüla ‘round’ (cf. CBarwar *galola*)

küpa ‘low’ (cf. CBarwar *kopa*)

šxünta ‘hot’ (cf. CBarwar *šaxina*)

There is one final source of the vowel /ü/, which is a high front vowel immediately next to a bilabial. This development may be explained as another case of assimilation, with retiming of the lip rounding to overlap with the pronunciation of the neighbouring vowel. It took place in some basic adjectives, but is by no means a productive process. Examples include the Azran words:

²¹ Khan, 2016, p. 50.

²² Cf. Napiorkowska, 2015a, p. 38.

müļana ‘green’ (cf. CBarwar *milana* ‘blue’)

xamüma ‘hot, warm’ (cf. CBarwar *xamima*)

xüwa ‘snake’ (cf. CBarwar *xuwwe*)

But note that there are also many examples such as:

bibiya ‘pupil’ (not *bübiya*)

The development of /ü/ occurred also in the word for ‘threshing floor’, which would suggest that the shift was operative some time ago, when words such as this still occurred relatively frequently:

büdra ‘threshing floor’ (cf. CBarwar *bädra*)

5.3 Lack of expected /ü/

As mentioned at the beginning of section 5, not all instances of **u* became /ü/ in Azran. The words in which the shift failed to occur can be subdivided into three types. In the first type, the factor which blocks the sound change seems to be historical emphasis, where the pronunciation would be retracted towards the back of the mouth. The back articulation of a consonant or an entire word prevented the fronting of the vowel /u/, which in such contexts would appear with the back allophone. Examples of this type include:

čawətra ‘lunch, midday meal’ (cf. CUrmi ⁺*cavutra*)

duxrana ‘feast of the saint’ (cf. CUrmi ⁺*duxrana*)

parušta ‘small flat stone’ (cf. CUrmi ⁺*parušta*)

tura ‘mountain’ (cf. CUrmi ⁺*tuyra*)

qunya ‘water well’

qurba ‘close, near’

qurdaya ‘Kurd’

quya ‘strong, powerful’

rumxa ‘spear’ (cf. CUrmi ⁺*rumxa*)

In modern Azran, none of these words contains emphasis, but traces of the former emphasis can be seen in the unaspirated articulation of the stop /t/ – for example in *tuṛa* ‘mountain’ – and in the back articulation of the vowel /u/, especially between /q/ and /r/ – for example in *qurba* [ˈqʊr.ba ~ qʊr.ba] ‘close, near’. Other words in this group are plain, that is, non-emphatic, in both Christian Barwar and in Azran, but many appear as emphatic in Christian Urmi.

The next group of words in which the shift failed to happen includes loanwords. Among loans in Azran one finds invariable adjectives, but also fully integrated items which serve as a base for further derivation. Examples include:

kubba (pl. *kubbe*) ‘meatball’ < Ar.

mašhūr (invariable) ‘famous’ < Ar.

mufrad (invariable) ‘singular’ < Ar.

muxtar (pl *muxtare*) ‘village chief’ < Kurd.

sixur (pl *sixure*) ‘porcupine’ < Kurd.

The lack of /ü/ here could be accounted for by the fact that, as mentioned earlier, loans have a special status in the lexicon and often do not conform to the rules of native phonology and morphology.

The last group of words in which the vowel /u/ is kept against the general tendency of shifting to /ü/ encompasses, once again, high-frequency words, such as the most common nouns, prepositions, adverbs and discourse particles. For example:

urza ‘man’ (also the CBarwar form)

dus, marginally *düs* ‘right, correct’ < Kurd. (cf. CBarwar *düz*)²³

ju- ‘in, at’ (cf. CBarwar *gu-*)

čud- ‘every’ (cf. CBarwar *kul-*)

xu- a discourse particle (cf. CBarwar *xu-* ~ *xo-*)

We can, therefore, observe once more how the frequent occurrence of certain words renders them immune to a common sound shift and allows them to keep their more original phonological shape.

²³ This could alternatively be treated as a recent loan, although it appears to be well-integrated with the language and takes part in derivational processes, e.g. *duzzüta* ‘truth’.

Among the high-frequency words without the expected /ü/, one can also discern a grammatical category, the past base and the resultative participle of II and III stems, which in Azran have /u/ as the thematic vowel:

š-d-r ‘to send’ (II), past base *šudər-*, resultative participle *šudra*
(cf. CBarwar, past base *mšodər-* ~ *mšudər-*, participle *mšudra*)

g-d-l ‘to freeze’ (III), past base *mujdəl-*, resultative participle *mujdəla*
(cf. CBarwar, past base *mugđəl-*, participle *mugđəla*)

The vowel /u/ in the Azran forms is probably retained to create a uniform paradigm of inflection with a single thematic vowel across the stems. This is even more evident when we compare the forms of the infinitive of II and III stems, which also have the vowel /u/, but in this case as a result of the shift from an earlier *o (see section 5.1). Thus:

š-d-r ‘to send’ (II), infinitive *šadure* (cf. CBarwar *mšadore*)

g-d-l ‘to freeze’ (III), infinitive *majdule* (cf. CBarwar *magđole*)

The Azran forms of the past base, resultative participle and infinitive are, accordingly, *šudərre*, *šudra*, *šadure* in stem II and *mujdəlle*, *mujdəla*, *majdule* in stem III. The lack of the shift *u > /ü/ in the verbal paradigm, although causing the two otherwise distinct historical vowels *o and *u to collapse here, nevertheless results in a clear inflectional paradigm with a single thematic vowel. The absence of the expected shift is in this case of a morphological, rather than lexical, nature. This demonstrates that phonological shift is by no means blind, but distinguishes between lexical and morphological categories. It also suggests that paradigm pressure may have the upper hand in allowing or disallowing changes over phonological processes.

5.4 Language contact

As far as the motivation for the shift of *u to /ü/ is concerned, the internal factors mentioned above seem sufficient: the process of a chain shift, triggered by the accumulation of back quality allophones, pushed the original vowels higher and to the front of the mouth. Other sources of /ü/ may be explained as the process of retiming of gestures involved in articulation; for example, assimilation to an adjacent bilabial, or to a following glide in the case of *i_w > /ü/.

Similarly, Khan attributes the development /uy/ from a long *u in Christian Urmi to palatalisation, classifying it thus as an internal phonetic process.²⁴

²⁴ Khan, 2016, p. 191.

Cross-linguistically, the independent emergence of vowel fronting is attested in other languages. For example, in some modern accents of English, such as in the south-east of England, long /u/ has shifted to the front, and as a consequence, the words *looking* and *licking* are pronounced with almost the same vowel quality.²⁵ Another example of the internal development of rounded non-back vowels comes from Modern Mandaic, another Neo-Aramaic language. Here, the entire vowel system underwent a process of raising in comparison to Classical Mandaic. As part of this, the system underwent a shift in the pronunciation of /u/ from [u] to a more fronted [ʊ].²⁶ For these languages, an internal explanation of vowel fronting is generally accepted; that is, no language contact is postulated as a source of the emergence of the front rounded vowel.

In this situation one should ask whether language contact is of any relevance to the development of /ü/ in Azran. The same high front rounded vowel is indeed attested in Azeri Turkish,²⁷ as well as in certain dialects of Kurdish, such as Amedia, Zakho and Akre.²⁸ However, it is difficult to maintain that any of these varieties induced the emergence of /ü/ in Azran, as none of them has been in steady and direct contact with the dialect. For the Azeri Turkish and Kurdish *ü*-quality to have an effect on Azran, we would have to postulate an areal feature of vowel fronting, similar to the situation with the areal palatalisation of velar consonants. There are, however, insufficient grounds for this claim. For many other NENA and Kurdish dialects around Azran, no *ü*-quality has been reported, and so it does not seem to have travelled by continual spreading across language varieties. This is very different from the diffusion of consonant fronting described in section 4 above, which clearly proceeds from the east to the west, gradually losing its influence over particular NENA dialects. Considering, therefore, the phonological factors, the cross-linguistic attestations and the geographical distribution of this feature, it can be concluded that so far there is no evidence for any external input in the development of the vowel /ü/ in Azran. Rather, the emergence of the vowel is motivated internally.

6 Conclusions

In considering consonant and vowel fronting in Azran here, a number of classes of words where processes of palatalisation or vowel-fronting did or did not occur were established – high-frequency words, low-frequency words, loanwords, words containing emphasis, and so on. The classification of Azran words and the associated processes are by no means exhaustive, nor are they

²⁵ Uffmann, 2013.

²⁶ Häberl, forthcoming.

²⁷ Householder and Lofti, 1965.

²⁸ MacKenzie, 1961.

deterministic. There are, of course, words which do not lend themselves to the above grouping – for example, *purya* ‘light’, where no vowel fronting took place despite favourable conditions, since it is a native word with no emphasis; or *janyar* ‘threshing sleigh’, where palatalisation to an alveolar affricate occurred even though the word designates an artefact no longer used or seen in the community. The classes of Azran words suggested above are rather intended to illustrate the different processes that have been involved in shaping the phonological profile of the dialect. These processes encompass phonetics (gesture retiming, push-chain shift and backing of segments), morphology (paradigm pressure) and language use (frequency and language contact), all of which contribute to the apparently irregular diffusion of the innovative features. However looking behind this apparent irregularity, we have seen the way in which each different process maps separately onto the lexicon. In addition, it has been argued that internal processes should be recognised as largely responsible for many of the observed shifts; the role of external language influence as a factor in changes in progress in Azran needs to be carefully evaluated.

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The Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Telkepe

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1 Introduction¹

The dialect described here is a dialect of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) spoken by the Chaldean Catholic Christians of the town of Telkepe. It, and other Christian dialects, are known as *sūraθ* to their speakers. The Telkepe dialect is similar to the dialects of the surrounding Chaldean villages but distinct enough to require a separate description. It is generally well understood by other Iraqi Chaldeans, because the *təlkəpnāyə* (natives of Telkepe) have formed a large part of Chaldean communities in the diaspora, in Baghdad and Detroit especially.

Telkepe [*təlkəpə*] (Arabic Tall Kayf) is a small town situated at the southern end of the Mosul Plain, about fifteen kilometres north of the city of Mosul. Historically Christian, it gained a sizable Muslim population as well. In 2014, with the surge of Islamic State in Iraq, Telkepe was captured and almost all its Christian inhabitants were forced to flee. Telkepe has since been recaptured, but it remains to be seen how many will return.

Telkepe is at the southern tip of a string of Neo-Aramaic-speaking villages leading north from Mosul: Telkepe, Baṭnāya, Baqopa, Tisqopa and Alqosh. To the south-east of Mosul there are three other Neo-Aramaic-speaking villages: Karimlesh, Qaraqosh/Baghdede and Barīṭle/Bartīlle. Most of the inhabitants of these Neo-Aramaic-speaking villages belong to the Chaldean Catholic Church, but the inhabitants of Qaraqosh and Barīṭle adhere mainly to the Syriac Catholic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church respectively. There are also Arabic and Kurdish speakers of various ethno-religious backgrounds living in the local area (especially Christians, Yezidis and Shabaks).

¹ I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the speakers of the Telkepe dialect who have assisted me in my fieldwork, especially Amera Mattia-Marouf, Shawqi Talia, Mahir Awrahem, Haniya, Rania, Francis and Khalid. I would also like to thank Bishop Emanuel Shaleta, who helped me so much during my trips to Detroit. I also extend my thanks to the editors of this volume for their helpful suggestions. My deep gratitude goes especially to Geoffrey Khan, who introduced me to this wonderful language with its endless riches and who taught me to be a scholar.

The etymology of the name Telkepe is apparently ‘the mound of stones’ (Arab. *tall* ‘mound’, Aramaic *kepā* ‘stones’). This refers to the large archaeological tell at the edge of the village. It has not been excavated due to the village cemetery situated on it.

According to Wilmshurst, the earliest mention of Telkepe is in an inscription commemorating the restoration of a nearby monastery in 1403 “by the residents of Telkepe”, and he suggests that Telkepe “may well have been founded as late as the fourteenth century”.² Of course, the tell points to an ancient habitation on the site; it is not known what the name was of the Assyrian settlement now hidden under the tell.

Formerly adhering to the Church of the East, Telkepe was one of the first villages to unite with the Catholic Church.³ According to Wilmshurst, there were Catholic missionaries in Telkepe in the 17th century and there were a significant number of converts by the end of the century.⁴ By the beginning of the 19th century, those in union with Rome were in the majority.

Already in the 19th century Telkepe was the largest Christian village in the plain of Mosul and many of the clergy of the Chaldean Church were its sons. Its prominence in the Chaldean Church continues to this day. In the late 19th century, it had two churches, the churches of Saint Cyriacus and of the Virgin Mary;⁵ within a few decades the number grew to six. There are also several shrines.⁶

Telkepe is notable for its history of emigration, and communities of *tālkəpnāyā* are now found in all the major cities of Iraq, as well as abroad, especially in Detroit, Michigan. In Iraq the *tālkəpnāyā* are prominent in the management of hotels, while in Detroit they have predominantly worked in the grocery business. Emigration to Detroit began in the early 20th century, and the *tālkəpnāyā* are the largest group in the huge Chaldean community there.⁷

Until recently there was little published specifically on the dialect of Telkepe, although there were two articles by Sabar with texts and grammatical notes.⁸ More generally on the dialects of the area of the Mosul Plain, there are several early works providing information.⁹ Unfortunately these do not distinguish between the dialects of the area, which, though highly mutually intelligible, nevertheless are also clearly distinct in phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon.

² Wilmshurst, 2000, p. 223. The inscription was noted by Sachau, 1883, p. 361.

³ Fiey, 1965, p. 360.

⁴ Wilmshurst, 2000, p. 224–226.

⁵ Sachau, 1883, p. 367.

⁶ Fiey, 1965, p. 369.

⁷ Sengstock, 2005.

⁸ Sabar, 1978 and Sabar, 1993.

⁹ Socin, 1882; Guidi, 1883; Sachau, 1895; Rhétoré, 1912; Maclean, 1895; Maclean, 1901.

More recently, studies have been published on individual dialects of this area, such as the varieties spoken in Tisqopa, Qaraqosh, Alqosh, Karimlesh and Baritle.¹⁰ In recent years I have also published a number of papers covering individual aspects of the dialect of Telkepe.¹¹

We are fortunate in having a number of manuscripts of religious poetry composed in the dialects of the Mosul Plain,¹² with the earliest dating to the 16th and 17th centuries. These early texts clearly show dialectal features of this region, while also exhibiting archaic features now lost, as well as lacking certain analytic verbal constructions which presumably developed later. They are therefore a priceless source for the historical development of the NENA dialects of this region.¹³

This study of the dialect of Telkepe was carried out as part of the North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Project at Cambridge University, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board. Most of the fieldwork on which it is based was carried out during two fieldwork trips to Detroit in 2004 and 2007. Some other interviews were conducted in London and Chicago in 2006, while further interviews were also carried out by telephone.

This paper will focus on the basic phonology, morphology and lexicon of the dialect, rather than the syntax, on which I have published elsewhere and which will also be treated in a separate monograph.¹⁴ I have tried here to keep to the same structure as in my other paper-length dialect descriptions, for maximum comparability.¹⁵

2 Phonology

2.1 Phonemic inventories

2.1.1 Consonants

The inventory of consonant phonemes in the dialect of Telkepe is given in table 1. Note the IPA values for the following symbols: *č* [tʃ], *j* [dʒ], *ž* [ʒ] (as an allophone of *š*), *y* [j], *ġ* [ɣ], *h* [ħ], *ʿ* [ʕ], *ʾ* [ʔ]. Other symbols have their IPA values. Apart from *h*, consonants with a dot under are the emphatic (velarised/

¹⁰ See Rubba, 1993a and Rubba, 1993b for Tisqopa; Khan, 2002 for Qaraqosh; Coghill, 2004, Coghill, 2005 and Coghill, forthcoming-b for Alqosh; Borghero, 2008 for Karimlesh; and Mole, 2015 for Baritle.

¹¹ See Coghill, 2008; Coghill, 2009; Coghill, 2010a; Coghill, 2010b; Coghill, 2014; Coghill, 2015.

¹² See e.g. Pennacchietti, 1990; Poizat, 1990; Poizat, 1993; Mengozzi, 2002a; Mengozzi, 2002b; Mengozzi, 2011.

¹³ For diachronic studies using these texts as sources, see Mengozzi, 2012; Coghill, 2010b, pp. 377–379; Coghill, 2016, especially pp. 234–239, 268–282.

¹⁴ See Coghill, 2010a; Coghill, 2010b; Coghill, 2014.

¹⁵ See Coghill, 2013 on Peshabur; Coghill, forthcoming-b on Alqosh.

Table 1. Consonant inventory

		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Laryngeal
Stops/affricates											
plain	voiceless	<i>p</i>		<i>t</i>		<i>č</i>		<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>		ʔ
	voiced	<i>b</i>		<i>d</i>		<i>j</i>		<i>g</i>			
emphatic	voiceless			<i>t̤</i>		<i>č̤</i>					
	voiced										
Fricatives											
plain	voiceless		<i>f</i>	<i>θ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>š</i>		<i>x</i>		<i>ħ</i>	<i>h</i>
	voiced		<i>(v)</i>	<i>ð</i>	<i>z</i>			<i>ġ</i>			
emphatic	voiceless				<i>š̤</i>						
	voiced			<i>ð̤</i>							
Nasals		<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>						
Lateral approximant					<i>l</i>						
Tap/trill											
plain					<i>r</i>						
emphatic					<i>r̤</i>						
Approximants		<i>w</i>					<i>y</i>				

pharyngealised) versions of the undotted consonant; for instance, the symbol *ð̤* represents [ð̤ʕ].

Unemphatic voiceless plosives are lightly aspirated, while emphatic or voiced stops are unaspirated:

<i>talθa</i>	[tʰɛlθæ]	‘the year before last’
<i>tūrâ</i>	[tʰu.rʕv]	‘mountain’
<i>dax</i>	[dɔx]	‘how?’

Some phonemes are only found in loan-words, but are nevertheless common; for example /ð̤/ occurs in words from Arabic. On the other hand, /v/ is only attested in the Kurdish loan-word *šivānâ* ‘shepherd’.

Voiced plosives and fricatives are devoiced in word-final position: *mez* [me:s] ‘table’ (K. *mêz*), *primuz* [pri:mus] ‘primus stove’. This devoicing also occurs in Alqosh, and is an areal feature also found in the Qəltu-Arabic dialects of Mosul and Anatolia, as well as Kurdish dialects.¹⁶ The voicing is preserved when the word is followed by a suffix: *mezât* [me:zæ:t] ‘tables’, *primuzât* [pri:muzæ:t] ‘primus stoves’.

¹⁶ For the dialects of Mosul, see Jastrow, 1979, p. 41; for those of Anatolia, see Jastrow, 1978, p. 98; for Kurdish dialects, see Mackenzie, 1961, pp. 48–49.

2.1.2 Vowels

There are nine vowel phonemes, five of them long and four short. The distinction between long and short is not phonemic in all environments. The phonemes /o/, /e/, and /i/ are usually realised as long, but are not marked as such in order to minimise the number of diacritics. The vowel phonemes are:

Long vowels: /i/ /e/ /ā/ /o/ /ū/

Short vowels: /ə/ /a/ /ǎ/ /u/

The most common realisations of these vowels (in the environment of non-emphatic consonants) are shown below. In an emphatic environment, they may be backed and lowered, at least in the onset. Long vowels may be realised as mid-long, or even short, in an unstressed syllable.

/i/ = [i:]

/e/ = [e:]; it is often diphthongised, with a lowering of the tongue, [ɛɛ]

/ā/ = [æ:]

/o/ = [o:]

/ū/ = [u:]; before /y/ it may be realised as [y:]: *rūyā* ['ry:jɔ] 'grown up'

/ə/ = [ɪ] ~ [ɛ] or a close-mid central vowel, [ə]

/a/ = [æ] or centralised to [ɜ]; in final position sometimes long, [æ:]

/u/ = [u] or a more lax [ʊ]

/ǎ/ = open back to mid central, slightly rounded, [ɔ], [ɐ] or [ə^o]: *hallǎ* ['hællɔ] 'give her', *idǎ* ['i:ðə^o] 'hand'

In an unstressed final open syllable, the length distinction of /a/–/ā/ and /u/–/ū/ is neutralised, and so only the following vowels occur: /i/, /e/, /o/, /ə/, /a/, /u/ and /ǎ/, and the diphthong /ay/. In fact, /ǎ/ only occurs in this position.

What is unusual among NENA dialects is the presence of two distinct 'a' phonemes in final position, /a/ and /ǎ/, where other NENA dialects have one:

skinǎ 'knife'

skina 'her knife'

qtǎllǎ 'she killed'

qtǎlla 'they killed'

'ānǎ 'I'

'āna 'those'

The realisation of these two vowels is quite distinct: final /a/ is a front vowel [æ], not normally centralised (unlike non-final /a/), with more tendency to be pronounced long as [æ:]; /ǎ/ is a back-central vowel, usually slightly rounded. Given the phonetic similarity of the former to the non-final /a/ phoneme, I have chosen to write them the same. Arguably, however, one could alternatively view *ǎ* [ɔ] as an allophone of non-final /a/, given that when word stress is shifted on to it, it changes to /a/:

'arbā	'four (m)'	'arbā=gūrə	'four men'
šātā	'year'	šātā=xurtā	'next year'
'əkmā	'how many?'	'əkmā='armonə	'how many pomegranates?'
xənnā	'other'	xənnā='axonā	'another brother'

There is one diphthong in Telkepe, normally only found in final open syllables (stressed or unstressed), usually a third person plural morpheme. It may also be found in certain Classical Syriac loans.

/ay/ = [ɛy]; e.g. *beθáy* 'their house', *kullay* 'all of them', *bassay!* 'enough for them', *wāway* 'they were', *way!* (similar to German *doch!*), *haymānūθā* 'faith', *suraytūθā* 'Christianity' (< *surāyā* 'Christian')

2.2 Word stress

Word stress is mostly penultimate, as is generally the case in Christian dialects of Iraq; e.g. *mašəlxāna* 'robber', *kəməšəqəllə* 'he took it'. Non-penultimate stress can be found in specific verbal forms, e.g. *mášəlxu* 'rob! (pl)', *kpāθəxwālə* 'he used to open it'. As a result of this, stress is marginally phonemic:

mbāšəllə 'cook it!' *mbāšəllə* '(that) he may cook it'

In this paper, word stress will only be marked where it is not penultimate.

2.3 Synchronic sound rules¹⁷

2.3.1 Assimilation

Assimilation of consonants to each other is very common in Telkepe, as in other NENA dialects. It involves voicing, nasality, place of articulation and

¹⁷ Some forms and phrases in this paper are glossed, with a full list of abbreviations given in the Appendix; the Leipzig Glossing Rules are used where possible. Note, however, that, for economy, the NENA Present Base forms are not explicitly glossed as Present Base; all other verb forms are glossed with their category name. Thus the Present Base form *k-šāqəl* 'he takes' is glossed as [IND-go.3MS], while the Past Base form *šqəl-lə* 'he took' is glossed as [take.PAST-L.3MS]. Words and morphemes are often combined in phrases containing a single stress: one element may be a clitic, but this is not necessarily the case. The long equals sign '=' is used where the stress is on the second component, e.g. *xā=xənnā* 'each other'. The short equals sign '=' is used where the stress is on the first component, e.g. *xoš='ixālā* 'good food' and *gāre=lə* 'it is a roof'. For affixes a simple hyphen is used. Note, however, that the distinction between affixes and clitics is somewhat blurred. For instance, the monoconsonantal prepositions (*b-*, *l-* and *m-*), as well as the genitive marker *d-*, are somewhere between.

emphatic spread. Usually a consonant assimilates to the following one (regressive/anticipatory assimilation), but in emphatic spread consonants before and after may be affected.

Assimilation is very common with grammatical prefixes, and in these cases it will be indicated in the transcription; for example *p-siyārā* ‘in the car’ is underlyingly *b- + siyārā*. When it affects part of the root, on the other hand, assimilation will not be indicated in the orthography; e.g. *xzelə* ‘he saw’ is produced with a voiced initial consonant, as [ɣze:lə] (compare *kxāzə* [kxa:zə] ‘he sees’). Assimilation, especially voicing assimilation, also commonly occurs over the word boundary, but such sandhi will not be indicated in the transcription. Assimilations which are shown in the examples in this section but which are normally ignored in my transcription will be put here in square brackets.

Most consonants regularly assimilate to a following consonant in voicing:

Underlying form	Assimilation	
<i>b- + šāqəl</i> [FUT- + take.S.3MS]	<i>p-šāqəl</i>	‘he will take’
<i>k- + zad-ux</i> [IND- + fear-S.1PL]	<i>g-zadux</i>	‘we fear’
<i>kaləbθā</i>	<i>kalə[p]θā</i>	‘bitch’
<i>bas dahā</i>	<i>ba[z] dahā</i>	‘but now’

There are certain consonants that neither cause nor undergo voicing assimilation: the laryngeals /ʔ/ and /h/, the pharyngeal approximant /ʕ/ and the ‘sonorants’, that is, the nasals /m/ and /n/, the liquids /l/ and /r/ and the semivowels /y/ and /w/, as well as any emphatic counterparts of these.

An emphatic consonant will normally make a neighbouring consonant emphatic also. Emphatic spread may also affect consonants not immediately adjacent:

Underlying form	Assimilation	
<i>qiṣ- + -tā</i> [cut.RES.PTCP- + -FS]	<i>qəṣtā</i>	‘cut’
<i>ṭūrā</i> [mountain]	<i>ṭūrā</i>	‘mountain’
<i>ltexəd + ṭūrā</i> [down + mountain]	<i>ltexət=ṭūrā</i>	‘down the mountain’

The consonants /d/ and /b/ may, before a nasal, themselves become the equivalent nasal consonant, /n/ and /m/ respectively. This is obligatory with /b/ before /m/ and very common (though not obligatory) with the other combinations:

Underlying form	Assimilation	
<i>b- + mašloxə</i> [in- + rob.INF]	<i>m-mašloxə</i>	‘robbing’
<i>b- + nāpəl</i> [FUT- + fall.S.3MS]	<i>m-nāpəl</i>	‘he will fall’
<i>b- + mez</i> [in/on- + table]	<i>m-mez</i>	‘on to the table’
<i>ltexəd + mez</i> [underneath + table]	<i>ltexən=mez</i>	‘underneath the table’

There are two cases where a consonant consistently assimilates to the following one in terms of its place of articulation: /n/ becomes an [m] before the bilabial /p/ (the sequence /nb/ is not attested) and /k/ is backed to [q] before uvular /q/:

Underlying form		Assimilation	
<i>npālā</i>	[fall.INF]	[m]pālā	‘to fall’
<i>k- + qem-ən</i>	[IND- + get_up-S.1MS]	qqemən	‘I (m) get up’

Sometimes a plosive assimilates to a following fricative, although this is not obligatory. In the following cases this results in total assimilation:

Underlying form		Assimilation	
<i>yom-əd + šabθā</i>	[day-CST + week/Saturday]	<i>yoməš=šabθā</i>	‘Saturday’
<i>k- + xašw-an</i>	[IND- + think-S.1FS]	<i>x-xašwan</i>	‘I (f) think’
<i>kud + θe-li</i>	[when + come.PAST-L.1SG]	<i>ku[θ] θeli</i>	‘when I came’

2.3.2 Secondary gemination

There is a tendency (but not a rule), where a short vowel is in an open syllable, for the syllable to be closed by means of the gemination of the following consonant. The main cases of this are presented below:

<i>*la= + piš(ən)</i>	<i>lappəš</i>	‘there is/are no ... left’
[NEG= + there_is_left]		
<i>la= + zilə</i>	<i>la=zzilə</i>	‘he is not going to’
[NEG= + PRSP.3MS]		
<i>k- + zālə</i>	<i>kəzzālə</i>	‘he goes’
[IND- + go.3MS]		
<i>kəm- + (‘)āxəl-lə</i>	<i>kəmmāxəllə</i>	‘he ate it’
[PST_PFV- + eat.S.3MS-L.3MS]		

2.3.3 Plosivisation of interdental adjacent to /l/

As is common across NENA, there is a tendency for an interdental fricative adjacent to an /l/ to become a stop:

Underlying form	Output	
<i>yaldā (ylǝ I)</i>	<i>yaldā</i>	‘she may give birth’
<i>məθ- + -lə</i>	<i>mətlə</i>	‘he died’

2.3.4 Vowel length alternations

A selection of the synchronic vowel alternations in this dialect are presented here. Syllable closure, through the addition of a suffix, usually results in the shortening of a vowel: /ā/ to /a/, /i/ to /ə/, /ū/ to /u/ and /o/ to /o/ ~ /u/ ~ /a/:

Open syllable	Closed syllable
<i>'azāla</i> 'going' (msg active participle)	<i>'azaltā</i> 'going' (fsg active participle)
<i>pθixā</i> 'open (msg)'	<i>pθax-tā</i> 'open (fsg)'
<i>yarūqā</i> 'green (msg)'	<i>yaruq-tā</i> 'green (fsg)'
<i>qtol</i> 'kill!'	<i>qtol-li ~ qtal-li</i> 'kill me!'
<i>komā</i> 'black (msg)'	<i>kum-tə</i> 'black (fsg)'
<i>šaxlopə</i> 'to change' (infinitive)	<i>šaxlap-tā</i> 'changing' (fsg infinitive)

Vowel lengthening also takes place, in a similar way as in Alqosh, either through the opening of a syllable or when a suffix is added that places the vowel in a non-final open syllable:

<i>čangal</i> 'fork'	<i>čangāli</i> 'my fork'
<i>k-xāzə</i> 'he sees'	<i>k-xāzela</i> 'he sees her'
<i>θelə</i> 'he came'	<i>θələlan</i> 'there came to us'
<i>p-kāθu</i> 'he will write'	<i>p-kāθūlə</i> 'he will write it'

Both short final 'a' vowels shift to /ā/ under the latter condition:

<i>k-xāza</i> 'they see'	<i>k-xāzāla</i> 'they see him'
<i>k-šaqalā</i> 'she takes'	<i>k-šaqalāla</i> 'she takes him'

Vowel shortening often takes place when the stress is shifted from an open syllable making it pretonic:

<i>tāle</i> 'to him'	<i>taláy</i> 'to them'
<i>gūdā</i> 'wall'	<i>gudānə</i> 'walls'

Vowels are also shortened when moved to a stressed position before two or more syllables:

<i>b-zālux</i> 'you (msg) will go'	<i>b-záloxu</i> 'you (pl) will go'
<i>k-šaqalūtu</i> 'you (pl) take'	<i>k-šaqalátūlə</i> 'you (pl) take him'
<i>θelə</i> 'he came'	<i>θələlan</i> 'there came to us'

The shift /e/ > /ə/, seen in the previous example, is morphologically conditioned; it does not occur before the anterior suffix:

θeli ‘I came’ *θéwāli* ‘I came (remote past)’

2.4 Historical developments

2.4.1 *Beḡadkeṗat* and other consonant changes

As in NENA generally, the plosive and fricative allophones of Late Aramaic **b*, **g*, **d*, **k* and **t* have for the most part become separate phonemes.¹⁸ As usual, **p* is the exception to this: its allophones have merged as plosive /*p*/:

Stop	Fricative	Examples of fricative reflexes
* <i>b</i> → <i>b</i>	* <i>b̥</i> → <i>w</i>	<i>šwāwā</i> ‘neighbour’ (Syr. <i>š^obābā</i>)
* <i>g</i> → <i>g</i>	* <i>g̥</i> → ’	<i>ra’olā</i> ‘valley’ (Syr. <i>rāḡōlā</i>)
* <i>d</i> → <i>d</i>	* <i>d̥</i> → <i>ð</i>	<i>’idā</i> ‘hand’ (Syr. <i>’idā</i>)
* <i>k</i> → <i>k</i>	* <i>k̥</i> → <i>x</i>	<i>rakixā</i> ‘soft’ (Syr. <i>rakkīkā</i>)
* <i>p</i> → <i>p</i>	* <i>p̥</i> → <i>p</i>	<i>’uprā</i> ‘soil’ (Syr. <i>’apṙā</i>)
* <i>t</i> → <i>t</i>	* <i>t̥</i> → <i>θ</i>	<i>māθā</i> ‘village’ (Syr. <i>mātā</i>)

As indicated above, Telkepe, like other dialects of the Mosul Plain, is among those dialects which have preserved **t̥* and **d̥* as interdental (/θ/ and /ð/), rather than merging them with the dental stops.

Original **h* has merged with **k̥* as /*x*/, e.g. *xəttə* ‘wheat’ (< *hettē*), as in most but not all NENA dialects.¹⁹ Original *’ and **ḡ* have generally merged, both shifting to /’/, e.g. *’amrā* ‘wool’ (Syr. *’amrā*) and *š’ārā* ‘fuel, kindling’ (Syr. *š^oḡārā* ‘kindling’). Immediately before or after a consonant, the resultant /’/ may have been elided, e.g. *šubetā* ‘finger’ (< **šubə’ta* < **šube’ta*, Syr. *šeb^o’tā*), *ṭəmā* ‘taste’ (< **ṭəm’a* < **ṭem’ā*, Syr. *ṭa’mā*), *xāta* ‘thorn-bush’ (< **xa’ta* < **xaḡta*, Syr. *hāḡtā*). Two cases where it was not elided are *pa’lā* ‘labourer’ (Syr. *pā’lā*) and *pə’lā* ‘radishes’ (< **peḡlē*, Syr. *puḡlē* ~ *paḡlē*).

Apparent exceptions to these sound shifts, where the original sounds are preserved (as *h*, ’ and *ḡ*), are usually borrowings from Classical Syriac (see section 2.4.3).

Historical gemination of consonants has mostly been lost where it followed /*a*/, e.g. *yāmā* ‘sea’ (Syr. *yammā*), *rābā* ‘big’ (Syr. *rabbā*), *rakixā* ‘soft’ (Syr. *rakkīkā*), *mzābān* ‘he may sell’ (Syr. *m^ozabbēn*).²⁰ Gemination loss and the resultant presence of single post-vocalic plosives is one of the reasons for the phonemicisation of the plosive-fricative distinction in NENA.

¹⁸ In Syriac, these consonants were realised as fricatives when they occurred after a vowel, unless they were geminated (when they were realised as a plosive). In all other positions they were realised as plosives.

¹⁹ The two are merged as /*h*/ in the dialects of Hertevin (Jastrow, 1988, p. 6), Umra (Hobrack, 2000, p. 22–24) and Derabün (my own fieldwork data).

²⁰ In stressed syllables the vowel was lengthened in compensation for the loss of gemination.

2.4.2 Vowel changes

The vowel phonology of Telkepe is relatively conservative within NENA, except that the old diphthongs have been monophthongised. The reconstructed proto-forms in what follows are based on Syriac forms, as well as those of other NENA dialects.

Original **ō* (as in the eastern pronunciation of Classical Syriac) is preserved as /o/, e.g. **rāgōlā* > *ra'olā* 'valley' and **b^orōnā* > *brona* 'boy, son'. Original **ē* is preserved as /e/ [e:] in non-final position and as /ə/ in final position, e.g. **rēšā* > *rešā* 'head' and **hāzē* > *xāzə* 'he may see'. In its preservation of **ō* and **ē*, Telkepe resembles most other dialects native to northern Iraq and much of the Hakkari province in Turkey.²¹

The old diphthong **aw* (< **aw*, **aḥ* and **ap̄*, where **a* in some cases < **ā*) is also realised as /o/:

<i>*gawzā</i>	>	<i>gozā</i>	'walnut'
<i>*zabnā</i>	>	<i>zonā</i>	'time'
<i>*tlāpḥē</i>	>	<i>tlaxə</i>	'lentils'

This matches what is found for other documented Mosul Plain dialects: Alqosh, Tisqopa (e.g. *zon-* < **zawn-* Present Base 'sell'), Barīṭle (e.g. *gora* < **gawra* < **gabrā* 'man'), and Qaraqosh.²²

The old diphthong **ay* (and **āy*) has been monophthongised in Telkepe and merged with **ē* in most positions (non-final and stressed final), unlike in Alqosh, where it is monophthongised but kept distinct as /ɛ/,²³ or other dialects such as Peshabur, where it is preserved as a diphthong /ay/ [ei]:²⁴

<i>*baytā</i>	>	TK <i>beθā</i>	Alq. <i>bεθa</i>	Pesh. <i>bayθa</i>	'house'
<i>*payšā</i>	>	TK <i>pešā</i>	Alq. <i>pεša</i>	Pesh. <i>payša</i>	'she may become'
<i>*xzay</i>	>	TK <i>xze</i>	Alq. <i>xzε</i>	Pesh. <i>xzay</i>	'see (pl)!'

In a final, unstressed, open syllable, **ay* is also monophthongised, but as /a/:

<i>*xāzay</i>	>	TK <i>xāza</i>	Alq. <i>xāzε</i>	Pesh. <i>xāzay</i>	'they may see'
<i>*šqəl-lay</i>	>	TK <i>šqalla</i>	Alq. <i>šqalle</i>	Pesh. <i>šqallay</i>	'they took'
<i>*'annay</i>	>	TK <i>'āna</i>	Alq. <i>'āne</i>		'those'

²¹ This contrasts with some dialects of eastern Hakkari, such as Jilu, and the Christian dialects of Urmi, in which **ē* has in many cases shifted to /i/ and **ō* to /u/ (i.e. **rēšā* > *riša* 'head' and **b^orōnā* > *bruna* 'boy, son'). For Jilu, see Fox, 1997, pp. 17–18, 127; for Urmi, see Khan, 2016, pp. 186–87, 190–91.

²² For Alqosh, see Coghill, 2004, p. 78; for Tisqopa, see Rubba, 1993a, p. 175; for Barīṭle, see Mole, 2015, p. 112; and for Qaraqosh, see Khan, 2002, p. 54.

²³ Coghill, 2004, p. 78.

²⁴ Coghill, 2013, p. 39.

There are a few cases where **ay* in a final unstressed syllable is realised as /e/. These are the feminine imperatives of *verba tertiae* /y/ in derivations **II**, **III** and **Q**, which usually end in /e/, even though this goes back to unstressed **ay*, which should be realised as /a/. This exception results presumably from analogy with the forms in derivation **I**, which end in /e/ (e.g. *xzé* ‘see (f)!’).

mšāray* (*šry* **II) > TK *mšāre* ‘begin (f)!’
 māhkay* (*hky* **III) > TK *māhke* ‘speak (f)!’

An exception to the exception is *meθa* ‘bring (fsg)!’ (< **mayθay*, *’θy* **III**), suggesting that the analogy is not made consistently.

The historical 3pl pronominal suffix **-ayhən*²⁵ has become a diphthong *-ay*, e.g. *beθáy* ‘their house’ (compare Alq. *beθéy*). In some forms the suffix does not take the stress, but the diphthong remains: e.g. *kúllay* ‘all of them’, *mánnay* ‘from them’ and *’arbáθnay* ‘four of them’.

Telkepe may be contrasted with another dialect of the northern Mosul Plain, namely Tisqopa. In this dialect **ay* has also generally merged with **ē* to /e/, e.g. **mayθa* > *meθa* ‘she may die’.²⁶ On the other hand, final unstressed **ay* is preserved as a diphthong: *kxāzey* ‘they see’, 3pl L-suffix *-ley*.²⁷

The existence of two ‘a’ vowel qualities in this dialect has already been mentioned. The back /ā/ vowel, found only in unstressed final open syllables, is usually a reflex of original **a* < **ā*²⁸ in final position, as found in nominal and adjectival inflection and some pronouns, e.g. *nāšā* ‘person’, *māθā* ‘village’, *skināθā* ‘knives’, *rābā* ‘big’ and *’āwā* ‘that (m)’, as well as in the anterior suffix *-wā* (< **(h)wā*), when word-final.

The front /a/ vowel in unstressed final position is usually a reflex of original **ay*, as mentioned above. Both ‘a’ vowels, however, also go back to original **-ah* < **-āh*, but in different morphological contexts. The 3fsg possessive suffix on nouns and prepositions, **-ah* < **-āh*, is realised as *-a*, e.g. *barāna* ‘her ram’. The 3fsg L-suffix, **-l-ah* < **-l-āh*, on the other hand, is realised as *-lā*. I have elsewhere suggested that already in early NENA the /h/ was lost in the L-suffix, but retained in the possessive suffix in order to disambiguate it from the nominal inflection **-a*.²⁹ Various dialects preserved this distinction in different ways: some by preserving the /h/ or by reinforcing it as a pharyngeal /ħ/. In Telkepe, the /h/ was lost, but the vowel quality distinguished the possessive suffix *-a* from the nominal inflection *-ā*, which now had a back vowel.

²⁵ See Hoberman, 1988, p. 565 for this reconstruction.

²⁶ Rubba, 1993a, p. 176.

²⁷ Rubba, 1993a, pp. 71–72.

²⁸ The original Aramaic ending was *-ā*, but across NENA it is normally a short *-a*. A 12th century source for early NENA also suggests a short vowel; see Khan, 2008b, p. 97.

²⁹ See Coghill, 2008, pp. 91–97.

2.4.3 Borrowed phonemes

The following consonants are introduced into Telkepe Neo-Aramaic primarily through loan-words from neighbouring languages, mainly Kurdish and Arabic:

- ð (< Arab.) *manðofə* ‘to clean’
- č (< K. and Iraqi Arab.) *čāyi* ‘tea’, *čangal* ‘fork’, *ču* = ‘no’
- f (< Arab.) *flān-* ‘such and such’, *fyārā* ‘to fly’
- j (< Arab. and K.) *jullə* ‘clothes’, *mjawobə* ‘to answer’

The following consonant is found only marginally:

- v (< K.) *šivānā* ‘shepherd’ (the native synonym *marə* ‘yānā is also used)

The sounds /ʻ/, /ħ/ and /ğ/ (i.e. *ḡ*), which mostly underwent sound changes in the native lexicon, have been reintroduced into the language through loan-words from Arabic and Classical Syriac; e.g. *‘āšərtā* ‘evening’ (< Arab. *‘ašr*), *ya ‘qu* ‘Jacob’, *haqquθā* ‘truth’ (< Arab. *haqq*), *haššā* ‘suffering, Passion’ (< Syr. *haššā*), *ḡliṭā* ‘wrong’ (< Arab. *ḡli* i ‘to err’), *paḡrā* ‘body (of Christ)’ (< Syr. *paḡrā*).

3 Morphology

3.1 Pronouns

In table 2 are the independent personal pronouns as well as the pronominal suffixes which can be affixed to nouns (with possessive function) and to prepositions.

Table 2. Personal pronouns

Independent pronouns		Pronominal suffixes			
3 msg	<i>‘āwu</i>	‘he’	-e	<i>beθe</i>	‘his house’
fsg	<i>‘āyi</i>	‘she’	-a	<i>beθa</i>	‘her house’
pl	<i>‘ani</i> ~ <i>‘āni</i>	‘they’	-āy	<i>beθāy</i>	‘their house’
2 msg	<i>‘āyət</i>	‘you (msg)’	-ux	<i>beθux</i>	‘your (fsg) house’
fsg	<i>‘āyat</i>	‘you (fsg)’	-ax	<i>beθax</i>	‘your (msg) house’
pl	<i>‘axtu</i>	‘you (pl)’	-óxu	<i>beθóxu</i>	‘your (pl) house’
1 sg	<i>‘ānā</i>	‘I’	-i	<i>beθi</i>	‘my house’
pl	<i>‘axni</i>	‘we’	-an	<i>beθan</i>	‘our house’

In the third person singular possessive suffixes, Telkepe contrasts with some other dialects of the Mosul Plain (Tisqopa, Alqosh, Karimlesh and Qaraqosh),

which, instead of losing the *h of 3msg *-eh and 3fsg *-ah, have strengthened it to a pharyngeal, -əḥ and -aḥ.³⁰

The independent possessive pronouns are formed on the stem *diy-*, e.g. *diy* ‘mine’. These are typically, though not only, used predicatively, e.g. *lelə diy-oxu* [NEG.COP:3MS POSS:2PL] ‘It is not yours (pl)’.

Table 3 gives the demonstrative pronouns in both their independent and attributive forms.

Table 3. Demonstrative pronouns

Near deixis		Far/absent deixis	
Independent	Attributive	Independent	Attributive
sg 'āyi ~ 'ādi	'āyi ~ 'aθ	msg 'āwā	'āwā ~ 'o
		fsg 'āyā	'āyā ~ 'e
pl 'āni	'an ~ 'āni	pl 'āna	'āna

The attributive forms usually form a stress phrase with the following noun. The stress may fall either on the demonstrative or the noun. As shown in the table, Telkepe, similarly to Alqosh and Qaraqosh,³¹ has only two distinctions in deixis: e.g. 'an=nāšə 'these people' vs 'āna=nāšə 'those people'. Contrast this with dialects further north, such as Peshabur, which distinguish between 'near' and 'far' (both of which can be pointed towards) and 'absent' deixis (where the direction is unknown or irrelevant); the masculine singular forms in Peshabur are 'awwa 'this (here)', 'awāḥa 'that (there)' and 'āwa 'that (absent/past time)'.³²

The reflexive pronoun is formed from *gyānā* 'soul, self' with possessive suffixes, e.g. *la=ma iq-at gyān-ax!* [not=bother-S.2FS self-2FS] 'Don't bother yourself (f)'. Reciprocity can be expressed with 'əḡḡāḏə or *xā=xanna* (with feminine form *ḡḡā=xurta/xarta*) [one=other] 'each other', e.g. 'anna *xā=xanna* [help.PAST:3PL one.M=other.M] 'They (m or mixed) helped each other', 'anna *ḡḡā=xarta* 'They (f) helped each other'.

3.2 Nouns

Masculine nouns usually end in -ā, e.g. *gorā* 'man', *kalbā* 'dog' and *kθāwā* 'book'. Feminine nouns usually end in -Tā, that is, either -tā (< *-ta) or -θā (< *-ta), e.g. *sustā* 'mare', *šabθā* 'week' and *betā* 'egg'. There are also some unmarked feminine nouns, which end in -ā: *yammā* 'mother', *dūkā* 'place', 'aqər wā 'scorpion', 'anānā 'cloud', 'arā 'earth', 'əzzā 'goat', 'almā 'world', 'addānā 'time' and *berā* 'well'.

³⁰ See Coghill, 2008, pp. 96–97 for an explanation for the various developments these suffixes have undergone.

³¹ Deixis in Alqosh is described in Coghill, 2004, pp. 112–113; and the system of Qaraqosh in Khan, 2002, pp. 81–82.

³² In Peshabur, furthermore, greater distance in far deixis can be indicated by lengthening the stressed syllable: 'awāḥa or 'awa 'ḥa 'that one, way over there'. For a description of deixis in Peshabur, see Coghill, 2013, pp. 97–100.

Nouns with other endings may be masculine or feminine: e.g. *gārə* (m) ‘roof’, *lelə* (f) ‘night’, *xūwə* (f) ‘snake’, *məndi* (m) ‘thing’, *kālu* (f) ‘bride’.

Female beings (animals or humans) are always feminine, e.g. *yəmmā* ‘mother’, as are most place names, e.g. *bağdad* ‘Baghdad’, *təlkepə* ‘Telkepe’.

The feminine endings *-Tâ* and *-iθâ* are often used for derivations that, in relation to the source noun, are female, singulative or diminutive, e.g. *qāṭu* (m) ‘tomcat’, *qaṭuθâ* (f) ‘female cat’; *məzzə* (pl) ‘hairs’, *məzzetâ* (f) ‘(single) hair’; *quprānâ* (m) ‘shelter, booth’, *qupraniθâ* (f) ‘small shelter, booth’. As in Alqosh, *-u* also occurs as a diminutive suffix, especially in hypocoristic names, e.g. *sotu* ‘little old lady’ (< *sotâ* ‘old woman, granny’), *maxxu* ‘Mike’ (< *mixâ* ‘il’ ‘Michael’), and *šammu* ‘Sam’ (< *šmu* ‘él’ ‘Samuel’). Another diminutive suffix is *-onâ*; the examples elicited with this suffix were of animals and people with disabilities, e.g. *kalbonâ* ‘little dog’, *səmyonâ* ‘blind man’.

There are eight plural suffixes, whose distribution is lexically defined. The plural *-ât* is borrowed: it derives from Arabic *-āt* but occurs not only with Arabic loans but also with European loans (perhaps via Arabic). The suffixes, along with examples, are:

<i>-ə</i>	<i>torâ</i> (m) ‘bull’, pl <i>torə</i> ; <i>’abəštâ</i> (f) ‘raisin’, pl <i>’abišə</i>
<i>-ānə</i>	<i>gūdâ</i> (m) ‘wall’, pl <i>gudānə</i> ; <i>dūkâ</i> (f) ‘place’, pl <i>dukānə</i>
<i>-āθâ</i>	<i>’aqlâ</i> (f) ‘leg’, pl <i>’aqlāθâ</i> ; <i>šišəltâ</i> (f) ‘chain’, pl <i>šəšlāθâ</i>
<i>-awāθâ</i>	<i>deṛâ</i> (m) ‘monastery’, pl <i>deṛawāθâ</i> ; <i>ammâ</i> (m) ‘paternal uncle’, pl <i>ammawāθâ</i>
<i>-wāθâ</i>	<i>nāšâ</i> (m) ‘person’, pl <i>našwāθâ</i> ; <i>səpθâ</i> (f) ‘lip’, pl <i>səpwāθâ</i>
<i>-yāθâ</i>	<i>’itotâ</i> (f) ‘party’, pl <i>’itoyāθâ</i> ; <i>xawərθâ</i> (f) ‘(female) friend’, pl <i>xawəryāθâ</i>
<i>-āCe</i>	<i>təllâ</i> (m) ‘hill’, pl <i>təllālə</i> ; <i>səkθâ</i> (f) ‘ploughshare’, pl <i>səkkākə</i>
<i>-ât</i>	<i>mez</i> (m) ‘table’, pl <i>mezât</i> (also <i>mezə</i>); <i>primuz</i> (m) ‘primus stove’, pl <i>primuzât</i>

Alqosh and Qaraqosh have also borrowed the Arabic plural *-ât*, but in those dialects it has lost the stress, in line with the native penultimate stress, e.g. Alq. *maḥállə* ‘town quarter’, pl *maḥállat*.³³

There exist irregularities in the plurals of some common words. Some are the same as in Alqosh, e.g. *gorâ* ‘man’, pl *gūrə* (Alq. *gūrə*), while others are different, e.g. *’axonâ* ‘brother’, pl *’axawāθâ* (Alq. *’axunwāθa*). Both *bronâ* ‘boy, son’ and *brātâ* ‘girl, daughter’ show nasal assimilation in their plurals, *mnonə* (Alq. *bnonə*) and *mnāθâ* (Alq. *bnāθa*) respectively. The following are entirely irregular: *gā* ‘time’, pl *gāyi*; and *’aji* ‘child’ (< Mosul Arab.), pl *’ajāyâ*.

³³ Coghill, 2005; Coghill, forthcoming-c.

3.3 Adjectives

As generally in NENA, adjectives show at most a three-way distinction in gender and number: masculine singular, feminine singular and common plural. There are four patterns of inflection in Telkepe adjectives, shown in table 4. The first three patterns vary only in the feminine inflection; the last class is uninflected (invariable).

Table 4. Adjective inflections

Pattern	Masculine	Feminine	Plural
1	-â	-Tâ	-ə
2	-â	-ə	-ə
3	-â	-Tə	-ə
4	-∅	-∅	-∅

Inflectional patterns 2 and 3 are only used for certain very restricted sets of adjectives. Pattern 4 is used with certain Arabic loan adjectives. All other adjectives take inflectional pattern 1, which is the original Aramaic inflection.

Adjectives which take a particular inflectional pattern tend to follow certain morphological and derivational patterns, which will also be discussed here. Adjectives taking inflectional pattern 1 include derivations ending in *-ānâ* or *-(n)āyâ*, as well as the following common adjectival patterns: *CCiCâ*, *CaCiCâ*, *CaCCiCâ*, *CaCūCâ* and *CaCāCâ*.

Adjectives taking inflectional pattern 2 include certain loan-words, of both Arabic and Kurdish origin. The feminine inflection *-ə* is borrowed from vernacular Arabic, and is identical to the (native) plural inflection. As in other dialects, such as Alqosh,³⁴ some adjectives which take this pattern belong to the lexical field of disabilities; e.g. *taršâ* (m), *taršə* (f), *taršə* (pl) ‘deaf’ (< Arab.). They also all have a stem of the form *CaCC-*. Other attested adjectives taking this inflection are: *randâ* ‘fine’ (< K.), *xarsâ* ‘dumb’ (< Arab.), *baršâ* ‘albino’, *arjâ* ‘lame’ (< Arab.), *zarqâ* ‘blue’ (< Arab.), *sahlâ* ‘easy’ (< Arab.) and *ša bâ* ‘difficult’ (< Arab.).

Inflectional pattern 3 is a mixed inflection, where the feminine is doubly marked in a combination of *-Tâ* (the native inflection of pattern 1) and *-ə* (the borrowed Arabic form of pattern 2), resulting in *-Tə*. Adjectives taking this inflection are all of Aramaic origin. This inflection is, to the author’s knowledge, not yet attested in other dialects; in Alqosh, for instance, the same words take inflectional pattern 2. What these adjectives have in common is unusual or unique consonant-vowel patterns: none of the common adjectival patterns occur in this group.³⁵ The attested members of this group, next to a representation of their consonant-vowel patterns, are:

³⁴ Coghill, 2004, pp. 282–283.

³⁵ Note that it is the patterns that are unusual, in that few adjectives appear in them. The adjectives themselves are common.

<i>CāCā</i>	<i>rābā</i> (m), <i>rabθə</i> (f), <i>rābə</i> (pl) ‘big’ <i>tāwā</i> (m), <i>totə</i> (f), <i>tāwə</i> (pl) ‘good’ <i>xāθā</i> (m), <i>xəθtə</i> (f), <i>xāθə</i> (pl) ‘new’
<i>CoCā</i>	<i>zorā</i> (m), <i>zurtə</i> (f), <i>zorə</i> (pl) ‘small’ <i>komā</i> (m), <i>kumtə</i> (f), <i>komə</i> (pl) ‘black’
<i>CCoCā</i>	<i>smoqā</i> (m), <i>smuqtə</i> (f), <i>smoqə</i> (pl) ‘red’
<i>CCāCā</i>	<i>xwārā</i> (m), <i>xwartə</i> (f), <i>xwārə</i> (pl) ‘white’

Inflectional pattern 4 consists of no inflection at all. Adjectives following this pattern are probably recent borrowings from Arabic, which have not been adapted to Aramaic morphology or phonology, e.g. *ḏa* ‘if’ ‘weak, thin’ (< Arab.), *ḏa* ‘if’ (f), *ḏa* ‘if’ (pl). Other examples of unadapted uninflected adjectives are: *lā-ṣaḥ* ‘ill’ (< Arab.), *’arzan* ‘cheap’ (< K.), *’agran* ‘expensive’ (< K.), *rəṣāši* ‘grey’ (< Arab.), *qahwāyi* ~ *qahwā* ‘i’ ‘brown’ (< Arab.), *qərməzi* ‘purple’ (< Arab.), *’ašla* ‘bald’ (< Arab.). The lack of agreement is illustrated by the following examples: *šuqtā qərməzi* ‘a purple shirt (f)’, *’āni ḏa* ‘if’ ‘the weak ones’.

The loan-word *xoš* ‘good’ is also invariable, but is different to the other words here in that it precedes the noun: *xoš* = *’ixālā* ‘good food’.

3.4 Annexation constructions

A genitive relationship between two (or more) nouns is usually expressed by means of the head-marking (construct) suffix *-əd*, e.g. *yoməd=da* ‘wā’ ‘the day of the wedding’ (cf. *yomā* ‘day’). Two irregular forms are *bərt* ‘son of’ (cf. *bronā* ‘son’) and *bərtəd* ‘daughter of’ (cf. *brātā* ‘daughter’).

The older dependent (genitive) marker *d-* is also found, especially when the possessor is predicated, e.g. *wāwā d-gūrə* [PST.COP.3PL GEN-men] ‘they were the men’s’.

The /d/ consonant of both morphemes undergoes anticipatory assimilation (see section 2.3.1), e.g. *nāšəz=zāxu* ‘the people of Zakho’ (cf. *nāšə* ‘people’) and *’āyi betā, k-oyā t-kepā* [this egg IND-be.3FS GEN-stone] ‘this egg, it is of stone’.

The old Aramaic apocopate construct is preserved in the following productive prefixes: *bi-* ‘house of’, *mar-* ‘owner of’, e.g. *bi-kālu* ‘the family of the bride’ and *mar-beθā* ‘house-owner’.

Measurements of quantity are usually simply placed in juxtaposition with the noun, e.g. *ḡḏa=maṭamiθā məšxā* ‘a spoonful of oil’, *tətté=tanayāθā sūraθ* ‘two words of Surath’.

3.5 Numerals and the indefinite article

The numerals 1–10 are given in table 5. These numerals, and only these numerals, inflect for gender to agree with the noun modified. Before a noun the

stress is usually shifted onto the final syllable and any /â/ replaced by /a/, e.g. 'arbé='ənsə 'four women' and 'arbá=gūrə 'four men' (see section 2.1.2). Sometimes the stressed vowel is lengthened, e.g. 'əšwā='ənsə 'seven women'. The forms for 'one' undergo shortening when used attributively: xa= (m) and ġđa= (f).

Table 5. Independent numerals (1–10)

	one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight	nine	ten
m	xā'	tre'	tlāθā	'arbā	xamšā	'əštā	šo'ā	tmānyā	təš'ā	'əsrā
f	ġđā'	tätte	tləllaθ	'arbe	xamməš	'əššət	'əšwā	tmāne	təššā	'əssar

The indefinite specific article (expressing 'a certain') is identical to the attributive numeral 'one' and thus also inflects for gender: xa= (m) and ġđa= (f).

The numerals 11–19 are: *xadesar*, *tresar*, *təltāsar*, 'arbāsar, *xamšāsar*, 'əštāsar, *šo'āsar*, *tmānyāsar*, *čāsar*. The multiples of ten are: 'əsri 'twenty', *tlāθi*, 'arbi, *xamši*, 'əšti, *šo'i ~ šu'i*, *tmāni*, *təš'i*. 'Hundred' is 'umḡā and 'thousand' is 'alpā. Combinations of tens and units are ordered with the unit first; note that this order varies across NENA dialects. Stress is placed on the final syllable of the unit: 'arbā-w=əsri 'twenty-four'.

Cardinal numerals, as in other NENA dialects, are expressed by annexation constructions (see section 3.4), but also with gender agreement, e.g. *gorā dətre* 'second man', *baxtā t-tätte* 'second woman'.

3.6 Verbs

3.6.1 Derivational patterns and verbal bases

There are five main verb derivation patterns (*binyānīm*): four triradical and one quadriradical. Derivations **I**, **II** and **III** are derived from earlier Aramaic *p^aal*, *pa'el* and *aph'el* derivations respectively. Derivation **II**₂ is a variant of **II** found with roots where the last two radicals are the same (e.g. √*xll*): in this derivation the original gemination of *pa'el* is preserved. The bases used in the verbal system are formed according to the derivation (see table 6). They are: the Present Base, Past Base, Imperative, Infinitive, Resultative Participle, and Active Participle.

Like some other NENA dialects (including Alqosh and Qaraqosh), Telkepe has acquired new derivations, borrowed from Arabic, in particular the **Ct-** derivation (with infixes -t- after the first radical), borrowed from the Arabic eighth derivation, and the **St-** derivation (with prefixed *st-*), borrowed from the Arabic tenth derivation.³⁶ Their existence as independent derivations is

³⁶ In personal correspondence, David Enochs reports of a further borrowed derivation used by Telkepe speakers living in America, namely the Arabic fifth derivation, loaned along with the Arabic verb *mny v* 'to wish', where the *t-* prefix is also transferred into the Telkepe forms. The precise paradigm still needs to be confirmed, however, so it has not been listed here.

Table 6. Verbal bases

	I	II	II₂	III	Q
	<i>qtl</i>	<i>bšl</i>	<i>xll</i>	<i>šlx</i>	<i>šxlp</i>
	‘to kill’	‘to cook’	‘to wash’	‘to rob’	‘to change’
Present Base	<i>qaṭl-</i>	<i>mbašl-</i>	<i>mxall-</i>	<i>mašəlx-</i>	<i>mšaxəlp-</i>
Present Base 3msg	<i>qāṭəl</i>	<i>mbāšəl</i>	<i>mxalləl</i>	<i>mašləx</i>	<i>mšaxləp</i>
Past Base	<i>qṭəl-</i>	<i>mbušəl-</i>	<i>mxulləl-</i>	<i>mušləx-</i>	<i>mšuxləp-</i>
Imperative	<i>qtol</i>	<i>(m)bāšəl</i>	<i>(m)xalləl</i>	<i>mašləx</i>	<i>(m)šaxləp</i>
Infinitive	<i>qṭālā</i>	<i>(m)bašolə</i>	<i>(m)xallolə</i>	<i>mašloxə</i>	<i>(m)šaxlopə</i>
Res. Ptcp. m	<i>qṭilā</i>	<i>mbušlā</i>	<i>mxullā</i>	<i>mušləxā</i>	<i>mšuxəlpā</i>
Res. Ptcp. f	<i>qṭəltā</i>	<i>mbušəltā</i>	<i>mxulləltā</i>	<i>mušləxtā</i>	<i>mšuxləptā</i>
Act. Ptcp.	<i>qaṭālā</i>	<i>mbašlānā</i>	?	<i>mašəlxānā</i>	<i>mšaxəlpānā</i>

undermined somewhat by the fact that they are only found with borrowed Arabic verbs. Nevertheless, like the other derivations they have their own paradigms, even if these show some variation, as shown in table 7.³⁷

Table 7. Arabic verbal bases

	Ct-	St-
	<i>ḥrm Ct-</i> ‘to respect’, <i>ḥfl Ct-</i> ‘to celebrate’, <i>xlf Ct-</i> ‘to differ’	<i>‘ml St-</i> ‘to use’
Present Base	<i>maḥtarm-</i> <i>məḥtafl-</i> <i>maxtəlf-</i>	<i>məsta ‘aml- ~</i> <i>məsta ‘məl- ~</i> <i>məsta ‘əml-</i>
Present Base 3msg	<i>maḥtarəḥm</i>	?
Past Base	<i>muḥtarəḥm-</i> <i>məḥtəfəl-</i>	<i>mustə ‘məl-</i>
Imperative	?	?
Infinitive	<i>maḥtaromə</i>	<i>məsta ‘molə</i>
Res. Ptcp. m	<i>muḥtərmā</i>	<i>mustə ‘əmlā</i>
Res. Ptcp. f	<i>muḥtəramtā</i>	<i>mustə ‘məltā</i>
Act. Ptcp.	?	?

The Present, Past and Imperative bases are inflected for person and used as verb forms themselves. The main person indexes are the S- and L-suffixes (see table 8). The Infinitive and the Resultative and Active Participles, as nominal/adjectival forms, require auxiliary verbs such as the copula to lend them verbal force.

³⁷ More detail on Arabic loan derivations in Telkepe and other dialects can be found in Coghill, 2015.

Table 8. Verb inflection paradigms

	S-suffixes	Present Base with S-suffixes	L-suffixes	Past Base with L-suffixes	Past Base with S-suffixes
3	msg —	<i>šāqəl</i>	<i>-lə</i>	<i>šqəllə</i>	<i>šqil</i>
	fsg <i>-ā</i>	<i>šaqlā</i>	<i>-lā</i>	<i>šqəllā</i>	<i>šqilā</i>
	pl <i>-i</i>	<i>šaqli</i>	<i>-la</i>	<i>šqəlla</i>	<i>šqili</i>
2	msg <i>-ət</i>	<i>šaqlət</i>	<i>-lux</i>	<i>šqəllux</i>	?
	fsg <i>-at</i>	<i>šaqlat</i>	<i>-lax</i>	<i>šqəllax</i>	?
	pl <i>-ūtū</i>	<i>šaqlūtū</i>	<i>-loxu</i>	<i>šqəlloxu</i>	?
1	msg <i>-ən</i>	<i>šaqlən</i>	<i>-li</i>	<i>šqəlli</i>	<i>šqilən</i>
	fsg <i>-an</i>	<i>šaqlan</i>	<i>-li</i>	<i>šqəlli</i>	<i>šqilan</i>
	pl <i>-ux</i>	<i>šaqlux</i>	<i>-lan</i>	<i>šqəllan</i>	<i>šqilux</i>

The Present Base takes S-suffixes to index the subject and may take L-suffixes to index an object:

<i>k-šaql-ux</i>	<i>k-šaql-ux-la</i>
IND-take-S.1PL	IND-take-S.1PL-L.3PL
‘we take’	‘we take them’

The Past Base takes L-suffixes to index the subject and may take S-suffixes to index a feminine or plural third person pronominal object:

<i>šqəl-lan</i>	<i>šqil-i-lan</i>
take.PAST-L.1PL	take.PAST-S.3PL-L.1PL
‘we took’	‘we took them’

The Past Base is also used in a passive construction, where it takes S-suffixes to index the subject (and no L-suffixes). This can be elicited from certain older speakers, but has not been documented in spontaneous speech.³⁸ It expresses a passive: the examples offered by speakers all have present perfect aspect, but it is not known whether it is restricted to this function:

- (1) *sayārətt-i mzubn-ā*
 car(f)-1SG sell.PAST-S.3FS
 ‘My car has been sold.’

As in Alqosh, L-suffixes undergo regressive assimilation to a previous consonant: to the final /n/ of a root and to a final rhotic (/r/ or /r̥/):

<i>*zwən + li</i>	>	<i>zwənni</i>	‘I bought’	
<i>*gwər + lə</i>	>	<i>*gwərrə</i>	> <i>gwerə</i>	‘he married’

³⁸ The Past Base with S-suffixes is used to express a passive in some other NENA dialects; see Coghill, 2016, pp. 268–269. It seems, however, to be undergoing a general decline in favour of analytical passive constructions: in the closely related dialect of Alqosh it is not productive but survives only in fixed idioms and proverbs; see Coghill 2004, pp. 191–192.

They also assimilate to the final consonants of S-suffixes, i.e. /n/ and /t/:

**k-šaqłən + lux* > *k-šaqłənnux* ‘I (m) take you (msg)’
 **k-šaqłat + li* > *k-šaqłatti* ‘you (fsg) take me’

Note that /t/ as part of a *root* does not trigger assimilation: *fətlə* ‘it passed’ (*fyt* I).

There is another set of suffixes, B-suffixes, which are found predominantly attached to the existential particle *ʾiθ* in a form which expresses ‘to be able’ (see section 3.6.5). These have the same form as L-suffixes, except with the /l/ replaced by /b/, e.g. *-bə* (3msg) and *-bā* (3fsg).

The main verb forms of NENA, Telkepe included, originate in Late Aramaic participles. The Present Base derives from the Late Eastern Aramaic active participle and the Past Base from the passive participle. The S- and L-suffixes have quite different historical origins. The S-suffixes originate in gender and number inflection of the participles which merged with enclitic first and second pronouns. The L-suffixes originate in the Late Aramaic dative preposition *l-* with pronominal suffixes attached. This preposition flagged direct as well as indirect objects of the active participle construction. With the passive participle it flagged firstly experiencers (with verbs such as ‘to hear’), then was extended to all agents.³⁹ The B-suffixes have a similar origin, except that they were formed on the locative/instrumental preposition *b-*.

3.6.2 Tense-aspect-mood categories and verbal modifiers

The Past Base inflected with L-suffixes expresses the past perfective: this includes present perfect aspect, e.g. *šqəl-li* ‘I took’, ‘I have taken’.

The inflected Present Base may occur without a prefix as the present subjunctive, in which case it expresses deontic modality, or forms part of a verbal complement. Other tense-aspect-mood (TAM) values are expressed by means of prefixes on the Present Base or an auxiliary (pseudo-)verb with or without the complementiser *d=*, as shown in table 9.

As in other NENA dialects, the past perfective prefix *kəm-* always co-occurs with object suffixes: *kəm*-Present Base normally serves in place of Past Base forms, when an object needs to be indexed, as only 3fsg and 3pl objects may be indexed on the Past Base.

The prefixes *k-*, *b-* and *šud-* follow the normal rules or tendencies of assimilation (see section 2.3.1), as in the following examples:

k- + bāxə > *gbāxə* ‘he weeps’
b- + pāyəš > *ppāyəš* ‘he will be’
b- + maθyāli > *mmaθyāli* ‘she will bring to me’

³⁹ See Coghill, 2016 for a description of the development of the NENA verbal system and accompanying alignment change in the language.

Table 9. TAM modifiers of Present Base forms

Modifier	Main function	In combination	Translation
Ø-	jussive	<i>yalpâ</i>	‘let her learn’
Ø-	complement	<i>kəbâ d=yalpâ</i>	‘she wants to learn’
<i>k-</i>	indicative	<i>k-yalpâ</i>	‘she learns’
<i>b-</i> (~ <i>bəd-</i>)	future	<i>b-yalpâ ~ bəd-yalpâ</i>	‘she will learn’
<i>šud=</i>	jussive	<i>šud=yalpâ</i>	‘let her learn’
<i>kəm-</i>	past perfective	<i>kəm-yalpâ-lə</i>	‘she learned it’
<i>zi-</i>	prospective	<i>zi-yalpâ</i>	‘she is going to learn’
<i>šwoq/šoq d=</i>	jussive	<i>šoq d=yalpâ</i>	‘let her learn’
<i>xoš d=</i>	cohortative	<i>xoš d=yalpux</i>	‘let us learn’
<i>lāzəm/garag</i>	necessitive	<i>lāzəm yalpâ</i>	‘she must learn’
<i>zil-S/zi-L</i>	prospective	<i>zilâ yalpâ</i>	‘she is going to learn’

Prefixes also follow the rules of syllable structure, disallowing *CCC*, so that when the addition of an affix causes a consonant cluster, an epenthetic vowel, *a*, is usually inserted to break it up:

k- + *mbāšəl* > *kəmbāšəl* ‘he cooks’

When *kəm-* or *b-* (> *m-*) is prefixed to a stem beginning with *mC*, one /m/ is elided. This can cause ambiguity:

kəm- + *mbāšəllâ* > *kəmbāšəllâ* ‘he cooked it (f)’
kə- + *mbāšəllâ* > *kəmbāšəllâ* ‘he cooks it (f)’
b- + *mbāšəl* > *mbāšəl* ‘he will cook’
 Ø + *mbāšəl* > *mbāšəl* ‘he may cook’

Another common feature is the loss of /’/ after a prefix ending in a consonant, e.g. *bd-āwəð* ‘he will make’ (< **bəd-’āwəð*). It is not always consistent, e.g. *kəm-amrannax* ~ *kəm-’amrannax* ‘I (f) said to you (f)’.

Verbs formed on the Present and Past Bases may take an affix *-wâ* (*-wā-*) directly after the base, or after the S-suffix, if there is one, but before any L-suffix. This shifts the time reference (further) into the past: present subjunctive *darsən* ‘I (m) may study’, past subjunctive *darsənwâ* ‘I (m) might study’; present indicative *k-āθa* ‘they come’, past habitual *k-āθāwâ* ‘they used to come’; past perfective *məθlə* ‘he died, he has died’, remote past perfective *máθwālə* ‘he had died’. In Telkepe the past habitual usually takes the indicative prefix, unlike in Alqosh,⁴⁰ but it sometimes occurs without, in which case it is indistinguishable from the past subjunctive, e.g. *nablíwāla* [*nabl-i-wā-la*] *l-ħarub* [take-S.3PL-ANT-L.3PL to-war] ‘they used to take them to war’.

⁴⁰ Coghill, 2004, p. 139.

The Imperative is inflected for singular (-Ø) and plural (-u), e.g. *pθox* ‘open (sg)!’, *pθūx-u* ‘open (pl)!’ (cf. Alq. *pθox*, *pəθx-u*). *Verba tertiae* /y/ in all derivations also distinguish between masculine and feminine singular, as does the irregular verb *ʔl I* ‘to go’. The Imperative takes initial stress, as in many other NENA dialects, e.g. *māšəlx-u* ‘rob (pl)!’. As in Alqosh, the Imperative is sometimes combined with a particle *di-* ~ *də-*, adding some kind of emphasis, e.g. *di-pθox šubbak!* ‘Come on, open a window!’. A similar particle (in form and function) is found in Kurmanji and Qəltu Arabic.⁴¹

Verbs are negated by the preposed negator particle *la=*, which takes stress. For negated imperatives there is a suppletive construction, namely the inflected Present Base with no further prefixes, e.g. *la=dārət* [not=put:S.2MS] *qesā b-nuqbəd dəbborə* ‘Don’t put a stick in a hornet’s nest!’.

The auxiliary verb *pyš I* can be used in various tenses, aspects and moods (more in its sense ‘to become’ than ‘to be’) to express a dynamic passive, e.g. *malkā lāzəm pāyəš qtilā* [king necessary become.S.3MS kill.RES.PTCP.MS] ‘The king must be killed’.

3.6.3 Weak verbs

The following are some of the less predictable weak classes of verbs.

Verba primae /ʔ/ fall into two groups. In type 1, the /ʔ/ is not necessarily elided and the verbs conjugate as strong verbs, e.g. *k-ʔrəq* ~ *k-ārəq* ‘he runs’ (*ʔr q I* ‘to run’). Type 2, which is weak, includes *ʔxl I* ‘to eat’, *ʔmr I* ‘to say’, *ʔsq I* ‘to climb’, *ʔsr I* ‘to tie’, *ʔθy I* ‘to come’, *ʔwð I* ‘to make, do’, *ʔwr I* ‘to enter’ and *ʔtw I* ‘to sit’, as well as the irregular verb *ʔl I* ‘to go’.⁴² When these verbs are used with the indicative prefix *k-*, the /ʔ/ is always elided. There is, however, no change of vowel: *kāxəl* ‘he eats’ (cf. Alq. *kixəl*). In Past Base forms and the Resultative Participle, the first radical is elided: *xəl-li* ‘I ate’, *xilā* ‘eaten (m)’. For the Imperative we find *ʔixul* (sg), *ʔaxlu* (pl) ‘eat!’, *ʔimor* (sg), *ʔəmru* (pl) ‘say!’ (cf. Alq. *mor*, *muru*). Infinitives begin with (ʔ): *ʔixālā* ‘to eat’, *ʔimārā* ‘to say’.⁴³

Verba tertiae /y/ behave much like in other NENA dialects, for instance with a msg/fsg distinction in the Imperative: *k-xāzə* ‘he sees’, *k-xazyā* ‘she sees’, *k-xāzotu* ‘you (pl) see’, *xzələ* ‘he saw’, Resultative Participle *xəzyā* (msg), *xziθā* (fsg), *xəzyə* (pl) ‘seen’, Imperative *xzi* (msg), *xze* (fsg), *xzo* (pl) ‘see!’, Infinitive *xzāyā* ‘to see’.

⁴¹ Jastrow, 1978, pp. 310–311.

⁴² Membership of this class varies somewhat from that of Alqosh, where *ʔwr I* is type 1, and some other verbs that are type 2 in Telkepe are *primae* /y/ in Alqosh. See Coghill, 2004, pp. 143, 146.

⁴³ The initial glottal stop is elided after the preposition *b-*, as in the progressive construction, e.g. *ʔilə b-ixālā* ‘he is eating’.

3.6.4 Irregular verbs

The irregular verb *'zl I* 'to go' has a suppletive Present Base stem *zā-* inflected with L-suffixes, e.g. *zālā* 'he may go', *zāloxu* 'you (pl) may go'. This is used with all Present Base TAM modifiers (unlike in Alqosh where the indicative has a different stem), e.g. *b-zālā* 'he will go' and *šud=zālā* 'let him go'. It also takes the anterior suffix, e.g. *zā-wā-li* 'I used to go'. After indicative *k-* a shwa is inserted, often followed by gemination: *kə-zālā ~ kə-zzālā* 'he goes'. There is a three-way distinction in the Imperative: *si* (msg), *se* (fsg) and *so* (pl) 'go!'. This verb also has a special form based on the Past Base (*zil-/zi-*) inflected with a mixture of S- and L-suffixes. It may be used as an independent verb with immediate future reference, e.g. *zilā l-šūqā* 'He's about to go to the shops', or as an auxiliary marking prospective aspect, e.g. *zilā zālā š^l-šūqā* [PRSP:3MS go:L.3MS to-market] 'He's going to go to the shops'. In the latter sense it may also occur as a particle, eroded to *zi-* ~ *si-*, e.g. *zi-zālā l-šūqā* [PRSP-go:L.3MS to-market] 'He's going to go to the shops'.⁴⁴

Other irregular verbs, with some examples, are the following:

'θy I 'to come' has Present Base *'āθā* 'he may come', *'aθyā* 'she may come', *k-āθā* 'he comes', *k-aθyā* 'she comes', *bd-āθā* 'he will come', *št-aθyā* 'let her come'. The Past Base is *θe-*, e.g. *θeli* 'I came'. There is a suppletive Imperative *hayyu ~ hay* (sg), *hayyo* (pl) 'come!', and the Infinitive is *'iθāyā* 'to come'.

b'y I 'to want' behaves as a regular *tertia* /y/ verb, with /' / unelided, except for the Present Base with *k-*, which has the irregular stem *kəb-*; contrast *ba'yā* 'she may want' with *kəbā* 'she wants'.

hwy I 'to be' is a regular verb of the *verba tertiae* /y/, apart from the lack of a Past Base form (except in the meaning of 'to be born') and the changes that prefixes make to the Present Base forms: *hāwā* 'he may be', *k-āwā* 'he is (generally)', *pt-āwā* 'he will be', *t-āwā* 'that he may be'.

yδ' I 'to know' has an irregular Present Base stem with *k-*, namely *kəδ-* ~ *keδ-*, e.g. *yaδux* 'we may know', *kəδux ~ keδux* 'we know'. The final radical /' / is elided, or in some cases treated like /y/: *yaδ-i ~ yaδ-a* 'they may know'.

ywl I 'to give' has an irregular Present Base stem: *yāwəl* 'he may give', *yāw-i* 'they may give'. After the *kəm-* prefix, this is sometimes altered to *-ewəl-/ew-*, e.g. *kəmm-ewəl-lā* 'he gave to her'. The

⁴⁴ See Coghill, 2010b and Coghill, 2012 for the forms, functions and development of this form in the Mosul Plain dialects.

/y/ is elided in Past Base forms and the Resultative Participle: *wəlli* ‘I gave’, *wilā* ‘given (m)’. The Imperative is irregular: *hal* (sg), *hallu* (pl) ‘give!’.

3.6.5 Copulas and other pseudo-verbs

Telkepe has a Present Copula and a Past Copula, both available in independent form (occurring before the predicate) and enclitic form. Both may also be negated, in which case the copula stands before the predicate:

<i>'ilā</i>	<i>'āxā</i> , <i>'āxa=lā</i>	‘she is here’
<i>wāwā</i>	<i>'āxā</i> , <i>'āxā=wāwā</i>	‘she was here’
<i>lelā</i>	<i>'āxā</i>	‘she is not here’
<i>la=wāwā</i>	<i>'āxā</i>	‘she was not here’

These copulas are ‘pseudo-verbs’, that is, they take special inflection unlike normal verbs. Other TAM values are expressed with *hwy* I ‘to be’ or *pyš* I ‘to become, be’, e.g. *purtenā*, *k-āwə smoqā* [flea(m) INF-be.3MS red.MS] ‘The flea, it’s (generally) red’, *hāwotun brixə* [be:2PL blessed.PL] ‘May you (pl) be blessed’, *hwi/poš iāwā* [be.IMP.MS/be.IMP.SG good.MS] ‘Be (msg/sg) good!’. The copula paradigms are presented in table 10.

Table 10. Copulas

	Present independent	Present enclitic	Negative Present	Past independent	Past enclitic	Negative Past
3 msg	<i>'ilə</i>	<i>=ilə</i>	<i>lelə</i>	<i>(i)wewā ~ (i)wāwə</i>	<i>=wewā ~ =wāwə</i>	<i>la=wewā</i>
fsg	<i>'ilā</i>	<i>=ilā</i>	<i>lelā</i>	<i>(i)wāwā</i>	<i>=wāwā</i>	<i>la=wāwā</i>
pl	<i>'ila</i>	<i>=ila</i>	<i>lela</i>	<i>(i)wāwā</i>	<i>=wāwā</i>	<i>la=wāwā</i>
2 msg	<i>'iwət ~ 'it</i>	<i>=iwət ~ =it</i>	<i>lewət ~ let</i>	<i>(i)wətwā</i>	<i>=wətwā</i>	<i>la=wətwā</i>
fsg	<i>'iwat ~ 'it</i>	<i>=iwat ~ =it</i>	<i>lewat ~ let</i>	<i>(i)watwā</i>	<i>=watwā</i>	<i>la=watwā</i>
pl	<i>'iwotu ~ 'itu</i>	<i>=iwotu ~ =itu</i>	<i>léwotu ~ letu</i>	<i>(i)wútuwā</i>	<i>=wútuwā</i>	<i>la=wotuwā</i>
1 msg	<i>'iwən ~ 'in</i>	<i>=iwən ~ =in</i>	<i>lewən ~ len</i>	<i>(i)wənwā</i>	<i>=wənwā</i>	<i>la=wənwā</i>
fsg	<i>'iwan ~ 'in</i>	<i>=iwan ~ =in</i>	<i>lewan ~ len</i>	<i>(i)wanwā</i>	<i>=wanwā</i>	<i>la=wanwā</i>
pl	<i>'iwux ~ 'ix</i>	<i>=iwux ~ =ix</i>	<i>lewux ~ lex</i>	<i>(i)wuxwā</i>	<i>=wuxwā</i>	<i>la=wuxwā</i>

The /i/ of the Present Copula merges with a final vowel of the predicate: *dəx=iłə* ‘how is he?’, *'āxā + =ilə > 'āxa=lə* ‘he is here’, *gārə + =ilə > gāre=lə* ‘it is a roof’.

Telkepe is relatively unusual among NENA dialects in using *'ilə* as an unbound copula preceding the predicate as well as in clitic form.⁴⁵ In many other dialects it only occurs as an enclitic, and there is a separate deictic copula

⁴⁵ The *'ilə* copula may still occur in unbound form, taking its own stress, in the Christian dialect of Barwar, typically between the subject and predicate; see Khan, 2008a, pp. 181, 622, 625–628. Deictic functions are, however, expressed by the deictic copula *hole*.

which covers some of the functions of Telkepe *'ilə*, for instance expressing the present progressive in combination with the infinitive. Further north this is usually *holə* or a variant thereof (*'olə* in Tisqopa, *wolə* in Alqosh), while in the eastern Mosul Plain one finds *kilə*.⁴⁶ Compare the Telkepe present progressive expression *'iwan bə-syāqā* [PRS.COP.1FS in-drive.INF] 'I am driving' with Alqosh *wo-la kās-i bə-mrā'a* [DEIC.COP-3FS stomach-1SG in-hurt.INF] 'My stomach is hurting.'

Presumably unbound *'ilə* existed in the common ancestors of the dialects, but a cliticised form arose and the unbound variant eventually disappeared in most. The distinct deictic copulas, *holə* and *kilə*, would then be innovative forms that were never adopted in Telkepe. The first probably derives from a deictic element plus *-ilə*; the second from the indicative present prefix *k-* plus *-ilə*. The purely deictic functions of these copulas may be expressed in Telkepe by combinations of the demonstratives *'āyi* 'this' and *'āwā* 'that (msg)' with the enclitic copula, e.g. *'āyi=wan* 'Here I (f) am!' and *'āwa=lə* 'There he is!'

The copulas and verbs 'to be' (*hwɣ* I, *pyš* I) are used in a variety of analytic verb forms. For example, they may be combined with the Resultative Participle to express perfect or stative aspect:

- (2) *'ilə* *'əθyā* *ta maxrowə.*
 PRS.COP.3MS come.RES.PTCP.MS for destroy.INF
 'He has come to destroy.'
- (3) *wewā* *dmixā.*
 PST.COP.3MS sleep.RES.PTCP.MS
 'He was asleep.'
- (4) *bağdad* *lewan* *xziθā.*
 Baghdad NEG.PRS.COP.1FS see.RES.PTCP.FS
 'Baghdad, I haven't seen.'

Such constructions may also express passive voice, in which case the preposition *l-* 'to' may mark the agent:

- (5) *'ilə* *xilā.*
 PRS.COP.3MS eat.RES.PTCP.MS
 'It has been eaten.' or 'He has eaten.'
- (6) *'ilə* *mulpā* *l-polus.*
 PRS.COP.3MS teach.RES.PTCP.MS to-Paul
 'He has been taught by Paul.'

⁴⁶ This Qaraqosh form is from Khan, 2002, p. 128; the same form is also found in Karimlesh (Roberta Borghero, personal communication) and Baritle (Kristine Mole, personal communication).

The copulas or verbs ‘to be’ may also be combined with the Active Participle, in which case they express a kind of scheduled future:

- (7) *bd-aθy-at* *şaprá?* – *la’,* *’iwan* *palattá.*
 FUT-come-2FS tomorrow no, PRS.COP.1FS go_out.ACT.PTCP.FS
 ‘Will you come tomorrow? – No, I’m going out.’

With the Infinitive prefixed by *b-* ‘in’, they express a present progressive:

- (8) *’iwan* *b-ixālá*
 PRS.COP.1FS in-eat.INF
 ‘I’m eating.’

The deictic copulas may be combined with the inflected Past Base to emphasize the here-and-now:

- (9) *’āyi=wat* *mte-lax!*
 this=PRS.COP.2FS arrive.PAST-L.2FS
 ‘Here you are, arrived!’, i.e. ‘You’re already here!’
- (10) *’āwa=lə* *θe-lə!*
 that=PRS.COP.3MS come.PAST-L.3MS
 ‘There he is, just come!’

Other pseudo-verbs are formed from the existential particle *’iθ ~ ’iθən* ‘there is/are’ and its negated equivalent *leθ ~ leθən* ‘there is/are not’. The corresponding past forms are *’əθwá* ‘there was/were’ and *laθwá* ‘there was/were not’. With L-suffixes, these express possessive predication, that is, ‘to have’. As in Alqosh, the sequence **tl* is realised as */t/*. Some examples are: *’əttə* [EXIST:L.3MS] ‘he has’, *lattux* [NEG.EXIST:L.2MS] ‘you (m) don’t have’, *’əθ-wā-lan* [EXIST-ANT-L.1PL] ‘we had’.

With B-suffixes (see section 3.6.1), the existential particle expresses ability or location. In this form the */θ/* is elided before the */b/*. Some examples are: *’ibə* [EXIST:B.3MS] ‘he can’, *’əθ-wā-bə* [EXIST-ANT-B.3MS] ‘he couldn’t’, *le-ba t=palt-i* [NEG.EXIST-B.3PL COMP=get_out-S.3PL] ‘they can’t get out’, *le-bə taṭawwur* [NEG.EXIST-B.3MS development] ‘there’s been no development in it’.

Both L- and B-suffixes can also be combined with the 3msg Present Base form of *hwy I* ‘to be’ to express other TAM values, e.g. *d=la=hāwe-bə də=mḥārək* [COMP=not-be.S.3MS-B.3MS COMP=move.S.3MS] ‘so that he would not be able to move’.

L-suffixes are also combined with various 3msg Past Base verbs, expressing (dis-)possession/affectedness, e.g. *θále-lan nāšə* [come.PAST:L.3MS-L.1PL people] ‘people have come to us’ (i.e. ‘we have guests’).⁴⁷

Some other pseudo-verbs are the following:

bass- ‘it’s enough for’ is inflected with the possessive suffixes, e.g. *bassa!* ‘It’s enough for her!’.

ba ‘d- ‘to be still X’ is inflected with the possessive suffixes, e.g. *ba ‘de tāmā* ‘He is still there’.

xəšt- ‘to resemble, to be like’ takes the same person inflection as the L- and B-suffixes, e.g. *xəšt-a ʻənglezāyə* ‘They resemble English people’ and *xəšt-ā qaqwānā* ‘She is like a partridge’ (i.e. she is beautiful).

4 Lexicon

Presented in this section are the main members of some restricted lexical sets, as well as common words which are known to vary between dialects of NENA.

4.1 Prepositions

Prepositions, as the name suggests, always precede the noun or noun phrase. They are formed in various ways, with some meanings being represented by two or more forms (e.g. *l-*, *rešəd*, *rəš* ‘on’ and *m-*, *mən* ‘from’).

When they govern personal pronouns, prepositions take the possessive suffixes (see table 2), and they have special stems for this. In the lists below, the attachable stem is given, attached to the 3msg suffix, e.g. *mənn-e* ‘from him’.

Some prepositions consist of only a single consonant in their basic form, and this must be attached to another word. This often assimilates to a following consonant, or takes an epenthetic vowel before a consonant cluster.

<i>l-</i>	<i>ʻəll-e</i>	‘to’, ‘on’, ‘about’, agent of passive
<i>b-</i>	<i>bgāw-e</i>	‘in’, ‘into’, ‘at’, ‘on’, ‘with’ (instrumental)
<i>m-</i>	<i>mənn-e</i>	‘from’

Other prepositions are independent words, though often unstressed.

⁴⁷ See Coghill, 2016, pp. 210–211 and Coghill, forthcoming-a for more examples and discussion.

<i>baθar ~ baθar m-</i>	<i>baθr-e</i>	‘after’, ‘behind’
<i>ben ~ benaθ</i>	<i>benāθ-e</i>	‘between’
<i>ta</i>	<i>ṭāl-e</i>	‘to, for’
<i>mən</i>	<i>mənn-e</i>	‘from’
<i>barqul ~ darqul</i>	<i>b/darqul diy-e</i>	‘opposite, against’
<i>wəl</i>	–	‘until’

Other prepositions end in the construct suffix, *-əd*. The /d/ of the suffix usually assimilates to a following consonant, as described in section 2.3.1, e.g. *bgāwəş=şomâ* ‘in Lent’. Some of these prepositions are derived from nouns, e.g. *p-palgəd* ‘in the middle of’ < *b-* ‘in’ + *palgâ* ‘half’ + *-əd*. Others, such as *’amm-əd* ‘with’ (originally *’əm-* ‘with’), have presumably acquired the ending *-əd* by analogy.

<i>xwāθəd</i>	<i>xwāθ-e</i>	‘like’
<i>’amməd</i>	<i>’amm-e</i>	‘with’
<i>(l-)xoθəd</i>	<i>(l-)xoθ-e</i>	‘under’
<i>dormadārəd</i>	<i>dormadār-e</i>	‘around’
<i>xawəḏrānəd</i>	<i>xawəḏrān-e</i>	‘around’
<i>p-palgəd</i>	<i>p-palg-e</i>	‘in the middle of’
<i>ltexəd ~ ltex m-</i>	<i>ltex mənn-e</i>	‘below’

Some prepositions have forms both with and without the *-əd* suffix.

<i>go ~ (b-)gāwəd</i>	<i>(b)gāw-e</i>	‘in’
<i>geb ~ gebəd</i>	<i>geb-e</i>	‘beside’, ‘at the house of’ (French <i>chez</i>)
<i>l-rəš ~ l-rəšəd</i>	<i>rəš-e</i>	‘on’
<i>qam ~ qāməd</i>	<i>qām-e</i>	‘before’

A different type of preposition is the particle *dla=* ‘without’, formed from the genitive marker *d-* and the negator *la=*.

When a demonstrative pronoun or deictic adverb (e.g. *’āxâ* ‘here’) beginning in /’/ follows a preposition, the genitive marker *d-* is sometimes inserted between the two and the /’/ is elided; e.g. *l-d-aθ=beθâ* [to-GEN-this.SG=house] ‘to this house’, *mən d-o=gūda xənnâ* [from GEN-that.MS=wall(m) other.MS] ‘from the other wall’, *mən d-āni* [from GEN-these] ‘from these’, *wəl d-āyâ ’etâ* [up_to GEN-that.FS church(f)] ‘up to that church’, *mən d-āxâ* [from GEN-here] ‘from here’.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See Gutman, 2016, pp. 282–289 for an analysis of genitive *d-* and its development in NENA.

4.2 Interrogatives

man ~ *māni* ~ *mani* ‘who?’, *mahā* ~ *mā* ‘what?’, *’emā* ‘which’, *’ekā* ‘where, whither?’, *’iman* ‘when?’, *dəx* ‘how?’, *’ukmā* ~ *’əkmā* ‘how many?’, *māqā* ‘how much?’, *qāyi* ~ *qay* ‘why?’, *ta-mahā* ‘how come?, why?’

4.3 Conjunctions

u ‘and’, *lo* ‘or’, *’aw* ‘or’, *yā* ‘or’, *fa* ‘so, for, you see’, *bas* ‘but’, *lākən* ‘but’, *d=* ‘which, who; that’ (relativiser, complementiser), *kud* ‘when’, *’ən* ‘if’, *wəl* ‘until’, *tad=* (<*ta-d=* ‘for’ + complementiser) ‘so that’, ‘in order to’.

4.4 Miscellaneous

hādax ‘thus’, *ham* ‘also’, *har* ‘just, exactly; always, constantly’, *bas* ‘only, just’, *ba’ad* ‘still’, *lappəš* ‘no longer’, *’égahā* ~ *’ega* ‘then, at that time’, *’āxā* ‘here’, *tāmā* ‘there’, *l’el* ‘above’, *ltex* ‘below’, *təmmal* ‘yesterday’, *šapra* ‘tomorrow’, *’omā xənnā* ‘the day before yesterday’, *mxuškā* ‘in the morning’, *kabirā* ‘much, a lot, very’, *kabirə* ‘many’, *xəššā* ~ *xə-qəššā* ‘a little’, *qəššā* ‘little, few, not often’, *tərwəθ-* ‘the two of, both of’, *nxθ I* ‘to go down’, *’sq I* ‘to go up’, *pyš I* ‘become’.

5 Syntax

Syntax will be covered in a monograph to be published on the Telkepe dialect, but some syntactic features have already been discussed in various papers, in particular ditransitive constructions, differential object marking and grammatical relations.⁴⁹

6 ‘Weddings’ (glossed text)

The following text was recorded by the author in Detroit in 2004 with an elderly lady who grew up in Telkepe. Note that SMALL CAPS indicates the nuclear stress in the intonation phrase, while | marks the intonation phrase boundary.

1. *kud* *GGORIWA*, | *nāšə* *P-QAMEΘĀ*, /
kud *k-gor-i-wā* *nāš-ə* *b-qameθā*
when IND-marry-S.3PL-ANT person-PL in-before
‘When they used to marry, people, formerly,’

⁴⁹ See Coghill, 2010a for a presentation of ditransitive constructions; Coghill, 2014 for differential object marking; and Coghill, forthcoming-a on grammatical relations. Coghill, 2016, pp. 12–13, 145–146, 210–211, 226, 236, 270, 285 also deals with some aspects of syntax in Telkepe.

2. *kud=ğdā L-BEΘA kāθāwā kəmbarxiwālā.*
kud=ğdā l-beθ-a k-āθā-wā kə-mbarx-i-wā-lā
 each=one.F to-house-3FS IND-come.S.3PL-ANT IND-bless-S.3PL-ANT-L.3FS
 ‘each (bride), they would come to her house and bless her.’
3. *’ānā pəšli šātā ʔLƏBTĀ.*
’ānā pəš-li šātā ʔləb-tā
 I remain.PAST-L.1SG year engage.RES.PTCP-FS
 ‘I remained engaged for a year.’
4. *u ’iman d=’āθewā GEBAN.*
u ’iman d=’āθe-wā geb-an
 and when REL-come.S.3MS-ANT chez-1PL
 ‘and whenever he came around to ours.’
5. *la=maḥəkyanwā ’emme u ’ARQANWĀ.*
la=maḥəky-an-wā ’emm-e u ’arq-an-wā
 not=speak-S.1FS-ANT with-3MS and run-S.1FS-ANT
 ‘I didn’t speak with him, but I would run away.’
6. *zāwāli GEBĀY.* / *la-’atwanwā MAḤƏKYAN=ƏM(ME).*
*zā-wā-li geb-āy la-’atw-an-wā maḥəky-an=əm(m-e)*⁵⁰
 go-ANT-L.1SG chez-3PL not-sit-S.1FS-ANT speak-S.1FS=with-3MS
 ‘I used to go to them. I didn’t sit and talk with him.’
7. *dahā <?> ’iwotu bəxzāyā mā=’iθ BƏBRĀYĀ.*
dahā <?> ’iwotu bə-xzāyā mā=’iθ bə-brāyā
 now <?> PRS.COP.2PL in-see.INF what=EXIST in-happen.INF
 ‘Now <?> you see what is happening.’
8. *yā ’ĀLAHA=lloxu.* / *kfahmūtu m=in BIMĀRĀ?* / *YA ’NI.*
yā ’ālaha=lloxu kfahm-ūtu m=in b-imārā? ya ’ni
 O God=on-2PL IND-understand-S.2PL what=PRS.COP.1SG in-say.INF it.means
 ‘O God be upon you. You understand what I’m saying? So-so.’
- [Interviewer: ‘How old were you when you got married?’]
9. *’umri wewā ... tmanesar ŠƏNNƏ.*
’umr-i wewā tmanesar Šənnə
 age-1SG PST.COP.3MS eighteen years
 ‘I was ... eighteen years old.’
10. *li’an bābi MƏθWĀLƏ.*
li’an bāb-i məθ-wā-lə
 because father-1SG die.PAST-ANT-L.3MS
 ‘Because, my father had died.’

⁵⁰ The speaker stops before finishing the word: (*me*) is a reconstruction of the end of the word.

11. *wanwā ʔləbtā=w bābi məθwālə,*
wanwā ʔləb-tā=w bāb-i məθ-wā-lə
 PST.COP.1FS engage.RES.PTCP-FS=and father-1SG die.PAST-ANT-L.3MS
 ‘When I was engaged, my father had already died.’
12. *pəšlan ʔARBÉ=šənnə.*
pəš-lan ʔarbé=šənnə
 remain.PAST-L.1PL four.F=years(f)
 ‘We remained four years (thus)(?)’
13. *p-qameθā la=mbarxíwā ʔALLÁ ...| qameθā=wāwā lə-TRESAR=šənnə,*
b-qameθā la=mbarx-í-wā ʔallā ...| qameθā=wāwā lə-tresar=šənnə.
 in-before not=bless-S.3PL-ANT except before=PST.COP.3FSto-twelve=years
 ‘Before, they didn’t bless/marry you except ... Formerly, it was at twelve years.’
14. *baθər mə-TRESAR=šənnə,| w-^{Eng}either^{Eng} ʔARBĀSAR.*
baθər mə-tresar=šənnə w-either ʔarbāsar
 after from-twelve=years and-... fourteen
 ‘after twelve years or fourteen.’
15. *d-arbāsar. ʔānā ʔumri ʔarbāsar mətlə BĀBI.*
d-arbāsar ʔānā ʔumr-i ʔarbāsar mət-lə bāb-i
 GEN-fourteen I age-1SG fourteen die.PAST-L.3MS father-1SG
 ‘The fourteenth (year). Myself, my age was fourteen when my father died.’
16. *pəšli ʔLƏBTĀ,*
pəš-li ʔləb-tā
 become.PAST-L.1SG engage.RES.PTCP-FS
 ‘I got engaged.’
17. *ya ʔnə wanwā ... xwāθəd= ʔARBE=šənnə,*
ya ʔnə wanwā xwāθəd= ʔarbe=šənnə
 it.means PST.COP.1FS like=four=years
 ‘I mean, I was ... around four [*sic*] years’
18. *ya ʔnə KƏBÉWĀLL.*
ya ʔnə k-əbé-wā-li
 it.means IND-want.S.3MS-ANT-L.1SG
 ‘I mean, he was in love with me.’
19. *la=muħkeli ʔƏMME!| u LA=MUħKEĻƏ ʔəmmi!| ʔE.*
la=muħke-li ʔəmm-e u la=muħke-lə ʔəmm-i ʔe
 not=speak.PAST-L.3MS with-3MS and not=speak.PAST-L.3MS with-1SG yes
 ‘I didn’t speak with him! And he didn’t speak with me. Yes.’

20. *HĀDAX=wuxwā ya 'nə.*
hādax=wuxwā ya 'nə
 thus=PST.COP.1PL it.means
 'That's what we were like, you see.'
21. *bə-ḥtišām=u laθwā 'əθwā ya 'nə ...*
bə-ḥtišām=u laθ-wā 'əθ-wā ya 'nə
 in-decency=and NEG.EXIST-ANT EXIST-ANT it.means
 'With decency and there wasn't – there was, I mean ...'
22. *'əθwā 'adab KABIRĀ geban./*
'əθ-wā 'adab kabirā geb-an
 EXIST-ANT manners much chez-1PL
 'There were good (lit. a lot of) manners among us.'
23. *kud θela kəmbaxilan bgāwəd=BEΘĀ./*
kud θe-la kə-mbarx-i-lan bgāwəd=beθā
 when come.PAST-L.3PL IND-bless-S.3PL-L.1PL in=house
 'When they came, they blessed us in the home.'
24. *u qameθā 'iman kālu D=GORĀWĀ./*
u qameθā 'iman kālu d=gor-ā-wā
 and formerly when bride COMP=marry-S.3FS-ANT
 'And formerly, whenever a bride got married.'
25. *kmarəkwiwālā L-SUSTĀ./*
k-marəkwi-wā-lā l-sustā
 IND-make_ride-S.3PL-ANT-L.3FS on-mare
 'they had her ride on a mare.'
26. *kmarəkwiwālā l-sustā=w*
k-marəkwi-wā-lā l-sustā=w
 IND-make_ride-S.3PL-ANT-L.3FS on-mare=and
 'They made her ride on a mare and'
27. *gdārāwā xa='aji ZORĀ qāma.*
k-dārā-wā xa='aji zorā qām-a
 IND-put.S.3PL-ANT a.M-child small.M before-3FS
 'put an infant in front of her.'
28. *NIŠAN ya 'nə,| šaprá mmaθyā YĀLƏ. | 'E./*
nišan ya 'nə šaprá b-maθy-ā yālə 'e.
 sign it.means tomorrow FUT-bear-S.3FS children yes
 'A sign, you see. Tomorrow she will bear children. Yes.'

29. *u katwiwā bgāwəd=BƏGNŪNƏ,| b-āyā QURNIΘĀ,|*
u k-atw-i-wā bgāwəd=bəgnūnə b-āyā qurniθā
 and IND-sit-S.3PL-ANT in=bridal_chamber in-that.F corner
 ‘And they sat in a bridal chamber, in that corner,’
30. *kođiwālā xa=məndi <?> xwāθəd=BƏGNŪNƏ,|*
k-ođ-í-wā-lā xa=məndi <?> xwāθəd=bəgnūnə
 IND-make-S.3PL-ANT-L.3FS a-thing <?> like=bridal_chamber
 ‘they made it/for her something <?> like a bridal chamber.’
31. *’ađ-bəgnūnə katwāwā šabθā kullā, kālu BGĀWA,|*
’ađ-bəgnūnə k-atw-ā-wā šabθā kull-ā kālu bgāw-a
 this=bridal_chamber IND-sit-S.3FS-ANT week all-3FS bride in-3FS
 ‘This bridal chamber, she sat a whole week in it, the bride.’
32. *leθ MAĤKOYƏ,| u knaxpāwā d=AXLĀWĀ,|*
leθ maĥkoyə u k-naxp-ā-wā d=axl-ā-wā
 NEG.EXIST speak.INF and IND-be_shy-S.3FS-ANT COMP=eat-S.3FS-ANT
 ‘There was no speaking. And she was too shy to eat.’
33. *knaxpāwā ta-d=AXLĀWĀ,|*
k-naxp-ā-wā ta-d=axl-ā-wā
 IND-be_shy-S.3FS-ANT for-COMP=eat-S.3FS-ANT
 ‘She was too shy to eat.’
34. *’e ... ’iwewā ya ’nə zonānət=QAMEΘĀ,|*
’e ... ’iwewā ya ’nə zonān-ət=QAMEΘĀ
 yes PST.COP.3PL it.means times-CST=before
 ‘Yes ... they were the old times.’
35. *ba ’dén ... duni KƏMBADLĀ,|*
ba ’dén duni kə-mbadl-ā
 later world IND-change-S.3FS
 ‘Later, the world changes.’
36. *w-ilā kamri MṬUWERĀ ya ’nə,| DAHĀ,|*
w-ilā k-amr-i mṭuwər-lā ya ’nə dahā
 and-PRS.COP.3FS IND-say-S.3PL develop.PAST-L.3FS it.means now
 ‘And they say it’s progressed, you see, now.’
37. *u ’iwotu bəxzāyā mā=’IΘƏN,| ’ĀYI=LĀ,|*
u ’iwotu bə-xzāyā mā=’IΘƏN ’āyi=lā
 and PRS.COP.2PL in-see.INF what=EXIST this=PRS.COP.3FS
 ‘And you see what there is. That’s it.’

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Appendix: Abbreviations and glosses

I, II, II₂, III, Q	NENA verbal derivation patterns
Ct-, St-, T-	NENA verbal derivation patterns borrowed from Arabic
i, v, viii, x	Arabic verbal derivation patterns
=	links two words or morphemes in a phrase with a single stress on the second component (including but not limited to proclitics)
=	links two words or morphemes in a phrase with a single stress on the first component (including but not limited to enclitics)
	intonation phrase boundary
<?>	inaudible speech
SMALL CAPS	nuclear stress in intonation phrase
ACT.PTCP	active participle
Alq.	Alqosh dialect
ANT	anterior (shifting the time reference back, glossing -wā~-wā)
Arab.	Arabic
B	B-suffix
COMP	complementiser
COP	copula
CST	construct state suffix -əd
EXIST	existential (particle)
F	feminine
FS	feminine singular
FUT	future (tense)
GEN	genitive marker d-
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
K.	Kurdish
L	L-suffix
M	masculine

MS	masculine singular
NEG	negator/negated
PAST	Past Base
Pesh.	Peshabur dialect
PL	plural
PRS	present (tense)
PRSP	prospective (aspect)
PST	past (tense)
PST_PFV	past perfective (glossing <i>kəm-</i>)
REL	relativiser
RES.PTCP	resultative participle
S	S-suffix
SG	singular
Syr.	Classical Syriac
TK	Telkepe dialect

‘The King and the Wazir’: A Folk-Tale in the Jewish North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic Dialect of Zakho

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At the centre of this article is the transcription and translation of a folk-tale told in the Jewish North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (NENA) dialect of Zakho (member of the *lišána dèni* group of dialects). This is a rather unusual folk-tale, since it is built around a relatively uncommon motif in folk-literature, the motif of gender transformation. The folk-tale, told by Ḥabuba Messusani, was recorded as part of a Jewish Zakho NENA audio database project, which now comprises approximately 150 hours of audio recordings of native speakers of that dialect, in various spoken genres. It was Professor Geoffrey Khan, who first encouraged me to start this project in 2010, stressing the importance of the documentation and study of the NENA dialects.¹ I wish to express my gratitude to him for that.²

1 The folk-tales of the Jews of Zakho

The NENA-speaking Jewish community of Zakho (Iraqi Kurdistan) migrated collectively to Israel in 1951, together with the other Jews of Iraqi Kurdistan, carrying with it, so to speak, its unique language, culture, customs and exceptionally rich oral heritage.³ An essential part of that oral heritage is the large and complex corpus of folk-tales. This draws on both Jewish and Kurdish folklore: many of its tales bear distinctive Jewish characteristics, while others belong in the general regional repertoire. Telling folk-tales, and listening to

¹ See Khan, 2007, p. 1: “The description of these dialects is of immense importance for Semitic philology. The dialects exhibit linguistic developments that are not only interesting in their own right but also present illuminating parallels to developments in earlier Semitic.”

² I also wish to thank Batia Aloni, Yoel Perez and Zadok Alon for their comments. Special thanks are extended to my mother Batia Aloni for the help in proofreading the Neo-Aramaic transcription. I thank Ḥabuba Messusani for the many hours of recording sessions, of which this folk-tale is a fraction.

³ For the history and culture of the Jews of Zakho and Kurdistan, see Gavish, 2010; Ben-Yaacob, 1981; Brauer, 1993; Zaken, 2007; Aloni, 2014.

them, was a very common and popular shared pastime of the communities of Kurdistan. The very same folk-tales, in different versions, with additions, omissions or creative embellishments – all depending on the taste (and talent) of the tellers and their audience – could be told throughout Kurdistan, and in all of its different languages and dialects. The practice of storytelling continued in the Jewish-Kurdish communities in Israel: the senior members of the Zakho community in Jerusalem tell of the regular gatherings in a *diwàn*, a drawing room of a home of one of the elders of the community, for the purpose of listening and telling stories. Zakho folk-tales vary in length from relatively short ones, like the one presented here, to very long ones capable of filling several long consecutive winter evenings – oral novels, one may call them. Folk-tales are a social institution that plays a role in the forming and maintaining of the Zakho communal identity. They also take part in intergenerational communication: in a society that experienced a deep intergenerational gap brought about by the sharp transition to modern Israel,⁴ folk-tales (and other oral genres) are a mode of contact between the generation of the grandparents and their grandchildren.⁵

2 ‘The King and the Wazir’: Synopsis

A king and his wazir go out to explore their town, wearing ordinary clothes. After crossing a bridge, the wazir’s horse breaks into gallop, leaving the king alone. The king arrives at a river, and he sits down in order to eat and rest. He plays with his ring, and it falls into the water. The king dives into the water in order to recover his ring, and when he gets out, *yímméd mǎya* ‘the mother of the water’ (a water spirit) hits him on the head, and he is transformed into a woman. As he sees his reflection in the water, he realises that he is now a very beautiful woman. Some fishermen who are passing by take the beautiful woman, with the intention of marrying her to the son of their own king. The king and queen are astounded by the woman’s beauty, and their son the prince

⁴ See Sabar, 1975. About the social changes within the community caused by the migration, see Gavish, 2010, pp. 316–336.

⁵ Published Jewish Zakho folk-tales are: Socin, 1882, pp. 159–168, pp. 219–223; Polotsky, 1967, two episodes from a ‘novel’; Alon and Meehan, 1979; Avinery, 1978; Avinery, 1988, pp. 48–65; Zaken, 1997; Shilo, 2014, a collection of 14 folk-tales written originally in NENA (not transcribed from a recording), which I edited; Aloni, 2014, pp. 65–79. An important collection of oral literature of the Jews of Kurdistan, though only in English, is Sabar, 1982. The most important collection of folk-tales in the Jewish NENA dialect of Zakho is yet unpublished. It is a corpus of 33 stories recorded from Mamo (‘uncle’) Yona Gabbay Zaqen, father of the teller of our present folk-tale, Ḥabuba Messusani. Mamo Yona (Zakho 1867–Jerusalem 1970), an exceptional bearer and performer of the rich tradition of the Jews of Kurdistan and a well-known storyteller throughout Iraqi Kurdistan, was recorded during 1964 by Professor Yona Sabar for the Hebrew University’s Jewish Language Traditions Project (*Mif al Masorot Ha-Llašon*, see Fellman, 1978). Only a small portion of this material has been published, in Sabar, 2005: Mamo Yona’s own life story, narrated by him.

falls in love with her. The woman and the prince get married and have three children. To celebrate the third birth, the king throws a *seheràne* (an outdoor celebration) for all his people. The woman goes to the riverside in order to look again for her lost ring (the king's ring). She sees the ring in the water, and gets into the river to take it. The mother of the water comes again, hits her on the head, and the woman becomes a man once more, the king. He does not know what to do next.

In the meantime, the wazir, who had fallen from his horse, is found by some hunters who realise that he is an important man, seeing his beautiful clothes and horse. He does not remember who he is, as he has lost his memory. The hunters take him to a hospital, where he is taken care of for one year. A professor takes him home to be his servant, and eventually the wazir becomes like a son to him. One day the wazir is riding his horse, the horse again gallops, and the wazir falls from his horse at the same place where he had fallen before. He regains his memory. The wazir and his adoptive father go to the wazir's home, but his wife does not recognise him. She suggests that they should go to the imam, and he will decide whether the wazir is her husband or not.

The king also comes back to his home. His wife does not believe that he is her husband, so he also waits for the imam to come on Friday. The imam, who turns out to be Bahlul, the king's brother, decrees that the king is the king and that the wazir is the wazir, and he sends them back to their homes.

The prince, who had been married to the woman who the king became, searches for his wife everywhere. Eventually he arrives in the town of the king and the wazir. He goes to the imam and tells him about his lost wife. The imam tells the prince that his wife is not lost, she is a king. The king demands that the prince give him the children that he bore as a woman, and tells the whole story of his transformation. The imam decrees that the prince will keep those children, since the king has other children who he had earlier fathered as a man. The king and the prince both return to their homes.

3 The motif of gender transformation

Many of the motifs⁶ that appear in our story are known from other literary and folk traditions. To list but a few: the king and his wazir go out wearing ordinary clothes (motif K1812.17 'king in disguise to spy out his kingdom'); the king dropped his ring in water and then recovered it (K1812.17 'Solomon's power to hold kingdom dependent on ring; drops it in water'); *yímméd máya*

⁶ As classified by Thompson, 1955–1958. Motifs numbers and titles discussed here are taken from Thompson's classification. For the concept of motif in folklore, and critiques thereof, see Dundes, 1962; Ben-Amos, 1980; Ben-Amos, 1995.

‘the mother of the water’ (motif F420 ‘water spirits’);⁷ the king looks at his reflection in the water after having been transformed and sees an extraordinarily beautiful woman (motif T11.5.1 ‘falling in love with one’s own reflection in water. (Narcissus.)’).⁸ But the most surprising motif in our folk-tale, and one which plays a fundamental role in its structure, is certainly motif D10 ‘transformation to person of different sex’.⁹

Motif D10 is relatively uncommon in literary and folk traditions cross-culturally. In both written and oral literature, it is predominantly found in narratives from the Indian cultural space,¹⁰ though it is not restricted to it. Many of its other occurrences in oral folk-literature come from the Middle-East – Egypt,¹¹ Turkey,¹² the Jews of Iraqi Kurdistan¹³ and the Jews of Yemen¹⁴ – although it appears in non-Middle Eastern traditions as well.¹⁵

Only one occurrence of motif D10 is to be found in classical Jewish literature. That is in a story of a poor widower whose wife left him a nursing baby. The widower could not afford a wet nurse, and by way of miracle he gained breasts and fed his son himself.¹⁶

Perhaps the most well-known occurrence of D10 in Western culture is the Greek myth of Tiresias, the blind prophet who, as a punishment from Hera for hurting a pair of copulating snakes, spends seven years as a woman and gives birth to children. After encountering another pair of copulating snakes and spearing them, he is released from his punishment. Having the experience of being both a man and a woman, Tiresias is asked to judge in an argument between Zeus and his wife Hera: who has more pleasure in sexual relations, men or women? Tiresias agrees with Zeus’ opinion, and says that women’s enjoyment is ten times greater.

An Indian story from the Mahabharata, the story of King Bhangaswana,¹⁷ shares many plot elements with our folk-tale. King Bhangaswana is punished by Indra for not including him in a sacrificial ceremony. He is transformed into a woman while bathing in a lake. Bhangaswana had one hundred sons as

⁷ In his index, Noy (Neuman, 1954, p. 395) refers to Ginzberg, 1925, pp. 87, 204, who lists several occurrences of water spirits in Jewish literature. Ginzberg mentions the belief, also found in Greek literature, that “water is the adobe of demons”.

⁸ See also motif J1791.6.1.

⁹ Similar relevant motifs are: D10.2 ‘change of sex after crossing water’; D12 ‘transformation: man to woman’; D695 ‘man transformed to woman has children’; T578 ‘pregnant man’.

¹⁰ For a thorough overview of the sources, see Brown, 1927; Penzer, 1927.

¹¹ El-Shamy, 1980, pp. 33–38.

¹² Walker and Uysal, 1992, pp. 241–243.

¹³ In addition to our folk-tale, tales number 3932, 13471 and 16376 at the Israel Folktale Archives Named in Honor of Dov Noy (IFA), University of Haifa.

¹⁴ Tale number 1235 at IFA.

¹⁵ For instance it is found in Benin, China, the French-speaking region of Canada, India, Inuit regions and Ireland. See Thompson, 1955–1958, vol. II, pp. 8–9; Thompson and Balys, 1958, p. 97.

¹⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 53b. Noy (Neuman, 1954, p. 281) gives several cases of male embryo transformed into female in the womb.

¹⁷ Ganguli, c1900, book 13, §12, pp. 35–38.

a man and one hundred sons as a woman. They all slew one another in a battle incited by Indra. When Indra pardons Bhangaswana, now living as an ascetic woman, he asks which of the children should be resurrected. Bhangaswana replies that those he had as a woman should be resurrected, since the affection of a woman to her children is greater than that of a man. Highly pleased by the woman's truthfulness, Indra resurrects all two hundred children. He then gives Bhangaswana the choice of being a man or a woman, but Bhangaswana chooses to remain a woman, since the pleasure a woman finds in sexual relations is greater than that of a man.

The many print and manuscript versions of the Arabian Nights include four stories which containing the motif of a change of gender: 'The Enchanted Spring', 'Hasan the King of Egypt', 'Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad', and 'Shahab al-Din'.¹⁸ The latter two correspond to international tale-type ATU 681 'relativity of time'¹⁹ (previously known as tale-type AT 681 'king in a bath; years of experience in a moment'²⁰). 'Hasan the King of Egypt' is reminiscent of an Egyptian oral tale.²¹ In 'Warlock and the Young Cook of Baghdad' a transformed vizier gets married and gives birth to seven children; the transformed vizier of 'Hasan the King of Egypt' gives birth to only a single child. In all four stories the change of sex is by means of dipping in water.

The oldest of the Middle-Eastern manifestation of the motif is the one of the tale of Khurafa (*Ḥadith Khurafa*).²² In its most elaborate version, in the book *Al-Fākhir* by 9th century writer Al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Salama, Khurafa, taken prisoner by three jinns, hears the following story told by a man: the man was transformed into a woman after being trapped in a particular well; he then got married and gave birth to two children; after some time he went back to the same well, was transformed back into a man, got married again and had two more children.²³

The final story that will be mentioned here is possibly the earliest recorded folk-tale of the Jews of Zakho. It also includes the transformation of men into women in proximity to water – in this case, the transformation of two men. This is a Jewish Zakho NENA text recorded by Socin as early as 1870 from Pineḥas of Zakho,²⁴ which recounts the story of the two brothers 'Ali and

¹⁸ Stories number 191, 545, 412 and 435 in Marzolph, Leeuwen and Wassouf, 2004.

¹⁹ Uther, 2004, vol. I, p. 373; see also Marzolph, Leeuwen and Wassouf, 2004, p. 797.

²⁰ Aarne and Thompson, 1961, p. 238.

²¹ El-Shamy, 1980, p. 33–38, mentioned above in n. 11.

²² See Drory, 1994, where she claims that *Ḥadith Khurafa* was one of the earliest "attempts to legitimize fiction in classical Arabic literature". See also Marzolph, Leeuwen and Wassouf, 2004, p. 616.

²³ This story is classified by El-Shamy, 2004, p. 378, as tale-type 705B "I have begotten children from my loins, and from my womb!": Khurāfah's experience", where he lists more of its occurrences.

²⁴ Sabar, 2002b, p. 613, suggests that this is Pineḥas Čilmèro.

‘Amar.²⁵ Sabar has published an updated version of this story, written in language as if it were told in the 1950s, together with a commentary on the linguistic differences between the two versions.²⁶ In this story, the son of ‘Amar and his friend go hunting. They chase after a gazelle for three days, and on the third day they reach a river. The gazelle leaps over it and says to them, “Stop following me. God will, if you are men, you will become women; if you are women, you will become men!”²⁷ They marry men and live as women for seven years. One of them gives birth to a triplet of boys, and the other to a triplet of girls. One day they dress as men, take their horses, and ride to find the gazelle. Again they chase after her for three days, and then reach a river. The Gazelle leaps again and says the same words, and the two are transformed back into men and return to their homes.

Almost all of the stories mentioned here present a curious coupling: the proximity of motif D10 to water. Indeed, in his article about the motif in Indian literature, Brown lists “bathing in an enchanted pool or stream”²⁸ as the first of five means by which a change of sex is effected,²⁹ and Penzer, after providing an overview of cases of sex transformation “by a magic pill, seal or plant, or merely by mutual agreement with a superhuman being”,³⁰ writes that “as the *motif* travelled westward it seems that water became the more usual medium”.³¹

One more element of our story should be commented on: the name of the imam, Bahlul. The character of Bahlul, or Behlül Dane – the clever brother, or son, of caliph Harun Al-Rashid – is well known from many folk-tales, especially those originating in eastern Turkey.³² A whole sub-genre of folk-tales features him. In all of them he seems at first like a simpleton, or pretends to be one, but eventually he proves his mental and moral superiority over everyone, including the caliph. One of the many Behlül Dane stories is particularly relevant to our folk-tale. In the story ‘Behlül Dane Teaches God’s Time versus Human Time’,³³ the caliph Harun Reşit is sceptical when he hears Behlül Dane saying, ‘I have a God whose one hour is equivalent to a thousand of our hours’. When entering the toilet with a kettle of water Harun Reşit has a vision in which he lives as a woman for years, gets married and has children. He then wakes up to discover himself still in his toilet.

²⁵ Socin, 1882.

²⁶ Sabar, 2002b.

²⁷ Sabar, 2002b, p. 625.

²⁸ Brown, 1927, p. 4.

²⁹ The other four are: curse or blessing of a deity; exchanging sex with a Yakşa, “a creature that is unique in possessing the power to make this remarkable exchange”; by magic; by the power of righteousness or in consequence of wickedness. See Brown, 1927, pp. 4–5.

³⁰ Penzer, 1927, p. 224.

³¹ Penzer, 1927, p. 224.

³² See Walker and Uysal, 1966, p. 296.

³³ Told by Hacı Mehmet Sivri in 1974; see Walker and Uysal, 1992, pp. 241–243.

4 *Báxtox həkòma-la* ‘your wife is a king’: Gender boundaries and perplexity

Many scholars have commented on the cultural and social unrest and anxiety that undermining gender boundaries may create.³⁴ In our folk-tale, confusion generated by the focal point of motif D10 – the notion that breaking gender boundaries is possible, even by magic – permeates through many of the narrative elements. A latent sense of confusion is everywhere: in the plot and the reasoning of its events, in the words and the actions of the characters, in the narration, even in the language of the folk-tale. From the very first event in the storyline, obscurity is present. The wazir’s horse breaks into a gallop for no apparent reason. He then falls from it, loses his memory, and spends several years under another identity. The king is transformed into a woman by a water spirit, gets married and has children. He has not done anything to enrage the water spirit which could have caused this unwelcome transformation.³⁵ What is the reason for or purpose of these ordeals? Do they come as a punishment, or in order to teach some lesson? In many of the other stories built around these motifs, some rationale for the tormenting adventures undergone by the characters is given: they are either punished by enraged gods or spirits, or taught a lesson after showing disbelief. Not in our folk-tale. The king and the wazir’s long and harsh ordeals come and then go away with no apparent motive nor benefit of a lesson learned. Even when their period of transformation is done and they regain their original identity, there are hardships involved – the disbelief of the wives, the king torn away from the children he gave birth to as a woman, the prince losing his beloved wife – and no greater power, position, wealth or wisdom – no compensation – is gained. This is a Kafkaesque folk-tale, almost as Kafkaesque as Kafka’s own *Metamorphosis*, where the suffering of the protagonists is left unexplained and unresolved. The words of the king after being transformed back into a man in his second encounter with the mother of the water, where we would expect him to rejoice at having recovered his identity, are (45) *wi-má-b-ozán ’ə-nàqla?!* ... *lá-k-i`ən ma-*

³⁴ For example, “Cross-dressing is about gender confusion.” About this sentence, taken from Marjorie Garber’s book *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (1992, p. 390), Tova Rosen, 2003, pp. 149–150, writes: “If clothing is a language, then cross-dressing poses a gender riddle. Clothes are intended both to cover and to reveal; they hide the body’s sexual signs and, at the same time, signify the binarism of the sexes. The concealed anatomical differences are replaced by a culturally determined gendered symbolism of clothing. Thus, in texts, as well as in life, clothing functions as a code for sexual (and other) differences. Moreover, the language of clothing does not only encode ‘masculinity’ or ‘femininity’, but rather points to the very constructedness of gender categories. Cross-dressing, on the other hand, manifests the discontinuity between the sexual body and the cultural gender and, thus, offers a challenge to easy notions of binarism.” Also, Meiri, 2011, pp. 164–165: “Transsexuality evokes categorical and epistemic crises more than any other form of crossing of gender.... transsexuality, in its visibility, holds in itself the various anxieties evoked by different forms of crossing of gender” (my translation).

³⁵ About gender transformation as unexpected and unwelcome, see Brown, 1927, pp. 6–9.

'òzən.¹ 'Oh, what shall I do now? ... I do not know what to do.' His confusion is evident, and is growing: (46) *la-k-i'a ma-òza,¹ ta-máni 'áza 'ámra 'ána hakòma-wán.¹ ta-máni 'ámra 'ána bax-ḥakòma-wán.¹* 'She does not know what to do, to whom would she go [and] say "I am the king"? To whom would she say "I am the wife of the king"? This reaction of the king, his manhood restored, seems even more helpless than his reaction to his first transformation, where he simply wore his old man's clothes and was taken away by the fishermen.

The peak of confusion and loss of identity in the story is found in the secondary character, the wazir. When he is found by the hunters after he has fallen from his horse, the following short dialogue takes place: (51) *là-g-maḥké,¹ la-hè la-lá,¹ g-əmri le m̀ani-wət?¹ g-émer là-k-i'en, wéle p̀si'a.¹ m-èka wét? g-émer là-k-i'en.¹* 'He does not speak, not "yes" [and] not "no", they say to him "who are you?" He says, "I don't know", he is wounded. "Where are you from?" He says, "I don't know".' The wazir's words are at variance with his appearance, a tension between his external identity markers and his own lack of identity: he is recognised by the hunters as being an important person by his clothing and horse, but the external aspects of his identity do not help him when he loses his sense of self.

The atmosphere of confusion is not created by the events of the storyline alone; stylistic features of the narrative contribute to it as well. For instance, the characters are nameless. Only one character, who appears towards the end of the story, has a name: the imam Bahlul.³⁶ The lack of given names, which is a well-known characteristic of fairy-tales in itself, contributes to the confusion of the listener due to the identity transformations in our folk-tale. Furthermore, the confusion is aggravated. Our folk-tale contains three kings (the main character; the father of the prince; and the prince, who is also referred to as king), three queens (the wife of the main character; the mother of the prince; and the woman who used to be king, who is referred to as queen after marrying the prince), and three women (the main character; the wazir's wife; the main character's wife). These sets of characters are referred to as 'the king', 'the queen' and 'the woman' respectively, without specification.

It seems that even the teller of the story herself is partaking in the general bafflement. The following episode occurs just before the wazir goes out for the ride which will bring about the regaining of his memory: (55) *'áwa¹ qámle xà-yoma,¹ g-əmri wéle ḥakòmda,¹ 'átle ṭ̀era.¹ ḥakóma dóhun m̀tle.¹ 'átle ṭ̀era g-mandèle.¹* 'He rose one day, they say there's a king, which has a bird. Their king died. He has a bird which they throw.' This episode, which seems incoherent and has no clear ties to preceding or subsequent events, is located at a

³⁶ It is interesting to note that the imam plays a role of clarifying and restoring order. The children of the wazir are also given names, Mirza-Maḥamad Aḥmad and Fatma, but these characters play no role in the story; the knowledge of their names is used as proof of identity. That is, once again, names have a role in restoring order.

crucial point of the storyline, just before all the entanglements of the story begin to be resolved.

Gender transformation spreads confusion and chaos even in the grammatical structure of the language of the folk-tale: at the points of transformation, as well as when the king later recounts his experiences, the use of referential elements with specified gender – pronouns and conjugations – becomes unclear. Grammatical elements of the ‘wrong’ gender are used both before and after a transformation takes place. For example, in (44)–(46): *pāšla gōra.^l qāmla lwišila julle dida^l mxéla l-^lúrxa* ‘She became a man ... She rose [and] wore her clothes and started walking.’ And also: (79) *báxtox hakōma-la.^l* ‘Your wife is a king’; (80) *k-xáze gōra híle,^l* ‘He [=the king] sees it is her [feminine, =the king’s] husband’; (81) *g-émer yalúnkad mà?^l ^la[he]t-gōra wát!^l màṭo^l yalúnke mesónnu-làx?^l* ‘He [=the husband] says [to the king]: “Children of what? You are a man! How will I bring you [feminine] the children?”’. The same grammatical confusion occurs in other places in our folk-tale as well.³⁷

5 ‘The King and the Wazir’: The text

This folk-tale,³⁸ ‘The King and the Wazir’, told by Ḥabuba Messusoni, was recorded on 7 January 2013 at Ḥabuba’s home in Jerusalem’s Katamonim neighbourhood, where many of the Jewish immigrants from Kurdistan settled when arriving in 1951. Ḥabuba was born in Zakho in 1936 and came to Jerusalem in 1951. As mentioned, she is the daughter of the famous storyteller Mamo Yona Gabbay.³⁹ Present in the recording session were Ḥabuba Messusani (HM), Batia Aloni (BA), Professor Geoffrey Khan (GK), and myself.

The transcription system used here is the one used by Professor Khan in his NENA grammars. In addition to the standard Semitic consonant and vowel signs, intonation signs are employed: a superscript vertical line (*a^l*) indicates an intonation unit boundary; a grave accent (*à*) indicates the main stress in an intonation unit; acute accents (*á*) indicate secondary stresses in an intonation unit. Words or phrases in Modern Hebrew are written between superscript capital H letters (*^H...^H*). The English translation is as literal as possible; tenses are kept as in the NENA text, at the expense of standard English style.⁴⁰ The recording ID is HM130107T4 00:04-12:16.

³⁷ This linguistic abnormality appears also in the story of the brothers ‘Ali and ‘Amar; see Socin, 1882, p. 164, line 6; Sabar, 2002b, p. 621, no. 51.

³⁸ This folk-tale clearly belongs to the genre of fairy-tale (Märchen). It presents the genre’s distinctive characteristics: unknown time and place of happening, nameless protagonists, archetypical characters, miraculous incidents and supernatural beings. That being said, keep in mind Dundes’ assertion (1964, p. 252): “... thus far in the illustrious history of the discipline [=folkloristics], not so much as one genre has been completely defined.”

³⁹ See n. 5 above.

⁴⁰ For a study of Jewish Zakho NENA narrative syntax, see Cohen, 2012, pp. 237–357.

- (1) HM: ^Hhayá mélex^H xá ḥakòma^l u-wazìra.^l HM: There was a king, a king, and a wazir.
- (2) ḥakòma g-émer ta-wazìra dide,^l d^{H1}-áx xàzax^l má hìle^l ^Hmašàv^{Hl} bážer dèni.^l The king says to his wazir, ‘Let us see what is the situation of our town.’
- (3) b-lóšax júlle dád ^Hragil,^{Hl} hàdxa,^l júlləd dārwiše,^l b-áx zàvrax.^l We shall wear these ordinary clothes [lit. clothes of regular], like that, beggars’ clothes, we shall go [and] wander around.’
- (4) g-émer[r]e-go-`èni.^l He says to him, ‘upon my eyes’.⁴²
- (5) g-émer náblax xa-gòlàma `ámman,^l g-émer là.^l He says, ‘Shall we take a servant with us?’, he says, ‘No’.
- (6) t`ón xápča `awàye,^l `ixàla,^l u-drí go-kásta dídox,^l Carry some things, food, and put [them] in your bag,
- (7) `á[hə]t go-mahíne dídox, `àna go-mahíne dídì^l kútran b-áx. you on [lit. in] your horse, I on [lit. in] my horse. Both of us will go.
- (8) [m]páqlu básər gəšra,^l They went out, [and right] after the bridge,
- (9) mahíne dəd wàzir^l dhərra.⁴³ `i u-dì u-`rəqla u-`rəqla u-`rəqla u-`rəqla u-qam-nablále `emma,^l hìl^l `úrxət-^H `eze^H xamšá ^Hkelométer^H qam-mamp[ə]lále.^l the wazir’s horse broke into gallop. *I* and *dì*⁴⁴ she ran and ran and ran and ran and took him [=the wazir] with her, until a distance [lit. way] of some five kilometres [where] she dropped him.
- (10) pášle ḥákoma ^Hlevàd,^{Hl} lá-k-i `e `éka `àl,^l `éka lá `àzəl.⁴⁵ The king was left [lit. became] alone, he does not know where he should go, where he should not go.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Contraction of the interjection *de*.

⁴² Idiomatic expression meaning ‘I will fulfill your request’.

⁴³ The Modern Hebrew root *dhr* is used here with NENA morphology.

⁴⁴ Sabar, 2002a, p. 141: “*day-day-day*: sounds describing speed of racing animals”.

⁴⁵ Note the use of two allomorphic forms of the same verb within one sentence: `àl, `àzəl.

⁴⁶ Idiomatic expression meaning ‘he did not know where to go’, ‘he was utterly perplexed’.

- (11) *zàlle.*[!] He started walking [lit. he went].
- (12) *zàlle*⁴⁷ *xzéle xá,*[!] *xawòra.*[!] *xawóra* He went⁴⁷ [and] saw a river. Do
k-í`at mà-yle?[!] you know what is *xawóra*?
- (13) GK: ... *he*... GK: ... Yes ...
- (14) HM: *xawòra,*[!] *Hnàhar.*^{H!} HM: *xawóra*, a river.
- (15) *xzéle-xa xawòra,*[!] *rùwwa.*[!] He saw a river, [a] big [one].
- (16) *qàmle túle z*⁴⁸ *dáw... tàma.*[!] He rose [and] sat down upon that
... there.
- (17) *šlâxle hâšak didox*⁴⁹ *Hna`alà...^{H!}*
qundâre dide,[!] *dréle`âqle go-*
màya,[!] *mopâqle xâpča`ixâla*
xàlle,[!] *mopâqle jôzi dide`úzlele*
xa-qâhwa,[!] *mto`âlle bâd`asâqsa*
dide hàdxa.[!] *asâqsa dide mpélla*
go-màya.[!] He took off, excuse my
language,⁴⁹ his shoes, [and] put
his feet in the water. He took out
some food [and] ate, took out his
coffee kettle [and] made himself a
coffee, he played with his ring,
like that. His ring fell into the
water.
- (18) *wây g-émer`mpèlla`âtta lá-k-i`ân* ‘Oh!’ he says, ‘It fell, now I do
éka má b-òzen,[!] *d-lá`asâqsa.*[!] not know where, what I shall do,
qàmle,[!] *šlâxle jülle dide`u-g-émer* without a ring.’ He rose, took off
b-ân,[!] *kôšân go-màya,*[!] *zé`li`éka* his clothes, and he says, ‘I shall
mpèlla.[!] *mapqànna.*[!] go, go down into the water,
[since] I know where it had fallen.
I shall bring it out.’
- (19) *mpâqle, yimmed màya*⁵⁰ *sèla.*[!] [When] he went out [of the
*mxéla-[`al]le xá... hânna*⁵¹ water], the Mother of the Water
came. She struck him with one ...
*this,*⁵¹ *rašòma*⁵² upon his head.
She turned him into such a girl,

⁴⁷ This repetition of a word or phrase is a typical stylistic feature of Jewish Zakho NENA narration. It usually appears at the beginning of an episode in the narrative.

⁴⁸ Contraction of *râš-*.

⁴⁹ Sabar, 2002a, p. 169, on *hâšak dôxun*: “All present/of you excluded (said after saying a dirty word)”.

⁵⁰ Sabar, 2002a, p. 177: “a female ghost that dwells in the river”.

⁵¹ The literal meaning of *hânna* is ‘this’ or ‘this thing’. Pragmatically it is used for several functions: a substitute for a word that the speaker is unable to remember (sometimes the speaker will add the forgotten word immediately thereafter); an anaphoric pronoun referring back to an object or a concept mentioned earlier; an abbreviation replacing an idea that all participants know it refers to; and as a euphemistic substitute for words that the speaker wishes to avoid saying. *hânna* is translated as italicised ‘this’ throughout the English translation.

- rašóma*⁵² *go-rèše,*^l *qam-`ozále xà* you could not stare enough at [lit.
^Hbaḥorà,^{Hl} *lá-g-hanélox`àbba* you would not enjoy (i.e. be
men[xət].^l *ḥakòma pàsle* satisfied) to stare at her]. The king
^Hbaḥurà.^{Hl} became a young woman.
- (20) *k-xáze gyàne,*^l *bràta-le!*^l *xà sqélta!* He sees himself [=his reflection in
lá-g-hanèlox`àbba.^l the river], he is a woman! So
beautiful! You could not enjoy
[staring enough] at.
- (21) *[m]páqle l-wàrya,*^l *júllet gùre-lu* He went out [of the water], men's
tàma. lúšle jülle dide!^l *túle l-* clothes were there. He wore his
tàma.^{l53} clothes. He sat there.
- (22) *sèlu,*^l *'ányal dád g-dóqi hènna!* Came, these, who catch *this*,
šabakvâne!^l *g-əbe dóqi g-doqi* fishermen, they want to catch,
nunyàsa.^l *k-xáze`é*^H *baḥurá*^H they catch fish. They see this so
hádxa sqèlta,^l *g-əmri wálla bār* the son of our king, for three years
they have been searching [lit.
ḥakòma dèni,^l *hay-ṭlá[ha] šənnne* turning around] for a girl for him,
wélu bə-zvára xa-^H *baḥurá*^H *ṭàle,*^l a beautiful [girl] [or: a beauty], a
xa-sqèlta,^l *xa-bràta u-là!*^l *g-ráze* girl, and he is not satisfied with
bəd-čù-xa.^l anyone.'
- (23) BA: *'aqále la-qṭé'le`əl-čù-xa.*^l BA: His mind was not cut on
anyone [=He was not satisfied
with anyone].
- (24) HM: *'éha b-nabláxla*^H *'ulày*^H HM: 'This one [=the girl], we
raze-`àbba.^l shall take her [to him], perhaps he
would be satisfied with her.'
- (25) *qámli sèlu,*^{l54} *sèlu,*^l *qam-nablíla* They rose [and] came, they
qámáye kəz-ḥakòma, yimme u- came,⁵⁴ they took her first to the
bàbe,^l *qam-... g-əmri,*^l *'éha* king, his mother and father, they
say, 'That [girl] is something
gè[r]...`é gèr-məndi-la!^l *go-*^H *kól* different, in the entire world there
is not [a girl] like her, she is even

⁵² Sabar, 2002a, p. 292: “vertical hand used as cursing sign; a blow with open hand on top of the head (to indicate disdain, disapproval ...)”. Also appears in Rivlin, 1959, pp. 226, 240.

⁵³ Verbal forms and pronouns in this sentence are masculine. The woman is still referred to as a man here.

⁵⁴ See n. 47 above.

- ha- 'olám^H lez-moxwà[sa]' bəs⁵⁵-*
sqálda-la mán ráhel 'ammènu
'afəllu.^l more beautiful than Rachel our
 Mother'.⁵⁶
- (26) *^Htòv.^{Hl} mäsélu ^Hyèled,^H 'éne...^l*
qam-xazèla,^l 'šəqle 'àlla,^l qam-
'ebèla.^l Good. They brought the child
 [=the prince]. His eyes ... he saw
 her, he fell in love with her, he
 loved [or: wanted] her.
- (27) *zəllu mäsélu qám^l-barxíla 'əlle,^l u-*
'áy šàta,^l sməxla.^l [h]wélela xa-
bróna.^l šátəd...^l pəšla,^l báser tré
šənne,^l sməxla, hwélela xa-bróna
xət.^l báser tré tlá[ha] šənne^l
sməxla hwélela xa-bróna xət hay-
təha.^l They went [and] brought [and]
 married them [lit. they blessed her
 to him], and in that year she
 became pregnant. She gave birth
 to a son [lit. a son was born to
 her]. A year ... she stayed [=she
 did not become pregnant for one
 year, and then] After two years
 she became pregnant [again] and
 gave birth to another son. After
 two [or] three years she became
 pregnant [again and] gave birth to
 another son, that's three.
- (28) *qám^Hlu ^Hanšey^H-bàžer,^l 'o haqóma*
mərre,^l g-émer b-ózen^l
seheràne.^{l57} k-í'ət má-yla
seheràne?^l They rose, the people of the city,
 the king said, he says, 'I shall do a
seheràne.'⁵⁷ Do you know what is
 a *seheràne*?
- (29) GK: *mm* GK: Mm.
- (30) HM: *mà-yla?^l* HM: What is it?
- (31) GK: *^Hmesibà.^{Hl}* GK: A party.
- (32) BA: *^Hnaxon.^H* BA: Right.
- (33) HM: *seheràne nápqaq 'əl-e...^l* HM: *Seheràne*, we go out to
 the ...
- (34) BA: *^Hmesibà.^{Hl}* BA: A party.
- (35) GK: *^Hpìk^Hnik.^{Hl}* GK: A picnic.

⁵⁵ š > s due to the following consonant.

⁵⁶ Rachel the Matriarch.

⁵⁷ Sabar, 2002a, p. 237: "communal procession and picnic in the country side (during Passover and Succoth Holidays)".

- (36) HM: ... ^Hpàknək.^H HM: ... picnic.
- (37) [m]páqlu b-seheràne,^l u-b-nablánna báxti u-yalúnke dìdi,
kúlle `ixàla^l `ána b-yáwə̀n ta-náš
bàžer,^l bàlaš.^l `áse `əl-xəšbòni,^l
čukun-kálsi [h]wélela hay-tl[à]h[ha]
bnóne.^l They went out for the *seheràne*,
'and I shall take my wife and my
children, I will give all of the food
to the people of the city, for free.
They should come at my expense,
because my daughter-in-law gave
birth to three boys.'
- (38) [m]pàqlu.^l They went out.
- (39) kàlse-ši,^l ^Hmalkà^H-la,^l ...wéle
^Hkéter^H b-rèša.^l His daughter-in-law, she is also a
queen, [she has] a crown on her
head.
- (40) zèllu,^l wélu, `aw-yòma^l xèllu,^l
štèlu,^l kùllu^l welu bə-rqàza^l u-
dòla^l u-zərne u^l u-mád^l g-əbe^l b-
`[w]ázat^l faràħe.^l They went, they were, on that day
they ate, they drank, everyone
were dancing, and *doḷa* and
zurne,⁵⁸ and whatever is necessary
for a celebrations [lit. whatever is
needed in making celebrations].
- (41) `éha séla xa-hánna b-rèša,^l g-
əmra wàll^l b-azána kəz-gəvən
^Hnàhar.^H `asəqsa dīdi mpəlwala
tàma.^l u-`asəqsa lá xəzyàli.^l qam-
`ozáli `e-yimmed məya ^Hbaħurà^H. That one [=the woman], some *this*
came into her head, she says [to
herself], 'Indeed, I shall go to the
riverside. My ring had fallen
there. And I did not find [lit. see]
the ring. That Mother of the Water
made [=turned] me into a girl.'
- (42) zəlla l-tàma,^l zəlla l-tàma⁵⁹ `əna,^l
báz monəxla bəd-màya^l `éna
nžərri bə[d]-`asəqsa.^l qam-
xazyàla.^l She went there, she went there,⁵⁹
her eye, she only looked at the
water, her eye caught a glance of
her ring. She saw it.
- (43) wáy!^l g-əmra^l wàll^l wéla `asəqsa
`asəqsət ħakòme-la.^l p-košàna.^l Oh! She says, 'Indeed here is the
ring!' It is the ring of the king. 'I
shall go down [there]'

⁵⁸ The *zurne*, a conical wind instrument with a double reed, similarly to the western oboe, is played together with a large double-headed bass drum, the *doḷa*, during weddings and other happy occasions.

⁵⁹ See n. 47 above.

- (44) *šlixila jülle dida, šlixila jülle
dida,⁶⁰ kùšla,⁶⁰ kùšla,⁶⁰ g-ába šáqla
^Htabà 'at,^H séla yimmed m̀aya,⁶¹
mxéla-la xá⁶¹ rašòma,⁶¹ p̄šla
hakòma.⁶¹ p̄šla gòra.⁶¹* She took off her clothes, she took
off her clothes, she went down
[into the water]. She went down
[into the water],⁶⁰ she wants to
take the ring, the Mother of the
Water came, she hit her with a
rašòma,⁶¹ she became the king.
She became a man.
- (45) *wi-má-b-ozán 'ə-nàqla?⁶¹ júlləd
baxtása 'isən!⁶¹ lá-k-i 'ən ma-
'òzən.⁶²* 'Oh what shall I do now [lit. this
time]? There are women's
clothes! I do not know what to
do.⁶²
- (46) *qám̄la lwišila jülle dida⁶¹ mxéla l-
'úrxa b-[']àqle u-dí u-dí u-dí u-dí
u-sèla.⁶¹ la-k-i 'a ma-'òza,⁶¹ ta-máni
'áza 'ámra 'ána hakòma-wán.⁶¹ ta-
máni 'ámra 'ána bax-hakòma-
wán.⁶¹* She rose [and] wore her clothes
and started walking [lit. hit the
road by legs] and onwards she
came. She does not know what to
do, to whom would she go [and]
say 'I am the king'? To whom
would she say 'I am the wife of
the king'?
- (47) *lá-k-i 'a mà-[']oza,⁶¹ 'átla t̄lá[ha]
bnóne m̀enne.⁶³ ^Htón^H m̄t̄ela,⁶¹
^Haxšáv^H 'áya b-šoqànna,⁶¹ sélan
kəz-wàzir.⁶¹* She does not know what to do.
She has three sons from him.⁶³
Good, she arrived, now we shall
leave her, we come [lit. came] to
the wazir.
- (48) *wázir sèlu, 'ànya⁶¹ d̀əd⁶¹ g-èzi,⁶¹ g-
d̀oqi⁶¹ h̀anna⁶¹ t̄ere.⁶¹ nəšàre.⁶¹* The wazir, they came, those
[people] that go [and] catch *this*,
birds. Hunters.
- (49) BA: *nəçàre.⁶¹* BA: Hunters.
- (50) HM: *g-él g-m̀enxi,⁶¹ 'ò⁶¹ xá nàša,⁶¹
mux-hakòma-le wázir,⁶¹ xá-kma
jülle sq̄ile-'əlle,⁶¹ 'e mahíne, wele-
mpíla l-tàm.⁶¹* HM: He walks, they look. [They
see] this, one man, he is like [=he
looks like] a king, the wazir, some
beautiful clothes he has, and a
horse [lit. that horse], he [the
wazir] had fallen there [lit. he is
fallen there].

⁶⁰ See n. 47 above.

⁶¹ See n. 52 above.

⁶² The verbal forms in (45) with which the king refers to himself are masculine.

⁶³ Unlike in (45), where the king is referred to using masculine forms, in (46) and (47) he is referred to using feminine forms.

- (51) *là-g-maḥké,¹ la-hè la-lá,¹ g-əmrile*
màni-wət?² g-émer là-k-i³’en, wéle
pšì⁴’a.⁶⁴ m-èka wét? g-émer là-k-
i³’en.¹ ^Hzikarón^H dide zəlla.⁶⁵ la-k-
táxer çù-məndi. He does not speak, not ‘yes’ [and]
not ‘no’, they say to him, ‘who are
you?’ He says, ‘I don’t know’, he
is wounded. ‘Where are you
from?’ He says, ‘I don’t know’.
His memory was gone [lit. went].
He does not remember anything.
- (52) *qámli qam-nablile,¹ qam-daréle*
gó,¹ ’e hənna,¹ gó xastaxàna,¹
márru ta-dáw...¹ e dóktor g-émer
’òh! ’ó xà náša rúwwa-le,¹ qam-
xazáxle wele-mpila mən-mahine,¹
msàdərre,¹ mtàpəl⁶⁶ ’ábbe.¹ They rose and took him, they put
him in a, *this*, in a hospital, they
said to that ... eh doctor, he [=one
of the hunters] says, ‘Oh! This is a
great [=important] man, we saw
him [he had] fallen down from a
horse, fix him, treat him.
- (53) *mtopàlle⁶⁶ pášle gó...¹ xastaxàna¹*
^H’éze^H xá, xá šàta.¹ *g-mbaqrile m-*
èka wét,¹ g-émer là-k-i³’ən,¹ ’éka b-
àt?¹ là-k-i³’ən,¹ pášle l-tàma.¹ He treated him, he stayed in the
hospital for about one year. They
ask him ‘where are you from?’ He
says ‘I don’t know’. ‘Where will
you go?’ ‘I don’t know’. He
stayed there.
- (54) *xà,¹ muxwàsox¹ profèsor⁶⁷ g-émer*
ysálox⁶⁸ kəsli¹ b-yà[wə]nnox¹
’ixàla¹ štàya,¹ ’átli šùla,¹ ’úzli
xápča šùla,¹ mád g-ábət ’òz.¹ g-
émer hàwwa.¹ lá-k-i³’e çù-məndi.¹ One, like yourself, a professor,⁶⁷
says, ‘Come stay with me, I will
give you food [and] drink, I have
work [for you], do some work for
me, do whatever you like.’ He
says, ‘all right’. He does not know
anything.
- (55) *’áwa¹ qámle xà-yoma,¹ g-əmri*
wéle ḥakòma,¹ ’átle ṭera.¹ ḥakòma
dóhun məṭle.¹ ’átle ṭera g-
mandèle.¹ He rose one day, they say there’s
a king, which has a bird. Their
king died. He has a bird which
they throw.

⁶⁴ The Modern Hebrew root *pš* ‘ is used here with NENA morphology.

⁶⁵ Verb in the feminine form, although ^H*zikarón^H* is masculine.

⁶⁶ The Modern Hebrew root *tpl* is used here with NENA morphology. Since the historical emphasis of the consonant *ṭ* is not retained in Modern Hebrew, it is pronounced as *t* by Ḥabuba.

⁶⁷ Directed to Professor Khan.

⁶⁸ *Dativus ethicus*.

- (56) *'ôha rkúle mahíne dide,^l mahíne
dide dhàrra,^l dhàrra,^l dhàrra,^{l69}
'aka mpàlle^l mpàlle xa-gar-xét 'al-
tàm.^l ^H'aval^H-mpàlle,^l la-brélele
čù-màndi,^l txàrrre.^l* He [the wazir] rode his horse, his
horse galloped, galloped,
galloped. Where he had fallen, he
fell there again. But [when] he
fell, nothing happened to him, he
remembered.
- (57) *wáy!-g-èmer^l 'ána wàzir wéli^l ké-
le ḥakòma? 'éka zàlle? 'ána pàšli
^Hkvàr^l mevugàr,^l zakèn,^H mà-b-
amrən?^l 'éka p-šaqláli bàxti? la-
k-šaqláli,^l ^Hkvár^H la-g-bàli!^l 'ána
wál pàšli...^l la-g-mhéməna 'əbbi^l
díwən [=dəd hiwən] 'ána wàzir!^l* ‘Wow!’ he says, ‘I was a wazir!
Where is the king? Where has he
gone? I became already old, what
will I say? Would [lit. where
would] my wife take me [back]?
She wouldn’t take me [back], she
doesn’t love [or: want] me
anymore. Indeed I became ... She
won’t believe me that I am the
wazir!’
- (58) *séle 'al-bəsa,^l kəz-bàbe,^l kəz-daw-
bàbe d-qam-hənnàlle,^{l70} g-emərre,^l
mà qəšta?^l g-émer ḥàl^l u-qəšta
didi hədxə wəla.^l didi u-dəd-
ḥakòma.^l ḥakóma zàlle b-xá 'àl,^l
lá-k-i 'en 'éka zàlle,^l u- 'ána zəlli b-
xà- 'al.^l* He came home, to his father, to
that father of his that did such and
such for him,⁷⁰ he says to him,
‘What is the story?’, he says, ‘My
story [lit. situation and story] is
thus. Of mine and of the king. The
king went to one side, I do not
know where he went, and I went
to another [lit. one] side [=we
separated].’
- (59) *g-émer de-qu sà bròni,^l k-taxréten
'éka-wət,^l go-d-éma bəžer?^l g-
émer hə.^l k-taxrátte šəmmed
bəsox,^l k-i 'àtte?^l g-émer hə.^l qu-d-
àx^l b-ásən 'əmmox.^l* He [the father] says, ‘So go ahead
[lit. rise come] my son, do you
remember where you were?’ He
says, ‘Yes.’ ‘Do you remember
the name of your home, do you
know it?’ He says ‘Yes.’ ‘So let’s
go [lit. rise that we shall go], I’ll
come with you.’
- (60) *šqàlle 'áwa u-báxte, làtle
yalúnke,^l 'ó pàšle mux-bròne.^l se-* He took his wife [lit. he took
himself and his wife], he doesn’t
have children, he [the wazir] was
[lit. became] like a son to him [lit.

⁶⁹ The Modern Hebrew root *dhr* is used here with NENA morphology.

⁷⁰ The irregular root *h-nn-l* in derived from *hənnə*; see n. 51 above. Sabar, 2002a, p. 151: “to say this and that; to do this and that, have intercourse ...”.

*d-áx b-ásan`èmmox,^l zálle`
`àmmme.^l*

(61) *zálle`àmmme,⁷¹ mtoqtáqlu [b-
]dârga,^l [m]páqla xa-xəddâmta,^l –
`átle pàre,^l wázir hîle,^l k-šáqəl
mà`aš,^l báxte k-šáqla mà`aš,^l – g-
əmrále mání-wət`àhət?^l g-émer
`ána wázir wán,^l `ó bésa dīdi-le.^l*

(62) *g-ámra wáy!^l zálle mǎrra ta-báxte
g-əmraxa-šəzàna wəl-sèle, g-
émer^l `ána wázir wán,^l `ó bésa
dīdi-le.^l*

(63) *g-ámra mà`urre,^l má`urre xázyan
`éma šəzàna.^l k-xazyá-le la-g-
ya`àle.^l*

(64) *g-emǎrra`áhat bāxti wát,^l
šəmməd bróni, mǐrza-maḥàmad-
île,^l šəmməd bróni xèt,^l `àḥmad-
île,^l šəmməd bràti^l fātma-le.^l `àna^l
ḥà^l u-qəsta dīdi hádxala.^l*

(65) *g-əmrále ḥmòl,^l tú tamà,^l xà`ála.^l
nablánnox kəz-`imam.^l ḥākan-
`imam mǎrrə də[d]^l ^Hbe`emét^H
`á[hə]t gòri wét,^l góri, lá` là^l
lèwət góri.^l*

(66) *g-emǎrra^H bəssèder.^H*

(67) *ḥákoma šíne tréle tréle`áv
ḥakòma,^l séle`àp-awa.^l séle,*

his son]. ‘Let’s go [lit. go that we shall go], I’ll come with you.’ He went with him.

He went with him,⁷¹ they knocked on the door, a maid opened – he has money, he is a wazir, he receives [lit. take] a salary, his wife receives [lit. take] the [=his] salary – she [=the maid] tells him ‘Who are you?’, he says, ‘I am the wazir, this house is mine.’

She says, ‘Huh?!’ She went [and] said to his wife, she says, ‘One madman indeed came, he is saying “I am the wazir, this house is mine.”’

She [the wife] says, ‘Show him in, show him in [and] I’ll see what madman [this is].’ She sees him [and] she doesn’t know [=recognise] him.

He tells her, ‘You are my wife, the name of my son is Mirza-Maḥamad, the name of my other son is Aḥmad, the name of my daughter is Fatma. I, this is my story [lit. my situation and story is thus].’

She tells him, ‘Wait, sit over there, aside. I’ll take you to the imam. If the imam says that you are my husband, [you are my] husband, [if] not, [then] not, you are not my husband.’

He tells her, ‘OK.’

The king also, he rode and rode that king. He also came. He came, he came⁷² he arrived home. He

⁷¹ See n. 47 above.

*séle*⁷² *mṭéle* 'əl *bèsa*.^l *séle g-pásxa*
dárga xəddàmta,^l *g-émer* 'ána
ḥakóma wən.^l 'ána... 'áya *bàxti-*
la.^l

came, the maid opened the door,
 he says, 'I am the king, I ... that is
 my wife.'

(68) 'állà *g-əmrá*, *lèwan* 'ána *báxtox*,^l
 'áhət *wət-píša gèr šəkəl*,^l *lá-welox*
hàdxá! 'átta-*wal pāšlox gèr*
hàнна! 'ána *là-gə-mhémenan*
 'əbbox.^l *g-émerra* ^H*tòv*.^H

Indeed she replies, 'I am not your
 wife, you changed [lit. you
 became a different shape], you
 were not like that! Now you
 indeed became [of] different *this*!
 I do not believe you.' He tells her,
 'OK.'

(69) 'áp-*awa zálle qam-matùle*, 'éka
wàzir,^l *qam-matwíle xàzre*.^l

He also went, [someone] sat him
 down where the wazir [was], they
 sat him down next to him.

(70) *yóm 'əròta*,^l *yóm 'əròta-g-əmri b-*
áse 'imam dèni.^l *imam déni* 'áwa
b-qàṭe 'k-i' *e*.^l 'átle ^H*nevu* 'à. ^H*k-*
xáza 'ákan *d-ile* ^H*be-* 'emèt^H
ḥakóma.^l

'Friday, [on] Friday our imam will
 come. Our imam he will decree.
 He knows. He has prophecy. He
 sees whether he is really the king.'

(71) *wállà k-èse*,^l 'imam *dóhun yóm*
 'ərròta,^l *k-xáze bahlul-ile*,^l 'axón
ḥakóm,^l *k-xàze* 'áwa-*le*.^l

Indeed, their imam comes [on]
 Friday, he [=the king] sees it is
 Bahlul, the king's brother. He
 [=the king] sees it is him.

(72) *g-əmríle wállà k-i' èt*,^l 'é *hàнна*^l
dèni,...^l ^H*mīšpát*^H *dèni qam-*
*mesáxla*⁷³ *kəšlox*.^l ^H*ki*^H *là-mšax*.^l
 'òha,^l *ḥakòma-le*,^l 'ó *wàzir-ile*.^l
 'áhət *màr*,^l *psóx jəzúka*⁷⁴ *b-qúr* 'an
dìdox^l *kan-díle wàzir*^l *kan-díle*
ḥakòma.^l

They tell him, 'Indeed, you know,
 our *this* ... our case [lit. trial] we
 brought to you. Because we are
 not able [to decide whether] that
 [man] is the king [and] this [is
 the] wazir. You, say [=tell us the
 answer], open a booklet⁷⁴ in your
 Quran, whether he is the wazir
 [and] whether he is the king.'

⁷² See n. 47 above.

⁷³ Verb in the feminine form, although ^H*mīšpát*^H is masculine. This may be because NENA *šari* 'əta/šər 'əta 'trial, judgment' is feminine.

⁷⁴ Sabar, 2002a, p. 127: "booklet (of religious or magic nature)".

- (73) *g-émer 'ó wázir-ile u-'ó ħakòma-
le,¹ d'órun l-bés gyanòxun.¹* He says, 'That is the wazir and that is the king, go back to your homes.'
- (74) *qam-nabálle 'áwa l-bèse¹ u-'áwa
l-bèse.¹* He led them, him to his home and him to his home [=he led each one of them to his home].
- (75) *'ó bár ħakòma,¹ dád wéla bàxte,¹
kúlla 'áy seheràne¹ pášla 'ázaya
'èlle.¹ g-tá'e báxte zèlla,¹ u-zà 'la'
u-zà 'la¹ u-,¹ la šúqle xá dùksa,¹ híl
'amèrika zàlle!¹* That son of the king, that she⁷⁵ was his wife, that entire *seheràne*⁷⁶ turned into mourning upon him. He is looking for his wife [but] she is gone, and she has disappeared and disappeared and ... He did not leave [out even] one place, he went all the way to America!
- (76) *čú dúkka lá šúqle hile b-tá'ya
'àlla.¹ čú-xxa lá k-i' e' lé xázya
bàxta.¹* He did not leave [out even] one place, he is searching for her. No one knows, [no one] had seen a woman.
- (77) *xzélú xá góra ħakòma¹ zàlle.¹
mžèle l-d-áy bážer.¹ mžéle l-d-áy
bàžer,¹ 'éka b-àl?¹ zàlle 'ál hènna,¹
kəz- 'imam,¹ kəz-jəma '¹* They had seen one man, a king. He [already] went [away]. He [=the husband] arrived in that city, where should he go? He went to *this*, to the imam, to the mosque.
- (78) *g-emərre bròni¹ má^H bakašá^H
dídox hila?¹ g-émer ħàl¹ u-qəsta¹
didi¹ hàdxa wéla.¹ qam-xazéla xá
^Hbahurá^H rəš,¹ bastád^H nàhar,^H
qam-meséla tàli¹ u-qam-gorənna¹
u-['ə]tlí tlá[ha] bnóne mənna,¹ u-
zà 'la baxti!¹* He tells him, 'My son, what is your request?' He says, 'This is my story [lit. my situation and story was thus]. They [=the fishermen] saw one girl on the river bank, they brought her to me, and I married her, and I have three sons from her, and my wife has disappeared!'
- (79) *g-émer là zá 'la baxtox,¹ baxtox
ħàl¹ u-qəsta hàdxa-la,¹ baxtox
ħakòma-la.¹ 'átta mnablənnox* He says, 'Your wife has not disappeared, your wife that is her story [lit. the situation and story is thus], your wife is a king, now I

⁷⁵ Meaning, the king who turned into a woman.

⁷⁶ See n. 57 above.

- kàsle,¹ u-, 'àwa¹ b-qaṭé¹ la šar 'áta* shall take you to him, and, he will
dìdox.¹ decree [lit. cut] your judgement.'
- (80) *g-émərre d-àx.¹ z'alle qam-nab'alle.¹* He tells him, 'Let's go.' He went
k-xáze gòra⁷⁷ hile,¹ 'áwa k-i'e, and led him. He [=the king] sees it
wéle báxta gòra⁷⁷ hile.¹ g-əmrále⁷⁸ is her [=the king's] husband. He
kèlu yalúnke dídí?¹ g-əbànnu!⁷⁹ [=the king] knows, he was a
woman, this is [=was] her
husband. She [=the king] tells
him, 'Where are my children? I
want⁷⁹ them!'
- (81) *g-émer yalúnkəd mà?¹ 'a[he]t-* He [=the husband] says, 'Children
gòra wát!¹ məṭo¹ yalúnke of what? You are a man! How
mes'ənnu-làx?⁸⁰ will I bring you⁸⁰ the children?'
- (82) *g-əmra h'ál¹ u-q'ásta dídí hàdxa-la.¹* She [=the king] says, 'This is my
'ána mp'èlla¹ 'asəqsa¹ dídí,¹ hádxa story [lit. my situation and story is
qam-mazvərànna¹ mp'əla go- thus]. I, my ring fell, I twisted it
məya,¹ séla yimmed məya¹ mxélali [around my finger] like that, it fell
xá raš'oma¹ qam-'ózali^H baḥùra^H!¹ into the water, the Mother of the
qam-gorànnox,¹ 'iláha w'álleli¹ Water came, struck me with a
ṭl'à[ha] bn'óne m'ánnox.⁸¹ *raš'oma⁸²* [and] turned [lit. made]
me into a girl. I married you, God
gave me three sons from you.'
- (83) *'úzlox seheràne,¹ s'èli,¹ 'éni n'z'ər-¹* You made a *seheràne*,⁸³ I came,
['e]l 'as'əqsa dídí,¹ 'as'əqsa d'əd- my eye caught a glance of my ring,
^Hyahalòm^H h'ila,¹ d'əd,¹ jawàhar.¹ it is a ring of diamond, of,
diamond.
- (84) *kápli g-ában šaqlànna,¹ séla 'ày* I bent down in order [lit. I want]
yimmed məya¹ mxélali xá raš'oma¹ to take it, that Mother of the
qam-'ozali xá-gar xát gòra.⁸⁴ Water came, struck me with a
raš'oma [and] turned [lit. made]
me again into a man.

⁷⁷ The feminine possessive pronoun *-a* refers to the king.

⁷⁸ Feminine verbal form.

⁷⁹ This verb, uttered by the king, is in the feminine form.

⁸⁰ Feminine pronoun.

⁸¹ All forms in (82) referring to the king are feminine.

⁸² See n. 52 above.

⁸³ See n. 57 above.

⁸⁴ All forms in (84) referring to the king are feminine.

- (85) *ʿána ḥakòma-wən,^l k-xázət ʿàxxa.^l* I am a king, you see here. Now, I
ʿe-náqla g-éban⁸⁵ yalúnke dīdi,^l want⁸⁵ my children, whatever the
mád mārre ʿiman,^l mārre ʿtáli-ilu,^l imam says [lit. said]. He says [lit.
H ʿo^H-ʿtálox hílu.^l said] they are for me or they are
for you [=he will decree either].
- (86) *g-emárra^H gam^H-ʿà[h]at zállax^l* He tell her [=the king], ‘First [lit.
H gam^H-yalúnke yawànnu-lax?^l also] you went away, and [now
ʿilà[ha]-la qabállá mánna^l you want that] I will give you the
children as well?! God will not
permit this! [lit. God will not
accept it from you; =this is a
violation of the divine justice].’
- (87) *sèle-kəz ʿimam^l ʿimam g-èmer,^l* He came to the imam, the imam
ʿà[h]at ʿátlax yalúnke,^l ʿàwa^l – says, ‘You [=the king] [already]
yalúnke dīde hílu.^l ʿàni^l yálunke have children, he [=the prince] –
dīde ʿtále,^l yalúnke dīdax ʿtálax,^l sí those are his children. They, his
bròni,^l ʿilaha-ha[w]e ʿàmmox,^l sí children are for him [=should stay
gór xa-xèta.^{l86} with him], your children are for
you. Go my son, may God be with
you, go and marry another.’⁸⁶
- (88) *há ʿèha wéla,^l ʿáwa zállle l-bèse,^l* Here, this is it, he went to his
ʿó séle l-bèse.^l H zéhu^H g-ábet xa- home, [and the other] one went to
xèt?^l his home. That’s it, would you
like another one [=story]?
- (89) BA: *kúd šmi ʿále xà[y]e...^l* BA: [May] whoever has heard it
live ...
- (90) HM: *...xà[y]e,^l kud-là šmi ʿále...^{l87}* HM: ... live, whoever has not
g-ábet xa-xèt?^l heard it ... [also live].⁸⁷ Would
you like another one?

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⁸⁵ Feminine verbal form.

⁸⁶ All forms in (86) and (87) referring to the king are feminine.

⁸⁷ A common ending formula in NENA folk-tales.

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PART 2

Texts, Scribes and the Making of Books and Documents

Crossing Palaeographical Borders: Bi-Alphabetical Scribes and the Development of Hebrew Script – The Case of the Maghrebi Cursive

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In the middle of the 11th century in Jerusalem, Abū al-Faraj Furqān ibn Assad or, to use his Hebrew name, Joshua ben Judah, a scholar of fame and the leader of the Karaite house of study, faced a dilemma.¹ A wealthy patron, most probably Da'ūd ibn 'Imrān, an influential merchant from Fustat, ordered from Joshua ben Judah a commentary on the Pentateuch, but omitted to specify whether he wished his book, composed in Arabic, to be written in Hebrew or in Arabic characters. Joshua ben Judah mentioned this problem to an anonymous middleman who was by all evidence in charge of providing the Egyptian patron and keen bibliophile with books from Jerusalem. The bookish go-between wrote to the patron explaining that the question of the choice of script was hindering Joshua ben Judah from sending off the finished work. His letter, sent from Jerusalem and written in the Arabic language using the Arabic alphabet, must have reached its destination. It was recycled in the 12th century, this time by a Rabbanite Jew who wrote a Hebrew-Arabic dictionary of the Mishnah in Hebrew characters on the blank verso and between the lines of the original Arabic letter. After a long circulation, the letter was deposited in the Genizah, to be finally discovered, studied and published by Professor Geoffrey Khan,² to whom this essay is dedicated with gratitude and affection.

What seems to be just an anecdote in fact has serious bearings on the question of script used by Jewish scribes in the medieval East. The discovery and publication of the letter by Geoffrey Khan in 1993 has provided new elements for our understanding of the possible motivations behind the choice of Hebrew

¹ Some ideas of this paper were included into the John Coffin Memorial Lecture presented at King's College, University of London, on 27 May 2017. I thank Miriam Wagner and Ronny Vollandt for their comments and suggestions. All images reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

² T-S K 25.230, in Khan, 1993a.

or Arabic script to copy Jewish books. More importantly, this letter shows that Jewish scribes possessed the skills to write with equal ease in Hebrew and in Arabic. The purpose of this present essay is to reflect on the possibility that training in and simultaneous practice of two writing systems had implications on the development of Hebrew script itself, and should be considered as a factor in palaeographical research. The impact of bi-alphabetism on the creation and development of specific subtypes or styles of Hebrew script will be illustrated through the example of the specific script style used from the beginning of the 11th century by the professional trading network of Maghrebi merchants.

1 Jewish scribes writing in Arabic script

It is well known that medieval Jews spoke the vernacular languages of their non-Jewish environment as their mother tongue, reserving Hebrew for education, prayer and reading. In contrast to their total acculturation to the spoken linguistic environment, the written production of the Jews was usually conveyed in Hebrew script. However, the study of the evidence provided by the Cairo Genizah suggests that the scribal reality in Eastern communities was much more complex than is suggested by this clear-cut oral/written distinction. The letter concerning Joshua ben Judah's commentary reveals an indiscriminate use of Hebrew and Arabic scripts by the same scribe. The choice does not depend on the scribe's skill or the lack of it; it is left to the preference of the reader, in this case a wealthy patron. Geoffrey Khan explains that this indiscriminate use of Hebrew and Arabic scripts was particularly frequent among the Karaites, who even transliterated the Hebrew Bible into Arabic characters.³ More open to the literary influences of the Arab majority culture⁴ and adepts of the Aristotelian view of script as an arbitrary – and thus interchangeable – reflection of the linguistic reality, the Karaites were indeed not averse to writing in Arabic script.⁵ Although Rabbanite Jews displayed less readiness to use Arabic script, knowledge of the Arabic script was nonetheless also common among mainstream Jews. Genizah documents indeed show that medieval Jewish scribes, Karaites and Rabbanites alike, functioned not only in a situation of linguistic diglossia but also within a bi-alphabetical graphic culture. They learned Arabic script alongside Hebrew, and used it for reading Arabic books as well as for writing literary and pragmatic texts. This rubbing shoulders, or rather calami, with non-Jewish writings, scribes and scripts had a lasting impact on stylistic aspects of the Hebrew script itself.

³ Khan, 1993a, pp. 138–140. For the Karaite Bibles in Arabic script, see especially Hoerning, 1889; Khan, 1990.

⁴ Drory, 2000a, pp. 135–136; Drory, 2000b, pp. 107–108.

⁵ Ben Shammai, 1982; Khan, 1997; Olszowy-Schlanger, 1997.

The first issue to consider is the capacity and willingness of Jewish scribes to employ non-Jewish scripts, and the extent of their use. Medieval Jewish communities, or at least their male component, were literate.⁶ Urbanised, book-centred in their religious rituals, involved in bureaucratically managed economic and legal activities, for medieval Jews reading and writing skills were simply vital. They inherited from antiquity the tradition of schooling for young boys which made basic literacy, be it scientific, religious or pragmatic, quite widespread across the population. Mentions of schools and teachers – either privately hired or employed by the community as a whole – abound in medieval sources. The teaching methods can be reconstructed from Rabbinic texts as well as from the hundreds of extant children’s primers and writing exercises found in the Cairo Genizah. The pedagogical methods inherited from classical antiquity insisted on the recognition of the forms of letters. This was achieved by learning their shape and ductus (the number, direction and mutual relationship of the pen movements involved in producing a letter).⁷

It is true that the main purpose of the Jewish elementary writing education was to acquire skills in reading and writing Hebrew, and more specifically in reading and writing the square, calligraphic register of the script, the one found in Bible scrolls and display codices. However, there is ample evidence that Jewish individuals also learned to read and write in Arabic script. At the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries, Hai ben Sherira Gaon is explicit about allowing the teaching of the Arabic alphabet (in addition, of course, to the study of the Torah) in Jewish primary schools.⁸ And indeed, the Cairo Genizah shows that at least some Jewish children learned Arabic writing in parallel with attending a Hebrew school. In a letter studied by Shlomo Dov Goitein, a father begs his son’s Jewish teacher’s indulgence for delays caused by overlapping Arabic lessons,⁹ and a large number of writing exercises in Arabic script, including learning the alphabet, are preserved in the Genizah, sometimes with Hebrew equivalents (see figure 1).

Members of the Jewish elite were aware that Arabic literacy skills were essential for climbing social ladders. On the Western side of the Mediterranean, Judah ibn Tibbon, a Granada-born physician and translator of Jewish philosophical works in 12th century Lunel, admonishes his son Samuel in his unflattering ethical will:

⁶ For a general overview, see Reif, 1990. There are different scholarly opinions as to the true level of Jewish literacy in the Middle Ages. The actual percentage of literate Jews in medieval communities is impossible to establish, as is, incidentally, the precise number of Jews in general. In my understanding, a literate society is not necessarily a society in which everyone or nearly everyone has access to and masters literacy and numeracy skills, but rather a society in which such skills constitute a necessary foundation for economic and religious activities.

⁷ Goitein, 1962, especially pp. 35–41; Goitein, 1967–1988, particularly vol. II, pp. 74–76; Narkiss, 1972; Olszowy-Schlanger, 2003.

⁸ Quoted by Assaf, 1931, pp. 4–5.

⁹ Goitein, 1962, p. 35.

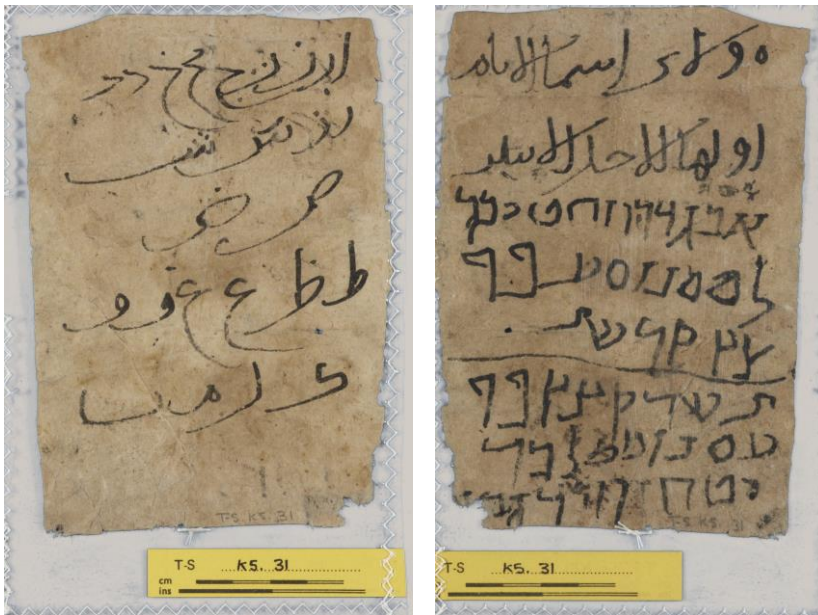


Figure 1. T-S K 5.31 r. and v.: Children's exercises in Hebrew and Arabic script; the Arabic writing seems more fluent than the Hebrew

Also in the matter of Arabic writing that you started to learn seven years ago, I had to encourage you constantly, but you have never listened to my advice. But you know well that the greatest among our people have not achieved their greatness and elevated status but thanks to the Arabic writing.¹⁰

This doting father insisted on his son learning Arabic calligraphy, in addition to his lessons in Hebrew calligraphy for which the father paid the considerable sum of 30 gold dinars a year. It seems that, unlike Hebrew whose study required a teacher, for learning Arabic calligraphy Samuel was supposed to train by copying Arabic books. Judah also encouraged Samuel to read Arabic books, both translation of the Bible and scientific works that were accessible in Judah's private library. Indeed, it was not uncommon for Jewish bibliophiles to own and study books in Arabic. Fragments of works such as *Kalila wa-Dimna* (see T-S Ar. 51.60), mentions of copies of the *Arabian Nights*¹¹ and fragments of Arabic scientific works were found in the Cairo Genizah.¹² Even in Christian Spain, Arabic books were commissioned or even copied by Jewish individuals.¹³

Arabic literacy of the Jews in Dār al-Islām went much further than a mere acquaintance with the Arabic script and reading works of Arabic literature in their original graphic form: Jewish scribes copied manuscripts in both Hebrew

¹⁰ Abrahams, 1976, p. 84.

¹¹ Goitein, 1959.

¹² Khan, 1986.

¹³ See van Koningsveld, 1992, especially pp. 89–93.

and Arabic scripts. Evidently, there must have been a demand for Jewish books in Arabic script, and therefore we can conclude that there was a community of competent readers, some of whom preferred to read the Arabic rather than the Hebrew graphic forms. As we saw, the choice of Hebrew or Arabic script was indifferent on the production end, and depended only on the personal choice of the book's prime reader – the ordering and paying patron. This arbitrary use of Hebrew or Arabic script as an individual's choice is also attested in documentary Genizah writings.¹⁴

As was mentioned, Karaite scribes produced manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible transliterated into Arabic script (but retaining their Tiberian vowels) to facilitate its study, and a number of Jewish books written in the Arabic language have been preserved in manuscripts in either Hebrew or Arabic script. As shown by Geoffrey Khan, the Karaites used the two scripts indiscriminately between the 11th and 13th centuries (with a preference for Hebrew script from the 14th century onwards). For example, the aforementioned commentary on the Pentateuch of Joshua ben Judah has been preserved in at least five manuscripts in Arabic script and seven in Hebrew script.¹⁵

The use of Arabic script was, however, by no means restricted to Karaite book production. Several books written in the Arabic language by Rabbanite authors, in particular scientific and medical compositions, were rendered in both Hebrew and Arabic scripts. Although some specifically Jewish texts, such as early Bible translations and glossaries, were transmitted in Arabic script in addition to Hebrew,¹⁶ the former was primarily used in writings addressed to a broader public that included non-Jewish readers, such as medical and philosophical texts. For example, Masarjawayh (c700) wrote his medical tractates in Arabic letters.¹⁷ The works of another pioneer of Judaeo-Arabic literature, David al-Muqammaṣ, active in the 9th century, also exhibit clear indications of being originally composed in Arabic script.¹⁸ Similarly, Isaac Israeli, who was active around the turn of the 10th century, wrote his philosophical and medical compositions in Arabic characters.¹⁹ His pupil Dunash b. Tamim (first half of the 10th century) continued this custom in a treatise on the armillary sphere.²⁰

A particularly interesting case is the manuscript transmission of the medical and philosophical works of Moses Maimonides. There is no question that Maimonides, with his official functions as the court physician to Saladin's

¹⁴ In a private letter, a certain Mūsā b. Jacob instructs the addressee to reply in Hebrew script because he prefers it (*wa-yakūn al-khaṭṭ 'ibrānī*); see CUL Or. 1080 J 42, in Gil, 1997, vol. III, p. 304. I thank Ronny Vollandt for this reference.

¹⁵ For this, and for the use of Hebrew and Arabic scripts for copies of the works of other Karaite authors, see Khan, 1993a, p. 137.

¹⁶ See Zucker, 1959, p. 50; Hopkins, 2002, pp. 369–374.

¹⁷ Gil, 2004, pp. 297–298.

¹⁸ See Stroumsa 1989, p. 36.

¹⁹ See Altmann and Stern, 1958, pp. 3–4.

²⁰ Stern 1954–1956, pp. 373–382.

family, was perfectly acquainted with Arabic and could use it in writing. His medical works in particular were of universal interest, and they are found in manuscripts in both Hebrew and Arabic scripts. Maimonides's *Tractate on Poisons and Their Antidotes* is preserved in at least six manuscripts in Arabic script and four in Hebrew script.²¹ His multilingual herbalist encyclopaedia, *Book of the Names of Drugs*, is preserved only in Arabic script, in a manuscript copied by a famous 13th century Muslim botanist, Ibn al-Baytar.²² Moreover, the entries of this encyclopaedia are organised according to the order of the Arabic alphabet. It is possible that Maimonides preferred to write in Hebrew script; the autograph drafts of his medical works found in the Genizah are all in Hebrew script,²³ and this includes the drafts of works written for his Muslim patrons. For example, T-S Ar. 44.79 and T-S Misc. 34.24 are fragments of Maimonides's draft of *Fī l-Jimā* ' , a tractate on sexual intercourse, aphrodisiacs and healthy diet written for a nephew of Saladin, the woman-loving Al-Muzaffar 'Umar ibn Nūr ad-Din, who asked his trusted physician to provide him with a guide to help increase his sexual potency.²⁴ None of the autographs is in Arabic script, although it has been suggested that Maimonides sometimes used Arabic script for corrections and marginal glosses – in a Genizah fragment of the *Epitomes* of Galen (T-S Ar. 21.112 and Gaster 1019) studied by Simon Hopkins, marginal additions which seem to be by Maimonides's hand are in Arabic script.²⁵ In any case, while Maimonides may have preferred to draft his works in Hebrew script, at least those destined for Muslim patrons or the general Jewish and non-Jewish public must have been immediately copied in Arabic script. Even when such fair copies were destined for non-Jews, those who prepared the initial master copy must have been Jewish scribes well acquainted with Hebrew script, and able to read the spidery and ligatured informal handwriting of the master.

A manuscript tradition in both the Hebrew and the Arabic alphabets is also attested for Maimonides's works written explicitly for a Jewish audience. The famous *Guide for the Perplexed*, the author's draft of which, in Hebrew script, has been found among Genizah fragments,²⁶ was rapidly circulating in both scripts. This is particularly important because, according to the Iraqi philosopher and physician 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, who visited Maimonides in Egypt in 1191, the author forbade and cursed in anticipation those who would be tempted to transliterate his book into Arabic script.²⁷ However, the prohi-

²¹ Rosner, 1998, p. 32.

²² Meyerhof, 1940, pp. lvii–lxi; Ferre, 2009, p. 20.

²³ Hopkins, 2005, p. 91.

²⁴ Stern, 1956, vol. III, pp. 17–21; Backer and Polliack, 2001, p. 416; Hopkins, 2005, p. 93.

²⁵ Hopkins, 1994.

²⁶ The fragments from Maimonides's draft of the *Guide* have been published and studied by several scholars; see the list of fragments and their publication in Sirat and Di Donato, 2011, pp. 70–71. See also Sirat, 2014.

²⁷ Munk, 1842, p. 27 n. 1; Hopkins, 2005, p. 91.

bition was short lived (or, less likely, al-Baghdādī learned the Hebrew alphabet²⁸), since the Iraqi scholar was able to read the book soon after it was finished. It seems that, whether Maimonides accepted it or not, copies in Arabic characters circulated freely and some are still extant.²⁹ When Samuel ibn Tibbon undertook the translation of the *Guide* into Hebrew in Provence, he wrote to Maimonides in Egypt complaining that the model that reached him and served for the first translation differed from the original author's version. He claimed that his model was a retro-transliteration back into Hebrew characters from a copy in Arabic script. This script manipulation resulted in many errors and misinterpretations.³⁰

Maimonides's preference in writing his drafts may serve as an example that Jewish scribes on the whole preferred Hebrew script. From the letter of Samuel ibn Tibbon we gather that it was the Arabic script used for a copy of the *Guide* that was to blame for the text's corruption and mistakes. A similar criticism of the Arabic script as responsible for errors in the transmission of ancient knowledge – this time of the astrological compendium of Ptolemy, the *Tetrabiblos* – appears in the 13th century encyclopaedia, the *Midrash ha-Hokhmah* ('the lesson of wisdom') by Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen, a Spanish Jew who probably worked in Sicily at the time of Frederick II. Judah ben Solomon stressed the superiority of the Hebrew letters because he believed them to reflect the movement of the planets and to convey esoteric and scientific truth. But it was the graphic nature of the Arabic script, and in particular the absence in the manuscripts of the diacritical points to distinguish such letters as *bā*', *yā*', *nūn*, *tā*' and *tā*', that he found responsible for the errors in text transmission:

For the Arabic script leads to falsities. It has many letters whose form is identical, and which are distinguished only by dots. Scribes often err in placing the dots and this leads to misunderstandings.³¹

Despite this evident esteem for Hebrew, scribes were often so familiar with both alphabets that Hebrew and Arabic can be found side by side in the same manuscript, on the same page and line. Scribes writing in Arabic script could easily switch to Hebrew script, for example to write a biblical quotation within the Arabic body of the text; for instance, several manuscripts of the *Guide* in Arabic characters quote the Bible in Hebrew characters. Although some scholars argue that these bilingual and bi-alphabetical manuscripts were destined for study sessions between Jewish and non-Jewish intellectuals, it seems more

²⁸ As suggested by Hopkins, 2005, p. 91.

²⁹ Vajda, 1960.

³⁰ Lichtenberg, 1859, part II, p. 27a, col. 2: כי הראשונה כאשר הודעתי אל כבוד אדוננו נראה ממנה שנכצבה: מספר כתוב ערבי או מספר שנכתב הוא מספר כתוב ערבי ולזה רבו טעיותיו כאשר יראה בה אדוננו. See Vajda, 1960; Hopkins, 2005, p. 91; Sirat and Di Donato, 2011, p. 60.

³¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich. 551, ff. 178 v.–179 r., quoted in Langerman, 2000, p. 380.

likely that they were destined for Jewish readers who were used to reading in Arabic script, but preferred to keep the Biblical text in its own characters. In any case, if we take as an example T-S Ar. 18(1).141,³² a fragment of the *Guide*, the Arabic and Hebrew parts were copied by the same scribe, with the same ink, and by all evidence at the same time and place. There is no question that the scribe writing in Arabic left spaces to be filled in later with Hebrew script. The writing flows easily and the passage from one script to another is so fluent and natural that, at first glance, it is difficult to distinguish the quotations in Hebrew script (see figure 2). Similar instances of a natural flow of writing in Hebrew and Arabic can be found in many legal documents and letters.³³

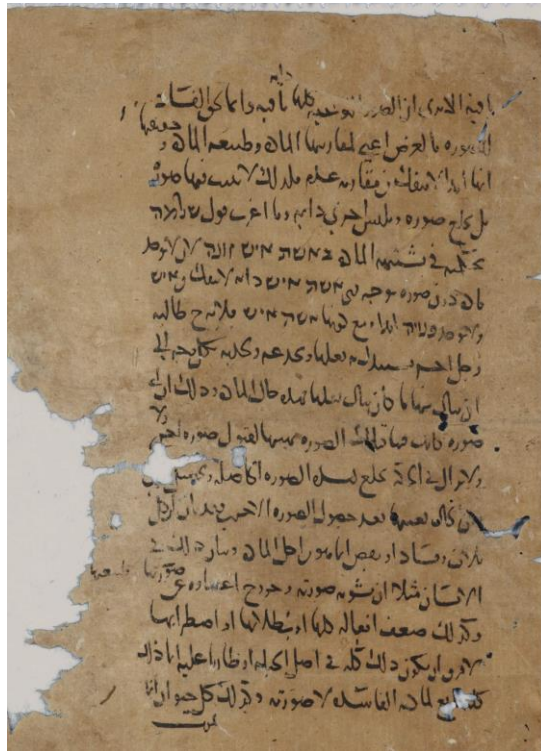


Figure 2. T-S Ar. 18(1).141 (13th century, Egypt): a page from a manuscript of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, in Arabic script with quotations in Hebrew script

³² Several leaves from the same manuscript of the *Guide* in Arabic characters with quotations in Hebrew have been found in the Cairo Genizah: T-S NS 306.252 and T-S Ar. 18(1).141. See Hopkins, 1985, p. 713; Hopkins, 2005, p. 92; Khan, 1990, p. 2; Sirat and Di Donato, 2011, p. 61.

³³ For example, the 12th century booksellers' records in BL Or. 10656.5 (see Allony, 2006, no. 78).

2 The impact of bi-alphabetism on Hebrew script: A cognitive approach

The fluency of use of Arabic and Hebrew scripts in the same text indicates that its scribes mastered both writing systems, and probably did so at an early stage of their writing education. Just like people who learn to speak a language early or late in life can be often recognised by their accent, early writing education has an impact on the way scribes trace the graphic forms. There are native and non-native writers just as there are native and non-native speakers.

The fluent use of both Hebrew and Arabic scripts indicates that Jewish scribal culture was not segregated from that of their neighbours. It has been argued that such a shared scribal culture had a lasting impact on the Hebrew script, on the formation of various local script-types and styles and on the visual aspects of Jewish books and documents in general. However, the precise ways and mechanisms through which non-Jewish scripts impacted on the development of Hebrew script have not yet been sufficiently studied by Hebrew palaeographers. It was Colette Sirat who first observed and studied the visual impact of non-Hebrew scripts on Jewish books and scribes. In her book *Écriture et civilisation*, published in 1976, she noted that

the Hebrew alphabet, just like other material characteristics of Jewish books, evolved in parallel with the contemporary scripts of the non-Jewish environment, so that the style of non-Jewish script is reflected in Hebrew script.³⁴

This impact of non-Jewish scribal cultures on Hebrew books and script was subsequently studied by Malachi Beit-Arié in his Panizzi Lectures series in London, in 1993. He pointed out that Hebrew manuscripts produced in various places of the Muslim or Latin world differ in their graphic and technological features, and that they are “moulded by the different places where they were made”.³⁵ The sharing of techniques of parchment making, ink, composition of quires, patterns of layout, and so on made these manuscripts into real “cross cultural agents”. Beit-Arié also discussed the influence of non-Jewish scripts on the appearance of Hebrew script, but warned that

the possibility that contemporarily shared or similar writing styles and techniques of production in different cultures of the same area do not necessarily mean intellectual scribal borrowings, but might have been independent outcomes of common aesthetic and technical impulses of the *Zeitgeist*.³⁶

The influence of the writing implement – calamus for Hebrew writings in the Orient, Spain and parts of Italy, and quill in Northern Europe – can also be seen as responsible for some specific features, where similarities with non-Jewish scripts result from being executed with the same instrument.

³⁴ Sirat, 1976, p. 4; my translation.

³⁵ Beit-Arié, 1993, p. 7.

³⁶ Beit-Arié, 1993, p. 13.

However it would seem that the impact on Hebrew script not only results from watching and imitating the aesthetics of the contemporary visual culture, nor of the external aspects of the page or the outer shapes of letters. As stated above, Jewish scribes were often trained in early life to be able to write in Arabic script. It seems to me that it is the memory of the gestures necessary to trace a letter as well as the economy and ergonomics of these movements which contribute to the fact that Hebrew script can be so evidently similar to the non-Hebrew one. It is this intimate relationship – defined for Latin by Jean Mallon as being between the hand and the eye in the production of the graphic act (“*le concours de la main et de l’oeil dans l’acte graphique*”³⁷) – that accounts for the production of forms of Hebrew script which echo the features of the non-Hebrew script of the majority culture.

Observed empirically by palaeographers, the importance of body memory or sensorimotor memory has been studied by anthropologists and cognitive psychologists who include writing among those human activities which are executed with a high degree of automatism. In recent years, the cerebral function related to the sensorimotor memory and the graphic act have received renewed attention from cognitive psychologists concerned in particular about the negative impact of the computer keyboard on the acquisition of literacy skills among young children. Scholars such as Marieke Longcamp and Jean-Luc Velay, working on the impact of graphic motricity on the process of reading, have observed that during the act of writing and the act of recognising letters (reading), the neuronal information which determines the order of writing strokes composing the characters is encoded – ‘memorised’ – in a specific zone in the brain (the premotor cortex of the left hemisphere for right-handed people, and the right hemisphere for left-handed people). Letters are represented in the brain not only through vision but also through the gesture or the mental, subconscious simulation of the movements that one makes when writing. This sensorimotor memory is activated in the process of writing, just as it is when someone forgets a phone number or the spelling of a word and retrieves it by mechanically dialling or writing, trusting that the hand ‘remembers’ it better than the conscious efforts to recall. The extensive neural network responsible for the complex sensorimotor memory involved in writing and reading is usually established in early education.³⁸ The gestures used in writing, the ductus of the letters and their groups are acquired through practice and repetition. When we take, for example, T-S 12.710 (see figure 3), we realise that the person who reused this 10th century letter as scrap paper for training in the Arabic script repeated over and over again the same conjunction of letters, the same gestures and their sequence, so that the chain of movements would become fluent and automatic.

³⁷ Mallon, 1952, p. 33.

³⁸ Longcamp, 2003; Velay and Longcamp, 2005.

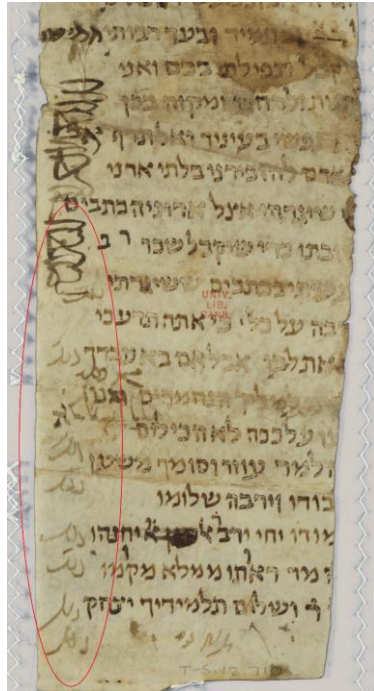


Figure 3. T-S 12.710: Arabic writing trials on a reused Hebrew document; the word *ذلك* is repeated nine times

Automatisation and reliance on sensorimotor memory is stronger when the writer is at ease with the action of writing. A proficient writer concentrates on the meaning of the message that he or she wants to convey, rather than on the graphic act itself. It is as if the hand is guided by an ‘automatic pilot’ while the conscious brain activity formulates the message to be conveyed in the writing. The best calligraphers, those able to reproduce perfectly their models, are those who are able to focus on the very act of writing, on shaping the letters, instead of analysing in real time the text’s message. On the opposite end of the scale, the less strictly controlled automatic writing allows the scribe’s mind to dwell on the meaning and gives his or her hand the freedom to trace the movements it ‘prefers’.³⁹ Cognitive scientists agree that this subconscious

³⁹ In palaeographical terms, calligraphically executed, controlled writings are closer to their model whereas informal writings stray the most from the models and contain the imprint of the scribe’s idiosyncratic features. The discrepancy between the stereotype models and a scribe’s individuality has been analysed by palaeographers (for Hebrew script in particular, by Malachi Beit-Arié, 1990) who distinguish accordingly between the typological entity of the ‘script’, shared by a group of scribes trained to follow the same models in the same chronological, geographical and cultural context, and the script’s idiosyncratic realisation by individual scribes, referred to as ‘hand’ or ‘handwriting’. The difference between the ‘ideal’ model and its actual realisation was defined by Geoffrey Khan (1993b), in terms inspired by Chomskian linguistics, as ‘competence’ versus ‘performance’. The actual ‘performance’ depends on many factors: on the individual’s perception of the model (visual perception and comprehension of the image by the central nervous system) and his/her capacity to reproduce what he/she perceives (motor

state based on memorised gestures lasts for a few seconds, with consciousness retaking control intermittently.

What happens, then, when scribes used to writing in Arabic write in Hebrew script? It is likely that the scribes' sensorimotor memories lead them to reproduce subconsciously the sequence of movements that they have learned and employ with frequency when they write in Arabic script. Indeed, bi-alphabetical Jewish scribes may prefer in some circumstances the fluent and ligatured movements of Arabic script because they are used to tracing such forms, having acquired them through long practice and repetition.

The recourse to the gestures needed to trace Arabic letters and words may be even more natural when they allow for greater comfort and speed of writing, important when the intended text is a personal letter or private notes, which do not involve a controlled calligraphy. Indeed, it is in ordinary, personal writings when individual scribes seek gestural commodity and ease and also speed that one finds a close similarity of form between Hebrew and Arabic scripts. The forms thus created by an individual but influential scribe can become a stylistic model, followed and reproduced by colleagues, disciples, family and the broader professional and intellectual milieu. With time, individual features can become characteristic of a group of scribes and of a distinctive style of script. Thus the capacity of scribes to function in two different working systems may have played a role in developments and changes of the Hebrew script through time, especially in the development of less formal, personal or documentary script registers.

3 A case study: The Maghrebi merchants' script

The documentary register of Hebrew script used in the Near East and North Africa and up to the Iberian Peninsula was based on the script variety developed in the chancelleries of the Talmudic academies in Iraq. By the late 10th century, this script had spread to the diaspora communities over which the Iraqi Geonim extended their control and with which they maintained active epistolary exchange. The chancery script of the Babylonian Geonim was devised for letters which were sent as far as Egypt, Tunisia, Spain and even northern France. This script had a double function: it was economical but also clear, elegant and distinctive. The economy of space and time in writing was achieved by the reduction of the horizontal strokes and the resulting predominance of vertical movements, the reduction of the number of strokes, the reduction of the size of letters, the rounded movements and finally a few ligatures. The salient morphological feature of this documentary script is the

skills and external conditions: body position, writing material and implements). But a particularly important factor is the writing behaviour that the scribe has learned in the past and applies in a quasi-automatic way.

kappa shape of the *aleph*, which goes on to appear in almost all documentary and cursive registers of Hebrew script. The speed of writing, however, did not prevent the letters from displaying a decorum worthy of the Rabbinic scholarly leaders.⁴⁰ Functional, but also a mark of prestige, the chancellery script was imitated and used in the diaspora communities for their legal documents and other pragmatic writings.

The Iraqi chancellery script was the model for the script of the Maghrebi merchants, but this script also possesses novel cursive features, which, as we shall see, reflect the impact of the ductus and form of contemporary Arabic characters. The earliest evidence of the Maghrebi script stems from Tunisia in the early 11th century. It is constituted by a corpus of letters preserved in the Cairo Genizah, written by merchants who were involved in international trade between Spain, North Africa, Sicily and Egypt, and from there further east to Abbasid Iraq and Iran on the silk road and, in the 12th century, southwards to Yemen and India. The influence of the script of the Babylonian Geonim on the Maghrebi script reflects the close and well-attested links between Maghrebi merchants and the Rabbinic yeshivot in Iraq.

Derived from the Babylonian chancellery style, the script of the merchants' letters nonetheless served a different function. Epistolary exchange was the backbone of international trade. Letters were not only essential for conveying vital information, but played a cohesive role by maintaining close ties between the members of the trading network.⁴¹ The letters they exchanged in great quantities needed to be written fast.⁴² The Genizah letter T-S 8J28.12, written in the early 11th century by Moshe ben Shmuel ibn Jāmi' in Gabes in Tunisia to the merchant potentate and scholar Joseph ibn 'Awkal in Fustat repeats three times that the letter was written in a hurry.⁴³ The writer explains that his previous communication, accompanied by sums of money for the Babylonian Gaon Hai son of Sherira, to be transmitted through the intermediary of Joseph ibn 'Awkal of Fustat, was sent in an equally hurriedly manner, because the sender had to take advantage of a merchant caravan passing through Gabes on its way to Fustat. The Maghrebi merchant travelling with the caravan to whom the money was entrusted, Shmuel ben Abraham al-Tāhirtī, could not stop for longer in Gabes, because he wanted to reach the next stop before the Shabbat. Thus, the sending of letters depended on the vicissitudes of passing caravans. No wonder that the merchants needed a script register which allowed for speedy writing.

At the same time as being able to be written quickly, the script the merchants used was legible and immediately recognisable, if not to all potential Jewish readers, at least to the members of their exclusive merchants' network.

⁴⁰ On the script of the Babylonian chancelleries, see Olszowy-Schlanger, 2014.

⁴¹ Goldberg, 2012a; Goldberg, 2012b.

⁴² Wagner, 2017.

⁴³ See Mann, 1931, vol. I, pp. 140–141; Gil, 1997, vol. II, no. 142.

Like the Italian *mercantesca* script of medieval trading republics, the script of the Jewish Maghrebi merchants was a highly cursive and distinctive register with its own identifiable ductus and style.

From North Africa, this script spread to Muslim Spain, where it developed into a fully fledged ‘Sephardi’ cursive which in turn was transferred and further modified in the Christian north of the Iberian Peninsula, and, in the 12th century, spread to southern France and Egypt.

A palaeographical analysis of the 11th century Maghrebi mercantile script (and its Iberian avatars) reveals that some letter forms are reminiscent of the ductus and shapes of the documentary Arabic script that the Jewish merchants certainly knew and practiced. In this respect, three graphic features are particularly relevant: ligatures between letters and between letter components; unprecedented numbers of allographs; and ‘nesting’. The presence of these features is facilitated by the use of a pointed calamus which allows writers to easily trace soft, rounded and looped lines. To illustrate these features, we take as an example manuscript T-S 10J9.26.⁴⁴ This is a Judaeo-Arabic letter of the 1040s, written to Joseph ben Jacob ibn Awkal in Fustat. The letter was written in the chancellery of Abraham ibn ‘Aṭā’, the Nagid (leader) of the Jewish community in Qayrawan, probably by Joseph ben Berakhyah, who was a member of a prominent Qayrawan family and acted as the Nagid’s helper.⁴⁵

3.1 Ligatures

Traditionally, in Hebrew script the letters are written well separated, one from another. In the calligraphic square scripts used in Torah scrolls for liturgical public reading, the distance between the letters in a word should be of a hair’s-breadth (BT Menachot 29b). Such prescriptions do not apply to pragmatic writings, but in most documentary registers, letters in a word are written separately. However, the need to save time and space in some script styles leads to writing letters close together and, when possible, in a single movement, without taking the implement off the support. Some basic ligatures are attested in the chancellery script of the Geonim, such as the nexus of *aleph-lamed* (attested also in the square calligraphic scripts) and *nun* followed by *vav* at the end of words.⁴⁶ It is, however, only in the Maghrebi merchants’ script that ligatures affect a large number of letters and can modify their shapes drastically. The choice of options for the ligatures is graphically and culturally determined. Interestingly, some of the Hebrew ligatures imitate the ductus proper to Arabic script.

⁴⁴ See Gil, 1997, vol. II, no. 163.

⁴⁵ See Gil, 1997, vol. II, no. 146.

⁴⁶ Olszowy-Schlanger, 2014, p. 191.

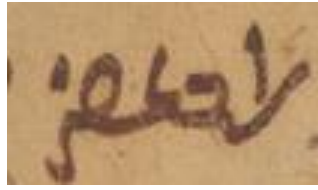


Figure 4. אלבאקי: *aleph-lamed* written as a nexus

To begin with, the Maghrebi script contains the *aleph-lamed* nexus found in other types and registers of medieval Hebrew script, as shown in figure 4. However, the Maghrebi script contains ligatures which are attested for the first time. The most prominent concern allographs of the letters final *he*, final *kaph*, final *pe*, and *qoph* following a letter whose last stroke ends on the base-line (see figures 5a–d respectively). In these ligatures, these letters are written with one stroke of the calamus, an extension of the last stroke of the previous letter. In order to trace these letters with one movement, their morphology is modified: it is loop-shaped. The loop-shaped allographs often appear alongside the more standard forms of the same letters in the same document, as can be seen in figure 6.

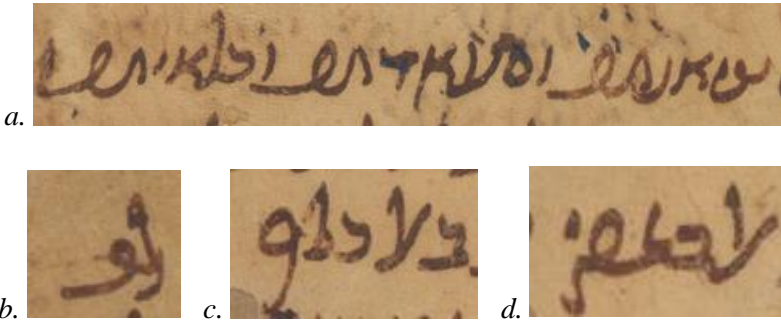


Figure 5. a. ציאנתה וסעאדתה וכלאיתה: the ligature with final *he*; b. לך: the ligature with final *kaph*; c. באלכלף: the ligature with final *pe*; d. אלבאקי: the ligature with *qoph* after a letter that ends on the base-line

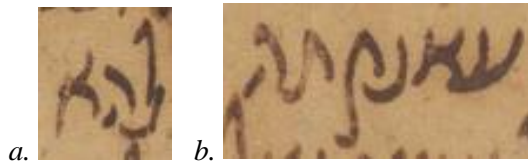


Figure 6. a. להא: non-ligatured *he*; b. עאנקתה: non-ligatured *qoph*

Another frequent ligature involves the letter *yod*. In addition to being written as a small vertical stroke placed at the head-line, *yod* is sometimes written as an extension of the previous stroke, without detaching the calamus from the writing surface, and is thus linked with the preceding letter by the so-called ‘invisible line’ (see figure 7).



Figure 7. a. *šade* followed by *yod*; b. *šade-yod* ligature

3.2 Allographs

The reduction of ‘unproductive’ strokes and movements of the calamus when tracing letters, as seen in the ligatures, is also applied within a letter, where components may be linked in a different place from that required by the usual ductus. The letter *qoph*, for example, is often composed of a lobe to which the descender is attached at the level of the base-line, as in figure 8; whereas in the more usual ductus, also attested in the same document, the descender is attached to the top of the lobe and descends from the head-line, as seen in figure 6b. The usual ductus requires lifting the calamus and moving the hand from the base-line back to the top of the letter and then down again, while the alternative ductus dispenses with this ‘unproductive’ movement. It has already been seen in figure 5d that when ligatured to the previous letter, the *qoph* takes the form of a loop. Thus, in the same document, one finds three different shapes – three allographs – of the letter *qoph*.

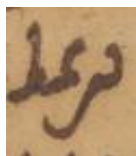


Figure 8. קֹפֶה: a cursive ductus of the *qoph* with its descender attached to the rounded lobe on the level of the base-line

The letter *aleph* has two allographs. One is kappa-shaped, similar to the eastern documentary script inherited from the Iraqi chancellery tradition (see figure 6 for examples). The other, written in a single movement, has a rounded downstroke on the right side of the letter and a base almost parallel to the base-line (see figure 8). The presence of the base allows for this allograph to be attached to the following letter.

Allographs of *aleph* and *qoph* similar to those found in this Maghrebi script are subsequently attested in Sephardi script.

3.3 ‘Nesting’ and writing at different levels of the line

One of the characteristic features of the Maghrebi and also Sephardi Hebrew scripts is a lack of a clearly defined head-line and base-line. Neighbouring

letters are placed at different levels in the line of writing, often one underlying another. This feature is particularly developed in cursive scripts from the Iberian Peninsula from the 13th century onwards, but a modest form of ‘nesting’ is present in the Maghrebi script, as can be seen in figure 9. In that example, the rounded bases of *tav*, *šade* and *nun* project to under the following letter, and in the sequences *šade-mem* and *nun-tav-he*, the long bases cause the shortening of the right-hand downstrokes.

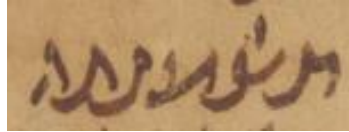


Figure 9. תצ'מנתה: projecting bases of *tav*, *šade* and *nun*, and shortened downstrokes in the sequences *šade-mem* and *nun-tav-he*

3.4 The Maghrebi merchants' script and Arabic script

Together with the soft and rounded lines used in writing the Maghrebi script, ligatures, allographs and nesting all seem to have penetrated Hebrew script from contemporary Arabic graphic culture. Linking the letters in a word and writing them at different levels of the line of writing are obvious features of contemporary Arabic script in both calligraphic and documentary variants. Allographs are the prominent orthographic feature of Arabic, with different forms being written in different, standard places: the beginning, the middle and the end of a word. Whereas in the Hebrew alphabet only five letters have an alternative form when written at the end of the word (*kaph*, *mem*, *nun*, *pe* and *šade*), in the Maghrebi documentary script, like in Arabic script, other letters can be involved in this process. The use of a particular form in a specific place in a word (beginning, middle or end) is not consistent, but the very idea of such a wide scope of allographs parallels Arabic orthography.

Moreover, the ductus of several characters of the Maghrebi script resembles the ductus of Arabic letters. Thus, the way of tracing the ligatured Maghrebi allograph of the *aleph* is identical to the way of tracing Arabic *‘ayin* (see figure 10); the ductus of the *qoph* is that of Arabic *šād* (see figure 11); and the ligatured, looped *he* is traced in the same way as Arabic *waw* (see figure 12).

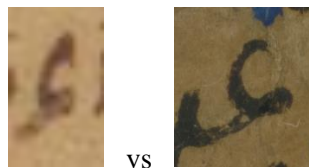


Figure 10. Maghrebi *aleph* versus Arabic *‘ayin* (T-S Ar. 5.1, of 1031)

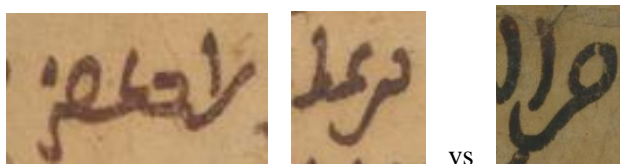


Figure 11. Two forms of Maghrebi *qoph* versus Arabic *šād* (T-S Ar. 5.1)

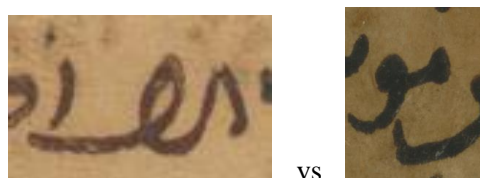


Figure 12. Maghrebi *he* versus Arabic *waw* (T-S Ar. 5.1)

This graphic similarity between the ductus and shape of the Hebrew and Arabic letters is purely external. There is no phonetical or grammatical correspondence between the Hebrew and Arabic letters with confusingly identical ductus. It is not the underlying linguistic or phonetic closeness but rather the spatial relationship between the neighbouring strokes and their frequency in certain graphic configurations that create this identical graphic effect.

4 Conclusion

Just like other members of the Jewish literate elites, including scribes of books copied in both Hebrew and Arabic, the Maghrebi merchants were highly proficient readers and writers of texts in Arabic script. It is this intimate familiarity with the Arabic writing system and the memory and execution of the partly subconscious and automatised writing gestures – together with the script's rapidity and the lack of conscious calligraphic effort on the part of the scribes – which account for the application of the movements of Arabic script when writing in Hebrew. This cognitive process works at the level of an individual writer and would seem to be at the origin of a stylistic development of the Hebrew script, a specific merchants' cursive of the Muslim West.

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Beyond the Leningrad Codex: Samuel b. Jacob in the Cairo Genizah

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Samuel b. Jacob is a scribe of the early 11th century whose name is not as familiar to most Bible scholars as that of his greatest creation, the earliest complete copy of the Hebrew Bible, Russian National Library (RNL) Evr. I B19a, the famous Codex Leningrad of the Firkovich Collection.¹ Samuel b. Jacob's name is etched, emblazoned even, throughout the illuminated carpet pages of the volume, but these conspicuous examples of the medieval artisan's trade are reproduced far less often than the main work itself – the biblical text. The consonants, vowels and accents of RNL Evr. I B19a form the base text for the most widely used of scholarly editions – Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (BHK, in its third edition), the German Bible Society's *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), Dotan's *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* (BHL), the new *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ) and increasingly vital online tools such as the Westminster Leningrad Codex (WLC) – but the name of its scribe is probably unknown to most who use these editions.² From the pristine pages of BHS, BHK, BHL, BHQ or the XML of the WLC it is impossible to get the flavour of the sheer high quality of the original manuscript; it is only when you look at the careful layout of the parchment leaves or the embellishment of the micrography on the carpet pages that you can really appreciate the standard of workmanship of the scribe Samuel b. Jacob. It is fitting, therefore, that such a sumptuous volume should be from a scholarly perspective also the most important codex of the Hebrew Bible that we possess. It is a masterpiece of the medieval Masoretic art.

¹ I am grateful to my colleagues in the Genizah Research Unit, particularly Dr Kim Phillips and Dr Samuel Blapp, for stimulating conversations around the conclusions reached in this paper, as well as for the feedback I received from a number of seminar and conference participants at home and abroad following my presentations on aspects of the texts featured here. The Leningrad Codex itself can now be viewed easily online on the National Library of Israel's Ktiv digital library, in stately black and white digitised microfilm form, with restrictive conditions: <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/en/ManuScript/>, item 151623, accessed 13 December 2017.

² One of many tools now to be found on the internet for biblical scholars, the Westminster Leningrad Codex reproduces the bare text, vowels and accents of B19a in useful XML. It is found at <https://tanach.us/Tanach.xml>; accessed 12 December 2017.

Comparatively little is known about this valuable codex's production however. The name of its scribe is rarely quoted alongside the text he produced, its exact date is uncertain, and even its place of composition often misreported. Little thought has generally been given to who produced such a masterpiece, for whom and why. This is a gap that can be filled, relatively easily, by reading the colophons of the book. Yet, they are rarely reproduced alongside the text, or, when they are published, interest tends to focus on the gold-illuminated carpet page colophons, rather than the highly informative and lengthy plain colophon of the manuscript.³

As I shall show in this paper, other documentary sources can shine a light on the context of the book's production and the background of its talented scribe, but the first page to turn to for anyone who has an interest in the book, its production and its ownership is folio 1 r. of RNL Evr. I B19a, the plain ownership colophon, composed and written by Samuel b. Jacob.

The colophon on f. 1 r. is lengthy, taking up most of the page; it is longer, for instance, than the Moses b. Asher colophon in the Cairo Codex of the Prophets.⁴ Its purpose is principally to indicate the ownership of the volume, as well as to record who copied it, where and when. It also serves as a long encomium on the owner and an opportunity for the scribe to show off his mastery of poetic Hebrew prose. It is worth reading in full not just for the details it preserves, but also for the quality of Samuel's original writing; he was a skilled and versatile scribe.⁵

The plain colophon

RNL Evr. I B19a, Codex Leningrad, folio 1 r.

1. זה המחזור מקרא שלם נכתב ונגמר בנקודות ובמוסרות ומוגה יפה במדינת מצרים :::
2. ונשלם בחדש סיון שלשנת ארבעת אלפים ושבע מאות ושבעים שנה לבריאת עולם
3. והיא שנת אלף וארבע מאות וארבעים וארבעה לגלות המלך יהויכין והיא שנת אלף
4. ושלוש מאות ותשע עשרה שנה למלכות יונים שהיא למנין {שטרות} ולפסיקת הנבואה
5. והיא שנת תשע מאות וארבעים לחרבן בית שני. והיא שנת שלוש מאות ותשעים
6. ותשע למלכות קרן זעירה: מה שזכה מבורך בן יוסף בן נתנאל
7. הידוע בן יזאדא הכהן ועשה אתו לעצמו להגות בו מעמלו ומיגיע כפיו ומיזיעת אפו

³ An exception is Freedman et al., 1998, which reproduces every page of the codex in glorious detail. If you don't already own a copy, however, then you need to be rich to acquire one.

⁴ Though this includes several lines added to the original ownership colophon by a subsequent owner of RNL Evr. I B19a, as seen below.

⁵ A complete edition of the colophon, transcribed and translated into French, can be found in Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, pp. 115–116. For the edition given here, I relied on digital images and the facsimile volume, and my readings differ occasionally from those of Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer.

8. יהי רצון מלפני יהוה שיחזיק אותו בתורתו ויאמץ אותו במצותיו ויחכמו בדקדוק
9. דתו ויאיר עיניו בתעודתו ויזכה לבנין ביתו וינחילו יוצרו שני חיי עולמים חיי העולם
10. הוזה וחי העולם הבא וְיִגַּן ברחמיו הרבים עליו ויפרש עליו ועל זרעו סכת שלום:
11. ויזכה אתו להגות בתורתו תמיד ויזכה לקים כל התורה מקרא ודקדוקי מקרא: ויקים
12. לא ימוש מפיד ומפי זרע ומפי זרע זרעך אמר יהוה מעתה ועד עולם: ויזכה
13. לזרע חי וקים ונכון בתורה ובמצות ובמעשים טובים ולחיים ארכים שאין בהם חטא ועון
14. וינחילו יוצרו חן וחסד והון ועשר וכבוד ועטרת תורה ותפארת תושיה ויזכה להוד [...]]
15. ולהדרה ולעזה ולעזוזה וינצל מכל עברה וצרה וזעם וחרון אף ומכל נזק ים ויבשה ויראה זרע
16. ויאריך ימים כאב המון הזקן אשר בא בימים ויצליח מאד בכל מעשים מכשרים כיחיד אשר
17. מצא מאה שערים ופדות והצלה כִּפְּץ איה השה בניאומים ועשר וכבוד כחון[ז]ה סלם מצב
18. במורא ממקומים וכן וחסד והוד כמבית האסורים יצא למשול בעמים ונסי נסים כשנעשו
19. למוציאם בן בכור מבין ענמים: וברית עולם כנחשבה לו צדקה לדורות עולם וגודל שמע
20. כשעמדו לו שמש וירח ביום מימים: וטוב עם יהוה ועם אנשים כנענה בהקריבו טלה תמים:
21. ובינת דבר כמנגן בשירות בנעימים: וחכמה ושכל כנחכם מכל חכמים: וישועה גדולה
22. כעל פי דברו זרמו גשמים: וינצל מכל צרה וצוקה כְּאִמֵר לא זה הדרך לגדודי ארמים:
23. אמן כן יהי רצון מצור עולמים ושלום רב מבורך זה יועצם ויותמם ויורם ויוחטם ויונעם
24. לעולם אמן ואמן באלהי אמן ומלך עולם: ס:

Addition to the colophon in a later hand⁶

25. קנה זה המצחף כ'ג'ק'מ'ור' אדוננו מצליח הכהן ראש ישיבת גאון יעקב יברכהו אלהינו וישמרהו
26. בר כ'ג'ק'מ'ור' אדוננו שלמה הכהן ראש ישיבת גאון יעקב זלחה"ה נין הגאונים בממונו לנפשו ומאת
27. כ'ג'ק' המשכיל החכם והנבון יוסף הנודע בן כוגך בחדש תמוז שנת אתמ"ו לשטרות האלהים יזכהו להגות

⁶ This purchase and ownership note was added to the colophon in the same style as the original when Mašliḥ Ga'on, head of the Palestinian Academy in the 12th century, purchased the codex. Subsequent owners of codices often write their own colophons, but Mašliḥ added himself to the chain of ownership in the original colophon, probably because of the significance and obvious value of the book. For more on this purchase, and the previous ownership by Ibn Kuchek, see Outhwaite, 2017.

28. בו הוא ובניו וזרעם כל ימיהם לקיים לא ימושו מפיד וג'
 29. חצר מנשה הכהן ביר' יעקב נ"ע חלפון הלוי ביר' מנשה נ"ע חצר דלך לוי
 הלוי בר יפת הלוי נ"ע

1. This codex⁷ of the complete Bible was written, furnished with vocalisation and *masora*,⁸ and carefully checked⁹ in Fustāt.¹⁰
2. And it was completed in the month of Sivan of the year four thousand and seven hundred and seventy of Creation,
3. and which is the year one thousand and four hundred and forty-four of the Exile of King Jehoiachin, and which is the year one thousand
4. and three hundred and nineteen of the Kingdom of the Greeks, which is the reckoning of {documents}¹¹ and of the Ceasing of Prophecy,
5. and which is the year nine hundred and forty of the Destruction of the Second Temple, and which is the year three hundred and ninety-
6. nine of the Kingdom of the Little Horn.¹² This has been rightfully acquired¹³ by Mevoraḳ ben Joseph ben Netan'el

⁷ The word translated as 'codex' is Hebrew מהזור, which has come to mean a prayer-book for the festivals in Modern Hebrew. In its earliest usage, however, it appears to have the sense of 'book, codex' in general, as opposed to *sefer*, which is 'scroll'. On the earliest uses of מהזור in this sense, see Glatzer, 1989, pp. 260–263. It can be found in a number of biblical colophons, including the Moses b. Asher colophon in the Cairo Codex of the Prophets: אני משה בן אשר 'I, Moses b. Asher, have written this codex of scripture'. Others prefer the loan-word *mishaf* (מצהף), Arabic مصحف, *maṣḥaf* or *muṣḥaf*) for the same meaning. Indeed, Samuel himself uses מצהף in the carpet page on f. 474 r. of Leningrad, זה המצהף 'I have written, vocalised and provided the *masora* of this codex' (abbreviating ומסרתי to keep a straight left-hand margin).

⁸ Samuel uses the plural, which he spells with a ך after the initial ך, perhaps reflecting the back pronunciation of the *qameṣ*. It is an unusual spelling that I cannot find replicated elsewhere. I hesitate to suggest it is an error this early in the colophon.

⁹ This is the *huf'al* participle of נגה, 'to check, revise', and refers to authoritative Bibles, those copied or corrected against a certain textual tradition. Yeivin, 1980, p. 138 describes מוגה as "any sort of carefully corrected text". The idea of 'checked' implying 'checked and corrected' texts is present already in the Talmud, e.g. BT Ketubbot 19b ספר שאינו מוגה 'a Torah scroll that has not been checked', which may only be kept for thirty days without having any corrections made. The most accurate translation would perhaps be 'copy-edited' or 'proof-read', but it sounds too anachronistic in the context of 11th century Fustāt.

¹⁰ Some other translations of the opening of the colophon read 'Cairo' – e.g. Lebedev in Freedman et al., 1998, p. xxii; Würthwein, 2014, p. 254 – but Samuel is definitely referring to Fustāt. The phrase occurs, for instance, in a divorce deed, CUL T-S 8.154, in which a man from Alexandria (*No Amon*) divorces his wife from Fustāt (*Medinat Miṣrayim*) in Taṭay in 1052. Stern, 2017, p. 199 suggests that RNL Evr. I B19a was written "probably in the land of Israel", but that is at odds with Samuel's statement in the colophon.

¹¹ The word שטרות 'documents' has been erased in the text, perhaps deliberately.

¹² This is the Hijra, the Islamic era, and the term 'little horn' is a belittling epithet for Islam derived from Daniel 7:8, "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn".

¹³ The verb זכה has a range of meanings, and is usually used in the sense of 'to be worthy of' in blessings and other pieces of laudatory prose (as often, for instance, in this colophon). But it may also have the technical sense of rightful ownership or possession – e.g. Mišna Bava Meši'a

7. who is known as Ibn Yazdād ha-Kohen, and he had it made for himself,¹⁴ to study it, out of [the proceeds of] his own labour, the toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow.
8. May it be the will of the LORD¹⁵ to encourage him through His Torah, to strengthen him through His commandments and to make him wise through the fine points of
9. His law. And may He give light to his eyes through His testimony. And may he award him with the [re]building of His house. And may his Creator bestow upon him the life of two worlds: the life of this world,
10. and the life of the world to come. May He protect¹⁶ him with His abundant mercy and may He spread over him and over his offspring a Booth of Peace.
11. And may He grant him to always study His Torah, and may He grant the fulfilling of the Torah, scripture and fine points of scripture.¹⁷ May He establish
12. “they shall not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children, or from your children’s children, said the LORD, from now and forever” [Isaiah 59:21]. And may he enjoy
13. offspring living, enduring and secure in Torah and in the commandments and in good deeds, and long¹⁸ life without sin or transgression.

1:3, and he said “I have acquired it”, then he has acquired it’ – which is probably also the case here in this ownership colophon. Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, p. 115 translate it as ‘a eu le mérite de faire’, taking ועשה (line 7) as subordinate to זכה. The same coordinate phrase occurs in the ownership colophon of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, ‘which is owned by Ya’beš b. Solomon – his rest be easy – and he made it ...’.

¹⁴ Literally, of course, ‘he made it for himself’, but the sense is that he commissioned it, rather than bought or acquired it otherwise. Exactly the same phrase occurs in the Ya’beš b. Solomon colophon of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, lines 2–4, ועשה אותו לעצמו להגות בו מעמלו ומיגיע, כפיו ומזיעת אפו. Note that the Cairo colophon uses the expected ז(י)עה, ‘sweat’, appropriated from Genesis 3:19, whereas Samuel’s מזיעת is, at best, a hybrid form from זיע, Ezekiel 44:18, and זעה.

¹⁵ Samuel uses the full form of the divine name, which is unusual for a piece of non-biblical prose. The Cairo Codex of the Prophets ownership colophon uses an abbreviated form in the phrase לזהות ביועם יי ‘to behold the beauty of the L[ord]’ (Psalms 27:4), as does the colophon of RNL Evr. II B17, אל י[ה]שב לי יי עון, ‘let the L[ord] not impute me blame’ (a reworking of Psalms 32:2), which is dated 929 CE.

¹⁶ The vocalisation on יגן appears to be original, added by Samuel when he wrote it and highlighting a difficult form that occurs only three times in the Bible (in Isaiah 31:5 and twice in Zechariah). Sporadic vocalisation in otherwise unvocalised Medieval Hebrew texts often occurs on obscure biblical forms or ambiguous words; see Outhwaite, 2000, pp. 6–7.

¹⁷ The term מקרא often implies the “study of scripture” and the phrase דקדוקי המקרא has the sense of “the fine points of scripture as established by detailed investigation” in early grammatical or Masoretic works; see Khan, 2000, pp. 14–15, 17–19.

¹⁸ Samuel employs a number of defective forms, such as אר(י)כים (line 13), א(ו)תו (lines 7, 11) and ק(י)ם (line 13), suggestive of a deliberately biblicising style to his prose here.

14. And may his Creator award him grace, kindness, wealth, riches, honour, and a crown of Torah and a diadem of success. And may he be granted the glory of the [...],¹⁹
15. its majesty, its strength and its might. May he be saved from all fury, hostility, indignation and wrath, and from all harm by sea and dry land. May he see offspring
16. and may He lengthen his days like the “Father of Many”,²⁰ who was old and stricken in age,²¹ and grant him great success in all proper deeds, like the only one²² who
17. found “one hundred measures”,²³ and redemption and success, like the one who spoke²⁴ the words “where is the sheep?”,²⁵ and wealth and honour like the one who had a vision of a ladder set up²⁶
18. in the most dreadful²⁷ of places, and grace and kindness and splendour like the one who came out of the prison to rule over people,²⁸ and miraculous miracles like those that were performed
19. for those who brought out the firstborn son from among the Ananites.²⁹ And an everlasting covenant like the one who was reckoned for righteousness for eternal generations,³⁰ and greatness of reputation
20. like the one³¹ for whom the sun and moon stood still on one particular day. And eminence with the LORD and with men, like the one³² who was answered when he sacrificed a whole lamb.

¹⁹ Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, p. 115 read *ויוכה להודה* and translate it as ‘qu’il ait le mérite de sa grâce’, but unless it is a highly elongated ה at the end of the line, another word should follow להוד.

²⁰ The patriarch Abraham, from Genesis 17:5.

²¹ Genesis 24:1.

²² Isaac, from Genesis 22:2.

²³ Isaac, from Genesis 26:12.

²⁴ Samuel b. Jacob vocalises כָּפַץ because of the unusual form and syntax. It is commonplace in classical Hebrew *piyyuṭ*, however, reflecting a *paytan*-like use of the preposition -כ with a finite verb, together with the apocopation of a final-*he* verb (פצה > פּרץ in fact) in the 3rd person masculine singular suffix conjugation. This particular verb, פָּץ, is very common in Hebrew poetry of the Byzantine period; see Rand, 2006, pp. 136–138, 422–427. Another example of *paytan*-like language is גִּיאוּמִים, a plural of גִּאֹם, where the *yod* perhaps reflects a pronunciation *niyūmīm*, with a glide replacing the glottal stop. The extensive use of biblical allusion in this colophon is also typical of poetic language. It suggests that Samuel was probably quite familiar with *piyyuṭ* and, as a professional scribe, he may well have copied poetry or liturgy as well as Bible codices in order to make ends meet.

²⁵ Isaac, from Genesis 22:7.

²⁶ Jacob, from Genesis 28:12.

²⁷ Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, p. 115 reconstruct א[במור]מ מקומים ‘dans le plus redoutable des lieux’. The allusion is to Genesis 28:17, מה גורא המקום הזה ‘how dreadful is this place?’. I think the reading במורא is visible, but it could conceivably be בגורא.

²⁸ Joseph, alluding to Ecclesiastes 4:14.

²⁹ Through synecdoche, the Egyptians; Genesis 10:13 and 1 Chronicles 1:11.

³⁰ Phineas, from Psalms 106:31, though Samuel has צדקה for the Psalmist’s צדקה.

³¹ Joshua, from Joshua 10:12–13.

³² Samuel, from 1 Samuel 7:9.

21. And the understanding of matters like the player³³ of songs in delight. And wisdom and understanding like the one who was wiser than all wise men.³⁴ And a great salvation
22. like the one on whose word the rains poured down.³⁵ And may he be saved from all distress and anguish, like the one³⁶ who said “This is not the way” to the bands of Aramaeans.³⁷
23. Amen. So may it be the will of the Rock of Ages. Great peace. This Mevoraḳ – may he be made strong and upright, be raised up, calm and pleasant.
24. For ever, amen and amen, by the God of Truth and the Eternal King :o:³⁸

Lines 1 to 24 are the original ownership colophon of the codex. A further note of ownership was added when the book changed hands in the 12th century.

25. The honourable, great, holy, our master and our teacher our lord Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen Head of the Academy of the Pride of Jacob purchased this book – may our God bless him and protect him –
26. son of the honourable, great, holy, our master and our teacher our lord Solomon ha-Kohen Head of the Academy of the Pride of Jacob – may his memory be for a blessing for the life of the next world³⁹ – descendant of *ge'onim*, with his own money for himself from
27. the honourable, great, holy, the wise and distinguished teacher Joseph who is known as Ibn Kuchek, in the month of Tammuz, the year 1446 of Documents. May God allow him to study
28. it, he, his children and their offspring, all their days to fulfil [the commandment] “they shall not depart from your mouth, etc.”.⁴⁰
29. Attending, Manasseh ha-Kohen son of the scholar Jacob – his rest be in Eden. Ḥalfon ha-Levi son of the scholar Manasseh – his rest be in Eden. Attending it, Levi ha-Levi son of Japheth ha-Levi – his rest be in Eden.⁴¹

The original colophon is in the hand of Samuel b. Jacob himself. This is clear from a comparison of the handwriting with the rest of the manuscript, and can also be seen from the use at the end of the colophon of his distinctive textual marker :o: (see figure 1), which he uses to delimit Masoretic sections

³³ David, from 1 Samuel 18:10 and elsewhere.

³⁴ Solomon, alluding to 1 Kings 3:12.

³⁵ Elijah, from 1 Kings 18:41–45.

³⁶ Elisha, from 2 Kings 6:19.

³⁷ 2 Kings 6:23.

³⁸ Samuel's siglum :o: marks the end of the original colophon.

³⁹ An abbreviation of זכרונו לברכה להי העולם הבא.

⁴⁰ Isaiah 59:21.

⁴¹ These three are witnesses to the sale, and all had links to Maṣliaḥ Ga'on and the Palestinian Yešiva.

throughout the *masora magna* of the book (and which also occurs in the illuminated carpet pages). Different copyists of the medieval Masoretic Bible use different sigla, such as simple circles or more elaborate combinations of circle and lines, but Samuel's is rare enough – though not unique to him – that we can with confidence take this as his own work here too. Indeed, there is no reason to doubt it.

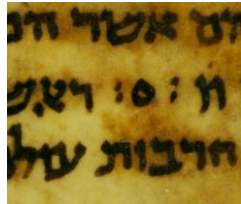


Figure 1. Samuel b. Jacob's distinctive siglum is used to divide Masoretic notes in another codex of the Torah that he copied, which now exists as scattered leaves in the Cairo Genizah (detail of CUL T-S A3.35 verso)⁴²

From the colophon, we can see that Samuel was working in Fustāt at this stage of his life. In using *מדינת מצרים* *medinat miṣrayim* instead of 'Fustāt' – פסטאט or מצר (Arabic, *miṣr*) – Samuel is endeavouring to use only Hebrew vocabulary in his colophon. This is a feature typical of Hebrew high prose style of this era, which tends to avoid using foreign terms or toponyms if vocabulary from the Bible can be used instead.⁴³ Fustāt was, since the Fāṭimid founding of Cairo, no longer the capital of Islamic Egypt. It remained, however, the administrative centre for decades after Cairo's emergence. For the Jews, it was the social, economic and cultural centre of Egypt.⁴⁴ Consequently, a scribe could expect to find commissions for scribal work in Fustāt from among the elite of the city, its community leaders and merchant princes.

Samuel gives the month of completion of his work as the Jewish month of Sivan (May–June), and then – to lend it more weight and significance – the year according to five different systems of reckoning, not all Jewish. They are: 4770 of the Creation (לבריאת עולם), which equates to 1010 CE; 1444 of the Exile of King Jehoiachin (לגלות המלך יהויכין), which is in the range 1006–1014 CE;⁴⁵ 1319 of the Seleucid Era (למלכות יונים שהיא למנין שטרות), which equates to 1008 CE; 940 of the Destruction of the Second Temple (להרבן בית שני),

⁴² Image reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

⁴³ As Golb, 1965, pp. 269–270 describes it, "The Jews probably began using Biblical Hebrew names for Egyptian cities during this period of nationalistic reorientation [i.e. after the revolt of the 2nd century CE] ... This practice of giving Hebrew names to Egyptian cities was evidently kept up after the arrival of Islam and through the beginning of the Fatimid period." On the avoidance of loan-words in Hebrew of this period, see Outhwaite, 2000, pp. 98–99.

⁴⁴ Bareket, 2017, pp. 88–89.

⁴⁵ The exile took place in 597 BCE; see Freedman, 1992, s.v. Jehoiachin. Rabbinic sources date it to 430 BCE, but it can be dated further back in 437/8 BCE in medieval documents (Olszowy-Schlanger, 1998, pp. 162–163). It's an important event in Jewish chronology, because it helps to set the date for the destruction of the First Temple eleven years later.

which is in the range 1008–1010 CE;⁴⁶ 399 of the Hijra (קרן זעירה), which is 1009 CE. Which to follow? The Jews in Egypt were more accustomed to using the Seleucid or Creation dates than others.⁴⁷ The Seleucid is probably reliable, as it is so commonly used. A date of 1008–1009 CE seems reasonable, as it comes closest to the Seleucid, Destruction and Hijra date ranges. We should not expect absolute calendrical exactitude in a pre-modern text, particularly when the writer was probably not a specialist in the discipline. Egregious errors of dating can be easily found in Genizah legal documents, such as a court record from Fustāt where the writer has recorded the date as 4994 of Creation (ד' אלפים ותשע מאות ותשעים וארבע), when he probably meant to write the year 4794 (ושבע מאות), that is, 1034 CE – an error of 200 years!⁴⁸

Most interesting is the fact that the colophon uses all five systems of dating, including the Exile of King Jehoiachin, which is a system used mainly in Karaite legal documents.⁴⁹ Samuel means to be comprehensive in his colophon, but in adding the reckoning according to the Jehoiachin exile, he is probably conforming to the affiliation of the owner of the Bible.

Mevoraḳ b. Joseph b. Netan 'el known as Ibn Yazdād ha-Kohen was the commissioning owner of RNL Evr. I B19a, as not only the plain colophon (f. 1 r.) but also a number of the carpet pages make richly clear (e.g., ff. 474 r., 475 v. and 478 v., among others).⁵⁰ The family was originally from Persia: the patronymic Ibn Yazdād is of Persian origin, meaning 'God has given', that is, 'God's gift'. An Ibn Yazdād, perhaps Mevoraḳ's father, appears in commercial correspondence from the Genizah early in the 11th century, whence it seems he is based in Egypt and plays a role in Mediterranean trade, associating with the great merchant Joseph b. Jacob Ibn 'Awkal.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Although the destruction of the Second Temple took place in 70 CE, the calculations of the elapsed time differ in Jewish sources, with the result that the reckoning from the Destruction effectively covers a range of several years, 68–70 CE; see Friedman, 1980, vol. I, pp. 104–106.

⁴⁷ Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. I, p. 355. The Seleucid system of dating, 'the Era of Documents' or 'of the Greeks', was the preferred system of the Babylonian Jews and, given their cultural dominance, it became common in documents from the Genizah too; see Friedman, 1980, p. 106. The suggestion in Würthwein, 2014, p. 254 that the Hijra date "is probably the most reliable because the writer lived in an Islamic country" goes too far. Hijra dating, though found in Genizah texts (and, indeed, see the document discussed below), is used far less than the Jewish systems of Creation and the Seleucid Era.

⁴⁸ CUL T-S 8J6.8. The handwriting and language are clearly of the 11th century. The error was probably not strictly mathematical or calendrical, but scribal: anticipating the תשעים a few words later, he wrote תשע instead of שבע.

⁴⁹ And mainly, it seems, in Karaite deeds from Ramla; Olszowy-Schlanger, 1998, pp. 162–163.

⁵⁰ Although Samuel spells Ibn Yazdād's name יזדאד on most occasions, he does write it once אזדאד, in the central text on the carpet page f. 474 r. Medieval Jewish writers like variety, and will often switch between the Hebrew and Arabic versions of people's names in the same document, but given that Samuel spells it יזדאד everywhere else, it is probably an unfortunate error by the scribe, which is explainable perhaps by the unfamiliarity of the name.

⁵¹ It could alternatively be our Mevoraḳ himself. He is mentioned in a letter sent from Tunisia to Ibn 'Awkal in Fustāt around 1000 CE, "What disturbed me most was your failure to pay to Ibn Yazdād and Salāma, the son-in-law of Furayj, the sum that I asked you to pay them" (translation from Goitein, 1973, p. 31). Ibn 'Awkal's roots also lay in Persia.

The owner Mevoraḳ was therefore himself probably a major merchant, and had accumulated both personal wealth and social status. Evidence of this, beyond his commissioning of an expensive codex, is that he was appointed around 1019 CE to oversee the two supervisors of an inheritance, ensuring the safeguarding of a substantial sum in trade goods for the minor son of a Jewish merchant.⁵² The Genizah has preserved a letter that Mevoraḳ wrote in his role as overseer to one of the deceased merchant's business partners.⁵³ Further correspondence, written by the supervisors themselves, reveals Mevoraḳ's name in Arabic to be Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Mubārak ibn Yūsuf ibn Yazdād.⁵⁴ Goitein believes that Mevoraḳ was a Karaite; Bareket, who also wrote about the case, suggests that there is not enough evidence to be sure.⁵⁵ A Karaite legal deed from 1004 CE, however, shows that Joseph Ibn Yazdād, Mevoraḳ's father, also held a position of trust in Karaite society, as there he is named as one of three supervisors of a Persian Karaite merchant's accumulated possessions.⁵⁶ This strongly suggests that the Ibn Yazdād family were themselves Persian Karaites, and it explains therefore Samuel b. Jacob's use of the very rare reckoning from the Exile of King Jehoiachin in the ownership colophon.

Samuel's expertise as a scribe of the Bible is evident on every page of RNL Evr. I B19a, from the careful layout to the micrographic conceits of the carpet pages.⁵⁷ We know from the several colophons that he copied the text and also added the vocalisation and the *masora*, performing alone a task often carried out by a scribe (*sofer*) and a punctuator (*naqdan*) working together.⁵⁸ Moreover, he appears to have produced, at the very least, the micrography on the carpet pages, and may well have added the gold illumination to them too.⁵⁹ It seems that this was a remarkable piece of solo entrepreneurship, producing single-handedly a luxury edition of the Hebrew Bible. Samuel's client, Mevoraḳ, would have wanted his personal wealth to be reflected in the quality of

⁵² A number of letters and legal documents from this case have been recovered in the Genizah. It eventually reached litigation in the Muslim and Jewish courts when the orphan came to his majority and purposefully sought to recover his father's assets. See Bareket, 1998, pp. 124–136; Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. III, pp. 293–295.

⁵³ CUL T-S 10J30.7.

⁵⁴ CUL T-S 16.27.

⁵⁵ Bareket, 1998, p. 125 n. 8.

⁵⁶ CUL T-S 16.171.

⁵⁷ Clearly inspired by Islamic book decoration, Samuel's carpet pages are a remarkable artistic achievement. Stern, 2017, p. 84 has described them as “among the most complex in the history of the Jewish book”.

⁵⁸ He states this explicitly in the plain colophon, and the colophons on ff. 474 r. and 479 r. It is not unusual for a single scribe to produce the different text layers of a Masoretic Bible, e.g. RNL Evr. II B39, which was written, vocalised and provided with *masora* by Joseph b. Jacob the Maghribi, or RNL Evr. II B115, which was written and vocalised by one Moses b. Hillel.

⁵⁹ The micrography is in a hand very similar to Samuel's and the sections, biblical verses and so on are often delimited by his :o: siglum, or various elaborations of it. Furthermore, one can take חקקתי in the micrographic colophon on f. 477 r. as referring to the creation of the micrographic embellishments themselves: יחיה אני שמואל חקקתי למבורך יחיה 'I Samuel have inscribed this for Mevoraḳ – long may he live'.

the volume: the care taken in its copying, its size, its embellishment. There is no doubt it would have been a costly book to produce – in raw materials alone it would have taken at least 120 sheep for the 491 leaves.⁶⁰ There is no record in the colophons of how much the volume cost, but we are fortunate to have a record of Samuel's later scribal activity that shows how costly it might have been.

CUL T-S 10J5.15 is a legal document in Judaeo-Arabic from the Cairo Genizah on the terms of payment for copying books of the Hebrew Bible. It was edited in full by Elinoar Bareket in her 1995 book *Jewish Leadership in Fustat*, where she notes that it was an agreement with a scribe by the name of Samuel b. Jacob.⁶¹ The document is dated 1021 CE, and Samuel was to be paid twenty-five dinars by Salāma ibn Sa'īd ibn Ṣaḡīr for copying אלתמניה אלתמניה 'eight books of the Prophets and the Writings', including all the vocalisation and *masora* (ונקטהא ומאסרתהא). Not only was he to do all this on his own, but, showing the same entrepreneurship that produced Codex Leningrad, he would also bind and cover the book. It was to be copied in the same style as a Torah in the possession of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥujayj, which Samuel had previously produced, and Ibrāhīm would receive two dinars from this agreement.

Agreement between Samuel b. Jacob and Salāma ibn Sa'īd ibn Ṣaḡīr
CUL T-S 10J5.15

1. בשם יי
2. יקול שמואל בן יעקוב אני ואקפת סלאמה בן סעיד בן צגיר עלי
3. נסך אלתמניה אספאר אלנבי ואלכתיב בכטהא ונקטהא ומאסרתהא
4. וכתב שרוט פי אול כל גזו ופי אכרה ותגלידהא ועמל זנפילגה
5. להא ויכון דלך עלי אלנמודג אלדי ענד אבו אסחק אברהים [בן]
6. חגיג והי אלתורה אלדי נסכתהא לה לא זאיד ענהא ולא נאקץ
7. [כ]מא תקדם בה אלשרט ואלאגרה פי דלך עלי גמיע מא תקד[ם]
8. בה אלוץף כ'ה דינארא גיאדא ואזנה
9. קבצ'ת מן דלך דינארין ודלך עלי <יד> סידי אבו נצר סלאמה
10. בן סעיד בן צגיר איידה אללה והו אלמתולי לנסך הדה אלאגרה
11. לאבי אסחק אברהים בן חגיג איידה אללה
12. ודלך ללנצף מן שעבאן סנה אתני עשר וארבע מאיה

⁶⁰ This is assuming that one complete sheepskin gives two bifolia of the quarto size used in RNL Evr. I B19a. There are 491 leaves in the book, arranged in quinions (quires of five bifolia, as is standard in eastern Jewish manuscripts), though the volume has been subject to later repair that has disordered some of the last leaves; see Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, p. 114.

⁶¹ Bareket, 1995, pp. 204–205, with a translation into Hebrew. She did not make the connection with the scribe of RNL Evr. I B19a, which is understandable since she is an historian, not a biblical scholar. It was Y. Ofer who first made the link with the scribe of the Leningrad Codex in his study of Samuel b. Jacob's copy of Sa'adya's *Tafsīr*, noting the fact in a footnote; see Ofer, 1999, p. 197 n. 23. I first discussed this document and its wider significance for the background of Codex Leningrad in Outhwaite, 2016.

1. In the name of the LORD
2. Samuel b. Jacob says: “Behold, I hereby make an agreement with Salāma ibn Sa‘īd ibn Ṣaḡīr concerning
3. a copy of the eight books of the Prophets and the Writings,⁶² with its script, its vowel points and its *masora*,⁶³
4. and the signs at the beginning and end of each section,⁶⁴ and its binding and the manufacture of the case⁶⁵
5. for it. And it should be according to the exemplar⁶⁶ that is in Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn
6. Ḥujayj’s possession – that is the Torah that I copied for him – nothing more and nothing less,
7. according to what is stipulated in this agreement. And the fee for this for all that is stipulated
8. in this specification is 25 dinars of full weight.
9. I have received from this two dinars, which came from the hand of my lord Abū Naṣr Salāma
10. ibn Sa‘īd ibn Ṣaḡīr – God give him strength – who is directing the copying. This fee is
11. for Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥujayj – God give him strength.
12. And this is Mid-Ša‘bān, the year 412.⁶⁷

⁶² The Hebrew Bible is traditionally divided into the Torah (Genesis–Deuteronomy), the Prophets and the Writings (the Hagiographa). The Prophets can be divided into the four books of the Former Prophets (Joshua–Kings) and the four books of the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve).

⁶³ This division of the three main tasks of the biblical copyist – the script, vowels and *masora* – is reflected in many of Samuel’s colophons, e.g. RNL Evr. I B19a f. 479 r., שמואל בן יעקב כתב, ונקד ומסר ‘Samuel b. Jacob wrote, vocalised and provided the *masora*’.

⁶⁴ Bareket, 1995, p. 204 understands these signs as denoting the open and closed sections of the text, the *parašiyot petuḥot* and *setumot*: נראה שהכוונה לסימן הפרשיות הסגורות והפתוחות. The Arabic word is جزء ‘section, part’. This could refer to the open and closed paragraphs (*parašiyot* or *pisqot*), but perhaps refers to the individual biblical books; i.e. the note of the total number of verses found after each book in Codex Leningrad. Or maybe it refers to the physical parts of the volume, the quires (though in Arabic this is usually *karārīs*). Quires have signs at the beginning and end of each part, to ensure the volume is bound in the correct order. In Codex Leningrad, the quires are marked with a catchword at the end of each and a quire number at the beginning: e.g. f. 10 v., the last page of the first quire, has the catchword מַה, anticipating the first word on f. 11 r., the first page of the second quire, numbered ב in the top margin. All the quires in the book are so marked. Given that the instructions in the agreement have already referred to the *masora*, which probably include the *parašiyot* and other paratextual features, it seems logical that this separate instruction may denote something more to do with the manufacture, binding and completion of the volume, i.e. the correct ordering of the quires.

⁶⁵ Bareket, 1995, p. 204 cannot read the last word clearly and guesses ארפיליה, but it is to be read זנפיליה, Arabic *zanfalīja* (though here either with metathesis of the vowels, or *yod* denoting *‘imāla*), meaning a rigid case for a book, a slipcase; see Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. IV, pp. 387 n. 191, 463 n. 229.

⁶⁶ ‘Exemplar, pattern, model’, (نموذج) נמודג, is a Persian loan-word into Arabic, perhaps reflecting the eastern origins of this type of scribal practice, copying from model codices.

⁶⁷ The night of 14/15 Ša‘bān, which equals November 1021 CE. As this is purely a financial agreement and in Judaeo-Arabic, the parties use the Hijra reckoning.

Like Mevoraḳ b. Joseph a decade or more before, Abū Naṣr Salāma ibn Saʿīd ibn Ṣaḡīr commissioned a copy of the Masoretic Bible, presumably for his own use. While we do not today possess a Bible with an ownership colophon for Salāma, Samuel copied at least one other partial copy of the Bible like this. The manuscript described by Richard Gottheil as number 27 in his famous 1905 article “Some Hebrew manuscripts in Cairo” is a copy of the Former Prophets with a colophon by Samuel b. Jacob. Gottheil 27 seems to have been written for a Yaḥyā b. Jacob.⁶⁸

Salāma ibn Saʿīd ibn Ṣaḡīr (Arabic, ‘little’), or Solomon b. Saʿadya in the Hebrew version of his name, was a leading financier and philanthropist in Fuṣṭāṭ in the first quarter of the 11th century.⁶⁹ He was a respected figure, serving as a trustee of orphans and as a fundraiser for the Jerusalem Yešiva.⁷⁰ Unlike Mevoraḳ, he was almost certainly a Rabbanite and not a Karaite, as his connections to the Jerusalem Academy suggest. Nevertheless, as a man of substance – in social, political and economic terms – he had a desire to possess a fine copy of the Bible, produced by one of Fuṣṭāṭ’s leading scribes.

The sum of money to be paid for producing this copy of the Prophets and Writings is considerable, 25 dinars. Goitein states that the average price of a complete codex of the Bible in the Classical Genizah Period was 20 dinars.⁷¹ He further estimates that an average monthly income might have been 2 dinars, and a yearly rent on a middle-class home, 5–6 dinars.⁷² Thus 25 dinars for Samuel’s partial copy of the Bible seems like a suitably high price for what presumably would have been a luxurious volume, like Leningrad.⁷³ Salāma ibn Saʿīd probably kept the Bible for himself, rather than dedicating it to a synagogue, as often occurred, since around 1110 CE we find, in a letter by Nathan ha-Kohen b. Mevoraḳ from Ashqelon, that a widow, known as ‘the daughter of Ibn Ṣaḡīr’ (בנת בן צגיר), had a number of biblical codices in her

⁶⁸ For the colophon of Gottheil 27, see Gottheil, 1905, pp. 636–637. A further description of the manuscript is in Beit-Arié, Sirat and Glatzer, 1997, p. 118. This manuscript is now in private hands.

⁶⁹ CUL T-S 18J2.16 is a deed written in 1026 by Abraham the son of the Palestinian Gaʿon Solomon b. Judah appointing a guardian for an orphan. Salāma ibn Ṣaḡīr is named as overseer of the guardianship. Since the deed is in Hebrew, Salāma is introduced with the Hebrew version of his name: שלמה בר סעדיה הידוע בן צגיר ‘Solomon b. Saʿadya who is known as Ibn Ṣaḡīr’.

⁷⁰ Gil, 1992, pp. 254, 428, 602, 609. The Genizah has preserved documents referring to him from the period 1021–1026 CE, though he was possibly still active in the 1060s; see CUL T-S 10J20.13, edited in Gil, 1997, vol. IV, pp. 673–675.

⁷¹ Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. I, p. 259. This is perhaps at the more luxury end of the market; Gil, 1992, p. 234 suggests 12 to 13 dinars.

⁷² Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. I, p. 358, vol. IV, pp. 94–95.

⁷³ We know how magnificent RNL Evr. I B19a looks, but we can also see that Samuel put a similar effort into his separate books of the prophets. Gottheil 27 is described as “magnificently written in beautiful characters, three columns to the page, plentiful Masora” and it is embellished with “Bible verses in letters of heroic size and in golden rims” and “gold borders”; see Gottheil, 1905, pp. 636–637.

possession, including a volume containing the Former Prophets and a volume containing the Latter Prophets and Writings.⁷⁴

In the agreement, Samuel testifies that he produced a Torah for Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥujayj, and that this will be the model for the Prophets and Writings that he will produce for Salāma ibn Sa‘īd. Perhaps Salāma had seen the copy produced for Ibrāhīm and decided that he wanted one as magnificent for himself. Certainly Salāma and Ibrāhīm knew each other, as both were major figures in Fustāt: Salāma was a money changer with links to the Palestinian Academy in Jerusalem and Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥujayj, known usually by his Hebrew name Abraham ha-Kohen b. Haggai, was a *parnas* – an administrator of the public charity – for the Palestinian leadership in the town.⁷⁵ In this role he was known for helping newcomers, visitors and scholars, a fact that is celebrated in public acclamation of his name.⁷⁶ The agreement delivers two dinars of Samuel’s fee into the hands of Abraham. Perhaps this was a fee for the use of the book, or maybe it was money that Samuel owed to Abraham and was thereby paying off.

It is quite possible that Samuel owed a debt to Abraham ha-Kohen b. Haggai, though maybe more moral than financial, since we find him seeking his help in a letter that was probably sent some years before.

CUL T-S 10J10.4 is a letter from Samuel b. Jacob to Abraham b. Haggai seeking his charitable support. This document was edited in full by the historian Mark Cohen in 2005, who stated that Samuel was writing to Abraham “supplicating his help and appealing to his reputation as a generous benefactor”.⁷⁷ He inferred that the writer was a “recent arrival” and that his use of Hebrew suggested “that he hailed from a European country”. Like Bareket, Cohen did not recognise the name of Samuel b. Jacob as that of the scribe of Codex Leningrad. But the combination of ‘Samuel b. Jacob’ (in itself, not a common combination of names in the Genizah world) and ‘Abraham b. Haggai’, as found in the legal agreement, ensures that we are dealing with that very man here.

Letter from Samuel b. Jacob to Abraham b. Haggai

CUL T-S 10J10.4

1. בשם רחום
2. ויאחזו צדיק דרכו וטהר יד' וג'

⁷⁴ Now damaged, they are sold for 12 dinars. Gil points to the possible connection between her ownership of the volumes and the deed T-S 10J5.15; see Gil, 1992, p. 234–235 and n. 8. The letter is CUL T-S 10J5.21, edited in Gil, 1983, vol. III, pp. 484–486.

⁷⁵ Gil, 1992, p. 613. A letter from the Palestinian Ga’on Solomon b. Judah is addressed to him in Hebrew and Arabic script, giving both the Hebrew and Arabic versions of his name side by side; Bodleian Libraries MS Heb. C.28.44, edited in Gil, 1983, vol. II, pp. 280–283.

⁷⁶ For instance, the letter edited by Mann, which tells Abraham that the congregation in the synagogue at Damascus blessed him over the Torah scrolls for his kindness to a traveller from Byzantium; see Mann, 1920–1922, vol. I, p. 104, vol. II, pp. 113–115.

⁷⁷ Cohen, 2005b, pp. 66–67.

3. שלום שלום לאיש השלום מארץ השלום שלום שלום
4. [כ]לט פניו באדרתו ויגלום והנה חלמתי חלום הוא כב'
5. גד' קד' מר' ור' אברהם הזקן היקר החכם והנבון [...]]
6. ירא שמים האוהב תורה ובעליה ומתנתו רחבה
7. בסתר [וב]גלוי לכל יברכו בכל מכל וכל בן כב' גד'
8. קד' מר' ור' חגי נ"בג אודיע לאדוני הזקן היקר כי אני
9. מן הזוכרים מעשיך ומתגעגיע בטובותיך ומעת
10. שהגעתי אל הנה מתאוה לראות את אדוני הזקן ובכל <עת>
11. מתפלל אני עליך ולא באתי אל הנה אלא מתוך [...]]
12. גדול וטובות אדוני הזקן מ[...]]
13. אליו כווסתו הנאה ומעת בא[...]]
14. מכלום אדם ואם יעש[...]]
15. בדבר שאתפרנס [...]]
16. אפילו פרוטה [...]]
17. מהק' ב' ה' [...]]
18. לו אח[...]]

Margin

1. ויבשריהו במחילה וסליחה
2. [...]]ה כל מה שהוא עושה עמי
3. כקרבן כליל ע[ל] גבי המזבח ויזכה לחזות בנועם
4. יי ולבקר בהיכלו ואילולי שאני יודיע ווסתו וחסדו וטובו
5. לא הטרחתי עליו ומנוחת אב[.נ] אין בידי דבר ואין לאל ידי
6. ימציאך הקב"ה חן וחסד לפניו ולפני כל רואיך יעקב שלום
7. תלמידו שמואל בריבי יעקב הרב
8. בריבי שמואל הרב נ"בג

1. In the merciful Name.
2. "The righteous will hold fast to their way, and the clean of hands", etc.⁷⁸
3. Many greetings to the man of peace from the land of peace, many greetings.
4. [When he] wrapped his face in his cloak and rolled it up.⁷⁹ Now, I have had a dream:⁸⁰ it is the honourable,
5. great, holy, our master and teacher Abraham the precious elder, the wise and understanding [...]

⁷⁸ A quotation from Job 17:9. There is a hole in the paper after די, which makes it difficult to be certain of the reading, but it looks like Samuel abbreviated the end of the verse to ו'ג' rather than writing ידים.

⁷⁹ This line merges 1 Kings 19:13, וילט פניו באדרתו, 'he wrapped his face in his mantle', and 2 Kings 2:8, יקה אליהו את־אדרתו ויגלם, 'and Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together', pivoting around the form אדרתו 'his mantle', which occurs in both. Cohen, 2005b, p. 66 instead takes יגלום as the verb גלה, '[...] his face and reveal them'.

⁸⁰ Genesis 37:9.

6. fears Heaven, who loves Torah and its masters, and whose offering is generous
7. (whether) in secret (or) revealed to everyone. May He bless him in every way, son of the honourable, great,
8. holy, our master and teacher Haggai – his rest be in Eden. I inform my lord the precious elder that I
9. am one of those who recall your [good] deeds and I long for your welfare, and from the moment
10. that I arrived here I have desired to see my lord the elder and at every moment
11. I pray for you. And I only came here out of great [need?],
12. and the good [deeds] of my lord the elder [...]
13. to him according to his worthy custom. And from the time of [my arrival ...]
14. from any man. And if he should do [...]
15. with something with which I might sustain myself [...]
16. even a coin [...]
17. from the Holy One Blessed Be He [...]
18. to him [...]

Margin

1. and may He gladden him with a pardon and forgiveness [...]
2. [...] whatever he does with me
3. like a complete sacrifice upon the altar, and may he merit seeing the delightfulness
4. of the LORD and to visit his temple. And were it not that I know his customary behaviour, his kindness and his generosity
5. then I would not have troubled him and the rest of [... And] I have nothing and I am helpless.
6. May the Holy One Blessed Be He let you find grace and kindness before Him and before all who see you. A reward of peace.⁸¹
7. His scholar⁸² Samuel son of the scholar Jacob ha-Rav
8. son of the scholar Samuel ha-Rav, his rest be in the garden of Eden.⁸³

⁸¹ The phrase *'eqev šalom* is a *'alāma*, a motto attached to correspondence, adopted from the Islamic practice. High-ranking individuals might have their own, or correspondents would use those of the leader of the time, or the recipient of the letter, to show loyalty.

⁸² The 'his' is a gesture of humility, rather than marking a previous relationship between the two. *Talmid* 'disciple, scholar' seems to change meaning over the Geonic period. Originally referring to as-yet-unordained scholars of the Academy (Mann, 1920–1922, vol. I, p. 54 n. 2), it comes more to denote a scholar who has acquired his learning outside of the academies, in the *midrašim* of eminent scholars; see Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. V, p. 266, "select few who attained a high degree of scholarship while studying with renowned masters far away from the seats of yeshivas". We might call them 'independent scholars'.

⁸³ Samuel's father, Jacob, is still alive, but his grandfather, Samuel, is dead. Samuel was named after his paternal grandfather, as was the usual custom among the Jews of the Islamic world (Goitein, 1967–1993, vol. III, pp. 6–7). This is evidence that he was probably not from Europe.

This letter is asking for favour, charity or financial support. It is a common genre in the Genizah, where travellers, immigrants and the indigent were often forced to turn to local sources of funding. Samuel informs Abraham that he is a new arrival (in Fustāt, where Abraham was based), having arrived here not by choice but probably out of ‘great [need]’ (line 11), and he now needs further assistance. It evidently dates from the days before Samuel became a scribe capable of charging twenty-five dinars to produce a glorious copy of the Bible. Abraham b. Haggai was a natural figure to turn to.⁸⁴ He had a reputation for helping scholars of the Torah (i.e. pious men, line 6), perhaps in a role as a patron of the arts, and as noted above he was a *parnas*, one of several at the time, who supervised charitable collections and looked after the community’s charitable foundations.⁸⁵ In the previous document, the agreement, it is clear that Abraham was known to Samuel – or rather the other way around, as their differing social status demanded. This letter, where Samuel appears to know Abraham only by reputation, must predate the agreement of 1021 by many years, since in the meantime Samuel became acquainted with Abraham and copied a Pentateuch for him. By 1021, the relationship appears to be that of patron and client, and this letter is probably evidence of the first steps that Samuel took in securing the patronage of the wealthy Abraham.⁸⁶

Though Samuel is in need at the time of writing this letter, because he has left his previous place of residence, he is not without a potential source of livelihood, as his appellation *talmid* ‘scholar’ suggests that he had enjoyed the benefit of an education at the feet of a sage or in a house of study. Certainly his later accomplishments strongly suggest a solid education in the Bible and *masora*, as well as a thorough knowledge of contemporary literary Hebrew. He is educated and only requires assistance to get on his feet in the new town, through the patronage of a wealthy and connected figure.

Where might Samuel have come from? Cohen believes him to be European, since he wrote his letter to Abraham in Hebrew. But this proves nothing of his origins, only of his education. Indeed, the letter is well constructed and mixes biblical phraseology in a playful manner alongside the characteristic contemporary language of letters. Letters seeking favour from social superiors are often written in Hebrew; it reflected favourably on the education of the writer and the respect he held for the addressee. In the 10th and 11th centuries Hebrew was particularly in vogue as an idiom of communication, and many letters between officials, scholars and other people of status in the community are written in the Holy Language.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ CUL T-S 13J23.9 is another request for help sent to Abraham, from a cantor called Ya’iṣ b. Sahl al-Nahrawānī, a Persian.

⁸⁵ Abraham’s brother Isaac, a community leader, served in a similar role. On the *parnasim* in general, see Gil, 1976, pp. 47–53; Cohen, 2005a, pp. 211–216.

⁸⁶ On reading ‘letters of appeal’ as requests for patronage, see Cohen, 2005a, pp. 174–188.

⁸⁷ On the use of Hebrew, as opposed to Judaeo-Arabic, for communicative purposes in the classical Genizah period, see Outhwaite, 2013.

Other details of the letter suggest that Samuel was not from a European land: the use of the title *talmid* and the use of an *‘alāma* and an opening invocation; the fact he was named after his grandfather, which as mentioned earlier was common in the Islamic lands of the Genizah; and the layout of his letter, leaving a clear margin at the top and on the right-hand side, again very common in letters from the Genizah world.⁸⁸

The importance of this letter is not just that it shows that Samuel b. Jacob was probably not a native of Fustāt, but that it also throws light on his ancestry. We could certainly have guessed that his grandfather’s name was Samuel, but this confirms it. More importantly, however, it shows that both his father and grandfather had a title after their name, ha-Rav. The use of *rav* before people’s names is just a common courtesy, and it usually occurs in the form of the phrase מרנא ורבנא or מורנו ורבנו, or just abbreviated to מ’ ור’ or similar, and is a polite appellation used for most anyone, ‘master and teacher’. When the noun *rav* follows the name, however, it appears to have been a specific title, bestowed originally by the Babylonian Yešivot on those who could function as a jurisconsult in the Maghrebi Jewish communities.⁸⁹ Šemarya b. Elḥanan, head of the Jews in Egypt in the late 10th century, and the leading member of the Babylonian party in Fustāt, had the title הרב הראש ‘the Great Rav’ after his name. His origins are obscure, though he probably spent time in Babylon and North Africa before settling in Fustāt. Following him, a number of leading Maghrebi figures in Egypt have the appellation ha-Rav, including Nahray b. Nissim from Qayrawān, the merchant-scholar who led the Babylonians, and the great scholar Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph, who was often simply known as Ha-Rav.⁹⁰

Given the connection of the title ha-Rav with the Maghreb and the Babylonian congregation, Samuel b. Jacob’s roots probably therefore lay in North Africa, in the Babylonian sphere of influence.⁹¹ With both his father and grandfather styled ha-Rav, he came from a line of scholars who had also achieved prominence in their community. This would account for the high standard of educational attainment that Samuel had clearly acquired. His own appellation of *talmid* implies advanced study at a college or with a sage, as

⁸⁸ Compare Byzantine Hebrew letters, for instance, which write across the full width of the page and do not imitate the *basmala* in their opening; see Outhwaite, 2009, p. 198.

⁸⁹ Bareket, 2017, p. 190, says: “According to Goitein, this title was only popular amongst the Maghrebi community and was not acceptable in Egypt. Hence, only figures from Maghrebi origin, such as Nehorai [=Nahray] ben Nissim, carried this title.” Cohen, 1980, p. 103 agrees: “Nahray functioned as professional jurisconsult to the Jewish community of Old Cairo [=Fustāt]. That is to say, like the Muslim mufti, he issued legal opinions, although not as a judge. Such authorities were styled ‘the rav’ (ha-rav), ‘the master’, a title peculiar to Jewish scholars from the Muslim west.”

⁹⁰ Cohen, 1980, pp. 102–105.

⁹¹ Samuel’s familiarity with the Babylonian *masora* is well attested in other copies of the Bible he produced such as Lm (Gottheil 14, now locked away in private hands) and the fragments that have been recently discovered in the Cambridge Genizah Collection; see Phillips, 2016, pp. 289–291.

befits the child of such a line, but his lack of the title ha-Rav suggests that he was not so successful politically. Indeed, we should not expect him to be writing Bibles for a living had he been more successful in community affairs.⁹²

On top of giving us the single most important complete codex of the medieval Hebrew Bible, Samuel b. Jacob has left behind a considerable legacy of professional work and a growing number of documentary sources.⁹³ As a result, he is arguably the most important medieval Jewish scribe that we know of, though, until recently, we knew very little about the man himself or how he worked. From a close reading of the plain colophon in the Leningrad Codex and of the documentary sources in the Cairo Genizah presented above, we can now fill out some of the context in which he produced his work and begin to appreciate what sort of role he played. The documents suggest he came from a family affiliated with the Babylonian Academies, and that his immediate ancestors had accrued some prominence in communities of Maghrebi Jews (the title ha-Rav). He himself had a good education, which continued into adulthood with an intellectual apprenticeship of some kind, probably in North Africa, though not necessarily so (the title *talmid*). His Medieval Hebrew idiom is accomplished and imaginative. If he was not a writer of *piyyuṭ* himself, then he was probably very familiar with the genre. He sought, and obtained, the patronage of a leading member of the Rabbanite Palestinian community in Egypt, but he accepted commissions from members of the Maghrebi (specifically, Persian-Maghrebi) Karaite community. Clearly, his services were sought after from across the religio-political spectrum in Egypt – Babylonian and Palestinian, Karaite and Rabbanite. And he achieved enough reputation in his field that he could charge a considerable sum for the production of a beautiful model codex of the Bible, of the kind that would have been an ostentatious, tangible sign of its owner's piety, good taste and wealth. And this is an important point to make. The Fuṣṭāṭ community, and other communities like it, produced and cultivated professional scribes of the calibre of Samuel b.

⁹² Further evidence of his family's prominence can be found in another letter, CUL T-S 13J15.13, which is thanking a leading Karaite courtier, Abū Sa'd b. Sahl al-Tustarī. It is written and signed by one *יעקב הרב בר' שמואל הרב בר' אברהם הרב*, Jacob ha-Rav son of the scholar Samuel ha-Rav son of the scholar Abraham ha-Rav (who also uses the same *'alāma* as Samuel in his letter, *עקב שלום*). This is probably Samuel b. Jacob's father, and it supplies the name of his great-grandfather, Abraham, who also held the title Rav. The letter, which was perhaps never sent (as it leaves a blank space to fill in the recipient's Hebrew name), was originally edited by Scheiber, though he made no connection with Samuel b. Jacob the scribe; see Scheiber, 1969, pp. 215–218. There are other traces in the documentary record of Samuel b. Jacob and of his family, but they do not add much more to the story for now. For instance, his name appears as the scribe of a divorce settlement (CUL T-S 10J27.12) in 1009 CE, and the same Samuel b. Jacob witnessed a deed of indemnity (CUL T-S 24.11) in 1002 CE.

⁹³ His works of biblical copying include RNL Evr. I B19a, Gottheil 14 (Lm), Gottheil 27, a copy of the Bible with Sa'adya's *Tafsīr* and an innovative *masora* (mostly in the Russian National Library as RNL Evr. II C1, but with leaves in the Genizah as well), further leaves of Bibles in the Taylor-Schechter Collection of the Cairo Genizah, as well as further items in the Russian National Library.

Jacob, but they would not have existed without a class of wealthy, pious and scholarly individuals, who could extend patronage to them and commission the works of art that they laboured over.

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Arabic Vocalisation in Judaeo-Arabic Grammars of Classical Arabic

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Many Judaeo-Arabic texts use Arabic vocalisation signs. In the vast majority of such texts, vocalisation is sporadic, and rarely includes case endings, *tanwīn* or other elements typical of fully vocalised classical Arabic texts. A much smaller group of Judaeo-Arabic texts – most if not all of which were originally composed in Arabic script and later transcribed into Hebrew characters – are consistently vocalised with Arabic signs. Examples include Judaeo-Arabic fragments of the Qurʾān (Halle DMG Arab 5),¹ of al-Ḥarīrī’s *Maqāmāt* (L-G Ar. 2.73), and of medical (Mosseri I.126.2, IX.124, X.30.1) and grammatical works (T-S NS 301.25). In addition, there are fully vocalised manuscripts that use a combination of Tiberian vowels with Arabic signs such as *waṣla* and *tanwīn*, which are not found in the Tiberian system; for example, a complete copy of the Qurʾān in Judaeo-Arabic (Ox. Bodl. Hunt. 529).

Few studies of Arabic vocalisation in medieval Judaeo-Arabic texts exist. E. Rödiger included a relatively detailed analysis of the Arabic vocalisation in his description of the Judaeo-Arabic Qurʾān fragment Halle DMG Arab 5, highlighting a number of instances of non-standard vocalisation.² Recently, E.-M. Wagner has studied Arabic vocalisation marks in Judaeo-Arabic letters and legal documents written by Ḥalfon b. Manasse, an early 12th century Jewish court scribe. Wagner suggests that this scribe may have become familiar with Arabic vocalisation practices through copying Arabic books into Hebrew characters, subsequently pioneering the use of Arabic signs in Jewish documentary texts.³

A study of Arabic vocalisation in Judaeo-Arabic texts is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, by identifying instances of non-classical vocalism such study can contribute to our knowledge of the phonology of medieval Arabic, in both its Jewish and its Muslim varieties, given that vocalisation marks

¹ For a transcription (without vowels) and a facsimile of this manuscript, see Paudice, 2009, pp. 230–239, 252–257. For a study of the manuscript, see Rödiger, 1860.

² Rödiger, 1860, pp. 485–489.

³ Wagner, forthcoming. See Ox. Bodl. Heb. e.74.1–6, a Muslim letter formulary, transliterated into Hebrew by Ḥalfon b. Manasse.

in texts transcribed into Hebrew characters could have been copied from Arabic *Vorlagen*.⁴ Secondly, it can inform our ideas on medieval Jewish education in Classical Arabic and its scribal conventions, shedding light on the level of Jews' knowledge of Arabic vocalisation rules, the kinds of people who might have had this knowledge, the periods when Arabic vocalisation marks were used by Jewish scribes in texts of different types, and the role Judaeo-Arabic texts consistently vocalised with Arabic vocalisation signs might have had as teaching materials for learning Classical Arabic pronunciation and vocalisation rules. To answer the latter set of questions, a systematic study of Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts with Arabic vocalisation signs is required, based on a corpus of sources that includes texts that were transcribed from Arabic as well as those that were originally written in Judaeo-Arabic.

This article makes a small contribution to the programme of research outlined above by analysing the Arabic vocalisation in Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts transcribed from Arabic *Vorlagen*, based on my work on a corpus of Classical Arabic grammars copied in Hebrew characters and preserved in the Cairo Genizah and in the Firkovich Collections in the National Library of Russia.⁵ The article consists of an edition of a grammatical fragment vocalised with Arabic signs, accompanied by a study of its spelling and vocalisation in the context of linguistic features reflected in other Judaeo-Arabic grammars of Classical Arabic and vocalised Judaeo-Arabic texts.

1 T-S NS 301.25

T-S NS 301.25 is a well-preserved one-folio fragment measuring 20.5cm x 12.5cm. The folio carries two unrelated texts: on recto, a grammar of Classical Arabic is copied in Judaeo-Arabic, in a 12th–13th century Egyptian handwriting;⁶ on verso, in a different Egyptian 12th–13th century hand, there is a dirge for a communal official who bore the title Nagid.⁷

The grammar on T-S NS 301.25 recto has been identified by Dr Almog Kasher from Bar-Ilan University as a passage from *Kitāb al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw* by Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ishāq al-Zajjājī, a 10th century Arab grammarian.⁸ *Kitāb al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw* is an introduction to Classical Arabic

⁴ For studies of Judaeo-Arabic Genizah fragments vocalised with Tiberian vocalisation signs see Blau and Hopkins, 1998, pp. 195–254; Khan, 1992, pp. 105–111; Khan, 2010, pp. 201–218.

⁵ I thank Dr José Martínez Delgado (University of Granada) for drawing my attention to the sources in the Firkovich Collections. I thank Dr Almog Kasher (Bar-Ilan University) for his comments on this article, as well as his cooperation and expert advice on the Arabic grammatical tradition. For studies of Judaeo-Arabic grammars of Classical Arabic, see Basal, 2010 and Vidro and Kasher, 2014.

⁶ I thank Dr Amir Ashur of Tel Aviv University for assessing the manuscript's handwriting.

⁷ Published in Allony, 1991, pp. 460–461. I thank Dr Michael Rand for his help with the poem.

⁸ *Kitāb al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw* is edited in Cheneb, 1927 and Al-Ḥamad, 1996. See also Sezgin, 1984, pp. 88–94; Zabara, 2005; Binaghi, 2015.

grammar written for beginners, in which Al-Zajjājī presents the rules of grammar accompanied by multiple examples and explains grammatical terminology. Numerous Arabic script copies of and commentaries on *Kitāb al-Jumal* exist, testifying to its popularity in the Muslim world, especially in al-Andalus.⁹ *Kitāb al-Jumal* was well known to Andalusian Jewish grammarians, as is shown by quotations from it identified in Jonah ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-Luma* and in Isaac ibn Barūn's *Kitāb al-Muwāzana bayn al-Luḡha al-'Ibrāniyya wal-'Arabiyya*.¹⁰

Copied in the 12th–13th century, T-S NS 301.25 is one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of *Kitāb al-Jumal*.¹¹ The preserved text belongs to The Chapter on Knowing the Markers of Inflection (*bāb ma 'rifat 'alāmāt al-i'rāb*) and forms the closing section of the chapter.¹² Below this, The Chapter On Verbs is announced but is not copied, leaving a large empty space at the bottom of the page. The text is consistently vocalised with Arabic signs.

2 Edition¹³

1. וגמעהא נח קולך לם יפעלא ולם יפעלו¹⁴ ומא
2. אשבה דלך פגמיע עלאמאת אלאערב
3. ארבע עשרה עלאמה ארבע ללרפע וכמס
4. ללנצב ותלת ללכפצי¹⁵ ואתנתאן ללגזם¹⁶
5. וגמיע מא יערב בה אלכלאם דסעה אשיא¹⁷
6. תלת¹⁸ חרכאת והי אלצמה ואלפתחה ואלכסרה
7. וארבוע¹⁹ אחרף והי²⁰ אלואו²¹ ואליא ואלף ואלגון

⁹ Binaghi, 2015, pp. 339–348.

¹⁰ See Becker, 1998, pp. 44–46, 57 and Becker, 2005, pp. 66–67.

¹¹ The earliest identified copy in the Arabic script is dated 1207 CE (Binaghi, 2015, p. 173).

¹² Cheneb, 1927, pp. 18–21, esp. p. 21; Al-Ḥamad, 1996, p. 3–6, esp. p. 6.

¹³ A transcription of this fragment, without vocalisation signs and identification, can be found on the Friedberg Genizah Project (FGP) website, <https://fjms.genizah.org/>.

¹⁴ In Cheneb, 1927, p. 21 and Al-Ḥamad, 1996, p. 6 the elision of the final *num* in 2fsg verbs is also mentioned, exemplified by למ תעלי. This passage is worded and placed slightly differently in the editions. The omission of this passage in the early Judaeo-Arabic copy, together with its instability in the editions, suggests that it is a gloss which made its way into the main body of the text.

¹⁵ Originally ללגזמי and ללכפצי, corrected to ללגזם (see n. 16), with the *plene* spelling of the short /i/ of the genitive, may have originated in the process of dictation or of ‘inner dictation’ when copying from a model. Alternatively, the spelling ללכפצי could be explained by the graphic similarity between the Arabic ضى and ضى.

¹⁶ Originally ללגזמי, corrected to ללגזם.

¹⁷ This vowel sign is barely legible and uncertain.

¹⁸ Originally תלאת, corrected to תלת.

¹⁹ The expected form is ארבעה.

²⁰ This vowel sign is barely legible and uncertain.

²¹ Ink traces are preserved above the final *waw*, but the vowel is uncertain.

8. [ו]חדה וסכון²² לא²³ יכון מְעַרְבֵי פִי שִׂיא²⁴ מִן אֶלְכֵלְאִים
 9. אֵלָא בְּאַחַד²⁵ הֵדָה אֶלְאִשְׂיָא
 10. בַּאב אֶלְאֶפְעַאֵל

3 Analysis

3.1 Spelling and vocalisation reflecting non-standard pronunciation

Although T-S NS 301.25 is a copy of a grammar of Classical Arabic, and its spelling and vocalisation were undoubtedly intended to represent Classical Arabic, some of its readings indicate non-standard pronunciations. These include:

- a. פִּגְמִיעַ (l. 2), with a *sukūn* instead of the expected *fatha* for the Classical Arabic *fa-jamī'u*, probably reflects a sandhi-type elision of the short /a/.²⁶
- b. The numeral three is vocalised וְתֵלֶה (l. 4) in place of the Classical Arabic *wa-ṭalāṭun*. In the second occurrence of the same numeral in line 6, the initially written תלאַת is corrected by overwriting to תֵּלֶת.
- c. The spelling דִּסְעָה (l. 5) instead of *tis'atu* reflects a voiced or an unaspirated pronunciation of /t/. The same pronunciation is attested in medieval Judaeo-Arabic letters from the Maghreb in the spelling of the name *Tustarī* as דִּסְתָּרִי.²⁷
- d. In בְּאַחַד (l. 9) the preposition ב is vocalised *ba-* instead of *bi-*. Similar vocalisation can be found in Halle DMG Arab 5, a Judaeo-Arabic Qur'ān fragment vocalised with Arabic vowel signs, in which *fatha* is occasionally marked where *kasra* is expected in Classical Arabic, especially but not exclusively on the prepositions ב and ל: בְּעַבְדָּהּ, בְּמֵאָל: לְכֵל, לְמֵן.²⁸ In Judaeo-Arabic texts vocalised with Tiberian signs, the preposition ב is occasionally vocalised with a *shewa*: בְּדָאךְ (T-S Ar. 53.12 r.), בְּמֵאָ, בְּכֵאָר (T-S Ar. 53.12 v.). Inasmuch as the main sound value of *shewa* in the Tiberian reading tradition is a short /a/, and since the phonetic conditions in the above given examples are not conducive to realising the *shewa* as short /i/, it has been assumed that the vocalisation of the Judaeo-Arabic preposition ב with a *shewa* either

²² Ink traces are preserved above the final *nun*, but the vowel is uncertain.

²³ The *sukūn* is partially rubbed and is uncertain.

²⁴ The final *aleph* may have been crossed out.

²⁵ Two dots are visible above the *aleph* and the *het*.

²⁶ Cf. Woidich, 1991, pp. 1632–1633.

²⁷ See Wagner, 2010, p. 35 and n. 23 there.

²⁸ Rödiger, 1860, pp. 487–488.

reflects the Palestinian substrate pronunciation, in which the *shewa* stands for a short /e/, or is a Hebraism.²⁹ The vocalisation of this preposition with a *fatha* found in manuscripts with Arabic vowel signs may hint that the intended value of the *shewa* here is, in fact, a short /a/ reflecting the reading *ba-*, possibly by hypercorrection.³⁰

3.2 Inflectional vowels

The majority of case endings in T-S NS 301.25 are correct. Exceptions are:

- a. גַּמְעָהָ (l. 1) should probably have the genitive case marker /i/ and not the accusative /a/. Although the preceding text is missing, the phrase according to the editions is³¹

وحذف النون أيضا علامة للجزم في تثنية الأفعال وجمعها

‘The elision of the *nun* is also a marker of *jazm*, in the dual and plural verb forms.’

It is likely that the reading in our fragment was the same, as is supported by the preserved examples *لَمْ يَفْعَلْهُ* (l. 1). If so, the genitive case ending is expected after the preposition *في*.

- b. לַלְרַפְעָ (l. 3), where the genitive rather than the nominative ending is expected after the preposition.
- c. לֹא יִכּוֹן מְעַרְבִי (l. 8), where a *fatha* on the second radical, and a nunated nominative ending *-un* are expected: *mu‘rabun*.³² The active participle form *mu‘rib* is highly unlikely in this context and appears to be a mistake. The accusative ending may be due to an erroneous parsing of *יִכּוֹן* as ‘incomplete’ *kāna* and of *מְעַרְבִי* as its object.

Confusion in the marking of case endings is also attested in a Kufan grammatical primer preserved in T-S Ar. 31.254, T-S 24.31 and T-S AS 155.132,³³ where the name ‘Abd Allāh after a preposition is occasionally vocalised with a *fatha* – for example, *עַלִי עַבְדֵּ אֱלִלָה* (T-S 24.31 r.) – as well as in the Qur’ān fragment Halle DMG Arab 5 and in Judaeo-Arabic texts with Tiberian vocalisation.³⁴

²⁹ Khan, 2010, p. 209; Khan, 1992, pp. 110–111.

³⁰ For examples of substituting /a/ for the Classical Arabic /i/ by hypercorrection, see Khan, 2010, p. 206.

³¹ Cheneb, 1927, p. 21; Al-Ḥamad, 1996, p. 6.

³² Cf. Cheneb, 1927, p. 21; Al-Ḥamad, 1996, p. 6.

³³ Edited and analysed in Vidro and Kasher, 2014.

³⁴ Rödiger, 1860, p. 487; Khan, 2010, p. 205; Blau and Hopkins, 1988, p. 469, §26.

3.3 The marking of long vowels

In a number of cases in T-S NS 301.25, long /ā/ is represented by an *aleph* vocalised with a *sukūn*; for example, מֶאֱ (1. 1, l. 5), עֶלְאֱמֶה (1. 2), עֶלְאֱמֶה (1. 3), אֶלְכֶלְאֱם (1. 5), אֶלְכֶלְאֱם (1. 8) and לֶאֱ (1. 8, example uncertain). This spelling is found in about half of the cases of long /ā/ in the fragment; in the rest of the cases the *aleph* is unvocalised, and other long vowels are never marked with a *sukūn* on the respective *matres lectionis*. The marking of all three *matres lectionis* with a *sukūn* is attested in Islamic manuscripts,³⁵ and was known to Jewish scribes. It is used in Judaeo-Arabic fragments L-G Ar. 2.3, 2.4, 2.10, 2.142 of *Kitāb al-Af‘āl Dawāt Hurūf al-Līn* by Judah Hayyūj – for example, בֶּאֱ (L-G Ar. 2.3 v.) and פֶּאֱקֶלֶל (L-G Ar. 2.4 v.) – as well as in an Arabic script Pentateuch commentary by Abū al-Faraj Furqān in BL Or. 2545, where a *sukūn* can be found on *matres lectionis* both in the original Arabic words (mainly for the long /ī/ and /ū/) – for example, رَسُوْلًا (BL Or. 2545, f. 8 v.) – and in transliterations of Hebrew words – for example, مَغْمَزِيْن for מגמזין (BL Or. 2545, f. 87 r.).³⁶ This function of the *sukūn* was carried over to the Tiberian *shewa* in some Judaeo-Arabic texts, such as a copy of the Qur‘ān in Hebrew characters in Ox. Bodl. Hunt. 529, where most long /ī/ and /ū/ vowels are represented by *yod* or *waw* with a *shewa* while the *aleph* of the long /ā/ is left unvocalised – for example, רַב־אֶלְעֶאֱלְמֶיִן, רַב־נַסְתַּעֲיִן and אֶלְמַגְיֶיִב (f. 1 v.) – and a liturgical fragment T-S Ar. 8.3, where the *aleph* of the long /ā/ is the only *mater lectionis* vocalised with the *shewa* – for example, דְּאֶר (f. 13 r.).³⁷

3.4 The marking of the initial *hamzat al-qaṭ‘* and *hamzat al-waṣl*

Only *hamzat al-qaṭ‘* is found in T-S NS 301.25, written on top of the *aleph* א̣ irrespective of its vowel, as seen in אֶלְאֶשְׂיָא (al-‘ašyā’, l. 9) vs. אֶלְאֶעֲרָב (al-‘i rābi, l. 2). The *hamza* is marked inconsistently and is missing in such forms as אֶרְבֶּעַ (l. 3), אֶשִׂיא (l. 5), אֶחֶרְךָ (l. 7) and אֶשְׁבֶּה (l. 2). On the other hand, it is used a number of times on the *aleph* of the definite article after a word ending in a vowel, where it is not pronounced according to the rules of Classical Arabic: אֶלְכֶלְאֱם בְּהָ יַעֲרַב־מָא גִמְיַעַ מָא (l. 5) and וְהִי אֶלְצִמָּה וְאֶלְפֶתְחָהּ (l. 6). A parallel phenomenon, understood in secondary literature as pseudo-Classical or morphophonemic spelling, is attested in Judaeo-Arabic texts with Tiberian vocalisation signs, where *alif al-waṣla* after a vowel is often vocalised as if it were pronounced as a glottal stop: פִּי אֶלְחֶכְמָה (T-S Ar. 53.12 v.).³⁸

³⁵ Cf. Wright, 1996, vol. I, p. 13, §10 rem.

³⁶ See Tirosh-Becker, 1998, pp. 383, 386.

³⁷ See Khan, 1992, pp. 108–109 and n. 20 there.

³⁸ See Khan, 2010, p. 205. See also Blau and Hopkins, 1988, p. 239, §14.2.

3.5 Nunation³⁹

The marking of nunated vowels in T-S NS 301.25 is largely in accord with Classical Arabic norms, with the exception of some cases where non-nunated vowels are found instead, for example:

אַרְבַּעַ עֶשְׂרֵה עֵלָאמָהּ אַרְבַּעַ לְלַרְפָּעַ (1. 3)

לֹא יִכּוֹן מְעַרְבַּ פִּי שִׂיא (1. 8)

In other grammars, too, *tanwīn* is occasionally unmarked where it is clearly intended. Thus, in T-S Ar. 5.45 the forms זִיד, עֵמֵר and בַּכְרֵ stand for Zaydun, ‘Amrun and Bakrun:

וּדְכַלָּה אֶלְתַּנּוּיִן כְּקוּלְךָ זִיד וְעֵמֵר

‘It has the *tanwīn*, e.g. Zaydun (זִיד) and ‘Amrun (עֵמֵר).’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r.)

אֶעֱלֵם אֵן אֶלְרַפַּע פִּי אֶלְאֶסֶם אֶלּוּאֶהֶד יִכּוֹן בְּשִׁיִן בְּאַלְצָמָה וְאַלּוּאוּ פְּאַלְצָמָה זִיד וְעֵמֵר וּבַכְרֵ וּמָא אֶשְׁבַּה דְלַךְ עֵלְאֶמָה אֶלְרַפַּע פִּי הֵדָה אֶל אֶסְמָא צָמָה אֶכְרָהָא וּבַעַד אֶלְצָמָה תַּנּוּיִן ‘Take note that the nominative case of single nouns is (expressed) by two things: the *ḍamma* and the *waw*. The examples of *ḍamma* are Zaydun (זִיד) and ‘Amrun (עֵמֵר) and Bakrun (בַּכְרֵ), etc. The marker of the nominative in these nouns is the *ḍamma* at the end and the *tanwīn* after the *ḍamma*.’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 v.)

In the Kufan grammatical primer *tanwīn ḍamma* is never marked:⁴⁰ for example, קֵאֵם זִיד, (T-S Ar. 31.254 r.) and עֲלִי אַכִּיךְ תּוֹב גְּדִיךָ (T-S 24.31 r.). Both *tanwīn fatha* and *tanwīn kasra* are found in the fragments alongside their non-nunated counterparts, but the signs are used indiscriminately: רַפַּעַת עַבְדֵּ אֶלְלָהּ (T-S Ar. 31.254 r.) vs. רַפַּעַת עַבְדֵּ אֶלְלָהּ (T-S 24.31 r.); לַקִּית עַבְדֵּ אֶלְלָהּ (T-S Ar. 31.254 r.) vs. לַקִּיני עַבְדֵּ אֶלְלָהּ (T-S Ar. 31.254 r.); בַּכְסֵר אֶלְפָּא (T-S 24.31 v.). At the top of T-S Ar. 31.254 short discontinuous passages of Arabic grammar are copied in Arabic script.⁴¹ In these passages a similar confusion between nunated and non-nunated vowels can be detected: *tanwīn ḍamma* is not used, whereas *tanwīn fatha* and *tanwīn kasra* are invariably used at the end of words irrespective of their syntactic position, as well as for final non-inflectional vowels:

اِقْسَامُ الْكَلَامِ ثَلَاثُ اِسْمٌ وَفِعْلٌ وَحَرْفٌ؛ فَالاسْمُ قَوْلُكَ رَجُلٌ وَفَرَسٌ وَغُلَامٌ؛ ضَرْبٌ زَيْدٌ عَمْرٌ؛ بَيْنَ
الْفَاعِلِ

³⁹ On *tanwīn* in Judaeo-Arabic texts see Baneth, 1945–1946; Blau, 1980, 153–154; Blau, 1955; Wagner, 2010, pp. 175–188.

⁴⁰ Vidro and Kasher, 2014, p. 206.

⁴¹ See Vidro and Kasher, 2014, pp. 176–177.

The lack of *tanwīn ḍamma* in these grammatical fragments resembles the vocalisation of the Qur'ān fragment Halle DMG Arab 5, in which *tanwīn fatha* and *tanwīn kasra* are marked as expected, whereas *tanwīn ḍamma* is not attested and the simple *ḍamma* is used instead.⁴²

When *tanwīn* is marked, its graphic representation varies somewhat among different Judaeo-Arabic grammars of Classical Arabic. In the section on orthographic signs in T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r., *tanwīn* is recorded as two oblique strokes, as in figure 1.

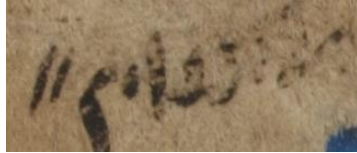


Figure 1. *Tanwīn* as two oblique strokes (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r.)⁴³

Unsurprisingly, this sign placed above or below the final consonant is used in the corpus for *tanwīn fatha* and *tanwīn kasra* respectively. For *tanwīn ḍamma* more variants are attested. The most common one is a *ḍamma* with an oblique stroke to the left, as in figure 2; in more cursive notation, the stroke connects to the *ḍamma*'s tail (see, e.g., SPB RNL Evr Arab II 185, f. 4 r.).⁴⁴



Figure 2. *Tanwīn ḍamma* as *ḍamma* with oblique stroke (T-S NS 301.25)⁴⁵

Tanwīn ḍamma can also be written with a double *ḍamma*, occasionally accompanied by the Hebrew *qubbuṣ*, as in figure 3.

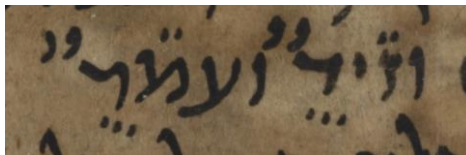


Figure 3. *Tanwīn ḍamma* as double *ḍamma* with Hebrew *qubbuṣ* (T-S Ar. 31.30 v.)⁴⁶

⁴² Rödiger, 1860, p. 486.

⁴³ Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

⁴⁴ Image available on Ktiv, the International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts, <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLIS/en/ManuScript/>, item 159468, accessed 6 July 2017.

⁴⁵ Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

⁴⁶ Image courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

The writing of *tanwīn ḍamma* with two *ḍammas* one on top of the other, mentioned in Muslim treatises on Arabic orthography,⁴⁷ has not been found in Judaeo-Arabic grammars but can be seen in a Judaeo-Arabic copy of the Qurʾān copied in Iraq or Iran in 1575–1625 (see, for example, Ox. Bodl. Hunt. 529, f. 2 v.).⁴⁸

In addition to the *tanwīn* sign, *nun* or *aleph* in combination with simple vowels can be used to indicate *tanwīn* in all three cases. Examples of *nun* are:

אבו זיִדן

‘Abū Zaydin’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 v.)

... אלכפץ יכון מע אל תנוין ואלכסר בלא תנוין מתל זידן בתנוין

‘... the genitive case is with *tanwīn* and *kasra* is without *tanwīn*, for example, Zaydin (זיִדן) has *tanwīn*.’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r.)

Examples of *aleph* are:

אלרפע פי קולך זידא ואלנצב פי קולך זידא ואלכסר והו אל גר פי קולך זידא

‘An example of the nominative is Zaydun (זיִדא), an example of the accusative is Zaydan (זיִדא), and the example of /i/, which is the genitive, is Zaydin (זיִדא).’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 v.)

אלחרכאת פתח והו אלנצב כקולך זיִדא או רפע והו אלצם כקולך זיִדא או כפץ והו אלכסר כקולך זיִדא

‘The vowels are: /a/ which is the accusative, e.g. Zaydan (זיִדא), or the nominative, which is /u/, e.g. Zaydun (זיִדא), or genitive, which is /i/, e.g. Zaydin (זיִדא).’ (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r.)

The writing of the *tanwīn* with an *aleph* can also be found in the example קאם זיִדא (T-S Ar. 5.45, P1 r., for the Classical Arabic *qāma Zaydun*), where *aleph* should probably be interpreted not as a hypercorrection but as a marker of the *tanwīn* but not of the case ending.⁴⁹

3.6 Function of the text

T-S NS 301.25 is unique in the corpus of Classical Arabic grammars in Judaeo-Arabic in that it is consistently vocalised with Arabic vocalisation signs. In all other grammars, Arabic vocalisation is used but is sporadic. This may hint at the fragment’s function. Al-Zajjājī’s *Kitāb al-Jumal* was composed in

⁴⁷ See Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad Al-Qalqašandī (Egypt, 1355–1418), *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-A‘šā* (Shams al-Dīn, 1987, p. 161).

⁴⁸ Image available at Digital Bodleian, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/0673a609-8fa3-40f2-b372-23099ab76822>, accessed on 22 June 2016.

⁴⁹ See also Blau, 1955 on the use of *aleph* to indicate nunation but not case in certain types of nominal sentences.

order to provide learners with basic knowledge of the Classical Arabic language and grammar,⁵⁰ and was traditionally used in the classroom for beginning students.⁵¹ It is clearly with the same purpose – that of learning the basics of Classical Arabic and its grammar – that this fragment was transcribed into Hebrew characters. That the single currently identified part of this grammar in Hebrew characters is the chapter on inflection, and the following chapter on verbs was not copied even though enough space remained on the page to do so, may indicate that only a portion of this book was transcribed and vocalised, possibly as a vocalisation exercise. Indeed, it seems fitting to use a basic text on grammatical cases, which mainly deals with vowels and ends with a summary of all case markers, as teaching material on the topic of Arabic vocalisation and as a sample text to practice one’s vocalising skills. The imperfect vocalisation of the fragment may indicate that this is not an expert’s work to be copied by future students, but the product of a learner who has not yet attained full mastery of this subject.

4 Conclusions

In this article I have edited and analysed a Judaeo-Arabic fragment of Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ishāq al-Zajjājī’s basic grammar of Classical Arabic, *Kitāb al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw*, preserved in T-S NS 301.25 and consistently vocalised with Arabic vowel signs. T-S NS 301.25 was undoubtedly intended to represent Classical Arabic, but nonetheless its spelling and vocalisation hint at the scribe’s substrate pronunciation and imperfect knowledge of the Arabic case system. The present analysis complements earlier studies of Judaeo-Arabic fragments vocalised with Tiberian vowel signs and describes different ways of indicating vowel length and nunation, which are not regularly marked in manuscripts with Tiberian vocalisation or in those sporadically vocalised with Arabic signs. It is suggested that the fragment is a vocalisation exercise performed by a learner of Classical Arabic and its grammar.

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⁵⁰ Binaghi, 2015, pp. 158–159.

⁵¹ Carter, 2017; Binaghi, 2015, pp. 155–156, 158–159.

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The Structural and Linguistic Features of Three Hebrew Begging Letters from the Cairo Genizah

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1 Introduction¹

Genizah begging letters are informal petitions in Judaeo-Arabic or Hebrew which were composed by ‘foreigners’ or by individuals who had fallen upon hardship, and which request practical assistance.² The majority of research on Genizah petitionary correspondence focuses on formal petitions, and the begging letters remain an under-studied category of epistolary literature.³ The extant research on begging letters has focused on the Judaeo-Arabic specimens, and has not explored the form and features of their Hebrew counterparts in equal depth.⁴ Furthermore, the formulaic structure and linguistic features of the Hebrew begging letters are particularly under-studied.⁵ Hebrew begging

¹ I am deeply honoured to contribute to this volume in honour of my dear supervisor and mentor Professor Geoffrey Khan. I also wish to express my gratitude to Dr Ben Outhwaite, who guided me in selecting this set of letters, patiently read multiple drafts of this article and provided many helpful comments and corrections.

² We may indeed consider begging letters to be an informal variation on the petitionary genre, since their purpose is to make a request, and since they tend to contain the basic formulaic elements found in more complex petitions. Mark Cohen has established that many of these letters were written by foreigners in Egypt and Palestine; see Cohen, 2005b and Cohen, 2006. Cohen, 2005b, pp. 174–188 also discusses in more depth why begging letters should be considered part of the petitionary genre.

³ Two relevant articles about begging letters are Cohen, 2000 and Cohen, 2005a. Concerning the broader category of petitionary documents in the Genizah, relevant articles include Goitein, 1954; Stern, 1962; Richards, 1992; Rustow, 2010. Geoffrey Khan has also published on the epistolary form of Arabic petitionary texts; see Khan, 1990a and Khan, 1990b.

⁴ Cohen’s two volumes contribute a detailed discussion of the role of begging letters in shaping our understanding of the history of the poor and foreigners in the early medieval Middle East; see Cohen, 2005b and Cohen, 2006. Some of the documents he mentions in those volumes are in Hebrew.

⁵ The main articles which examine Hebrew begging letters and certain aspects of their language are Scheiber, 1981 and Bareket, 2002. Outhwaite, 2009 researches in depth the linguistic features of Hebrew Genizah correspondence by Byzantine authors, but does not focus on begging letters.

letters form an intrinsic part of Genizah correspondence, and thus they should be more thoroughly researched in order to clarify how they are situated amongst their Judaeo-Arabic counterparts. Even more importantly, these Hebrew documents provide a window into the average layperson's use of Hebrew as a language for correspondence, and are thus a valuable source of linguistic data.

Here I seek to make a contribution towards this end. I wish to complement previous scholarship by focusing on the linguistic features and formulaic structure of some additional Hebrew begging letters, contextualising them with those which have already been published by Bareket and Scheiber.⁶ I first present an edition of three unedited Hebrew begging letters, and then I explore their internal structure, their linguistic register and their authors' skill with Hebrew. I note which specific features are found in wider, more formal Genizah correspondence, as well as which features appear to be unique to these particular three letters, especially with regard to formulaic structure. The reader should be aware that while my analysis and definitive comments concern only the specific documents presented in this study, I would argue that it is reasonable to extrapolate the general trends of the features of these letters onto the genre of Hebrew begging letters as a whole. My analysis found that for these three documents (and, by tentative extension, most Hebrew begging letters), the language is in general the same as in the more formal medieval Hebrew correspondence of the Geonim, only simpler and less skilful. Likewise, while their formulaic structure is similar to that of more formal petitions, it is simpler in nature, and adheres to a specific order of elements which are specially tailored for begging.⁷

2 Text editions

2.1 Mosseri II.98.1

Material: paper (folded many times). Recto: 19 lines. Verso: 4 lines.

2.1.1 Transcription⁸

Recto

1. ש שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך ו[אק]...
2. שלומות רבות וישועות קרובות

⁶ Bareket, 2001; Scheiber, 1981.

⁷ Such assertions will be tentative, however, as a full study of the Hebrew begging letter corpus has not been conducted.

⁸ Text in brackets has been reconstructed; I only reconstruct the text where there is sufficient contextual and/or physical evidence for a reconstruction. Ellipses indicate a lacuna or a missing section of text. It is difficult to tell where each line truly ends, and whether it has been cut off prematurely. The reader should note that lines without ellipses still may be incomplete.

3. וחנינה ויד ושם ומזל גבוה וקי...]
4. כבוד גדו קדו מר ורבי אור עינינ[
5. ר ישועה החכם והנבון הירא א...
6. אלהינו יברכהו וישמרהו ויעודדהו [ו]...
7. לשם ותהילה ויזכהו לראות שמחת ...
8. אמן ויזכהו לראות ביאת גואל ידוע
9. לך מרי ר ישועה לא כתבתי זו הכתב
10. ב בושתי פנים כי האל יודע אלו היה לי [כסף]
11. לא כתבתי אצלך ואני לא אהפוך מ[כבודך אלא]
12. ב ריטלין לחם כי יש לי מן השבת [ה]...
13. בלא לחם ואם אשב יום אח[ר] ולא או[כל]
14. אפחד שלא אפול בחולי ובאמו[נ]ה על ...
15. של[א] בטובתי כתבתי אצל [כ]בו[ד]ך ו[א]...
16. א[מ]... מן הרעב לא אכתו[ב] על אדם
17. ובאמונה אל תאשימני כ[י] האל יודע ...
18. כתבתי אצל כבודך זו ה[אג]רת אלא ...
19. איתי עצמי ב[ר]עב כ...

Verso

1. ... אפילו פרוטה ואני אשב ב ימים
2. ... ולא אכלתי לחם ולא אבקש מכבודך
3. [אלא ב רי]טלין והקב[ו]ה ישלם שכרך בעולם
4. [הזה וב]עולם הבא ושלומך ישגא ויפרה עד

2.1.2 Translation⁹

Recto

1. Great peace to the lovers of your Torah, and ...
2. Much peace and imminent salvation,
3. and mercy and remembrance and great fortune ...
4. Honourable, great and revered teacher and my master, light of [our] eyes
5. Rabbi Yeshua⁹, the wise and the clever, fearer of ...
6. our God. May he be blessed, guarded, encouraged [and] ...
7. for remembrance and praise. And may he be granted the joy of ...
8. Amen. And may he be granted to see the coming of the redeemer. Let it be known
9. to you, my teacher Rabbi Yeshua⁹, I did not write this letter
10. out of shame, because God knows if I had [money]
11. I would not write to you and I seek nothing from [your honour except]

⁹ Text which has been reconstructed in the transcription appears in the translation inside square brackets. Text in parentheses in the translation indicates my clarification.

12. two *rafts* of bread, which I have [not had] since Shabbat ...
13. without bread, and if I go for [another] day and do not [eat]
14. I fear that I may fall ill. And truly ...
15. That it is [not] of my goodness that I wrote to your honour ...
16. ... from hunger. And I will not [write] to man¹⁰
17. and truly, do not blame me, [because] God knows ...
18. I did not write this [letter] to your honour but ...
19. to myself in hunger ...¹¹

Verso

1. ... even a cent and I will dwell for two days
2. ... and I did not eat bread and I will not ask from your honour
3. [(anything) except two *rafts*]. May the Holy One, blessed be He, complete your gain in [this] world
4. [and in] the world to come. And may your peace grow and prosper more.

2.1.3 Textual notes

Recto

1. The first *shin* in the line is probably a mistake; the author apparently wished to indent the first line of the letter. The line itself quotes Psalms 119:165, and the *rafes* over the *bet* and the first *tav* of לאוהבי תורתך mark it as a quotation. Such marks are generally ornamental,¹² and perhaps they also function to indicate a biblical quote without using an actual introduction beforehand (in contrast, the last letter of this study, T-S Misc. 28.18, uses the Judaeo-Arabic כמא קאל to indicate that a biblical quotation is going to follow). These *rafes* may be a secondary addition, as the ink is lighter than the surrounding text; however, close inspection reveals that it is still the same colour as faded portions of letters throughout the document. The word אוהבי is spelled *plene*, contrary to its defective spelling in Codex Leningradensis; this is not unexpected.
- 2.–3. The irregular use of שְׁלוּמִית in שְׁלוּמִית is the preferred spelling in Genizah letters, as opposed to the more biblical שְׁלוּמִים.¹³
4. The honorifics appearing on this line are nearly universally used in Genizah letters from this period. As such, they appear here in abbreviated form, with dashes that appear similar to the *rafe* sign. The first set of

¹⁰ Lines 16–19 are damaged, so only a tentative translation can be made here.

¹¹ There are more letters beyond the end of what appears in the transcription, but they are for all purposes indecipherable.

¹² Outhwaite, 2000, p. 15.

¹³ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 216.

diacritics indicates the full phrase *כבוד גדולת וקדושת*. Such honorifics and their abbreviations are usual features of Genizah correspondence,¹⁴ although the forms of this abbreviation can vary.¹⁵

5. The line probably ends in some form of *אדון*, perhaps *אדונינו*, but it was not reconstructed in order to avoid prescriptiveness.
6. The *aleph* and the *lamed* in *אלהינו* have been joined together in a ligature – a common orthographic feature in both Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic Genizah correspondence. This ligature appears in all three of our letters here. *הו* is placed at the end of each of the verbs to indicate that Rabbi Yeshua' is their direct object. Its appearance here in the florid opening of the letter is appropriate.¹⁶
7. *לשם ותהילה* is difficult to translate because the previous line is damaged. I have chosen to respect the previous line's context as much as possible, and to translate this phrase as the end of the sentence, with the *lamed* appearing as a preposition to the noun *שם*. This noun also appears in line 3, where I translate it as 'remembrance', and it is likely that it has the same meaning here.
8. The writer's use of *לראות ביאת גואל* is noteworthy because he uses the gerund form of *ברא* but drops the definite article for the rest of the construct phrase. In comparison, T-S 12.258 (line 5 of the marginal side-writing) has the phrase *וישום ביאת הגואל בימיו*, which contains the definite article.¹⁷
9. The author's ordering of the demonstrative pronoun *זו* here – *זו הכתב* – is noteworthy.¹⁸ In this instance, the gender of the demonstrative pronoun does not match the noun which it governs. This construction is not anomalous in Genizah letters. Such gender confusion is a common feature in medieval Hebrew, and in some instances this construction can occur without the definite article.¹⁹ Importantly, scholarship has accepted that this particular construction is an Arabicism, corresponding to the construction *هذا الـ*; and as Outhwaite says, "it is certainly very pervasive, since in Genizah correspondence it can be found in letters by those who show no other Arabic influence in their language".²⁰ Finally,

¹⁴ Outhwaite, 2009, p. 186.

¹⁵ Outhwaite, 2013, p. 3.

¹⁶ Outhwaite, 2013, p. 4.

¹⁷ This manuscript was published by Bareket, 2001, pp. 381–383.

¹⁸ We see the same construction again on line 18 (recto) – *זו ה-* – but in that case the attached noun has been damaged; however the gender matches, as *אגרת* (reconstructed) is feminine.

¹⁹ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 201.

²⁰ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 201.

note the use in this line of כתב as opposed to מכתב. Both words are common in post-biblical Hebrew, but מכתב appears more often than כתב.²¹ This letter tends to utilise predominately post-biblical nouns, so the use of כתב here is a slight deviation from this trend. In letters by Jews whose vernacular is Arabic, this word, which is closer to كتاب, is preferred over the Hebrew מכתב.²²

10. The preposition ב of בבושת פנים is separated from בושת by a visible space on the manuscript. Note that for אליו the writer gives the only vowel sign in the entire manuscript. Outhwaite notes that אליו is less common in Genizah epistolary Hebrew than אלה, and that a marked minority of writers prefer אלו.²³
11. The use of the prefix conjugation for הפיץ does not necessarily indicate the future tense; it is common for this conjugation to “express a wide range of modal nuances”.²⁴ I attempt to show such nuance in my translation above. Also note my reconstruction at the end of the line: מכבודך אלא, which is the likely ending to the line had the document not been torn, although מכבודך כי אם is also a possibility.²⁵ The preposition אצלך is rather awkward: one would expect the writer to use אליך or לך instead. This may be a way of using distancing language (for more detail on ‘distancing language’, see my comment on line 15 below). Note that on line 18 the author uses a similar construction (כתבתי אצל כבודך). Perhaps אצל (either with the suffix יך- or else preceding כבודך) serves as a means of avoiding direct address²⁶ and of formalising the tone of the letter. Regardless, it is a testament to the author’s awkward grasp of Hebrew.
12. ריטלין lacks the dual form even though it is paired with the numeral ב. The use of the dual, however, is rare in this period, and “we often find that the dual is not used where it could be expected in BH or RH, being replaced by the number ‘two’ and the plural noun”.²⁷ The ין- suffix for the plural is typical for words which do not have a Hebrew origin or which were introduced to Hebrew after the biblical period (this particular root comes from the Arabic رطل).²⁸ An important point which clarifies the meaning of the entire document is that the phrase יש לי here

²¹ Outhwaite, 2009, p. 195.

²² Outhwaite, 2009, p. 195.

²³ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 199–200.

²⁴ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 225.

²⁵ Thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for suggesting this possibility.

²⁶ Although on line 9 he does write ... לא כתבתי ... לך.

²⁷ Outhwaite, 2000, p. 73.

²⁸ Outhwaite, 2013, p. 4 notes that the ין- suffix is a common feature in Gaonic Hebrew. The historical context behind mentions of bread in many begging letters, and this specific measurement, is to be found in detail in Cohen, 2005a, pp. 408–414. See Lane, 1984, vol. I, pp. 1101–1102 for the usage of the Arabic root.

refers not to bread, but to the amount of time the beggar has been without bread (i.e. 'I have gone [x] number of days since Shabbat without bread'). We can assume he has gone two days without the required food based on line 1 of the verso which could be understood to mean 'I will go two days without even a cent's worth of bread'.

14. With regard to אפחד שלא אפול בחולי 'I fear that I may fall ill', in Arabic it is possible to express in a subordinate clause a desire that something *not* happen by inserting لا between the two verbs, and it is to be noted that this لا does not negate the verb but instead serves to express the negative desire of the sentence.²⁹ Here we have this construction calqued in Hebrew, thus the translation 'I fear that I may (i.e. lest) I fall ill.'
15. A comment on כתבתי אצל כבודך 'I wrote to your honour'. By distancing himself from his addressee through using an honorific such as 'your honour', the author is writing in a higher and more formal register.³⁰ The phrase שלא בטובתי is reminiscent of בעל כרח / על כרח, a phrase found in Rabbinic Hebrew: 'it is against my will'.³¹ The phrase here likely conveys a similar meaning: the author feels forced to write this begging letter. This seems to connect, thematically, to the idea that the author is not writing 'out of shame'. The theme of 'shame' is pervasive in Genizah begging letters, and by emphasising that he would rather not have written, the author in effect reduces the 'shame' involved in writing a begging letter.³²

Verso

4. I have reconstructed the phrase 'in this world and' because it typically precedes 'in the world to come' in constructions such as this. Note that the letter does not contain a signature at the end. Normally one would conclude that a letter without a signature is a draft, but in the case of begging letters this conclusion is questionable. Being informal correspondence, it likely needed no real signature; signatures with names are infrequent or rare for our published corpus of Hebrew begging letters.

²⁹ Harrell and Brunot, 2004, p. 155 describe this construction fully, though one should note that this construction is not restricted to Moroccan Arabic. Thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for this suggestion.

³⁰ For an additional example, see T-S 8J13.5, line 3, in which distancing language is also employed in the blessing section of the letter.

³¹ Cf. Jastrow, 1903, p. 666. Thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for this suggestion.

³² Bareket, 2001, p. 363 mentions the pervasive desire to avoid shame in the begging letters, and there is an extensive discussion of this matter in Cohen, 2005a, especially p. 185.

2.2 T-S 8J13.5³³

Material: paper. Recto: 18 lines. Verso: blank.

2.2.1 Transcription³⁴

1. בשם אל רחום והנון ...
2. [אל] אדוני הזקן המכובד והמ...
3. ויארִיך ימיו בטוב ושנותי[ו] ...
4. לטובה ויברך את כל מעש[יו] ...
5. מפעליו ו[יז]כה ויראה בנ[ים] ...³⁵
6. וגם יחיה וישמר וינצור ויפרה ...
7. יארִיך ימיו ירבה שנותיו יום ...
8. אודיע לאדוני הזקן ה...
9. כי באתי ממקום רחוק עד ה[נה] ...³⁶
10. והייתי מן הנותנים ועושי ח[סד] ...³⁷
11. כל עשרי וכל ממוני ונשאר[תי] ...
12. אדוני הזקן וטוב כי ש...
13. עתה רחם עלי כמנהגך ה[טוב] ...
14. ייי ועליך שמתו בטחו[ני] ...
15. ואני [נ]כרי ולכן שא...
16. מאשר נתן לך ייי [אלהי] ...
17. ויכפיל ממ[ו]נך וית[ו]ן ...
18. ייי אלהי אבו[תינו] ...

2.1.2 Translation

1. In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate ...
2. [To] my lord the honourable elder and ...
3. May his days be lengthened with goodness and his years ...
4. with pleasantness. And may he (God) bless all his (the addressee's) deeds ...
5. and his actions, and may he merit to see (have) posterity ...
6. And may he be guarded and kept and multiplied ...
7. and may his days be long, also may he be given (long)³⁸ life ...

³³ Cohen, 2006, p. 51 has published a translation of this letter. This article presents a closer, line-by-line edition of the text.

³⁴ This document has spacing, and that spacing has been retained in the transcription. Ellipses indicate a lacuna and letters in square brackets are reconstructed. In the translation, curved brackets indicate my clarification. Note that in the manuscript, the Tetragrammaton is abbreviated with three *yods* in a triangle. I have represented this here as ייי.

³⁵ I agree with Cohen's reconstruction of the last word of this line as בניים.

³⁶ Cohen has provided plausible reconstructions of the end of this line as either הנה or המקום עד הנה. While I have been more reserved in reconstructing the end of the line, Cohen's second suggestion is most likely.

³⁷ The end of the line is probably חסד בממונם ואבד but in order to avoid prescriptiveness I have not reconstructed it.

³⁸ 'Long' is not in the letter, but it is implied.

8. To inform my lord the elder ...
9. Because I came from a faraway place to [here] ...
10. and I was one of the givers, and of those who practise [compassion] ...
11. all of my wealth and all of my money and I was left ...
12. My lord the wise and good, for ...
13. now have compassion upon me according to your custom ...
14. in God and you I put [my] trust ...
15. and I am a foreigner, and therefore ...
16. From what God has given you ...
17. And may He increase your wealth and may He give ...
18. Lord, God of [our fathers] ...

2.1.3 Textual notes

2. There are at least two adjectives written here to describe the elder, but only one, מְכוּבָד, is fully preserved enough to include in the translation. Later, on line 12, הַזָּקֵן functions as an adjective for ‘wise’.³⁹ Note that זָקֵן in this letter is a title, designating an ‘elder’; it does not function as an adjective describing the addressee as ‘old’.⁴⁰
3. Cohen translates this line as ‘may He lengthen your days with goodness and your years with pleasantness’⁴¹ but I wish to draw attention to the fact that the blessing, while still directed towards the addressee, is written in third person, that is, ‘may He lengthen *his* (the addressee’s) days ...’. Distancing language such as the use of the third person in the opening blessings of letters, alongside the presence of the imperfect with jussive force, adds to the formality of the text. This is also seen in the letter discussed in section 2.1 above, where the beggar – speaking of the addressee – writes ‘May he be blessed, guarded, encouraged’ (line 6). Writing in the third person in this manner is a common feature in epistolary Hebrew.⁴² I transcribe the last letter of the line as a *waw* in order to adhere to the third person pattern which continues to this point.
4. I have reconstructed the last word of this line as מְעַשִׂי to remain consistent with the rest of the text (it is symmetrical with מַפְעִלִי in line 5). However, an alternative would be to reconstruct the end of the line as מְעַשֶׂה יְבִין.⁴³ The use of the direct object marker אֵת is not an unusual

³⁹ Cohen translates זָקֵן as a noun, thus ‘the good elder’, but it is possible to read זָקֵן as an adjective, as I have done in my translation.

⁴⁰ Bareket, 1999, pp. 41–43 describes the use of this title in the Genizah.

⁴¹ Cohen, 2006, p. 51.

⁴² Asher and Outhwaite, 2014, p. 208.

⁴³ Thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for this particular suggestion.

feature in Genizah documents,⁴⁴ but it appears to be an unusual feature in Hebrew begging letters. This line, [י] לטובה ויברך את כל מעש[יו], contains the only occurrence of אַת in our three letters, and it occurs very infrequently in those begging letters which have already been published, specifically in T-S 12.354 and T-S 8.24. In most instances it is included when it occurs within the context of a biblical quotation or allusion. That applies here in this letter as well, because even though the blessing itself is not a biblical quote, it does allude to the phrase יברך את כל מעשי ייך in Deuteronomy 15:6, which we will see as an actual quote in line 1 of the final letter of this study, T-S Misc. 28.18, transcribed in section 2.3.1.

8. The spacing here very clearly indicates the transition from the opening blessing section of the letter to the addressing and petitioning sections. This may be considered evidence that the authors adhered to an order of specific sections, especially as the letter discussed in section 2.3 below also contains similar formatting.
13. Note that the author avoids using the possessive של here (as in שלך), instead opting for an attached pronoun without של to indicate possession: כמנהג שלך, instead of שלך.
14. Due to the lacuna we cannot know for certain whether the Tetragrammaton here belongs to a previous clause or sentence, but I have translated it as belonging to the clause of this line. Note the fronted focus of עליך in the clause (and יי if it belongs with this clause). This places the emphasis on the addressee himself. It could have been written as שמתי בטחוני ביי ועליך and although the meaning would be the same, the discourse structure would have altered the emphasis and placed it upon the author – in other words, it would read as ‘I place my trust in you and God’, as opposed to ‘in God and you I place my trust’. The use of this construction in this letter serves the function of placing pressure on the addressee to acquiesce to the request.
15. The word נכרי is what is visible on the manuscript, but the first letter is slightly damaged. Within the context, the translation ‘I am a foreigner’ is sensible. Cohen notes in his edition that the author of this letter is a foreigner, possibly European, basing this on the phrase כי באתי ממקום רהוק ‘I came from a faraway place’ in line 9. Cohen leaves the phrase אני נכרי ‘I am a foreigner’ out of his translation, even though it is apparent in the text of the letter. Thus the letter itself, in two places, explicitly confirms Cohen’s argument that begging letters can be from literal ‘foreigners’.

⁴⁴ For an overview of the use of אַת in Genizah letters, see Outhwaite, 2001, pp. 213–214.

2.3 T-S Misc. 28.18⁴⁵

Material: paper. Recto: 12 lines. Verso: blank.

2.3.1 Transcription

1. לתת מט[ר אר]צך [בעתו ולברך] את כל מעש[ה] ידיך [ו]הלוית ג[וים ר]בים ואתה לא
2. תלוה לחיים ואמרו אמן ויתקיים עליכם כל הברכות ואימ[ו]רות יש בארבע
3. פינות העולם כולם יבואו ויוחלו עליכם ועל בניכם ועל בתיכם דעו אדונינו
4. ואחינו ישראל כי אני איש מן ארץ רחוקה עני ודל ואחפוץ אליך לא יש לי [שכר]
5. הצפינה ולא יש לי צידה לדרך ואני בטח ביי ובישראל אם ייי יתינ בלובכים ...
6. ורחמים בעיניכם ויעזריני בזה דרך רחוקה כי אני אליך בארצ[י] ובמולדתי ודעו א[חינו]
7. ישראל כי טוב שם משמן טוב וזה לא יכשל בישראל כי היום א[נ]י הנה שבעים יום לא
8. פרוטה אחד ולא פת לחם ב... ישראל והינה כניסה וקהל וחזון ופרנס לא יכשל א[ל] ישראל
9. כי קאל ... ב ה... וג' וכ[מ]א קאל [ו]אהבתה לרע[ך] וג' וכמא קאל
10. וצד[קה] תצ[יל] ממ[ות] וכמ[א] קאל וחי אחיד עמ[ך] וכמ[א] [ק]אל פ[ת]ח [תפת]ח את ידך
11. ל[א]חיד וכמה זה אתם בששון ושמ[חה] מיי והוא שובע ולא יש עליכם גלות
12. כמו פי ארץ פרץ לא יש זה טוב ולא יכשל ושלום על כל יש[ראל] שששששש

2.3.2 Translation

1. ... give [rain to your land in its season, and bless] all the deeds of your hands, [and] you will lend to [many nations] and you will not
2. borrow forever, amen. And may all the blessings come upon you. And may, from the four
3. corners of the earth, all of them, (the blessings) come and be applied to you and to your sons and daughters. Know, our masters
4. And our brothers Israel, that I am a man from a faraway place, poor and destitute, and I want to go, (but) I do not have the [fare]
5. (for the) boat. And I do not have provisions for the road, and I trust in God and in Israel. If God will put in your hearts ...
6. and mercy in your eyes and help me on this long journey. Because I want to go to [my] land, and the land of my birth. Know [our brothers]
7. Israel, that a (good) name is better than good oil. And this will not fail in Israel, for today [I] am here seventy days. I do not have
8. a cent and not a piece of bread ... Israel. And here is a synagogue and a community and a *hazzan* and a *parnas*. And the God of Israel will not falter
9. As it is quoted ... as it is said, 'Love your neighbour', and as it is quoted,

⁴⁵ This document makes use of spacing to delineate formulaic sections, and that spacing has been retained in the transcription. Parentheses are used for clarification in the translation.

10. ‘and righteousness delivers from death’, and as it is quoted, ‘and your brother may live with you’, and as it is quoted, ‘open your hand⁴⁶
11. to your brother’. And what joy and happiness may you have from God, and He satisfies. And may none of you be exiled
12. as in the land of disaster (where) there is no goodness. And Israel will not falter, and peace (be) upon [Israel].

2.3.3 Textual notes

1. The phrase ‘you will lend to many nations and not borrow’ is quoting Deuteronomy 15:6, but it is especially noteworthy that the author uses the verb from the root לִוָּה for ‘lend’, rather than עָבַט, which is what is used in the actual verse. The root used in the letter is common in Rabbinic Hebrew, and is synonymous with עָבַט, so its use does not appear to be controversial or interpretive.⁴⁷ It is likely that this author was much more familiar with that root and so used it here, perhaps indicating that he was more concerned with the meaning that the verse conveyed than with the correct writing of the biblical text.
2. The use of יִשׁ as opposed to אֲשֶׁר or -שׁ here is awkward, and may indicate an unfamiliarity with the more usual syntax of epistolary Hebrew. אֲשֶׁר/שׁ is not an uncommon relativiser in Genizah epistolary Hebrew, and in this letter it appears that constructions using יִשׁ are influenced by a foreign idiom.⁴⁸ This is an indicator that this writer was perhaps not accustomed to writing in Hebrew.
3. Note the plural for ‘your daughters’, which instead of the expected בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם is בְּתוּלֵיכֶם. I would not translate it as ‘houses’; it seems to be parallel with ‘sons’, and therefore ‘daughters’ is a more sensible translation.
- 3.–4. This contains the only example in our three letters of כִּי as a complementiser (דַּעוּ אֲדוֹנֵינוּ וְאֶחָיו יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי אֲנִי אִישׁ מִן אֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה) ‘know our lords and our brothers Israel *that* I am a man from a faraway land’). Of the complementisers, both כִּי and שׁ are used in broad Genizah correspondence as a general characteristic, so it is noteworthy that this instance of כִּי is the only occurrence of a complementiser in the three letters which

⁴⁶ Much of this line has been reconstructed, but to ease reading I have not put reconstruction brackets in the English translation.

⁴⁷ See Jastrow, 1903, p. 697 (entry under לִוָּה, לוי) for the extensive rabbinic usage of this root.

⁴⁸ See the note for line 4. Also, see Outhwaite, 2000, p. 42 for a note on the usage of אֲשֶׁר in the Genizah epistolary corpus. He describes the use of this particle as ‘interchangeable’ with its shortened form.

are discussed here (it is repeated on lines 6–7).⁴⁹ The phrase used here, ידע + כי, is a preferred construction in Genizah correspondence.⁵⁰

4. The phrase לא יש לי is awkward: we would expect לי אין, yet לא יש לי is a favoured phrase of this author. This construction may be due to influence from Spanish: the same phrase occurs in T-S 16.100 (line 20), a letter which originated in Spain. Such a construction could be considered as similar to the Spanish *no tengo* + object ('I do not have' + object).⁵¹ This makes sense of the pattern in general terms: the negation comes first, and it precedes the particle יש, here a replacement for what would be the first person present tense verb in Spanish.⁵² While it is entirely possible that this is the case, it also appears that the author is not entirely certain how to use the particle יש, as he uses the construction יש ב- on line 2 and יש זה on line 12; these are patterns for which I do not have a plausible explanation. Another possibility is that the phrase לא יש comes from the Arabic ليس, which is semantically identical. Given the evidence in other letters for this phrase resulting from Spanish influence, as well as the amount of Arabic influence shown in this particular document, both possibilities seem equally plausible.⁵³
5. In this line, we find הצפינה for an expected הספינה – that is, with צ for an expected ס – suggesting the influence of the author's vernacular on his pronunciation of the Hebrew sibilant. There are also two issues with regard to the verbs on this line. First is אני בטח, which is noteworthy because בטח is not conjugated (or if conjugated, is written defectively, which in this instance is unusual). Next, he spells the verb נתן in *plene* form (יתין), and this *plene* spelling of the *şere* is a "pronounced characteristic" of Genizah letters.⁵⁴ When it comes to the word 'your hearts', what is written in the document appears to involve the exchange of *waw* for *bet* (i.e. לובבכים instead of לובבכם); the two would have a similar sound in this instance, where the author is using a ו in place of the fricative ב.

⁴⁹ Outhwaite, 2001, pp. 205–206.

⁵⁰ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 206, referring to Outhwaite, 2000, p. 45, notes: "In Genizah letters generally, it can be seen that verbs denoting speaking, knowing and understanding ... prefer the complementizer כי whereas other verbs, those in particular with a volitive or directive aspect ... tend to take the complementizer ש."

⁵¹ Yahalom, 1999. Thanks to Dr Ben Outhwaite for bringing this to my attention.

⁵² One does not need to use an explicit pronoun יו 'I' here; the verb is conjugated as first person singular.

⁵³ Outhwaite explores the possibility of this being a Greek construction, as the same construction also occurs in a Byzantine scribe's documents; see Outhwaite, 2009, p. 198, especially n. 55. I would argue that, as it shows up in the writing of speakers of both Spanish and Greek backgrounds, it is most likely an indicator that the author's native tongue is, or is influenced by, a non-Semitic language.

⁵⁴ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 217.

Alternatively, the ם may reflect a vowel which has been partially assimilated to the following consonant ך. More specifically, an *i* vowel here preceding the labial ך would be labialised under assimilation to the consonant, thereby shifting to *u*.⁵⁵

7. The author begins this line with a quote from Ecclesiastes 7:1, noting that ‘a good name is better than fine oil’. I interpret the next clause to mean that Israel’s greatness will not fail the writer’s expectations with regard to his request. His use of the word הנה here as opposed to הינה (which occurs on the next line) is probably unremarkable, but this particular spelling has been linked to the Arabic word هنا.⁵⁶
8. Juxtaposing his request for assistance with his estimation of the Jewish community makes his request seem even more reasonable; that is, ‘surely Israel will not falter in supporting me’. Note the author’s use of the Arabicism כניסה, which is a Hebraicised derivation from كنيسة and is frequent in Genizah correspondence.⁵⁷
9. This line is a quotation, the only legible part of which is a quote from Leviticus 19:18.
10. This line is also a mixture of quotations from the Tanakh, separated by the quotation indicator. The first quote comes from Proverbs 10:2 or 11:4 (the phrase occurs in both places), the second from Leviticus 25:36 and the third (which spills over onto line 11) from Deuteronomy 15:11. It does not appear that these quotes are marked by any diacritics, but they would not need to be so marked since they are introduced in the text as quotations.⁵⁸
12. The use of כמ here is noteworthy. It is not a common conjunction, especially without the prefix -ש, and is rare in other forms of Hebrew.⁵⁹ Equally, its meaning here in the sentence is unclear. The phrase ארץ פרוץ is rhymed prose, with פרוץ denoting disaster or trouble.⁶⁰ The translation is difficult, but the general meaning is a blessing: a hope that the addressee(s) will not suffer exile in a place where tribulation occurs.

⁵⁵ *Waw/bet* interchange is also attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls, for the same reasons we see it here. Reymond, 2014 notes this phenomenon (see p. 70 for a specific example). He also points to instances where “a following bilabial (/b/, /m/, /p/) or *resh* causes the shift from an /i/, /e/, or /a/ vowel to an /o/ or /u/ vowel” (p. 174), which may be what is occurring here. Qimron, 1986 also describes the assimilation of bilabials in the Dead Sea Scrolls (pp. 39–40).

⁵⁶ Outhwaite, 2001, p. 213.

⁵⁷ Outhwaite, 2009, p. 188.

⁵⁸ Thanks to David Sklare for help in identifying the biblical passages on this very damaged line.

⁵⁹ Outhwaite, 2000, p. 48.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the root פרוץ and its connotations, see Jastrow, 1903, pp. 1237–1238.

3 Analysis and further commentary

I am primarily concerned with three aspects of these documents' internal features:

- a. their macro-structure: their formulaic features and the order of their internal elements;
- b. their linguistic register: the location and extent of 'biblicising' or 'rabbinicising' features in the language, whether this appears in the form of quotations or in a mixture of syntactic and lexical elements;
- c. their Hebrew: the skill demonstrated in the use of the language and the presence of external linguistic influences upon it.

In this section I show that the letters are comprised of a definite formulaic structure which is simple but consistent and well-suited to the purposes of begging. They also display a register of medieval Hebrew which contains similar features found in Gaonic correspondence, yet is less sophisticated and less complex. In particular, my linguistic findings complement Bareket's conceptual understanding of the formulaic features in the begging letters.⁶¹

With regard to structure, the documents themselves can be split into a six-part formulaic structure:

1. opening biblical quotation or *bismillah*
2. blessings and honorifics
3. direct addressing of the recipient
4. justification for writing and defence of motives
5. request
6. closing blessings and signature

This six-part structure can be grouped into three obvious subsections: the opening, which consists of parts 1–3 (though parts 1–3 can vary in their order somewhat); the body, which consists of parts 4 and 5; and the closing, part 6. All three of the letters discussed here follow this six-part structure, and it tentatively appears that the documents published by Bareket and Scheiber also adhere to this 'template' (if one dares use so strong a word to describe informal letters such as these). In our letters, the six-part structure appears as follows:

Opening:

- Mosseri II.98.1: recto lines 1–8
- T-S 8J13.5: lines 1–7
- T-S Misc. 28.18: lines 1–3

⁶¹ Bareket, 2001, especially pp. 362–363.

Body:

- Mosseri II.98.1: recto line 9–beginning of verso line 3
- T-S 8J13.5: lines 8–15
- T-S Misc. 28.18: end of line 3–line 10

Closing:

- Mosseri II.98.1: verso lines 3–4
- T-S 8J13.5: 16–18
- T-S Misc. 28.18: 11–12

The discussion in sections 3.1 and 3.2 focuses on the formulaic structure and linguistic register of the opening and the body of the letters. The closings of these texts are very simple in their structure and warrant a separate discussion in section 3.3.

3.1 Formulaic structure

These medieval Hebrew begging letters belong to the array of petitionary literature of the 11th century Middle East, which consists mainly of petitions in Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic. Thus we can understand their features more clearly by contextualising them within this petitioning culture. Arabic petitions have a definite formulaic structure, the specific elements of which shifted and developed over the centuries and, especially in the Fatimid period, this structure consisted in general of specific formulaic blessings surrounding an inner core of “exposition, request, and motivation”.⁶² Our documents, too, follow a specific formulaic order of elements. However, it would be a mistake to assume that these documents were *directly* inspired by, or in direct imitation of, the structure of Islamic/Judaeo-Arabic petitions.⁶³ It seems much more likely that the structure of Hebrew begging letters was loosely influenced by their more formal Judaeo-Arabic counterparts, and more strongly determined by individual need. Furthermore, a poor petitioner would not necessarily have had easy access to the rich petitionary models exhibited by the Islamic/Judaeo-Arabic texts.⁶⁴ One may argue that some (or indeed many) begging letters were written by scribes on behalf of the beggar, and thus would allow the beggar to

⁶² Khan, 1990b, p. 8.

⁶³ Cohen himself notes that “the Geniza [begging] letters were supplications, in the style of Muslim-Arabic petitions to rulers or other dignitaries” (Cohen, 2005a, p. 418). But he also asserts that they “conform even less consistently to the eight-part structure of the Islamic petition” which was elucidated by Khan (Cohen, 2000, p. 448). While they belong to the same genre as Islamic petitions, Jewish, and especially Hebrew, begging letters must be considered on their own merits.

⁶⁴ T-S 8J13.5 is unusual: the author must have been an educated beggar. It was written in a practised hand and contains elegant vocabulary and syntax, both of which indicate this man was a scribe and/or educated. Thus we cannot paint the situation with a broad brush. Educated people also fell on hard times and needed to request assistance.

express himself in a higher register. This is possible, but in the case of the three documents here, it seems unlikely. Given the uneven spread of ability with Hebrew, the frequent impingement of non-Hebrew vernacular on the Hebrew text, the highly personal and intimate nature of the letters, and (with the exception of T-S 8J13.5) informal handwriting, it appears far more likely that these documents were penned by the beggars themselves. Thus I see begging letters as only *indirectly* influenced by the Islamic petitionary style and only loosely connected to the strictures of a formal petition. Ultimately they are tethered by the general practice of a petitioning culture, but remain freer in terms of formulaic structure, eloquence and content.

3.1.1 Opening

Each of the documents begins either with a biblical quotation (Mosseri II.98.1 and T-S Misc. 28.18) or a version of the *bismillah* (T-S 8J13.5).⁶⁵ A couple of the already published manuscripts also begin with a shortened form of the *bismillah* (T-S 18J4.4 and BL Or. 4856.1 have בשמך רהמנא at their beginnings). If biblical quotations are included in this section, they are usually, but not always, marked with diacritics or formatted differently from the rest of the text. Mosseri II.98.1, as noted above, places *rafes* over the relevant *bgdkft* consonants in the quotation from Psalms.⁶⁶ The presence of such graphical indicators for an opening passage serves to set this section of the opening apart in an almost formulaic manner, which is strong evidence of adherence to a particular structure. Furthermore, the nearly universal tendency in these letters to use abbreviations for the honorifics indicates a formulaic structure simply by the presence of the easily recognised shorthand. In the letters published by Bareket and Scheiber, abbreviated honorifics occur in BL Or. 4856.1, T-S 18J4.4, L-G Misc. 39,⁶⁷ T-S 13J17.9 and T-S 12.354.

The direct addressing of the letter's recipient tends to mark the transition point between the opening blessings and the body. This has an effect on the format of the letter, as the opening blessings are usually separated from the address by a blank space,⁶⁸ although sometimes the letters do not adhere to a

⁶⁵ The top of T-S Misc. 28.18 is cut off, so it is possible that this document began with the *bismillah* or further biblical quotations. The important point is that it is normal for biblical quotations and/or the *bismillah* to appear close to the beginning of these letters. Bareket, 2001, p. 362 notes that blessings and praises typically accompany the quotation or the *bismillah*.

⁶⁶ Other examples from the published texts: BL Or. 4856.1 marks the scriptures at the beginning of the letter by adhering to the formatting of the quoted scripture, as well as using occasional diacritics to ensure the reading is correct; and T-S 8J16.29 has four lines of marked scripture beginning the letter, separated from the rest of the letter by obvious spacing.

⁶⁷ Previously Westminster Misc. 39. The Westminster Collection is now the Lewis-Gibson Genizah Collection, and is shared by the Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

⁶⁸ In the already published begging letters, obvious spacing appears to occur in BL Or. 4856.1, T-S 18J4.4, ENA 2808.31, T-S 13J7.9 and T-S 12.24. In T-S NS 325.184 the addressee appears in the opening, and though it is not reflected in Scheiber's edition, the image shows spacing in line 4 after שמך. The body of the letter then follows.

strict formula of spacing (this inconsistency is unsurprising for informal begging letters).⁶⁹ In the letters described here, this spacing is very evident in T-S 8J13.5 and T-S Misc. 28.18.

Variation is possible, as sometimes the addressee can be mentioned twice in the opening section: first with the blessings, and then in the part where he is addressed directly. This occurs in two of the letters here, Mosseri II.98.1 and T-S 8J13.5. In both instances, it is clear that the first mention of the addressee does not serve as the direct address because third person reference is used at this point; the following mention is the direct address, where second person reference is used. For example in Mosseri II.98.1, the opening refers to the addressee in the third person – *יברכהו וישמרהו* ‘may he be blessed and guarded’ – and the same occurs in T-S 8J13.5 – *ויברך את כל מעש[יו]* ‘may you bless all of his deeds’; these mentions of the addressee thus do not serve as direct addresses. The major indentation in the line of the text typically occurs before the second, direct mention of the addressee. This direct address both closes the opening and flows seamlessly into the body of the text.

3.1.2 Body

While the opening is the longest section, the body of the document is succinct. Here the register, syntax and vocabulary shift dramatically from florid, allusion-based language to a more direct and original register, though it is often interspersed with reinforcing quotations and allusions where necessary. Because this section contains many individual details, it is the most variable and the least formulaic of all the sections.

The body is comprised of two parts: a justification or statement in defence of writing, and the actual request itself. In the justification the beggar defends his intentions and describes why he is writing, often emphasising his hesitancy to write a letter. This primes him to make his request elegantly. All three of the letters discussed here show this definite pattern.

The justification section appears first in the formulaic order. It tends to not only justify the author’s reason for writing, but also serves to admonish the addressee to respond favourably to the request. Bareket has also noted this admonishing trend in her documents, though she does not say that the trend belongs to a justification section, instead indicating that the admonishing tone reminds the addressee of the commandment of charity.⁷⁰ For the three letters here, however, it seems that this admonishment comprises an actual formulaic feature in their structure. In Mosseri II.98.1 the author spends quite a few lines justifying his reasons for writing and declaring his proper intentions. This is evident in these phrases:

⁶⁹ For example, this spacing is absent from Mosseri II.98.1 discussed here, and from T-S 12.354, T-S 8J16.29 and L-G Misc. 39.

⁷⁰ Bareket, 2001, p. 363.

‘I did not write this letter to you out of shame, because God knows if I had [money] I would not write to you’ (recto, lines 9–12)

‘and truly, do not blame me, [because] God knows ...’ (recto, line 17)

T-S 8J13.5 contains two justification clauses: ‘because I came from a faraway place’ and ‘because I was one of the givers, and of those who practise [compassion]’ (lines 9 and 10). In other words, while the author is asking for support now, he is making it clear that he used to be someone who gave support to others (which justifies his current request). T-S Misc. 28.18 also contains a lengthy justification section, mainly in lines 4–7 (with the theme revisited in line 10). First, the author describes himself as a foreigner, ‘poor and destitute’, but he also couches the justification in the phrases of ‘I trust in God and in Israel’, ‘this will not fail in Israel’ and ‘the God of Israel will not falter’, thus reminding the community of its duty to help those like him. The climax of his justification lies in the scriptural quotations in line 10: after all, what is more admonishing than to quote a scripture which says, ‘open your hand to your brother’?

The justification section of the letters is typically followed by the request – T-S Misc. 28.18 is unique in this regard, with the request mixed in with the justification. However, the requests (what we can see of them) are not made in an overt fashion. Their tone is indirect, which is sensible, as the general tone of begging letters is to follow a sense of decorum and avoid overt begging.⁷¹ In Mosseri II.98.1 the actual request is located on the verso, where he writes ‘even a cent[’s worth of bread] and I will dwell for two days’. In T-S 8J13.5 the request itself has been destroyed, but we can see the beginning in line 13, ‘now have compassion upon me according to your custom’, with the following request having been lost. T-S Misc. 28.18 is quite damaged, but we do have part of the request, which is made indirectly: ‘I do not have a cent and not a piece of bread ... And here is a synagogue and a community and a *hazzan* and a *parnas*. And the God of Israel will not falter.’ Importantly, in no legible place do any of these three authors include a statement with a verb which would make a direct request.

3.2 Linguistic register

These begging letters are written in medieval Hebrew, but within that language the register sometimes shifts to favour more biblicalising or rabbinicising features. The most obvious changes in tone occur in the openings and closings of each document. The innermost parts of the letters are the most original and the least dependent upon external textual syntax, allowing us to glimpse the

⁷¹ Exemplary of this desire to avoid begging is Mosseri II.98.1, where it states, ‘I did not write to you out of shame’; Cohen, 2005a, pp. 174–188 extensively discusses the desire to avoid shame in asking for assistance.

foreign influence of the particular author's vernacular, whether it be Arabic or another language.⁷² As a general comment, it appears that the syntax and the vocabulary of these documents, when not influenced by the author's mother tongue, correspond to a simplified form of what might be called Gaonic Hebrew.⁷³ We have a mixture of Biblical Hebrew syntax and of *plene* and *defectiva* spellings, post-biblical terminology, and the use of particular archaisms, and all of these features are also found in Gaonic correspondence. However, the begging letters employ these elements in a less complex and masterful fashion, often make 'errors' owing to an influence of the author's mother tongue (which is not Hebrew) upon the written Hebrew, and adhere to a formulaic, but less formal, format.

3.2.1 Opening

The opening blessings tend to contain a biblical quotation, but even if they do not, they are usually written in a register which imitates biblical syntax.⁷⁴ An obvious indicator of this syntax is the employment of imperfect with jussive force.⁷⁵ Mosseri II.98.1 uses this technique quite heavily, and although its particular use of the jussive is not especially biblical, it is still formalised writing. Lines 6–8 are the most exemplary:

- ... 6. אלהינו יברכה וישמרהו ויעודדהו [ו]...
 ... 7. לשם ותהילה ויזכהו לראות שמחת ...
 ... 8. אמן ויזכהו לראות ביאת גואל ידוע

T-S 8J13.5 combines the imperfect with jussive force quite frequently in the opening lines:

- ... 3. ויארִיךְ ימיו בטוב ושנותי[ו]...
 ... 4. לטובה ויברך את כל מעש[יו]...
 ... 5. מפעליו ו[יז]כה ויראה בנ[ים]...
 ... 6. וגם יחיה וישמר וינצור ויפרה...
 ... 7. יארִיךְ ימיו ירבה שנותיו יום...

⁷² However, the reader should note that I have been very careful to not speculate about the supposed vernaculars of the authors of these begging letters in this article. One can present the evidence, but one must be careful not to assert what cannot be known. What we do know is that certain external linguistic features are apparent in these letters: we cannot ultimately say for certain what language(s) the authors spoke.

⁷³ For an overview of this kind of Hebrew, see Outhwaite, 2013. His PhD dissertation (2000) is a comprehensive study of its linguistic features.

⁷⁴ This feature is found in other, more formal correspondence; for an example of a formal document written in Hebrew in this period that has an opening which uses biblical syntax and allusions, see T-S 20.173 in Ashur and Outhwaite, 2014.

⁷⁵ For a more comprehensive discussion of the use of the jussive, the imperfect with jussive force and the *waw*-consecutive, see Niccacci, 2013, a general survey on *waw*-consecutive, and the references therein; also Outhwaite, 2013, pp. 4–5, which shows that Hebrew letters in this period tend to use the *waw*-consecutive and the jussive in imitation of older forms of Hebrew.

Although the syntax of T-S Misc. 28.18 is markedly different and relatively influenced by Arabic, the author still employs these features in the blessing, beginning after the space on line 2; יבואו ויוחלו is the most overt instance:

2. תלוה לחיים ואמרו אמן ויתקיים עליכם כל הברכות ואימ[ן]רות יש בארבע
3. פינות העולם כולם יבואו ויוחלו עליכם ועל בניכם ועל בתיכם דעו אדונינו

Post-biblical language is common throughout the letters, but it is most apparent in the blessings and the honorifics surrounding the addressee (most telling are the titles אדוני, זקן, נבון, and חכם). Specifically rabbinic vocabulary, however, is apparent in T-S Misc. 28.18, where the author switches from the more common biblical verb for ‘lending’, עבט, and instead uses לוה, a verb that is extremely common in rabbinic literature. As noted in section 2.3.3, the meanings of the verbs are synonymous, and so it appears that the author was using the vocabulary which was more familiar to him: he knew the concept of the quotation, but utilised the particular verb because of its familiarity. It is noteworthy that despite the use of rabbinic vocabulary, T-S Misc. 28.18 does not contain formal, rabbinicised titles in the opening address. This may be because the document was written to a community, but even when he describes the community in line 8 (והינה כניסה וקהל וזון ופר[ן]ים), he does not include any descriptors which would be overtly rabbinicised in nature.

3.2.2 Body

Because the content of the body section is highly individualised, the writers are less dependent upon formal constructions except when they wish to use an allusion to justify their reasons for writing. The lack of dependence upon formulaic syntactic and lexical structures makes the language of the writers less standardised. In our letters, we see a few errors in the language where it is sometimes possible to see the author’s mother tongue shining through the syntax of the poorly constructed Hebrew. The most evident example is T-S Misc. 28.18, which contains a few examples of written code-switching into Arabic.

While the letters themselves contain a conglomeration of biblical and post-biblical vocabulary, certain authors tend to use more of one type than another. Mosseri II.98.1, for example, uses mostly post-biblical Hebrew nouns and other vocabulary (examples include חגיגה, מזל, יד ושם, חגיגה, גבוה, מפילו, and גואל).⁷⁶ The use of בלא as opposed to בלי in this letter does not seem to carry any significance when it comes to word selection or register. While T-S 8J13.5 also contains mainly post-biblical vocabulary, the author chooses a very elegant word, אודיע, when he addresses the recipient for the first time (line 8). This archaism significantly adds to the formality of the tone of the letter, which is,

⁷⁶ In determining whether a particular word or root was ‘rabbinic’, ‘biblical’ or ‘post-biblical’, I relied on three sources: the Bar Ilan Responsa database; Jastrow, 1903; and Outhwaite, 2000.

on the whole, the most skilled of the three. T-S Misc. 28.18 has the most diverse vocabulary of the three letters, with multiple biblical quotations, and it also includes Arabic phrases and constructions which I have tentatively traced back to the influence of a non-Semitic language.

Overall, it appears that these letters are interspersed with biblical and post-biblical elements. Biblical Hebrew is frequently used rhetorically, especially in quotations and in the opening syntax of the letters, whereas post-biblical Hebrew in an informal register seems to be the baseline and the structure to which the authors orient in their general language. This indicates that the authors are by and large familiar with Hebrew as a literary language, mostly through an oral medium, but they are not highly educated and so do not have a complex mastery of the higher, more formal or more poetic registers of Hebrew that are seen in letters written by the Geonim and *paytanim*.

3.3 Brief notes on the closing section

The brevity and lack of grandiose formulaic features are the most notable aspects of the closing section of these letters. Rarely more than a couple of lines, it consists of a transitional blessing flowing from the body of the text. The addressee may or may not be mentioned again, but further blessings are conferred on him (again using third person reference). Rarely are the endings of the letters preserved enough to show the full signature.⁷⁷ The syntax is much like that of the opening section of the letters, as it relies on biblical and rabbinic allusions to confer the final blessings upon the addressee.

4 Conclusion

In this brief study I have presented an edition of three Hebrew begging letters and have thoroughly commented upon their internal structure, their linguistic register and the authors' skills in Hebrew. I compared my observations with the features of those Hebrew begging letters which have already been published, and noted areas where the underlying native tongue of the writer shows through the literary Hebrew. Though three specific letters have been the focus here, it seems possible that the findings of my analysis may apply to other contemporary Hebrew begging letters. I wish to emphasise that more research should be done in order to confirm, on a wider and more certain scale, the conclusions which I have laid forth here concerning the structure and language of Hebrew begging letters.

Through this analysis it seems clear that the language and structure of these letters are related to formal correspondence in Gaonic Hebrew and Judaeo-

⁷⁷ The repeated *shims* at the end of T-S Misc. 28.18 are graphic line-fillers, and are not used as a signature.

Arabic, but are only loosely influenced by the Islamic petitionary model. These Hebrew begging letters consistently follow a six-part structure, the most important sections being the justification and the request. The justification typically precedes and seems to be necessary for the request. The request is couched in indirect language and is made in a florid manner, which indicates an influence from more formal petitions. The profile of their features thus makes it apparent that Hebrew begging letters are a medium which is influenced by the higher levels of Gaonic correspondence. Moreover, they show that even the average layperson was able to utilise this style of language in a formulaic and persuasive manner. Their structural features, combined with the unique and sometimes varied levels of register, not only define such letters as a distinct type of Genizah correspondence, but also situate them solidly within the rich continuum of petitionary practices in the early medieval Middle East.

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Birds of a Feather? Arabic Scribal Conventions in Christian and Jewish Arabic

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1 Confessional varieties: Judaeo-Arabic, Christian Arabic and Muslim Arabic

The founding father of the field of Middle Arabic, Joshua Blau, wrote the first proper grammar of ‘Christian Arabic’, and also coined the term ‘Judaeo-Arabic’ in his numerous works on Jewish varieties of Arabic.¹ Much of his work propagated the separation between confessional dialects, rendered in statements such as: “the writers of Judaeo-Arabic, themselves, in fact, had the feeling they were writing in a separate language”.² Blau’s works were pioneering and inspired many scholars to engage with Middle Arabic sources, but his general ideas about the nature of Middle Arabic and his ideas of segregation between the different confessional varieties of Arabic have been increasingly viewed with caution.

In recent years, various scholars have argued quite strongly against a separation of Arabic dialects according to confessional lines. Johannes Den Heijer, for example, who works mainly on Christian Arabic texts, suggests that religious sociolects should essentially be viewed as registers, comparable to those used in medical and philosophical texts.³ Similar reservations have been expressed by Holes, who finds little foundation for convincing confessional difference in modern spoken dialects.⁴ Shohat has disputed the concept of Judaeo-Arabic itself in very strong terms and called it a nationalist projection onto the Arabic of Jews, which mirrors “the persistence of the ‘Arab versus Jew’ dichotomy”⁵ and “reflects an undergirding investment in dislocating Arab-Jews from their Arab past”.⁶

¹ See Blau, 1966–1967; Blau, 1980; Blau, 1981; Blau, 1988. This paper follows Geoffrey Khan’s recommendation to use the term Judaeo-Arabic only to designate Arabic written in Hebrew script; see Khan, 2007, p. 526.

² Blau, 1988, p. 102.

³ Den Heijer, 2012.

⁴ Holes, in press.

⁵ Shohat, 2015, p. 14.

⁶ Shohat, 2015, p. 64.

Ideology appears to play an important role in the way confessional varieties of Arabic are being described.⁷ In a general article on how ideologies create perceptions of linguistic difference, Gal and Irvine have contended that “speakers and observers notice, justify and rationalize linguistic differences, placing them within larger ideological frames ... sometimes exaggerating or even creating linguistic differentiation”.⁸ The distinctness of Judaeo-Arabic in particular as opposed to other confessional varieties of Middle Arabic often seems overly emphasised. Features that are part of a greater substandard continuum are sometimes described as typical Jewish phenomena, when they can also be found in other confessional varieties.

Having academically grown up with Blau’s work, many of his ideas guided my early research on Judaeo-Arabic, and over years of studying Middle Arabic documents I have nurtured the impression that Judaeo-Arabic is more progressive than Christian Arabic in the way it takes up colloquial forms, and more inventive in creating its own register, and that it is more removed from contemporary Muslim norms than Christian Arabic. The question that arises for me now, after critically engaging with the concept of confessional varieties, is whether this impression can actually be verified through linguistic analyses, and how much of this difference and the specific inventory of Judaeo-Arabic is potentially due to writing in Hebrew script.

To approach this, I will compare two sets of texts from Jewish and Christian authors in the following for their similarities and differences. I have chosen to concentrate on mercantile correspondence, specifically letters from the Ottoman period. The corpora I have chosen are suitable for three different reasons. Firstly, as documentary sources they can be reliably dated and have not been subject to copying and editing processes. Secondly, mercantile correspondence is often linguistically more progressive than other sorts of texts, as I will describe below, and therefore linguistic change can be monitored more easily in business writing. Thirdly, work on this time period could potentially open up further avenues of comparative research, as there are literary texts available written in Garshuni and in Judaeo-Arabic from the same time period; this will enable further study of the differences between Jewish and Christian Arabic, focusing on whether the use of non-Arabic scripts by writers of the two confessional varieties yield different results from this study, in which the Christian writers use Arabic script, while the Jewish writers employ Hebrew script.

2 Features in 18th and 19th century Christian Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic mercantile letters

In many text genres, the Arabic used in medieval Christian and Jewish sources is very close to what would be considered the standard Muslim Arabic of the

⁷ Wagner, in press.

⁸ Gal and Irvine, 1995, pp. 992–993.

time. To detect difference in medieval material, one would ideally rely on corpus linguistics carried out on an extensive compilation of sources, as statistical analyses would enable us to detect variations that might go unnoticed otherwise. In contrast, an investigation of Ottoman material is more fruitful even in smaller samples of text, as we see much more variation in this late material as opposed to the earlier sources.

This article thus focuses on the investigation of variation between the Arabic used in different confessional groups in the Ottoman period, concentrating on mercantile correspondence. These business letters are very suitable for purposes of comparison for various reasons. First, operating in a linguistic mercantile continuum comprising members of all three Abrahamic religions, traders by and large appear to avoid non-Arabic forms to a greater extent than, for example, dignitaries, which allows us to concentrate on the Arabic by itself, without being distracted by Hebrew which is commonly used in Jewish Arabic literature.⁹ Secondly, the language employed by traders in many countries displays particular features that cannot be found in other text genres. Linguistic forms in mercantile letters are often closer to the spoken language, and specific words and phrases cross the threshold of codification – that is, they are written down for the first time – in a mercantile context. The literacy of traders has been coined ‘pragmatic literacy’ by Parkes,¹⁰ as they write in particular circumstances – they typically compose their correspondence efficiently, in great quantity and fast. The socially open linguistic networks and their geographic mobility add to this particular kind of literacy induced by certain frameworks of education and writing purpose, and facilitate the introduction of progressive language forms and linguistic levelling.¹¹ All these aspects make traders’ writings very worthy subjects of linguistic study.¹²

An additional advantage in focusing on mercantile writings is the availability of suitable materials. Extant corpora of both Christian and Jewish traders’ letters from roughly the same period of time have been preserved, and with an increasing focus on Ottoman Arabic documentary materials in current Arabist research, we should soon be able to compare Christian and Jewish materials with contemporary Muslim sources of the same text genre.¹³ More

⁹ Wagner and Connolly, 2018 have shown that mercantile correspondence contains only a few Hebrew words and phrases as opposed to contemporary communal correspondence. They have also demonstrated that individuals would vary the Hebrew content of their letters according to the genre: the same writers might use extensive Hebrew phrases in their correspondence for communal, political or religious purposes, but avoid Hebrew in their mercantile letters.

¹⁰ Parkes, 1973.

¹¹ For a study of closed and open network linguistic analyses, see Alcolado Carnicero, 2017.

¹² The role of the middle class, and in particular traders, in the course of emergence of vernacular languages has been explored in a book edited by Wagner, Beinhoff and Outhwaite, 2017; see also Wagner, 2013 and Wagner, 2017.

¹³ In addition to the work on the Prize Papers and the Genizah collections, discussed below, other documentary corpora being worked on include diaries and letters from the Gotha Research Library, which are currently being studied and prepared for publication by Boris Liebrecht and Kristina Richardson, and Garshuni letters edited by George Kiraz. Samples of these and many

than a hundred Jewish letters from the late 18th and early 19th centuries have been preserved in the Cairo Genizah, scattered in the different Genizah collections, with over-proportionally large batches of correspondence preserved in the collections of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), the Rylands Genizah Collection and the Mosseri Collection. The letters come from a Jewish trade network operating in Egypt.¹⁴

From a slightly earlier time, several dozen Christian traders' letters have been preserved in the Prize Papers collection in The National Archives in Kew, London.¹⁵ These letters were written in the years 1758 and 1759 by Egyptian Christian traders to their business partners in Egypt. The compared corpora are thus only separated by half a century. Apart from the similar geographical and chronological contexts, there is an even tighter link between the two different corpora: in the Prize Papers, the Egyptian-based company Francis and Sons is mentioned, and this is also the name of a firm receiving and sending large numbers of letters in the Genizah collections.

The basis for an examination of linguistic features in Jewish documentary writing is thus this corpus of Judaeo-Arabic letters from the Cairo Genizah, comprising the ten letters listed in table 1.¹⁶

Table 1. Judaeo-Arabic letters in the corpus (RGC = Rylands Genizah Collection)

Classmark	Sender	Addressee
L-G Misc. 24	Pinto Vasuarez	Elijah Sa'd and Jacob Šalom
T-S 10J16.35	Abraham Hamān & Gabriel Ḥefez	Mercado Karo & Simeon Fransis
T-S 10J19.22	Nissim Mašiš	Mercado Karo & Simeon Fransis
T-S 10J19.24	Unknown	Mercado Karo & Simeon Fransis
AIU VIII 132	Unknown	Mercado Karo & Simeon Fransis
T-S NS 99.23	Solomon Ḥayyim & Abraham Jizana	Mercado Ḥayyim Abraham ha-Levi
RGC A 803	Nissim Sabbāḥ	Jacob Yabets
RGC L 205	David b. Na'im	Moses b. Na'im
RCG A 701	Raḥamīm Abzardil	Moses b. Na'im
T-S NS 99.38	Abraham Hamān and Gabriel Ḥefez	Mercado Karo and Simeon Fransis

These letters exhibit quite a bit of linguistic variation, with certain pieces containing many more colloquial and Middle Arabic features than others. For

other Ottoman Arabic documents will be included in a forthcoming handbook and reader of Ottoman Arabic, which is being prepared by a large number of scholars from the fields of Arabic, Turkish and Ottoman Studies, to be edited by Esther-Miriam Wagner.

¹⁴ The letters are part of a project started by Geoffrey Khan, which Esther-Miriam Wagner and Mohamed Ahmed have now joined, as a result of which editions of about fifty letters will be published in the near future. Some of these Late Judaeo-Arabic letters have already been edited, and appear in: Khan, 1991; Khan, 1992; Khan, 2006; Khan, 2014; Wagner and Ahmed, forthcoming.

¹⁵ This correspondence is currently studied by Esther-Miriam Wagner and Mohamed Ahmed, to be published within the next three years.

¹⁶ The transcriptions of T-S and AIU letters in the table were originally compiled by Geoffrey Khan. I transcribed the L-G letter. With Mohamed Ahmed, I also transcribed the Rylands letters, for an edition of the three; see Wagner and Ahmed, forthcoming.

example, some letters spell final long /ā/ with א, as in Standard Arabic norms, but others use ה, reflecting the shortened pronunciation of final long vowels. Or, T-S 10J19.24 shows some rather unusual features which set it apart from most of the other correspondence. It spells some forms going back to Classical Arabic ذ with ז, as in אלזי T-S 10J19.24/25 ‘which’ or זליך T-S 10J19.24/8 ‘this’,¹⁷ while other examples going equally back to Classical Arabic ذ have ג, as in דלוקה T-S 10J19.24/10 ‘now’. In this last case, obviously the colloquial form is written as it is pronounced, with [d], while the forms which are not a regular part of the colloquial repertoire, אלזי and זליך, are spelled somewhat reflecting their Classical Arabic pronunciation.

This rich Jewish material is compared with a corpus of ten Christian business letters from the Prize Papers collection. These letters are all kept under the classmark HCA 32/212 in The National Archives. Some of them have individual classmarks on the sheets of paper, but because many of the letters were removed from bigger envelopes and opened for the very first time for me when I initially visited The National Archives and viewed the Arabic materials, the majority have not received further classmarks within the generic classmark for the box in which they were kept. Mohamed Ahmed and I, while working on a volume to publish the letters, have given provisional classmarks to the letters. The ten letters on which the comparison here is based are listed in table 2 – note that the last two have individual classmarks.

Table 2. Christian Arabic letters in the corpus

No.	Sender	Addressee
1	Gerges Faranjī	Yūsuf
3	Ni‘mat Allāh Da‘ūd	Ni‘mat Allāh al-Šāmī
4	‘Isā Zal’ūm	Ni‘mat Allāh al-Šāmī
11	Anton Ḳayr	Yūsuf and Faḍl Allāh
17	Yūsuf Baktī	Elias Mesk
20	Anton Ḳayr	Yūsuf
23	Yūsuf Baktī	Yūsuf
24	Yūsuf Baktī	Buṭrus
27 (NAL HCA 32/212 E25)	Anton Ḳayr	Demetri Ḳayr
29 (NAL HCA 32/212 E23)	Anton Ḳayr	Nicola

For the purposes of the comparison between Jewish and Christian letters, I concentrate here on a limited number of common features only, specifically on those which can be explored in the limited space available here, although I understand that the topic would merit a much larger and more comprehensive

¹⁷ In medieval Judaeo-Arabic epistolary writing, the Classical Arabic system of near and far deixis has been abandoned and there is a clear differentiation between pronominal demonstratives and attributive demonstratives as well as a possible distinction between anaphoric and cataphoric demonstratives. The demonstrative *hādā* is mainly used as an attributive demonstrative, while *ḏālika* serves almost exclusively pronominally, in this specific example with the meaning ‘this’ rather than Classical Arabic ‘that’.

study. The linguistic phenomena gathered here, however, already give a good impression of the difference between Jewish and Christian mercantile writing, and help us to understand the commonalities and differences encountered in Arabic materials written by members of different confessions.

The point of reference will be an artificial, presumed Standard Arabic of the Ottoman period, which is close to Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic. This approach is admittedly flawed and will inevitably draw criticism, as the time period of the materials precedes the *nahḍa*, during which ideas of normative grammar informed by Classical Arabic were again superimposed on Arabic. Yet there is no real alternative, as for now Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic are the only varieties with a prescriptive, fixed set of rules, described in grammar books, against which any other variety can be measured and compared.

2.1 Otiose *ʿalif*

Otiose *ʿalif* occurs very commonly in the Christian letters, but not once in the Judaeo-Arabic corpus – for example, أرسلوا NAL HCA 32/212.23/11 ‘you should send!’ vs תרסלו T-S 10J16.35/10 ‘you should send’. Clearly, Arabic script norms here hold a stronger sway over the Christian material than over the Hebrew script Judaeo-Arabic.

2.2 Vocalism

In the Judaeo-Arabic, colloquial vocalisations, and also vocalisations that may not occur in colloquial Christian or Muslim Egyptian Arabic but only in Jewish Egyptian Arabic, are frequently spelled: כתיבנא L-G Misc. 24/3 ‘we wrote’; צרעורב Ryland Genizah Collection A 803/5 ‘difficult to bear’; חוצור T-S NS 99.23/15 ‘it was present’; יהובר T-S NS 99.23/16 ‘they would like’; תכון וצליתך T-S 10J19.24/28 ‘it will have arrived to you’.

Such colloquial forms are not found in the Christian texts, with a few exceptions that may also be due to a shift of verbal forms, such as يصلالكم NAL HCA 32/212.17/page1verso9 ‘it will arrive to you’.

The question which then arises is: Did spoken Jewish Egyptian Arabic, or the reading tradition of written substandard Jewish Egyptian Arabic, have more idiosyncratic vocalisation patterns than contemporary Christian Egyptian Arabic varieties, or is it simply not expressed in script in the latter? If we turn to the modern context, Holes has stated that there is no evidence of observable differences in speech between modern Coptic Christians and Egyptian Muslims.¹⁸ Rosenbaum, however, describes a preference for /u/ over Standard dialect /i/ in Modern Jewish Egyptian Arabic, such as in *fuʿul* for

¹⁸ Holes, in press.

fi'il.¹⁹ However, is this distinctly differing behaviour in Jewish and Christian speech a consequence of post-nationalist linguist behaviour, or can we extrapolate from the modern situation to say that pre-nationalism Egyptian Christian and Jewish speech were different? Hary offers an explanation supporting the former thesis. He postulates that Modern Jewish *fu'ul* preserves an older urban Cairene, which has been lost in the other, non-Jewish dialects.²⁰ Purely descriptively, the written Jewish Arabic of the investigated time period renders such deviating vocalisms whereas the Christian Arabic does not. This may be due to Hebrew script, or perhaps to the fact that Jewish Egyptian at the time already followed more obviously differing vocalisation – that is, older, inherited patterns – than contemporary Christian and Muslim Arabic.

2.3 *Plene* spelling of short vowels

Plene spelling of short vowels is a very regular feature of the investigated Judaeo-Arabic letters: עילמיכום Ryland Genizah Collection A 803/4 ‘that’; באין Ryland Genizah Collection A 803/10 ‘your knowledge’; אלמוזהבין Ryland Genizah Collection L 205/6 ‘the beloved’; מעא T-S 10J19.24/4 ‘with’; אהנה כונה T-S NS 99.23/8 ‘we were’; יום כאם L-G Misc. 24/21 ‘some days’; נאכוד T-S 10J16.35/25 ‘we will take’; ארסילנהא T-S 10J19.24/12 ‘we sent it’.

In the Christian letters, we also occasionally find short vowels in *plene* spelling, although much less commonly than in the Judaeo-Arabic letters: معاه NAL HCA 32/212.29/recto8 ‘with it’; بكام يوم NAL HCA 32/212.20/recto4 ‘in a few days’.²¹

The much more frequent *plene* spelling of short vowels in Judaeo-Arabic probably has its roots in the Hebrew alphabet, perhaps also in the transferral of orthographic conventions from Hebrew, which commonly spells certain short vowels.²²

2.4 Spelling of Classical Arabic long vowels

Long vowels are sometimes spelled defectively in the Jewish corpus and only very occasionally in the Christian letters, so the phenomenon appears to be somewhat more frequent in the Judaeo-Arabic letters: مقبض NAL HCA 32/212.3/10 ‘exchanger’, Standard Arabic مقابض; ערפנכום T-S NS 99.23 ‘we informed you’, Standard Arabic عرفناكم; היסבכום T-S NS 99.23/36 ‘your account’, Standard Arabic حسابكم. Many of these examples probably reflect shortened pronunciation in the vernacular.

In some of the Judaeo-Arabic letters, the vast majority of final Classical Arabic long /ā/ are spelled with ה, for example in Rylands Genizah Collection

¹⁹ Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 37.

²⁰ Hary, 2009, p. 23.

²¹ This may be an attempt to differentiate the *kam* graphically from the second person plural suffix.

²² Hary, 1996, p. 732 has called this “hebraized orthography”.

A 803 and T-S NS 99.23. Exceptions are usually forms of the third person singular feminine suffix, which in order to avoid being spelled with two consecutive ה retain the Classical Judaeo-Arabic א. The majority of Judaeo-Arabic letters in this corpus, however, show a preference for א, mirroring Classical Judaeo-Arabic, for example T-S 10J19.22 and Rylands Genizah Collection L 205. In the Christian Arabic corpus, *hā'* for Classical Arabic long /ā/ occurs only very occasionally and seems restricted to particular words, for example *في هذه الوقت* NAL HCA 32/212.11/25 'in this time'. This particular feature of Judaeo-Arabic appears to be related to the use of Hebrew script, and potentially due to the influence of Hebrew orthography.

2.5 Spelling of *hamza*

We might expect spelling of *hamza* to be more frequent in the Arabic script material than in the Hebrew script material, but in fact there is no *hamza* by itself in either of the corpora, and it is usually dropped or replaced by *yā'* and *wāw* when it would be sitting on them in Classical Arabic, which corresponds to its colloquial pronunciation.

2.6 Interdental fricatives

The marking of the Standard Arabic interdental fricatives /ð/ and /t̪/ varies in both corpora. In the Arabic script corpus, they are often spelled as *dāl* and *tā'*, as in *ذكرتوه* NAL HCA 32/212.17/1verso3 'you mentioned it', *ثم* NAL HCA 32/212.1/2 'then' or *كثرة* NAL HCA 32/212.29/2 'magnitude', but we also find Classical Arabic spelling indicated: *هذا الذي* NAL HCA 32/212.1/9 'that which' and *ثم* NAL HCA 32/212.17/1verso3 'then'. In the Judaeo-Arabic letters, there is also marking of the interdental fricatives, indicated by a stroke or dot above the letter in particular words: *אלי* T-S NS 99.23/6 and T-S NS 99.38/5 'which' and *אלך* T-S 10J16.35/margin3 and T-S NS 99.38/8 'that'. In other cases, there seems to be no marking: *תלת* T-S NS 99.23/11 'a third' and *תלתה* Rylands Genizah Collection A 701/9 'three'. Those words which receive marking – that is, the demonstrative and relative pronouns above – seem to be part of a lexicon that is distinctly marked as 'high standard', as these forms do not occur in the vernacular. Both the Jewish and the Christian letters thus seem partially to be influenced by Standard Arabic norms, but also by the colloquial pronunciation.

2.7 *Tā' marbūṭa*

In both corpora, *tā' marbūṭa* is not always indicated by dots: *בפצה* T-S NS 99.38/20 'for *faḍḍa*' and *بالسلامه* NAL HCA 32/212.27/6 'safely'. Similarly, we often find *tā' maftūḥa* for *tā' marbūṭa* in both corpora, such as in *מאע שלמת תעאלא* T-S NS 99.38/15 'with God's (lit. the exalted's) protection', *בקלת*

גוואבכרם T-S NS 99.23/18 ‘scarcity of your reply’ and وعينت حب الرمان NAL HCA 32/212.17/1verso3 ‘a sample of pomegranate kernels’. This occurs also outside of traditional *’idāfa* constructions: אל כבר אלדי טלע בקולת אן וקע צולה T-S NS 99.38/23–24 ‘the news that came up saying the peace is close from Istanbul’, חוואלת תאנייא L-G Misc. 24/12–13 ‘a second money order’, and الخمست المذكورة NAL HCA 32/212.4/71 ‘the aforementioned five’, although in all these examples there is a tight syntactic connection between the word ending in *tā’ maftūha/tā’ marbūṭa* and the following word.

A phenomenon only found in the Christian corpus is *tā’ marbūṭa* for *tā’*, such as in اندفعة NAL HCA 32/212.17/1verso20 ‘they were paid’. This feature appears to be a specific phenomenon restricted to Arabic script.

2.8 *Tafkīm* and *tarqīq*

Both corpora show examples of *tafkīm* and *tarqīq*, however the phenomena occur more commonly in the Judaeo-Arabic letters: بخصر NAL HCA 32/212.1/18 ‘I make a loss’ and خسرو NAL HCA 32/212.4/48 ‘they made a loss’, from the root *k-s-r* ‘to make a loss’; נכלסו Rylands Genizah Collection A 701/5, from the root *k-l-ṣ* ‘to release, buy up, settle a bill’; ותרצו Rylands Genizah Collection L 205/5 ‘you should return’, from the root *r-d-d* ‘return’; צורעה T-S NS 99.23/43 ‘quickly’, from the root *s-r-* ‘quick’; טערפו T-S NS 99.23/9 ‘you should know’; איש רסלטו T-S 10J19.22/14 ‘anything you sent’. *Tafkīm* and *tarqīq* therefore seem to be more closely associated with the use of Hebrew script and the accompanying greater removal from Arabic script norms.

2.9 Nunation

A feature found in both corpora is the spelling of Arabic accusative nunation *-an* with final *nūn*: حقن NAL HCA 32/212.4/20 ‘indeed’; האלן T-S NS 99.38/11 ‘now’; דאימן AIU VIII 132/33 ‘always’.

2.10 Colloquial spelling of pronouns and pronominal suffixes

Pronouns and pronominal suffixes in colloquial spelling occur almost exclusively in the Judaeo-Arabic corpus. Most common are colloquial or hybrid spellings of the first person plural – such as אהנה T-S NS 99.23/8 and 10 ‘we’, והנה T-S NS 99.23/13 ‘and we’ and נהנא L-G Misc. 24/5 ‘we’ – and of the second person plural – such as אנתו T-S NS 99.23/9 ‘you’. The suffix of the third person singular masculine is often spelled as ו-, e.g. מעו T-S 10J19.22/10 ‘with him’; אוגרתו Rylands Genizah Collection A 701 ‘his fee’; תאריכו T-S NS 99.38/3 and 5 ‘today (literally: its history)’. Beside these and examples of standard orthography, we also find hybrid spellings such as אנהו AIU VIII 132/margin7 ‘that he’. The inclusion of these vernacular pronouns is probably

encouraged by Hebrew spelling, as in the case of the third person pronominal suffix, or generally caused by the use of Hebrew script. In the Christian Arabic corpus such forms are much rarer, but do occur, as in صحبتو NAL HCA 32/212.23/verso8 ‘with it’. In some of the examples, identification of the forms is difficult because both *hā*’ and *wāw* may be represented with a fairly similar squiggle of the pen.

2.11 Verb

As in almost all Middle Arabic texts, the letters display shortening of the third person plural verbal endings *-ūna* to *-ū*, for example يطرحوا NAL HCA 32/212.27/top margin1 ‘they are throwing them away’. Yet, in contrast to the Jewish material, the Christian letters also occasionally feature examples of the long form, such as يسلّمون NAL HCA 32/212.24/page4line6 ‘they send’. The second person plural ending is changed in analogy with the third person plural from *-tum* to *-tū*, such as in שרהתו T-S 10J16.35/5 ‘you explained’; اتسلمتوا NAL HCA 32/212.1/6 ‘you have received’. As is visible in the latter example, both Christian and Jewish Arabic texts also commonly show the colloquial stem *itfa* ‘*ala*’.

In the corpora investigated here, the dichotomy *nif‘il – nif‘ilu* appears only in the Jewish letters, for example לם ענדי מה נטול Rylands Genizah Collection A 803/11 and L-G Misc. 24/25 ‘I have nothing [to report] to prolong [this letter]’; גרסליו L-G Misc. 24/12 ‘we will send’; ובנסתארגו L-G Misc. 24/5 ‘we are looking forward’. This may be a heritage of Maghrebian influence on spoken Jewish Egyptian dialects in the Middle Ages, as suggested by Blau, or reflect the retention of older original Egyptian forms in the Jewish dialects, as put forward by Blanc and Hary.²³

Examples of other non-standard verbal forms, pertaining to vocalisation patterns and assimilation, occur only in the Judaeo-Arabic letters and appear to be related to the use of Hebrew script: וכברית T-S 10J19.24/28 ‘they (the ships) brought news’; קבטושי T-S NS 99.23/66 ‘you have received anything’.

2.12 *Bi*-imperfect

Bi-imperfect forms occur very commonly in both corpora: ما يعرف NAL HCA 32/212.1/31 ‘he does not know’; لان كده عمرى ما يعرف ان كان بخصر والا يكسب NAL HCA 32/212.1/16–17 ‘because otherwise I will never know in my lifetime whether I am making a loss or a profit’; بيتوجه NAL HCA 32/212.20/recto5 ‘it will be leaving’; לאן בנסמע סמעאח Rylands Genizah Collection L 205/10 ‘because we keep on hearing rumours’; בינבאע T-S 10J16.35/margin5 ‘we are buying’; ובנשופה T-S NS 99.23/62 ‘we are watching’.

²³ See Blau, 1981, pp. 56–64; Blanc, 1974; Hary, 1992, p. 278.

2.13 Auxiliary verbs

We find similar use of auxiliary verbs in both corpora, again demonstrating that there are connections between the registers used in Jewish and Christian letters. Derivatives of the verb *baqā* are employed, like in colloquial Arabic, and can for example be found in: *נבא נבא נבא* NAL HCA 32/212.17/1 verso 15 ‘it will arrive to you’; *ובقی معلומי* NAL HCA 32/212.1/5 ‘it became known to me’; *נבא נבא נבא* NAL HCA 32/212.29/13 ‘we will inform you’; *יבא אל עריל* T-S 10J19.24/7 ‘the Christian will continue making profit’; *פי בקא עמלנא* T-S 10J19.24/12 ‘we continued making’; *תבא תבא תבא* T-S 10J16.35/14 ‘keep on directing your attention’; *בא בא בא* AIU VIII 132/7 ‘it continued arriving to you’. In a very similar use, we find derivatives of the verb *šāra*: for example, *צאר מעלומנא* T-S 10J16.35/5 and *צאר מעלומנא* AIU VIII 132/17 ‘it became known to us’; *צאר מעלומי* NAL HCA 32/212.17/1 verso 18 ‘it became known to me’.

2.14 Negation

The use of negative markers varies greatly in different registers of Arabic, and much can be inferred from the occurrence and distribution of certain particles in particular constructions. The negation particle *lam*, for example, appears as a particular substandard register marker in various Middle Arabic varieties.²⁴ According to prescriptive Classical Arabic grammar, *lam* must be combined with the apocopate to negate the past only. In Ottoman Arabic literary and documentary texts written by members of all confessions, *lam* appears to have enlarged its functions considerably. As I have shown elsewhere, it becomes the main and almost exclusive negation particle in 18th–19th century epistolary Judaeo-Arabic, where it is used as both a verbal and a nominal negation particle and takes over the functions of most other negation particles.²⁵ It also appears in Muslim sources,²⁶ and in the early 20th century travelogue written by al-Jarādī.²⁷

In the Judaeo-Arabic corpus investigated here, *lam* is used abundantly in all letters, for both verbal negation of all tenses and for nominal negation: *לם הייא* L-G Misc. 24/18 ‘it is not’; *לם תרסיל* T-S 10J19.24/28 ‘do not send’; *לם פכרתו פינה* T-S NS 99.23/38 ‘you did not think of us’.

The negation particle *mā*, however, only occurs once in a negation phrase in the Judaeo-Arabic corpus, with a verb which also shows the colloquial negation marker *-š*: *מה תגיבוש* Rylands Genizah Collection A 803/9 ‘do not blame it on us’.

In the Christian material, *lam* does occur in many of the letters in all sorts of negation phrases, just as in the Jewish sources. It is found, however, much

²⁴ For *lam* used in mercantile Judaeo-Arabic, see Wagner, 2013. For a more general discussion of *lam* in spoken and written varieties of Arabic, see Wagner, 2010, pp. 141–150.

²⁵ Wagner, 2017.

²⁶ See Lentin, 2008.

²⁷ Mittwoch, 1926. I am indebted to G. Rex Smith for introducing me to this text.

less frequently than in the Jewish letters: ولم معنا زمان NAL HCA 32/212.3/13 ‘we do not have time’; لم ناخذ في بالنا NAL HCA 32/212.23/19 ‘we do not care’; لم وجدنا شي NAL HCA 32/212.24/page2verso3 ‘we did not find anything’. The negation particle *mā*, however, which is very rare in the Jewish letters, occurs more frequently: ما معي خير NAL HCA 32/212.1/9 ‘I had no news’; ما يعرف NAL HCA 32/212.1/16 ‘I do not know’; ما يصلاكم NAL HCA 32/212.23/1verso16 ‘it will not arrive’.

To summarise, in the Christian letters, *lam* is used to negate past and present, and, just as in Late Judaeo-Arabic and other forms of Ottoman Arabic, it can also be found as a nominal negation particle. In the investigated corpora, however, it appears to be much more common in the Judaeo-Arabic than in the Christian sources. The Christian traders use the negation particle *mā* more frequently; it is only found once in the Judaeo-Arabic corpus.

This analysis becomes even more interesting when we look at letters written by Christian church dignitaries, which are also preserved in the Prize Papers collection. There many more cases of *lam* occur; see, for example, the inlay in NAL HCA 32/212.46.1, which shows a large number of phrases with *lam*:²⁸ لم استعنيتم NAL HCA 32/212.46.1 inlay/recto 7 ‘you did not care’; ولم اتأ NAL HCA 32/212.46.1 inlay/recto 9 ‘it did not occur to you at all’; ولا علم عنه ولم NAL HCA 32/212.46.1 inlay/recto 7 ‘I do not want’; من اين هي هذه الخبيه NAL HCA 32/212.46.1 inlay/recto right margin 19 ‘no knowledge of it, and no [knowledge] where this failure [had come] from’.

It thus appears that with regard to this feature, the mercantile Judaeo-Arabic register is closer to the register used by church dignitaries than to the contemporary Christian mercantile register.

2.15 Colloquial words and phrases

Both corpora display a large number of words and phrases which are part of the colloquial lexicon, and there is no discernible difference between the Jewish and Christian letters in their use of the vernacular: منشان NAL HCA 32/212.29/recto8 ‘concerning’; حكم NAL HCA 32/212.29/recto9 ‘concerning’; يكون خاطرکم مطمئن NAL HCA 32/212.11/52 ‘you may calm yourself’; מן שאן AIU VIII 132/17 ‘concerning’; הוכם T-S NS 99.38/28 ‘concerning’; דלווקה T-S 10J19.24/7 and 10 ‘now’; ומנערפוש L-G Misc. 24/15 ‘we do not know’; והלבה T-S 10J19.22/21 ‘probably’; פעלי خيرا NAL HCA 32/212.17/page1verso25 ‘hopefully’; معرفيني NAL HCA 32/212.1/28 ‘you tell me’ (which appears to reflect the colloquial Egyptian form *ma’raf-ni* and *ma’rif-ni* ‘you tell me’).

More complex colloquial phrases often appear in emotional statements, for example expressing anger, where the register change creates a dramatic effect: ما بييعرف فين عقله NAL HCA 32/212.1v/3–4 ‘he does not know where his mind

²⁸ These and more examples can be found in Wagner and Ahmed, 2017, pp. 396–397.

is'; NAL HCA 32/212.1/16–17 'because otherwise I will never know in my lifetime whether I am making a loss or a profit'; T-S NS 99.23/23 'we are neither one-armed nor blind'; Rylands Genizah Collection A 803/9 'do not blame it on us'. Emotions such as anger are a common socio-linguistic trigger and facilitate the introduction of vernacular expressions.

3 Conclusions

The analyses done for this contribution have revealed a fairly complex picture. On the one hand, orthographically Judaeo-Arabic appears to be more removed from Standard Arabic than the Christian letters. Some of these linguistic differences between the Christian and Jewish letters can be traced back to the use of script. The frequently found otiose *'alif* in Christian letters is obviously a norm inherited from Arabic scribal traditions, which has been lost in documentary Judaeo-Arabic. *Plene* spelled short vowels, defective spelling of Classical Arabic long vowels, η for Classical Arabic long /ā/ and *tafkīm* and *tarqīq* in the Judaeo-Arabic correspondence appear to be aided by Hebrew script and Hebrew orthographical conventions. *Tā' marbūta* for *tā'*, however, only occurs in Christian letters and appears to be associated with Arabic script.

With other phenomena it is less clear how much they are influenced by the script or by the underlying dialect, such as the vocalism patterns found in the Judaeo-Arabic corpus. Potentially we may infer from the examples found in the texts that the vocalism found in Early Modern Jewish speech was different from that used in Christian and Muslim speech, following older inherited Cairene speech patterns abandoned by the other communities, but this needs to be investigated further.

Some phenomena are shared, such as spelling of interdental fricatives or of the nunation *-an* with final *nūn*.

Features restricted to the Judaeo-Arabic letters include the colloquial spellings of pronouns and pronominal suffixes, perhaps influenced by Hebrew orthography, and the dichotomy *nif'il* – *nif'ilu*, which may indicate a morphological difference between the forms used in spoken Jewish and Christian Egyptian Arabic. Only Christian letters show the long form of the third person plural verbal endings.

While the Judaeo-Arabic letters may be further removed from Classical Arabic on an orthographical level, and related to that also with regard to some morphological features, it is difficult to maintain the same for syntactical phenomena, although we may see a difference in frequency. The *bi*-imperfect is a frequent occurrence in both corpora. The negation particle *lam* in non-Classical uses, including that of nominal negation, occurs in both Christian and Jewish letters, although looking just at mercantile correspondence, it is much

more common in the Jewish letters. However although this uneven distribution may be seen as an example of a Judaeo-Arabic more removed from the standard than its Christian counterpart, further study of letters written between Christian dignitaries reveals that *lam* is an extremely common part of the register used in that correspondence, too.

As for lexical peculiarities, both corpora display a rich share of colloquial phenomena, and no discernible difference in the inclusion of vernacular forms can be found.

Returning to the initial question of whether Judaeo-Arabic is linguistically more progressive than Christian Arabic in its inclusion of colloquial forms, and more inventive in the creation of its own register, while more removed from contemporary prescriptive Arabic than Christian Arabic, this study reveals a heterogeneous picture. The Judaeo-Arabic letters indeed display greater variation with regard to orthographical and some morphological features, which may create the impression of greater removal from Standard Arabic standards, but the overall picture is much less pronounced when we focus on a syntactical and lexical level.

All of the features mentioned thus need to be investigated in greater depth, ideally by means of corpus linguistics. Further investigations should also focus on literary sources, which even in the Ottoman period seems to adhere more closely to the prescriptive norms of Arabic than the documentary sources. Optimal material for comparison with the above material would be contemporary Judaeo-Arabic texts, such as the *Qissat Hannah* (T-S Ar. 54.63)²⁹ or the *Townsmen and Fellah* (preserved in a post-medieval copy in AIU VII.C.16),³⁰ which both come from the 18th–19th century. Interesting also would be an in-depth study on Christian texts written in Garshuni, to see whether the use of alphabets other than Arabic produces similar effects in Jewish and in Christian texts. Appropriate sources for comparative purposes would be contemporary to the above-mentioned texts, such as *The Story of Zayana the King's Daughter who Converted 1,130,000 Souls*, which has been dated to the 18th century (preserved under CUL Or. 1125).³¹ Potentially, although outside of the mercantile arena, another excellent corpus for comparison would be the 19th century Patriarch letters written in Garshuni, which are currently being examined by George Kiraz. A comparison of all these materials will allow us comprehensive insights into the commonalities and differences of the historical varieties of Arabic as used by members of the three Abrahamic religions.

²⁹ This text was edited and described linguistically in depth in Schorreel, 2011.

³⁰ This text was edited in Goitein, 1972. It is dated there to the 17th century, but from the script it is clear that it must be a later text.

³¹ I thank Dr Chip Coakley for acquainting me with the relevant Garshuni materials. Chip is currently compiling a catalogue of Syriac and Garshuni manuscripts in Cambridge University Library, where the above-mentioned source is described.

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A 19th Century CE Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic Folk Narrative: Text, Translation and Grammatical Notes

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1 Introduction

The manuscript BnF Hébreu 583¹ (dated to 1839) contains, amongst other material, three Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic (henceforth JA) tales,² depicting fictional events in the life of Abraham ibn ‘Ezra (c1089–1167), the renowned Jewish Biblical scholar and polymath. This edition focuses on the third of these tales in which Abraham ibn ‘Ezra, brought from Cairo by two students at the urgent behest of a Rabbi, saves the life of the Rabbi’s son and secures the freedom of a Jewish community. While the literary contents of this tale are doubtless worthy of exploration,³ the purpose of this paper is to provide a new transcription of the original text, with simultaneous transcoding into Arabic script,⁴ an English translation, and a commentary on the text’s notable linguistic features.

¹ This manuscript was kindly made available to me by the Département de la reproduction at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. As of 2016, the manuscript is available to view online at <http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/> by searching for Hébreu 583.

² These three tales may be found in BnF Hébreu 583, ff. 135 r.–141 r. The first tale begins on ff. 135 r.–137 v.; ff. 137 v.–139 v. comprise the second tale; and ff. 139 v. 19–141 r. 20 the third tale, on which this paper is centred. A Hebrew edition of the three tales from the manuscript BnF Hébreu 583 was first produced by Yitshak Avishur (1992). Avishur’s interest in the folk narrative appears to have been predominantly literary and historical, and consequently his transcription does not reflect the true state of the text’s orthographic features. A new transcription and translation is required for the manuscript to be of use to broader audiences – linguistic, literary and historical. This paper, therefore, acts as a supplement to the existing edition by Avishur.

³ Of particular interest in this folk-tale is the accusation of blood libel – directed throughout the Middle Ages at European Jewish communities by Christians – here levelled at a Christian community. It was not uncommon in Europe during the medieval period for Jews to be accused of kidnapping and murdering Christian children for ritual sacrifice. This particular folk-tale bears a striking resemblance to the tale of William of Norwich, perpetuated by Thomas of Monmouth, in which it was suggested that each year, Jews would decide upon a country from which to take a Christian child for human sacrifice.

⁴ In transcoding the text into Arabic script, I hope to make this Judaeo-Arabic text with its many noteworthy linguistic features available to a wider audience interested in varieties of Middle

There are significantly fewer extant texts, across a narrower range of genres, which are composed in JA and datable to the Ottoman period, compared with the preceding periods. Letters and folk narratives, however, were among those genres which continued to be written in JA. Of the JA letters⁵ and folk narratives that survive from this period, most are dated to the mid-to-late 18th and early 19th centuries, and are written in ‘late JA’.⁶ Prior to the 15th century, JA was primarily based upon the imitation and emulation of Classical Arabic (henceforth CA) orthographic, morphological and syntactic principles. From approximately the 15th century onwards, this general adherence to the strictures of CA appears to have been gradually permeated with colloquial phonetic features, an increase in Hebrew and Aramaic influences and the standardisation of pre-existing pseudo-literary features.

The varied linguistic elements of the folk narratives found in BnF Hébreu 583 conform to the general principles – in so much as these have been established⁷ – of late JA, while provoking questions regarding the assumed origins and influences of some of these features.

2 Text, transcoding and translation

2.1 Notes on the critical edition

The text has been as faithfully rendered as possible, including all diacritics and orthographic idiosyncrasies found in the original manuscript. The JA text has then been transcribed into Arabic letters, grapheme-for-grapheme, except where the text uses Hebrew words. No adjustments or amendments have been made to the text in its transcribed form. As for the English translation, any additions that have been made to aid comprehension and readability are enclosed in parentheses.

Arabic. In so doing, I follow the practice pioneered by Diem, 2014, kindly suggested to me by Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner.

⁵Prof. Geoffrey Khan has produced a number of critical editions of JA letters from the Ottoman period; see Khan, 1991; Khan, 1992; Khan, 2006; Khan, 2013. These not only comprise transcriptions and translations of late JA letters, but also include detailed analyses of each text’s linguistic features. These editions are invaluable to furthering the study of JA, and late JA in particular, and provide the template on which this paper is based.

⁶Late JA is generally dated to the 15th–19th centuries; see Khan, 2007, pp. 526–529 and Hary, 1997, pp. 199–203 for discussions regarding the chronology of JA.

⁷Studies of late JA texts have tended to focus on letters (see Khan, 1991; Khan, 1992; Khan, 2006; Khan, 2013; Wagner, 2010), *šarḥ* (see Hary, 1992; Hary, 2009) and folk-tales (Hasson-Kenat, 2016; Ørum, 2017). Very limited linguistic analysis has been conducted in relation to other genres of late JA literary and documentary texts. Caution is, therefore, advisable when speaking of the ‘principles’ or ‘standards’ of late JA.

2.2 The critical edition

Translation	Transcoding	Text
<i>139 v.</i>	<i>139 v.</i>	<i>139 v.</i>
19 They also recounted that in one of the towns of the uncircumcised, every	19 איצה אכברו אן כאן פֿי בלד מן בלאד אל ערלים ⁸ כאנו כל	19 איצה אכברו אן כאן פֿי בלד מן בלאד אל ערלים ⁸ כאנו כל
20 year during their festival, they would take one of the Jews, making him a sacrifice for the(ir) idols.	20 סנה פֿי עידהום יאכדו ואחד יאודי יעמלוה קורבן לל ע״ז ⁹	20 סנה פֿי עידהום יאכדו ואחד יאודי יעמלוה קורבן לל ע״ז ⁹
21 (Every year), the Jews would cast lots for the children of the Jews in order that	21 וקאנו אל יאוד יעמלו גורל עלא אוולאד אל יאוד לאגל מא	21 וקאנו אל יאוד יעמלו גורל עלא אוולאד אל יאוד לאגל מא
22 they might know who would be made a sacrifice the following year, so that he might take	22 יערפו מין אלדי ינעמל קורבן אל סנה אל אתייה לאגל אן יטלע	22 יערפו מין אלדי ינעמל קורבן אל סנה אל אתייה לאגל אן יטלע
23 his expenses from the uncircumcised during the year. When the appointed time came,	23 מצרופו מן ענד אל ערלים טול אל סנה . ודין יזי אל מיעאד	23 מצרופו מן ענד אל ערלים טול אל סנה . ודין יזי אל מיעאד
<i>140 r.</i>	<i>140 r.</i>	<i>140 r.</i>
1 they would take him in a great procession and all that he asked for would be granted. One year,	1 יאכדוה במוכב עטים וכל אלדי יטלוב ינול . פֿי סנה מן אל סנין	1 יאכדוה במוכב עטים וכל אלדי יטלוב ינול . פֿי סנה מן אל סנין
2 they cast the lot (and) it fell on the son of the Rabbi of that town. He was	2 עמלו אל גורל טלע עלא אבן אל רב בתאע דאלף אל בלד וכאן	2 עמלו אל גורל טלע עלא אבן אל רב בתאע דאלף אל בלד וכאן
3 twenty years old and the Rabbi had no other (children) besides him. This boy had	3 עומריו עשרין סנה ולם כאן אל ראב ענדו כלאפו . וכאן דאלף אל ולד	3 עומריו עשרין סנה ולם כאן אל ראב ענדו כלאפו . וכאן דאלף אל ולד

⁸ The term ערלים 'uncircumcised' (sg ערל) is a Jewish term used exclusively to refer to non-Jews, generally Christians and Muslims; see Jastrow, 2005, p. 1119. Here, the term is used to refer to Christians.

⁹ (עבודה זרה) 'idolatry': ע״ז⁹.

- 4 no equal in the world in terms of eloquence and the recitation (of the Torah), and so on, so when
- 4 ليس لهو نظير فال دونيا من
ال فصاحا وال قرايه
وخلافو في حين الذي
- 5 the lot fell on the boy, they (all) began weeping and wailing and mourning and grieving.
- 5 طلع ال جورل علا ال ولد قامو
بال بوكا وال صبياح وال
نواوح وال حوزن
- 6 (The) date on which they would take the boy and present him as a sacrifice was decided as the first night of Passover.
- 6 وكان ميعاد الذي ياخذو ال
ولد يقربوه يحكوم اوول
ليلت فסה في ~
- 7 The Rabbi turned to two of the students and said to them 'You know you will go to Cairo
- 7 التفت ال راب لاتنين من ال
תלמידים وقال להوم تعرفو
تروحو مصر
- 8 to the place of Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra, peace be upon him! You will deliver this letter to him and you will inform (him)
- 8 لعند ال רב אברהם ן עזרא
עא"ס תסלמו لهו האذا ال
גוואב ותערפו
- 9 of this appeal. As for the people of your home(s), we will support them
- 9 في هاذى ال دعوه ومن
جيهت اهل منزلكوم نحن
نصروف عليهم
- 10 until you return,¹⁰ on the condition that you do not tarry on the road. For from this
- 10 لحين ما تحضرو وبشرط لم
تتعووقو فال طريق . لان من
هاذى ال
- 11 town to Cairo it is three months going and three months coming back. No doubt
- 11 بلد لمصر تلت او شهر
روواح وتلت او شهر مجبي
. وهلبت
- 12 you will stay in Cairo for a month. It will be seven months until you return.'
- 12 תקעודו פי מצר שהר יציר
סבעת אושהור לחין מא
תחצרו פי
- 13 They replied, 'We hear you and are obedient, O our master.' So, he wrote a letter for them and they set off
- 13 קאלו لهו סמיע מوطיע יא
סיידנא פי כתב להום גוואב
ואתווגהו

¹⁰ I am grateful to Dr Nadia Vidro for her suggested translation of this sentence.

14 for Cairo. After three months, they arrived in Cairo and they happened upon a poor man ¹¹	14 لمصر من بعد تلت أوشهور حوضرو في مصر وجدو واحد لاني	14 למצר מן בעד תלת אושهور חוצרו פי מצר וגדו ואחד עני
15 walking in the road. They asked him, 'Where is the house of Abraham ibn 'Ezra?' He replied,	15 ماشي فال سكه سالوه فين بيت ال رب ابراهيم في عوزا في قال لهوم	15 מאשי פאל סכה סאלוה פינ בית אל רב אברהם פי עזרא פי קאל להום
16 'I am he!' They gave him the letter. Then he said to them, 'There's nothing for it!	16 هوا انا . اعطو لهو ال جواب . في قال لهوم لم فيه باس	16 הוא אנה . אעטו להו אל גוואב . פי קאל להום לם פיה באס
17 With God's help, I will come with you and I will answer this appeal and all will be well.' He then	17 בע"ה נתווגו מעאכום נפצי האזי אל דעווה ולם יכון אלא כיר . פי	17 בע"ה ¹² נתווגה מעאכום נקצי האזי אל דעווה ולם יכון אלא כיר . פי
18 took them to his home (where) they stayed with him. After a month, they said to him, 'O our master,	18 اخدهوم الا منزلو وقعدو عندو . وبعد شهر قالو لهو يا سييدنا	18 אכדהום אלא מנזלו וקעדו ענדו . ובעד שהר קאלו להו יא סיידנא
19 we wish to go so that you can see to the appeal.' The Rabbi replied, 'You should	19 نريدو نتووجهو لاجل ال دعوه تتمها في قال لهوم ال راب لم	19 נרידו נתווגהו לאגל אל דעווה תתמהא פי קאל להום אל ראב לם
20 no longer address me with regard to this matter. I will go when I see fit.' So, they stayed	20 עודتو تخاطبوني في شان ذلك . انه وقت ما نريد نتوجه فقعدو	20 עודתו תכאטבוני פי שאן דאלך . אנה וקת מא נריד נתווגה פקעדו
21 until the night of the eve of Passover. After the Rabbi did the <i>Chametz</i> check, ¹³ they went	21 ללילת ערב פסה מן بعد ما عمل ال رب בדיקת חמץ واراحו	21 ללילת ערב פסה מן בעד מא עמל אל רב בדיקת חמץ ואראחו
22 for recitation. They sat for four hours during the night until the recitation was finished.	22 في قرايبه قعدو لاربع ساعات من ال ليل لحين ما فرغيت ال قرايبه	22 פי קראייה קעדו לארבע סעאת מן אל ליל לחין מא פרגית אל קראייה

¹¹ 'one' translated here as 'a man'.

¹² בעזרת השם): 'with the help of God'.

¹³ *Chametz* refers to food that contains grains that have been mixed with water and left to rise. In Judaism, it is forbidden to eat any products containing *chametz* from the day before Passover until the end of Passover. During this period, only *matzot* – unleavened bread – is consumed. On the day before Passover, all *chametz* food must be removed from the house; thus, the '*chametz* check'.

23 Then, they distributed the <i>ka'k</i> ¹⁴ with sesame oil. They gave two <i>ka'k</i> to the Rabbi and two <i>ka'k</i> to each of the	23 في فرقو كعك بسيرج في اعطو لل راب كعكتين وال תלמידים כל	23 פִּי פִּרְקוּ כַּעֲךְ בְּסִירַג פִּי אַעֲטוּ לַל רַאב כַּעֲכֵתִין וְאֵל תְּלִמִידִים כֹּל
24 students. Then, they set out to (tend to) their business. The Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra went on his way, and the	24 واحد كعكتين واتوجهو لخالكوم في اخذ طريقو ال رב אבן עזרא ואל	24 ואחד כעכתין ואתווגהו לחאלהום פִּי אֵדְ טְרִיקוּ אֵל רַב אֲבִן עִזְרָא וְאֵל
25 students	25 תלמידים	25 תלמידים
<i>140 v.</i>	<i>140 v.</i>	<i>140 v.</i>
1 students accompanied him and they set off (together). Instead of going to the house (from which) the current	1 תלמידים מעו ואתווגהו פִּי עוואצן מא יתווגהו לל בית חוכם אל	1 תְּלִמִידִים מַעֲו וְאֵתוּוּגְהוּ פִּי עוּוּאֲצִן מַא יֵתוּוּגְהוּ לַל בֵּית חוּכֶם אֵל
2 decree (came), they went off in the direction of the wilderness. The students exclaimed, 'O our master, where	2 גארי טלעו נאחיית אל חליה פִּי קאלו אל תלמידים יא סיידנא לאיין	2 גְּאָרִי טִלְעוּ נַאחִיית אֵל חֲלִיָּה פִּי קָאֵלוּ אֵל תְּלִמִידִים יָא סֵיידִנָא לַאֲיִין
3 are we going? This (seems to us like) we are still in the wilderness!' The Rabbi replied, 'Stay	3 מתווגהין נחן דא אחנא בקינא פִּי קאלו להום אל ראב אמסכו	3 מֵתוּוּגְהִין נַחֲן דַּא אַחְנָא בְּקִינָא פִּי קָאֵל לְהוּם אֵל רַאב אַמְסַכּוּ
4 close to me.' ¹⁵ So they stayed where they were. He called out a Name (but not till dawn broke over them (did they realise that)	4 פִּי טרפִּי פִּי מסכו טרפִּו וקרִי שם לם טלע עליהום אל פִּי גִזֵר אֵל	4 פִּי טְרַפִּי פִּי מַסְכוּ טְרַפִּוּ וְקִרִי שֵׁם לֶם טִלְעַ עֲלֵיהוּם אֵל פִּי גִזֵר אֵל
5 they were in the town from which the appeal came. ¹⁶ The students saw the town	5 והום פִּי בלד בתאע אל דעווה פִּי נטרו אל תלמידים אל בלד	5 וְהוּם פִּי בִלְד בְּתַאֵע אֵל דַּעוּוָה פִּי נִטְרוּ אֵל תְּלִמִידִים אֵל בִּלְד

¹⁴ כַּעֲךְ: In Arabic, كعك \ كحك *ka'k/kaħk* 'cookies of flour, butter, and sometimes a sweet filling or a dusting of sugar, baked for special occasions'; Hinds and Badawi, 1986, p. 737. In light of the context in which these 'cookies' are consumed in this tale, however, it is possible that *ka'k* here refers not to celebratory cookies but to *matzōt*, the unleavened bread consumed during Passover (see n. 13). For this reason, I have merely transcribed the JA noun, rather than translating it into English.

¹⁵ פִּי טְרַפִּי: literally reads 'keep my place!'

¹⁶ פִּי נִטְרוּ אֵל דַּעוּוָה: literally reads 'in the town of the appeal'.

- 6 and they were astonished!
One (of them) said, 'This is our town!' But the other exclaimed, 'this is not our town,
- 7 we're (still) in Cairo!
Rabbi Abraham walked in front of them until they arrived at the house of the
- 8 sage. They knocked on the door. The sage came down (and) opened the door
- 9 and found Rabbi Abraham standing on his doorstep (and) he assumed that he was a beggar. So, the sage
- 10 said to him, 'What do you want? Do you not know of our situation?' Rabbi Abraham replied,
- 11 'Yes, (I) know about your appeal but you should trust in God, He is exalted! He will make miracles for you!'
- 12 The sage turned and found the two students whom he had sent to Cairo
- 13 (in search of) Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra. He greeted them and said to them, 'Tell me what happened!'
- 14 They replied, 'O our master, it is Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra who stands in front of you!' So,
- 15 he introduced himself and they took (him) and he entered the house with him. After they had prayed in the synagogue,
- 6 ואתעגבו · ואחד יקול האדי אל בלדנא וואחד יקול למ היא בלדנא
- 7 נחן פי מצר ואל רב אברהם מאשי קודאמהום לחין מא וצלו לבית
- 8 אל חזם פי טרקו עלא אל באב · פי טלע אל חזם פתח אל באב
- 9 וגד אל רב אברהם ואקף עלא אל באב פי זמנו אנו סאל · פי קאל
- 10 להו אל חזם מא תריד למ תעלם בחאלנא פי קאל להו אל רב אברהם
- 11 נעם עלם בדעוותך ולאכנ אתכל עלא אללה ס"ו והוא יעמל לך נסים
- 12 אלתפת אל חזם וגד אל אתנין אל תלמידים אלדי כאן ארסלהום למצר
- 13 לל רב אברהם ז עזרא · פי סלם עליהום וקאל להום אחכו לי מא גרא
- 14 פי קאלו להו יא סידנא אל רב אב' ז עזרא הוא אלדי ואקף קוצאדך פי
- 15 קדם עליה ואכדו ודכל בו אל בית · פי מא בעד מא צלו פאל כניס
- 6 واتعجبو · واحد يقول هذا ال بلدنا وواحد يقول لم هيا بلدنا
- 7 نحن في مصر وال رב אברהם מאשי קודאמהום לחין מא וצלו לבית
- 8 אל חזם פי טרקו עלא אל באב · פי טלע אל חזם פתח אל באב
- 9 وجد אל רב אברהם ואקף עלא אל באב פי זמנו אנו סאל · פי קאל
- 10 להו אל חזם מא תריד למ תעלם בחאלנא פי קאל להו אל רב אברהם
- 11 نعم علم بدعوتك ولاكن اتكل على الله س"ו وهو يعمل لك نסים
- 12 التفت ال حזם وجد ال انتين ال تلاميذים الذي كان ارسلهم لمصر
- 13 لل رב אברהם ז עזרא · פי سلم عليهم وقال لهم احכו لي ما جرا
- 14 في قالو لهו יא סידנא אל רב אב' ז עזרא הוא الذي واقف قصادك في
- 15 قدم عليه واخذو ودخل בו אל בית · פי מא בעד מא צלו פאל כניס

- 16 the students told the master, (the) rabbi about what had happened and they showed him the *ka'k* with sesame oil
- 17 which (they had) with them. The rabbi was amazed at this. (Meanwhile,) Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra, may God help him,
- 18 spoke to the boy who was intended to be taken and made an offering to the idols, 'When they come
- 19 in the procession to take you, tell them that I will be with you. And when they say
- 20 to you, "(Whatever) you wish for, you will be granted", say to them, "what(ever) my companion desires."' The boy replied,
- 21 'I hear (and) am obedient.' After only two hours, the uncircumcised came in a great procession
- 22 in order to seize the boy (and) parade him through the town. The boy said to them,
- 23 'Take me and my companion with me and what(ever) is done to me, shall be done to
- 24 my companion.' The uncircumcised replied, 'We have one (already) but if you have given us two,
- 16 חכו אל תלמידים לל סי' חכם באלדי גרא ופרגו להו אל כעך בסירג
- 17 אלדי מעאהום · ואתעגב אל ח' עלא דאלך · ואל רב אבן עזרא ע"ה
- 18 קאל לל ולד אלדי נאוויין יאכדוה יעמלוה קורבן לל ע"ז · חין מא יגו
- 19 באל מוכב יאכדוך קול להום אן נכון אנא מעאך · וחין מא יקולו
- 20 לך אתמנא תועטא קול להום אלדי יתמנא רפיקי · פי קאל להו אל ולד
- 21 סמיע מוטיע · פי בעד סאעתין אלא וגו אל ערלים במוכב עטים
- 22 לאגל אנהום יאכדו אל ולד יווכבו בו פאל בלד · פי קאל להום אל
- 23 ולד כדוני אנא ורפיקי מעי ואלדי יתאתא עלייה יתאתא עלא
- 24 רפיקי · פי קאלו אל ערלים ערלים אחנא לנא ואחד ואדא כאן תעטונו אתנין
- 16 חכו אל תלמידים לל סי' חכם באלדי גרא ופרגו להו אל כעך בסירג
- 17 אלדי מעאהום · ואתעב אל ח' עלא דאלך · ואל רב אבן עזרא ע"ה
- 18 קאל לל ולד אלדי נאוויין יאכדוה יעמלוה קורבן לל ע"ז · חין מא יגו
- 19 באל מוכב יאכדוך קול להום אן נכון אנא מעאך · וחין מא יקולו
- 20 לך אתמנא תועטא קול להום אלדי יתמנא רפיקי · פי קאל להו אל ולד
- 21 סמיע מוטיע · פי בעד סאעתין אלא וגו אל ערלים במוכב עטים
- 22 לאגל אנהום יאכדו אל ולד יווכבו בו פאל בלד · פי קאל להום אל
- 23 ולד כדוני אנא ורפיקי מעי ואלדי יתאתא עלייה יתאתא עלא
- 24 רפיקי · פי קאלו אל ערלים ערלים אחנא לנא ואחד ואדא כאן תעטונו אתנין
- 141 r. 141 r. 141 r.
- 1 so much the better!' So, Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra rode, him and the boy, in the centre of
- 1 احسن واحسن · פי רكب ال رب اءن عזرا عا"ס هوا وال ولد في قلب

- 2 the sedan chair. The uncircumcised said to them, 'Whatever you wish for, you will be granted.' To which Rabbi
- 2 אל תכתרוואן וקאלו להום אל ערלים אתמנו תעטו . פי קאל להום אל רב
- 3 Abraham ibn 'Ezra replied, 'I wish you to put the high priest into a large gunny sack and bind
- 3 עב' ז עזרא אתמנא אן תגלעו אל קסיס אל כביר פי זכיבה ותרבטו
- 4 the opening of the sack to the sedan chair until the procession is over.' The uncircumcised said,
- 4 פום אל זכיבה פאל תכתרוואן להין ינתם אל מוכב . פי קאלו אל ערלים
- 5 'We hear and are obedient.' So, they took the high priest and lowered him into a sack and they tied
- 5 סמיע מוטיע פי אכדו אל קסיס אל כביר וחטוה פי זכיבה ורבטו
- 6 the opening of the sack to the sedan chair. The procession was swept along as they went around the town. Then, they went
- 6 פום אל זכיבה פאל תכתרוואן¹⁷ ואנגר אל מוכב ולפו אל בלד ואראחו
- 7 (to) the church. They asked them, 'What do you want to eat?' Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra asked them
- 7 אל כניסה . פי סאלוהום איש תרידו תאכלו פי טלב מנהום אל ראב
- 8 for two chickens. So, they brought two chickens for them. Then Rabbi Abraham went into the
- 8 אברהם פרכתין פי גאבו להום פרכתין . פי טלע אל ראב אברהם לל
- 9 church and he summoned (the) large idol(s), which they make the sacrifice(s) to. He said, 'O,
- 9 כניסה ונדה על ע"ז אל כבירה אלדי ביעמלו להא אל קורבאן וקאל יא
- 10 bastard, get down from your place and sharpen th(is) knife!' The idol got down and sat, sharpening
- 10 ממזר אנזל מן מכאנך וסן אל סכינה . פי נזל אל ע"ז וקעד יסן
- 11 the knife. All of the uncircumcised were speechless and great fear descended upon them.
- 11 אל סכינה פי אנהתו גמיע אל ערלים ונזל עליהום אל פזע אל

¹⁷ תלת רוואן: 'sedan chair' is written here in two parts, whereas elsewhere it reads as a single word (תכתרוואן).

12 Afterwards, Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra summoned his bitch, saying to her, 'Get down	12 עטים · פי מא בעד נדה אל רב אב' על ממזרתה וקאל להא אנולי	12 عظيم · في ما بعد نده ال رב اب' על ממזרתה וקאל להא אנולי
13 from your place and kindle the fire so that we may cook the chickens!' The bitch	13 מן מכאניך ולעי אל נאר לאגל מא נטבוך אל פראך פי נזלית אל	13 من مكانيك ولعي ال نار لاجل ما نطبوخ ال فراخ في نزلت ال
14 descended and sat, blowing (on) the fire. When the uncircumcised saw	14 ממזרתה וקעדית תנפוך אל נאר · פי חין מא שאפו אל ערלים	14 ممزرتها وקعدت تنفوخ ال نار · في حين ما شافو ال عرלים
15 this, she stilled their hearts and darkened their eyes. They exclaimed, 'O, lord of the Jews, dispel	15 כדאלך וקעית קלובהום וגשיית עיניהום וקאלו יא סייד אל יאוד ארפע	15 كذلك وقعيت قلوبهم وغشيت عينيهم وقالو يا سييد ال ياود ارفع
16 your anger towards us and return the idols to their places for us, and take the Jew with you	16 גצבך עננא ורגע לנא אל אצנאם אלא מכאנהום וכוד אל יאודי מעך	16 غضبك عننا ورجع لنا ال اصنام الا مكانهم وخود ال ياودي معك
17 and go! We will write an edict for you that from today we will never again claim	17 ואתווגה ונהן נכתב לכום פרמאן אן מן אל יום למ עודנא נטלבו	17 واتوجه ونحن نكتب لكم فرمان ان من ال يوم لم עודنا نطلبو
18 one (of your people), each year.' Then, they wrote an edict for them, signed (it) and gave (it)	18 ואחד כל סנה אבדן פי אל חין כתבו להום פרמאן וכתמו ואעטו	18 واحد كل سنه ابدن في ال حين كتبو لهم فرمان وختمو واعطو
19 to them. Then they went on their way, setting off for their home (where) they made a Passover festival, the like of which	19 להום ואכדו טריקהום ואתווגהו למנזלהום ועמלו עיד פסח למ להו	19 لهم واخذو طريقهم واتوجهو لمنزلهم وعملو عيد فصح لم لهو
20 has never been seen. Then, Rabbi Abraham ibn 'Ezra returned to his town. May His virtue protect us! Amen. His will be done!	20 נטיר אבדן ואתווגה אל ראב לבלדו זכותו יגן עלינו אמן כיי"ר ¹⁸ ::	20 نظير ابدن واتوجه ال رااب لبلدو زכותو يگن علينا امن كي"ر ::

18 (כן יהי רצון) 'His will be done!': כיי"ר¹⁸

3 Grammatical notes

All examples from the text referred to in this section are examined in relation to their Classical Arabic (CA) and, where applicable, their Modern Cairene Arabic (MCA) forms.

3.1 Orthography and phonology

3.1.1 The diacritics

3.1.1.1 Peh for *fā*'

In BnF Hébreu 583, ninety-five per cent of occurrences of *peh* denoting *fā*' are marked with a supra-linear dot. Unlike its Hebrew counterpart,¹⁹ the Arabic grapheme *fā*' has only one reflex: a voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/. Moreover, *peh* is only employed to denote *fā*' and no other Arabic graphemes, in all periods of JA writing. Therefore, the phonetic value so often ascribed to the diacritic – either to differentiate between allophones of a phoneme, as in the case of *gimel* for *ḡīm*, or to distinguish between independent graphemes, as in the case of *dalet* for *dāl* and *ḏāl* – is void in this context. The function of the diacritic above *peh* appears to be stylistic rather than phonetic:²⁰ it may result from the imitation of the Arabic grapheme *fā*' (ف). The emulation of Arabic *fā*' is also evident in the writing of *peh* in word-final position, where it is found in initial/medial form (פְ), which closely resembles the final form of its Arabic cognate (ف); for example, וּאִקְּוּ 'standing' (140 v. 9, 14; CA: واقف *wāqifun*); וְנִצְרֹף 'we will pay' (140 r. 9; CA: نَصْرَف *naṣrifu*).

3.1.1.2 Gimel for *ḡīm* and *ḡayn*

The marking of *gimel* for *ḡīm* with a sub- or supra-linear dot emerged as a common orthographic practice during the period of classical JA (c10th–15th centuries). The use of the diacritic to denote *ḡīm* has been interpreted by scholars of JA as indicative of the fronted pronunciation of *ḡīm*. The perceived phonetic value of the diacritic was compounded by the observation that this orthographic practice prevailed between the 12th and 17th centuries,²¹ after

¹⁹ In Hebrew, *peh* has a plosive and a fricative allophone. The latter occurs when preceded by a vowel.

²⁰ It has been suggested that the use of the diacritic above *peh* for *fā*' may be attributed to the continuation of the *raphe*, a supra-linear dash introduced in Hebrew by the Tiberian Masoretes to differentiate fricative (with *raphe*) from plosive (with *dageš lene*) allophones of the six *bgdkft* letters. However, the inclusion of the diacritic above *peh* for *fā*' is not evident in JA manuscripts until the 18th century. Why, when the script used in JA was the Hebrew script, would the *raphe* have not been included above *peh* for *fā*' in JA texts from the 10th century onwards? The form of the diacritic is also worth considering in this context; in JA texts, the diacritic found above *peh* for *fā*' is most commonly a dot (in keeping with the Arabic practice), rather than a dash (as is the case with the *raphe*).

²¹ Blanc, 1981, p. 191.

which *gimel* for *ḡīm* was increasingly left unadorned.²² By the early 19th century, the diacritic is said to be omitted entirely from *gimel* denoting *ḡīm*, a phenomenon that is generally understood to reflect the velar plosive pronunciation characteristic of MCA.²³ The use of the diacritic in this 19th century folk narrative challenges this assumption: a supra-linear dot appears above *gimel* for *ḡīm* in 80.5 per cent of occurrences of the grapheme, e.g. לאגל 'in order to, so that' (139 v. 21, 22; 140 r. 19; 140 v. 22; 141 r. 13; CA: *li-'aḡli*); גוואב 'a letter' (140 r. 8, 13, 16; CA: *ḡawābun*); ואתעגברו 'and they were astonished!' (140 v. 6; CA: *ta'aḡḡaba*). Much like the graphical imitation of *peh*, however, the supra-linear diacritic appears predominantly to be a stylistic device, used in imitation of the graphical form of its Arabic cognate (ح), rather than a marker of fronted pronunciation.²⁴ A further corroboration of this interpretation is found in the application of the diacritic to *gimel* in the Hebrew noun אל גורל 'the lot' (140 r. 2, 5), where it is preceded by the JA definite article. *Gimel* is one of six Hebrew plosives (the others being *bet* ב, *dalet* ד, *kaf* כ, *peh* פ and *tav* ת) which are fricativised post-vocally. In this context, however, *gimel* follows the consonant *lamed* /l/, and consequently the expected realisation of *gimel* would be plosive [g].

The Arabic grapheme *ḡayn*, also denoted with the Hebrew grapheme *gimel*, is consistently marked with a sub-linear diacritic in this folk-tale, e.g. פֶּרְגִית 'it was finished' (140 r. 22); ונגשיית 'and she covered' (141 r. 15).

3.1.1.3 Dalet for *dāl*

The Hebrew grapheme *dalet* is used to denote both the Arabic graphemes *dāl* and *dāl*. The latter is sometimes differentiated from the former by the use of a supra-linear diacritic in late JA literary and documentary texts. In the narrative BnF Hébreu 583, the diacritic only appears above *dalet* for *dāl* in CA forms,²⁵ e.g. האלא 'this' (140 r. 8; CA: *hādā*); אלדי 'that, which' (139 v. 22; 140 r. 1, 4, 6; 140 v. 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23; 141 r. 9; CA: *'alladī*; MCA: *'illī*), and is omitted in more quotidian words, e.g. אכדהום 'he took them' (140 r. 18; CA:

²² A diachronic analysis of the use of the diacritic in relation to *gimel* for *ḡīm* in letters and folk narratives spanning from the 9th to the 19th centuries suggests that this practice was less uniform than has been suggested in previous scholarship. The diacritic is found to be an unreliable source from which to reconstruct the historical development of the phonetic realisations of *ḡīm*. See Connolly, in press.

²³ Blanc, 1981, pp. 189, 191; Hary, 1996, p. 154.

²⁴ This is not to rule out the possibility of the diacritic's phonetic value, but to emphasise its stylistic function, which has heretofore been overlooked; see Connolly, in press for a more detailed discussion of the use of the diacritic in relation to *gimel* for *ḡīm*.

²⁵ The practice of writing a diacritic above *dalet* for *dāl* in words of CA origin is noted in Khan, 1992, p. 238. In my analysis of letters and folk narratives from the 15th–19th centuries, it has become apparent that the inclusion of a diacritic above *dalet* denoting *dāl*, as with the writing of *peh* for *fā*, is absent in 15th–16th century material and emerges only in the 17th(?)–18th century letters and folk-tales. Furthermore, the custom observed by Khan and evident in this 19th century folk-tale of including the diacritic above *dalet* for *dāl* only in words of CA origin is also consistently found in contemporaneous letters and folk-tales.

'*aḥada*). This appears to reflect the phonetic shift of *dāl* in colloquial forms of Arabic from a voiced dental fricative /ð/ to a voiced alveolar plosive /d/. However, it must not be presumed that the inclusion of the diacritic above *dalet* for *dāl* in CA forms is indicative of the voiced dental fricative /ð/ reflex. In the late JA manuscript CUL T-S Ar. 54.63, a fully vocalised folk narrative entitled *Qiṣṣat Hanna*, the JA relative pronoun אַלְדִּי 'ldy 'which' is vocalised as אֶלְדִּי 'eladdī (CUL T-S Ar. 54.63, 1v.; CA: 'alladī; MCA: 'illī).²⁶ The Hebrew pointing of the JA relative pronoun suggests that the fricative realisation of CA *dāl* was not necessarily retained in the reading tradition, and that the diacritic may indeed be a stylistic device, employed to evoke the graphical form of its Arabic counterpart *dāl* (ذ).

3.1.1.4 Kaf for ḥā' and kāf

A diacritic appears above *kaf* for *ḥā'* in initial/medial form throughout the text, e.g. לְאַפֵּי 'besides him' (140 r. 3; CA: *ḥilāfu-hu*); פְּרֻכְתֵּי 'two chickens' (141 r. 8; CA: *farḥatayn*). In final form the diacritic is omitted, e.g. נִטְבֹּךְ אֵל פְּרֻאךְ 'we may cook the chickens' (141 r. 13; CA: *naṭbuḥu al-firāḥa*); תְּנַפֵּךְ 'blowing' (141 r. 14; CA: *tanaffuḥun*).²⁷

The Arabic grapheme *kāf*, also denoted with the Hebrew grapheme *kaf*, is unmarked in its initial/medial form – e.g. מְרוֹכֵב 'a procession' (140 r. 1; 140 v. 19, 21; 141 r. 4; CA: *maukibun*); כְּנִיסָה 'a church' (141 r. 7, 9; CA: *kanīsatun*) – but contains a central dot in word-final position, e.g. לְאֵלֶיךָ 'that' (140 r. 2, 3, 20; 140 v. 17; CA: *dālīka*); כֻּעֵךְ 'cookie' (140 r. 23; 140 v. 16; MCA: *ka'k*).

The distinctions drawn between these two graphemes through the different uses of the diacritic mirror the graphical forms of their Arabic counterparts. *Kaf* for *ḥā'* (ح) with its supra-linear dot imitates the graphical form of *ḥā'* (ح), whereas *kaf* for *kāf* (כ/ק), which is unmarked in initial/medial form but takes a central marker in word-final position, evokes the graphical forms of Arabic *kāf* (ك/ق).

3.1.1.5 Ṣadeh for dād

The Arabic grapheme *dād* is consistently represented with a *ṣadeh* and supra-linear dot, in keeping with the orthographic practice established during the classical JA period, e.g. גַּזְבֵּךְ 'your anger' (141 r. 16; CA: *ḡaḏab*).

²⁶ This example comes from Khan, 2010, p. 213.

²⁷ As regards the use of the diacritic above the *kaf* in the commonly occurring noun אֵל חָכֵם 'the sage; rabbi', two interpretations present themselves: (i) this may be a Hebrew loan word which has an established use in colloquial Arabic (حَاخِم *ḥāḥām* 'rabbi') and is thus considered to be a JA word, in which *kaf* denotes *ḥā'*; or (ii) the JA graphical imitation of the Arabic *ḥā'* (i.e. ح for ح) is used to denote the Hebrew *kaf*, which is fricativised here due to its post-vocalic position. The latter interpretation seems more probable in light of the re-occurrence of *kaf* with a diacritic in a Hebrew word, זְכוּתוֹ 'his good deed' (141 r. 20) in which *kaf* is also fricativised.

3.1.1.6 Tet for *zā*'

As with *šadeh* for *dād*, the orthographic representation of *zā*' with *tet* and a supra-linear diacritic (ֿ), initiated during the classical JA period, is continued without exception in this late JA text, e.g. עֲטִים 'great' (140 r. 1; 140 v. 21; 141 r. 12; CA: 'aṣīmun); נִטִּיר 'equal' (140 r. 4; 141 r. 20; CA: *naṣīrun*). The representation of both *dād* and *zā*' in classical JA and this late JA text is driven by the imitation of the graphical forms of their Arabic orthographic cognates (ض and ظ respectively).

The determining factor in the use of *gimel* for *gayn*, *dalet* for *dāl* and *kaf* for *ḥā*' with a diacritic is commonly attributed to each of these grapheme's phonetic congruence with the fricative Hebrew allophones of *gimel* [ɣ], *dalet* [ð] and *kaf* [χ], respectively.²⁸ While the present study does not refute the fundamental essence of this interpretation, it argues that the inclusion of the diacritic was influenced not by the Hebrew phonemes but – as with *šadeh* for *dād* and *tet* for *zā*' – by the graphical form of their respective Arabic cognates. The re-evaluation of the diacritic's functions as primarily practical and stylistic rather than phonetic is founded on the inclusion of a supra-linear dot above *peh* for *fā*' in this and other late JA texts in which the diacritic serves no perceptible phonetic function, on the erratic use of the diacritic in relation to *gimel* for *ḡīm*²⁹ and on the relatively recent consistent inclusion of the diacritic above *peh* for *fā*', *dalet* for *dāl* and *kaf* for *ḥā*'.

While the continuation of classical JA spelling practices in late JA texts is generally acknowledged, it has often been suggested that Arabic itself has little or no influence on late JA.³⁰ Here we find evidence to suggest that written Arabic practices played a more significant role in the JA orthographic innovations of the Ottoman period than has previously been suggested.

3.1.2 Doubling of *vav* and *yod*

The graphemes *vav* and *yod* are often written twice to indicate the Arabic consonants *waw* and *yā*', differentiating them from the long vowels /ū/ and /ī/ and *scriptio plena* of short vowels /u/ and /i/. This practice, common in late JA texts, was influenced by Rabbinic Hebrew orthographic practices. In initial position, consonantal *waw* is always represented with a single *vav* in this text, e.g. וְאֶחָד 'one' (139 v. 20; 140 r. 14, 24; 140 v. 6, 6, 24; 141 r. 18; CA: *wāḥid*); וְנָגַד 'he found' (140 v. 9, 12; CA: *waḡada*). However, in medial form consonantal *waw* is routinely denoted with double *vav*, e.g. אֲוּלָדַי 'children' (139 v. 21; CA: 'awlādun); עוּוְאִי מָא 'instead' (140 v. 1; CA: 'iwāda; MCA: 'uwāḏ mā). To a lesser extent, medial consonantal *yā*' is also denoted with a double *yod*, e.g. דּוּוֵינִיָּא 'world' (140 r. 4; CA: *dunyā*).

²⁸ Blau, 1981, pp. 34–35; Khan, 2016, pp. 24–25.

²⁹ See Connolly, in press.

³⁰ Khan, 2007, pp. 527–528; Wagner, 2010, pp. 233–234.

3.1.3 *Scriptio plena*

The Hebrew graphemes *ʾalef*, *yod* and *vav* are used with varying degrees of frequency in the text to express the Arabic short vowels *fatha* /a/, *kasra* /i/ and *ḍamma* /u/, respectively.

3.1.3.1 *Scriptio plena of CA short /a/*

The denoting of the short vowel /a/ with *ʾalef* is relatively rare in this text. It occurs with the independent preposition *מע* ‘with’ (CA: *ma* ‘a) three times when a suffix pronoun is attached to it, e.g. *מעאָהוּם* ‘with them’ (140 v. 17; CA: *ma* ‘a-*hum*); *מעאַךְ* ‘with you (sg)’ (140 v. 19; CA: *ma* ‘a-*ka*).³¹ This reflects the MCA practice in which the second short vowel /a/ of the preposition is lengthened to /ā/ with the addition of a pronoun suffix (MCA: *ma* ‘ā).³²

3.1.3.2 *Scriptio plena of short /i/*

The use of *yod* to indicate the Arabic sub-linear vowel *kasra* occurs frequently in the 3fsg suffix conjugation, representing the vowel shift /a/ > /e/ in the 3fsg verbal suffix conjugation which is characteristic of MCA, e.g. *פֿרָגִית* ‘it was empty’ (140 r. 22; CA: *faragat*); *וּקְעָדִית* ‘and she sat’ (141 r. 14; CA: *qa’adat*). It is also present before the 2fsg suffix pronoun, again indicating MCA pronunciation (see section 3.2.6.2.1), e.g. *מִכְאַנִּיךְ* ‘your (f.) place’ (141 r. 13; CA: *makānu-ki*). *Plene yod* also denotes the short vowel *kasra* in the noun of *וּמֵן גִּיהַת* ‘on behalf of’ (140 r. 9; CA: *ḡiha*). The CA relative pronoun *man* ‘the one who’ is written with *yod* in this JA text, e.g. *מֵיִן* ‘the one who’ (139 v. 22), indicating the MCA pronunciation.³³

3.1.3.3 *Scriptio plena of short /u/*

The most common form of *matres lectionis* is the use of *vav* to represent the short vowel *ḍamma*,³⁴ e.g. *וְאַל חוּן* ‘and grieving’ (140 r. 5; CA: *al-ḥuzn*); *עוּמְרוֹ* ‘his age’ (140 r. 3; CA: *umru-hu*); *קוּדְאַמְהוּם* ‘in front of them’ (140 v. 7; CA: *quddāma*); *פֿוּם* ‘mouth’ (141 r. 4, 6; CA: *famun/fum*, construct state; MCA: *fumm*). In some instances, the *plene* spelling of the short vowel reveals a shift in pronunciation. In the following example, the vowel shift /a/ > /u/ reflects a change from CA to MCA pronunciation: *אַוּשְׁהוּר* ‘months’ (140 r. 11, 11, 12, 14; CA: *ʾašhur*; MCA: *ʾušhur*).

Scriptio plena vav is employed in the 3mpl independent (CA: *hum*) and 3mpl and 2mpl suffix pronouns (CA: *-hum/-him, -kum*) consistently throughout the text, irrespective of the preceding vowels, e.g. *עֲלֵיהֶם* ‘on them’ (140 r.

³¹ The independent preposition *מע* ‘with’ (CA: *ma* ‘a) occurs as frequently without the MCA-influenced *ʾalef* as with it, in this text.

³² Hinds and Badawi, 1986, p. 828.

³³ Hinds and Badawi, 1986, p. 842.

³⁴ *Plene* spelling of the short /u/ vowel is also very common in JA letters of all periods; see Wagner, 2010, p. 53.

9; 140 v. 4, 13; 141 r. 11; CA: *'alay-him*); מנזלכום 'your home' (140 r. 9; CA: *manzīlu-kum*).

The 3msg pronoun suffix is also written with a *vav* representing the short vowel *ḍamma* when suffixed to the preposition *l-* (CA: *li-*), e.g. להו 'to him' (140 r. 4, 8, 13, 16, 18; CA: *la-hu*). This may reflect the pronunciation practice (which is not represented in CA orthography) in which the 3msg pronoun suffix is long (*/-hū/*, */-hī/*) after an open syllable.³⁵

3.1.4 *Fy* for *fa-*

The CA bound particle *fa-* functions as a connective particle between two clauses, denoting either a temporal or consequential connection.³⁶ The CA bound particle is written in this JA text as an independent entity,³⁷ constituted of *peh* and *yod*, e.g. פִּי כתב '(then) he wrote' (140 r. 13; CA: *fa-kataba*); פִּי שלם '(then) he greeted them' (140 v. 13; CA: *fa-salima*).³⁸ The classical JA representative functions of *yod* – in which *yod* denotes its orthographic cognates *yā* */ī/* and */y/* and also *'alif maqṣūra* */ā/* – diminish in late JA compositions to denote only *yā* */ī/* and */y/*, leaving *'alif maqṣūra* to be represented with *'alef* or *hey*, e.g. עלא/עלה 'on, upon' (classical JA: עלי; CA: *'alā*). However, in the writing of the conjunction *fa-*, the short vowel */a/* is denoted in *plene* with *yod*. This phenomenon is indicative of *'imāla* – the raising of the long or short vowel */a/* to */e/* or */ɛ/* – in which *yod*, representing the *plene* spelling of the short */e/* vowel, denotes a shift in pronunciation.³⁹ This interpretation is corroborated by the Hebrew vocalisation in the late JA folk narrative CUL T-S Ar. 54.63, in which the bound particle *fa-* is vocalised with the Hebrew vowel *hireq* */i/*: פִּצָּאר 'and he came' *fī-ṣār* (CUL T-S Ar. 54.63, 4r.; CA: *fa-ṣāra*).⁴⁰

3.1.5 *'Alif maqṣūra* and *'alif mamdūda*

'Alef is routinely deployed to denote *'alif maqṣūra bi-ṣūrat al-yā* in this JA text, e.g. עלא 'on, about, concerning' (139 v. 21; 140 r. 2, 5; 140 v. 8, 9, 11, 17, 23; CA: *'alā*); אלא 'to, towards' (140 r. 18; 141 r. 16; CA: *'ilā*).⁴¹ In contemporary letters, it is common for final *'alif*, *'alif maqṣūra* and *'alif mamdūda* to be denoted with either *'alef* or *hey* in a phenomenon attributed to Hebrew and Aramaic influence.

³⁵ Fischer, 2002, p. 142, §268.

³⁶ Wright, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 290–291, §366.

³⁷ Thus, CA *fa-* 'so, thus' becomes indistinguishable from the independent preposition *fī* 'in, during' (JA: פִּי; CA: *fī*). Differentiation between the two entities depends, therefore, on the surrounding context.

³⁸ There is only one exception to this phenomenon, where the particle *fa-* appears in accordance with CA convention, that is, without the *yod* and conjoined to the following verb: פִּקְעֵדו 'So, they sat ...' (140 r. 20; CA: *fa-qa'ada*).

³⁹ See Wagner, 2010, p. 63, §4.5.6 for examples of this representation of *fa-* in late JA letters; see Blau, 1981, p. 74 for *yod* and *'alef* denoting *yā*.

⁴⁰ Khan, 2010, p. 213.

⁴¹ When the 1csg pronoun suffix is attached to the preposition *'alā*, it is denoted with a *yod* and *hey*, e.g. עלייה 'on me' (140 v. 23; CA: *'alayya*).

The *'alif mamdūda* ending is also represented with *'alef* in this text, e.g. קאמו באל בוכא 'they started weeping' (140 r. 5; CA: *al-bukā'u*). As such, *'alif mamdūda* becomes indistinguishable from *'alif maqṣūra bi-šūrat al-yā'*.⁴²

While there are discernible elements of the external influences of Hebrew and Aramaic, it is possible that the main motivation for the use of *'alef* for *'alif maqṣūra bi-šūrat al-yā'* is phonetic. Unlike many contemporaneous texts, *hey* does not represent *'alif* in this folk narrative (except in the case of *tanwīn 'alif*, see section 3.1.7).

3.1.6 Dagger *'alif*

Occurrences of CA dagger *'alif* – a supra-linear ‘dagger’ (¹) placed above a consonantal grapheme, taking the place of the *plene 'alif*⁴³ – in this JA folk narrative are written in *plene* with *'alef*,⁴⁴ e.g. לַאֵלֶךְ ‘that’ (140 r. 2, 3, 20; 140 v. 17; CA: *dālīka*); הַאֵלֶּה ‘this’ (140 r. 8; CA: *hādā*); וְלֹאֵכֵן ‘but’ (140 v. 11; CA: *wa-lākin*).

3.1.7 *Tanwīn*

The CA *tanwīn 'alif* indefinite adverbial marker is expressed with both the Hebrew graphemes *hey* and *nun* in this late JA text, e.g. אַיִצְּהָ ‘also’ (139 v. 19; CA: *'ayḏan*); אַבְדֵּן ‘never, ever’ (141 r. 18, 20; CA: *'abadan*).

3.1.8 Separation of units

3.1.8.1 *The definite article*

The JA definite article is written consistently throughout the text separately from the noun it modifies, e.g. אֵל קִסִּיט ‘the priest’ (141 r. 3; CA: *al-qissīsu*); אֵל סִכִּינָה ‘the knife’ (141 r. 10, 11; CA: *al-sikkīnātu*); אֵל נָאֵר ‘the fire’ (141 r. 13; CA: *al-nāru*). This is a well-established phenomenon in both literary and documentary late JA texts.⁴⁵

3.1.8.2 *Fy + definite article*

When preceding the definite article, the independent preposition פִּי *fy* ‘in, during’ (CA: *fī*) loses the *yod* and becomes prefixed to the *'alef-lamed* ligature, e.g. פִּי בַלַּד ‘in the town’ (140 v. 5, 22; CA: *fī al-baladi*); פִּי תַכְתְּרוֹוֹאֵן ‘in the sedan chair’ (141 r. 4, 6; CA: *fī al-taḥtarawāni*).⁴⁶

⁴² Blau, 1981, p. 74.

⁴³ Wright, 1967, vol. 1, pp. 9–10, §6a.

⁴⁴ The numerical form *talāṭ* ‘three’ appears three times in this JA folk-tale written as תַּלַּת ‘three’ (140 r. 11, 11, 14). In CA, ‘three’ may be written either with an *'alif* or dagger *'alif* (CA: *talāṭ*). Its form here may either be regarded as a defective spelling in which the *'alif* has been omitted, or as an imitation of the CA form in which the dagger *'alif* would have been included.

⁴⁵ Khan, 1992, p. 231; Khan, 2006, p. 51; Khan, 2013, p. 243.

⁴⁶ The assimilation of the independent pronoun *fy* and the definite article is recorded as occurring infrequently in some 11th century Maḡribi and 15th–16th century letters; see Wagner, 2010, p. 66. The appearance of this phenomenon in BnF Hébreu 583 is very consistent.

3.2 Morphology

3.2.1 Suffix conjugation

3.2.1.1 Otiose 'alif

In CA, the 3mpl suffix conjugation, the 3mpl and 2mpl subjunctive and jussive forms of the prefix conjugation, and the mpl imperative form are written with an otiose (also referred to as 'silent') 'alif, e.g. كَتَبُوا *katabū* 'they wrote'; يَكْتُبُوا *yaktubū* 'they (should) write'.⁴⁷ In a phenomenon common to classical JA documentary⁴⁸ and late JA texts alike, the otiose 'alif is omitted in all 3mpl suffix conjugations, e.g. אִכְּבְּרוּ 'they related' (139 v. 19; CA: 'aḥbarū); עִמְלוּ 'they made' (140 r. 2; 141 r. 19; CA: 'amilū).

3.2.1.2 Prosthetic 'alif

The fifth form of the suffix conjugation is prefixed with an additional 'alif as is customary in MCA, e.g. וְאִתְּוֹגְּהוּ 'and they set off' (140 r. 13, 24; 140 v. 1; CA: *tawaḡḡaha*; MCA: 'itwaggah); וְאִתְּעִגְּבוּ 'and they were astonished!' (140 v. 6; CA: *ta'aḡḡaba*; MCA: 'it'aggib).⁴⁹

3.2.2 Prefix conjugation

3.2.2.1 Niktib–niktibū

This literary text contains instances of both n-type and a-type verbal inflection. Occurrences of 1csg n-type verbal inflection may be seen in examples (1) and (2), while 1cpl n-type verbal forms are seen in examples (3) and (4):

- (1) נִכְּוֵן אֲנִי מֵעִיךְ
'I will be with you' (140 v. 19)
- (2) אֲנִי וְקֵת מֵא נְרִיד נְתוּגְּהָ
'When I want to, I will go' (140 r. 20)
- (3) וּבַעַד שְׁהַר קָאֵלוּ לְהוּ יָא סִידְנָא נְרִידוּ נְתוּגְּהוּ
'After a month, they said to him, "O our master, we wish to go ..."'
(140 r. 19)
- (4) לֵם עוֹדְנָא נְטִלְבוּ וְאֶחָד כֹּל סְנָה אֲבָדָן
'We will never again claim one (of you) each year' (141 r. 17)

⁴⁷ Examples from Fischer, 2002, p. 7, §7.2.

⁴⁸ Wagner, 2010, p. 47.

⁴⁹ Hinds and Badawi, 1986, pp. 563, 925.

Examples (5)–(7) constitute instances of a-type verbal inflection as they occur in the text. In examples (5) and (6), 1cpl form appears without the plural suffix *vav* in adherence with CA convention. In example (7) we find the sole instance of 1csg a-type verbal inflection:

- (5) נהן נצרוף
‘We will support ...’ (140 r. 9)
- (6) ונהן נכתב לכוּם פרמאן
‘And we will write a decree for you’ (141 r. 17)
- (7) אתמנא אן תגעלו אל קסיס אל כביר פי זכיבה
‘I wish you to put the high priest into a gunny sack ...’ (141 r. 3)

As is evident from examples (1), (5) and (6), 1csg n-type and 1cpl a-type verbs are often accompanied by an independent pronoun.⁵⁰ The inclusion of the independent pronoun – either post-positionally, as in example (1), or pre-positionally, as in examples (5) and (6) – is borne of a desire to avoid the semantic confusion which may arise from using 1csg n-type and 1cpl a-type verbal forms (which are identical in form) alongside one another in the same text.

As Khan remarks, the co-existence of n-type and a-type verbal inflection in JA written texts, as seen here, also reflects the concurrent uses of these verbal forms in Jewish spoken varieties of Arabic.⁵¹

3.2.2.2 *Bi-imperfect*

There is only one instance of the *bi*-imperfect in this late JA folk-tale. It is used to express habitual action:

- (8) על ע"ז אל כבירה אלדי ביעמלו להא אל קורבאן
‘And he summoned (the) large idol which they make the offering(s) to ...’ (141 r. 9)

3.2.3 *Ġā'a + bi-*

The MCA form *gāb* ‘to bring’ occurs in the text, once. This phonogenetic verbal form, comprising the CA verb *ġā'a* ‘to come’ + the bound preposition *bi-* ‘with, in’, is common in JA documentary texts of all periods:⁵²

- (9) פי גאבו להום פרכתין
‘So, they brought them two chickens’ (141 r. 8)

⁵⁰ I am indebted to Dr Nadia Vidro for this observation.

⁵¹ Khan, 2006, p. 58; cf. Blanc, 1974, pp. 209–212; Blau, 1981, pp. 58–60.

⁵² Wagner, 2010, p. 108; Esseesy, 2010, p. 225.

3.2.4 Vowel shifts

This text reveals two explicit deviations from CA and MCA verbal vocalisation, made evident by the *plene* spelling of one or both short vowels: נחן בצרוף ‘we will pay them’ (140 r. 9; CA: *naṣrifu*; MCA: *ṣaraf, yiṣrif*); and הוצרו ‘they arrived’ (literally, ‘they were present’; 140 r. 14; CA: *ḥaḍara*; MCA: *ḥaḍar, yaḥḍar*). The *plene* spelling of short vowels is prevalent in late JA literary and documentary texts (see section 3.1.3).⁵³ Yet the vowel changes they indicate – such as /a/ or /i/ to /u/ found here – do not always reflect the situation in MCA. Rather, they may be regarded as features unique to Egyptian Arabic-speaking Jews.⁵⁴

3.2.5 Negation

3.2.5.1 Verbal negation

The CA particle *lam* is used for all forms of verbal negation, irrespective of tense and form. In the following examples, for instance, the particle negates a suffix conjugation form, in (10), and non-jussive forms of the prefix conjugation, in (11) and (12), all of which connote the future.

- (10) פִּי קָאֵל לְהוֹם אֵל רַאב לִם עוֹדְתוֹ תְּכַאֲטְבוּנִי פִּי שְׂאן לְאֵלֶךְ
‘Then the Rabbi said to them, “You will no longer address me about this matter!”’ (140 r. 19-20)
- (11) וּבִשְׂרֵט לִם תְּתַעֲוֹקוּ פֶּאֵל טְרִיק
‘... and on the condition that you do not tarry on the way’ (140 r. 10)
- (12) וְלִם יִכּוֹן אֵלֵא כִּיר
‘... and all will be well’ (140 r. 17; CA: *lam yakun*)

3.2.5.2 Nominal negation

The use of the particle *lam* as a verbal negative marker of the jussive to indicate the past tense extends well beyond its limited capacity in CA in this late JA text. As well as being used with all verbal forms (see section 3.2.5.1), it serves as the negative marker of nominal sentences:

- (13) לִם הִיא בִלְדְנָא
‘It is not our town!’ (140 v. 6)
- (14) וְעַמְלוֹ עֵיד פִּסַּח לִם לְהוֹ נְטִיר אֲבָדָן
‘They made a Passover festival, the like of which has never been seen’ (141 r. 19-20)

⁵³ See also Hary, 1997, pp. 212–216.

⁵⁴ Hary, 2009, p. 101.

The varied functions and frequency of the negative particle *lam* evident in this text are found in JA and Middle Arabic texts alike.⁵⁵ *Lam* appears to have been viewed as a literary feature and, as such, was employed to raise the register of the narrative in both documentary⁵⁶ and, as is evident here, literary texts.

3.2.6 Pronominals

3.2.6.1 Independent personal pronouns

3.2.6.1.1 First person common plural pronoun

The MCA (*ihnā*) and CA forms (*nahnu*) of the 1cpl independent pronoun occur interchangeably throughout the text, e.g. אהנא 'we' (140 v. 3, 24); נהן 'we' (140 r. 9; 140 v. 3, 7; 141 r. 17).

3.2.6.1.2 Third person masculine and feminine pronouns

The spelling of the 3msg and 3fsg independent pronouns in this text obscures their morphological form. Both independent pronouns are written with word-final *alef* – היא 'he' and היא 'she' – which may be interpreted as either a phonetic *plene* spelling of the short vowel /a/, characteristic of the CA independent pronouns *huwwa* 'he' and *hiyya* 'she'; or else as the Hebrew independent pronouns הוא 'he' (*hū*) and היא 'she' (*hī*).

3.2.6.2 Suffix pronouns

3.2.6.2.1 Second person feminine singular suffix

The use of *mater lectionis yod* in conjunction with the 2fsg suffix pronoun יכ is indicative of the colloquial pronunciation of this suffix pronoun. Whereas in CA the 2fsg pronoun is pronounced with a final short vowel /i/, *-ki* 'your', in MCA /i/ or /ī/ precedes the *kāf*: *-ik/-īk* 'your', e.g. מכהניך 'your (f.) place' (141 r. 13; CA: *makānu-ki*; MCA: *makān-ik*).

3.2.6.2.2 Third person masculine singular suffix after a consonant

When written after a consonant, the 3msg pronoun suffix is denoted phonetically – according to MCA pronunciation – with Hebrew *vav* in this late JA literary text, e.g. ענדו 'with him' (140 r. 3, 18; CA: *inda-hu*; MCA: *andu*); עומר 'his age' (140 r. 3; CA: *umru-hu*; MCA: *umr-u*).

3.2.6.2.3 Third person masculine singular suffix after a (long) vowel

The Hebrew grapheme *hey* supplants *vav* as the representative of the 3msg direct object suffix pronoun when written after a (long) vowel, e.g. יקרבוה

⁵⁵ A Muslim Middle Arabic example of the frequent and varied use of *lam* as a nominal and verbal negative particle is found in the 19th century text by al-Ġarādī in Mittwoch, 1926.

⁵⁶ Wagner, 2010, pp. 135, 144.

‘they sacrifice him’ (140 r. 6; CA: *yuqarribūna-hu*); סאלוה ‘they asked him’ (140 r. 15; CA: *sā’alū-hu*). The use of *hey* – more commonly associated with classical JA orthographic practices and directly influenced by CA orthography – avoids any confusion that may arise with the use of an additional *vav* after the 3mpl suffix *-ū*.

3.2.6.3 Interrogative pronouns

The MCA interrogative pronoun *fēn* ‘where?’ (CA: *’ayna*) appears once in the text in direct speech:

- (15) פִּין בֵּית אֵל רַב אַבְרָהָם ׀ עֲזָרָא
 ‘Where is the house of R. Abraham ibn ‘Ezra?’ (140 r. 15)

Also in direct speech, the colloquial Arabic interrogative pronoun *’ēš* ‘what’,⁵⁷ which corresponds to MCA *’ēh*, occurs:

- (16) פִּי סַאֲלוּהוּם אִישׁ תְּרִידוּ תֹאכְלוּ
 ‘They asked them, “What would you like to eat?”’ (141 r. 7)

3.2.6.4 Demonstrative pronouns

Direct deixis is expressed in this JA folk narrative with the demonstrative pronouns האָדא *h’d* and האָדי *h’dy*. The msg demonstrative pronoun האָדא *h’d* emulates its CA counterpart *hādā*, while the fsg form האָדי *h’dy* may either be a reference to the archaic demonstrative pronoun *hādī*,⁵⁸ or – more probably – a pseudo-literary feature, resulting from the amalgamation of the CA fsg form *hādīhi* and the fsg MCA form *dī*.

In contemporaneous JA letters, the CA-derived demonstrative pronouns have been almost completely supplanted by the colloquial demonstrative pronoun די *dy* ‘this’ (MCA: *dī*), confirming the use of these forms in this folk narrative as a literary or archaising device intended to elevate the register of the narrative. The MCA msg demonstrative pronoun דא *da* ‘this’ (140 v. 3) appears once in this text, used in a presentative manner. The appearance of *d*’ is conspicuous. It has often been noted that in 17th century Middle Arabic literary and early 18th century JA documentary texts, the form די *dy* occurs to the exclusion of the contemporary msg form. As such, it has been argued that *dy* is an earlier, gender-indifferent version of the contemporary form.⁵⁹

3.2.6.5 JA relative pronoun

Unlike its CA counterpart (*’alladī*) but akin to its MCA equivalent (*’illī*), the JA relative pronoun אַלְדִּי *’ldy/’ldy*, frequent in both classical JA documentary

⁵⁷ The colloquial interrogative pronoun *’ēš* ‘what’ is no longer used in daily speech in MCA. It has been superseded by the contracted form *’ēh* ‘what’, while *’ēš* remains the preserve of “proverbs and set phrases” according to Hinds and Badawi, 1986, p. 46.

⁵⁸ See Fischer, 2002, p. 145, §274.

⁵⁹ See Wagner, 2010, pp. 125–126.

texts and late JA texts alike, does not inflect for gender or number in this folk narrative:

- (17) וגַד אל אתנין אל תלמידים אלדי כאן ארסלהום למצר
'... he found the two students whom he had sent to Cairo' (140 v. 12;
CA: 'alladīna)
- (18) ונדה על ע"ז אל כבירה אלדי ביעמלו להא אל קוראבן
'And he summoned the large idol which they make the offering(s)
to ...' (141 r. 9; CA: 'allatī)

3.2.7 Construct state

The MCA particle *bitā* ' is used interchangeably with the construct state to denote possession:

- (19) פי סנה מן אל סנין עמלו אל גורל טלע עלא אבן אל רב בתאע דאלף אל בלד
'One year, they cast the lot (and) it fell on the son of the Rabbi of that
town' (140 r. 2)
- (20) והום פאל בלד בתאע אל דעווה⁶⁰
'And they were in the town from which the appeal came' (140 v. 5)

3.3 Syntax

3.3.1 Subordination

3.3.1.1 Adverbial clauses and complex subordinators

Complex subordinators, composed of prepositions or conjunctions which take a complementiser to introduce an adverbial clause, are more prevalent than their 'simple' counterparts in this literary text. The following examples show complex subordinators acting as the head of a temporal adverbial clause, in (21), and a purposive adverbial clause, in (22).

- (21) קעדו לארבע סעאת מן אל ליל לחין מא פרגית אל קראייה פי פרקו כעף בסירג
'They sat for four hours during the night until the recitation was
finished, then they distributed the cookies with sesame oil ...'(140 r.
22–23)

⁶⁰ In MCA, the particle *bitā* ' inflects for gender and number (in construct: *bitā* ' (m), *bitā* 'it (f) and *bitū* ' (pl)). In other instances in the text, the noun בלד 'town', which may be either feminine or masculine in CA is referred to as feminine (as would be expected in MCA), e.g. האדי אל בלד 'this town' (140 r. 10–11); לם היא בלדנא 'it is not our town' (140 v. 6). It is unclear as to whether בלד 'town' was considered masculine or feminine in this context and, therefore, whether or not the construct particle *bitā* ' is invariable in this text.

- (22) וגו אל ערלים במוכב עטים לאגל אנהום יאכדו אל ולד יווכבו בו פאל בלד
 ‘The uncircumcised came in a great procession in order to take the boy
 (to) parade him through the town’ (140 v. 21–22)

3.3.1.2 Opacity

As is reflected in examples (21) and (22) above, אן (’n/’nn) – the JA equivalent of the CA complementisers ’an ‘to’ and ’anna ‘that’ – is used interchangeably with the free relative particle מא (m’) in complex constructions introducing adverbial clauses. The syntactic functions of CA *mā* include that of free relative particle and complementiser, the identification of which is context-dependent:

- (23) *ba’da mā’ rā’a*
 (a) ‘After what he saw’ (free relative particle)
 (b) ‘After he saw ...’ (complementiser)

In BnF Hébreu 583, however, the opacity regarding these two functions of *mā*’ appears to affect the use of the invariable JA relative pronoun ’*ldy*/’*ldy*. In (24), the subordinator *hyn* occurs with the complementiser *m’*, twice. In the following example, (25), however, *m’* is replaced by the relative pronoun ’*ldy*/’*ldy*, functioning as a complementiser:⁶¹

- (24) חין מא יגו באל מוכב יאכדוך קול להום אן נכון אנא מעאך · וחין מא יקולו לך אתמנא
 תועטא קול להום אלדי יתמנא רפיקי
 ‘When they come in the procession to take you, tell them that I will be
 accompanying you. And when they say to you, “What(ever) you wish
 will be granted”, say to them, “Whatever my companion wishes!”’
 (140 v. 18–20)
- (25) פי חין אלדי טלע אל גורל עלא אל ולד קאמו באל בוכא ואל צייאח ואל נוואח ואל חוון
 ‘When the lot fell on the boy, they began weeping and wailing and
 mourning and grieving’ (140 r. 4)

3.3.1.3 Analogical extension

In all forms of Arabic, the preposition *ba’da* may function as the head of a prepositional phrase with nominal dependents, as in (26), or as the head of an adverbial subordinate clause, as in (27). As has already been noted, adverbial subordinators in this text are often written in constructions which take a complementiser, which marks the shift of the construction from head of a prepositional phrase to head of an adverbial clause.

⁶¹ Further evidence of the effects of the opacity regarding the function of *m’* on the relative pronoun is found in the following example: חכו אל תלמידים לל סי’ חכם באלדי גרא ... the students told Mr. Rabbi about what had happened to them’ (140 v. 16; CA: *bi-mā ġarā*).

- (26) מן בעד תלת אושהור חוֹצְרוּ פי מצר
 ‘After three months, they arrived in Cairo’ (140 r. 13)
- (27) פִּקְעֵדוּ לַלַּיִל עֶרֶב פֶּסַח מִן בַּעַד מֵא עֵמַל אֵל רַב בְּדִיקַת חֶמֶץ וְאֵרְאָחוּ פִּי קִרְאִיָּה קַעֲדוּ
 לְאַרְבַּע סַעֲתָת מִן אֵל לַיִל
 ‘So, they stayed for the night of the eve of Passover. After the Rabbi did the *chametz* check, they went for recitation (and) they stayed (there) for four hours during the night.’ (140 r. 20–22)

In a phenomenon analogous to that described above, the adverbial phrase *fy m' b'd* (CA: *fīmā ba'du*) ‘afterwards’, used in example (28) in accordance with its CA syntactic function, also appears in construction with the complementiser *m'* as head of a temporal adverbial clause in (29).

- (28) פִּי מֵא בַּעַד נִדְהָ אֵל רַב אֲב' עַל מִמְזוּרְתָהּ וְקִאֵל לְהָא אֲנֹלִי מִן מַכְאֲנִיךְ וְלַעֲי אֵל נֹאֵר לְאַגֵּל
 מֵא נִטְבוּךְ אֵל פֶּרְאֵךְ
 ‘Afterwards, Rabbi Abraham summoned his female bastard, saying to her, “Get down from your place and light the fire in order that we may cook the chicken.”’ (141 r. 12–13)
- (29) פִּי מֵא בַּעַד מֵא צִלוּ כְּנִיס חֲכוּ אֵל תְּלִמִידִים לֵל סִי חֲכֵם בְּאַלְדֵי גֵרָא
 ‘After they had prayed in the synagogue, the students told Mr. Rabbi about what had happened’ (140 v. 15–17)

Constructions taking a complementiser to introduce adverbial clauses, which occur frequently in this and other 19th century folk narratives, are relatively rare in contemporaneous JA letters. They should be regarded as literary devices, added to enrich the ‘literary flavour’ of the narrative.

3.3.1.4 Relative clauses

3.3.1.4.1 Double use of relative pronouns

In a phenomenon that only occurs once in the text, the MCA relative pronoun *mīn* ‘the one who’ is immediately followed by the JA relative pronoun *'ldy/'ldy* ‘that, which’. The JA relative pronoun was perhaps added to raise the register of the text after the use of a colloquial form.

- (30) לְאַגֵּל מֵא יַעֲרְפוּ מִיָּן אֲלֹדִי יִנְעַמַל קוֹרְבָן אֵל סִנָּה אֵל אֲתִיָּה
 ‘... in order that they might know the one who was to be sacrificed the following year’ (139 v. 22)

3.3.1.4.2 Indefinite noun and relative pronoun

In the following example, the JA relative pronoun *'ldy/'ldy* is preceded by an indefinite noun, which appears to be semantically definite. The omission

of the definite article may have simply been an error on the part of the author or scribe.

- (31) וכאן מיעאד אלדי יאכדו אל ולד יקרבוה יחכום אוול לילת פסח
'(The) date on which they would take the boy (and) present him as a sacrifice was decided as the first night of Passover' (140 r. 6)

3.3.2 Definite article + noun + pronoun suffix

In two instances, the definite article and a pronoun suffix are both employed to qualify the same noun:

- (32) פִּי נזלית אל ממזרתה
'His female bastard descended' (141 r. 13-14)
- (33) ואחד יקול האלי אל בלדנא
'One (of them) said, "This is our town!"' (140 v. 6)

3.3.3 Prepositions

3.3.3.1 Directional l-

The bound preposition *li-* has superseded the independent preposition *'ilā* as the particle used to express spatial location in this text, e.g. *ואתווגהו למצר* 'and they set off towards Cairo' (140 r. 13–14); *וצלו לבית אל חלם* 'they arrived at the house of the rabbi' (140 r. 7); *מן האלי אל בלד למצר* 'from this town to Cairo' (140 r. 10–11).

3.4 Hebrew content

3.4.1 Hebrew vocalisation

There are two separate instances in which a JA noun is vocalised with Hebrew vowels: *פֵּאל כְּלִיָּה* 'in the wilderness' (140 v. 3; CA: *ḥalā*); and *סֵאַל* 'a beggar' (140 v. 9; CA: *sā'il*). It is probable that in the latter case, vocalisation is included to avoid the misunderstanding that may arise with the otherwise homographic form *סאל* 'to ask' (140 r. 15; 141 r. 7; CA: *sa'ala*), or to indicate the omission of the *hamza* and presence of an /i/ vowel.

3.4.2 Hebrew lexicon

The Hebrew content of this JA folk narrative accounts for 8.8 per cent of the total text, the most frequent manifestation of which is in nominal form. The Hebrew nouns often refer to Jewish religious events or concepts, e.g. *פסח* 'Passover' (140 r. 6, 21; 141 r. 19); *בדיקת חמץ* '(the) *chametz* check' (140 r. 21); *ערלים* 'uncircumcised' (139 v. 19, 23; 140 v. 21, 24; 141 r. 2, 4, 11, 14);

and רב/ר' 'Rabbi' (140 r. 2, 7, 8, 15, 19, 23; 140 v. 3). However more quotidian words are also used, spanning from the prosaic – e.g. ערב 'eve' (140 r. 21) – to the profane – e.g. ממזר 'bastard' (141 r. 10).

Hebrew nouns are consistently qualified with the JA definite article אל rather than the Hebrew equivalent, e.g. אל גורל 'the lot' (140 r. 2, 5); אל תלמידים 'the students' (140 r. 7, 23; 140 v. 2, 5, 12, 16); אל ערלים 'the uncircumcised' (139 v. 19, 23; 140 v. 21, 24; 141 r. 2, 4, 11, 14). In one case, the Arabic 3msg suffix pronoun, denoted with a *hey*, is used to modify the Hebrew noun: ממזרתה 'his female bastard' (141 r. 12, 13–14).

A small number of nominal forms in the folk narrative may be interpreted as either Arabic or Hebrew, e.g. לילת 'night of' (140 r. 6, 21); חכם 'rabbi, sage' (140 v. 8, 10, 12, 16; see also n. 27); קורבן/קורבאן 'a sacrifice, offering' (139 v. 20, 22; 140 v. 18; 141 r. 9). These visual diamorphs have been included in the Hebrew word count.

3.4.3 Hebrew preposition

The Hebrew preposition על (*al*) 'on, by' is used twice in this folk narrative after the verb נדה 'to summon' (MCA: *nadah*) in place of the Arabic preposition 'alā/li- 'on, upon'/'to, for':

(34) ונדה על ע"ז אל כבירה

'And he summoned the large idol' (141 r. 9)

(35) פ"י מא בעד נדה אל רב אב' על ממזרתה

'Afterwards, the Rabbi Abraham summoned his female bastard ...'
(141 r. 12)

This switch into Hebrew following an MCA verb may be influenced by the fact that the object of the verb, immediately following the Hebrew preposition, is in both cases a Hebrew noun.

4 Summary

As is evident in the spelling of consonantal *waw* and *yā* with double *vav* and *yod*, the not insubstantial Hebrew code-switching and the occurrence of *niktib-niktibū* forms, this folk narrative contains a number of features often referred to as characteristic of late JA. However, the quantity of these elements is overshadowed by the continuation of classical JA features, of limited CA influence, Middle Arabic practices and contemporaneous Arabic dialectal interference.

From the *plene* spelling of short vowels and the denoting of the 3msg pronoun suffix with *vav* to the presence of the colloquial verb *gāb* 'to bring' and the fifth form's prosthetic 'alef, this text reveals numerous colloquial features

that are characteristic of MCA. Yet, in the presence of the JA relative pronoun, CA-influenced demonstrative pronouns and complex adverbial subordinators, the text also displays a preoccupation with raising the register above the quotidian, an aspiration which is achieved through the use of CA-influenced pseudo-literary features.

Furthermore, the use of the diacritics and the consonantal representations indicate both a continuation of classical JA spelling practices – for example, in the representation of *dād* with *šadeh* and a supra-linear diacritic – and the enduring, albeit limited, influence of contemporaneous Arabic orthographic practices evident in the innovative application of the diacritic to graphemes such as *peh* for *fā*’, *dalet* for *dāl* and *kaf* for *hā*’, in imitation of the physical form of their Arabic equivalents.

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Popular Renditions of Hebrew Hymns in 19th Century Yemen: How a Crudely Formed, Vocalised Manuscript Codex Can Provide Insights into the Local Pronunciation and Practice of Prayer

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1 Introduction

The Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica recently acquired a Yemenite manuscript codex, which was purchased online from Israel Mizrahi, the owner of the Mizrahi Book Store in New York.¹ Mizrahi obtained the codex through an estate sale upon the death of a private collector from Morocco whose library had included many Yemenite books. Beyond these particulars, however, no other provenance information is available for this fascinating object. The bookseller's inventory simply described the item as a "c1830 Yemen Manuscript of Kinot & Burial Procedures".

The Price Library of Judaica, with over 110,000 circulating items, is the leading Jewish studies research collection in the south-eastern United States. In addition, it has a growing special collections department boasting thousands of rare, early-modern printed books, periodicals, pamphlets and ephemera; unique archival collections from Florida, Latin America and the Caribbean, and a small collection of 19th century manuscripts from India, North Africa and most recently the Yemen.² The Yemenite manuscript discussed here was purchased initially as a gift to the Library for use in classes related to the history of Jewish books and libraries, and to demonstrate to students the differences and similarities between early and late Hebrew manuscript traditions.

The c1830 Yemenite manuscript codex (see figure 1) includes traditional lamentations (*qinot*) and penitential hymns (*seliḥot*) for the Ninth of Av and

¹ Israel Mizrahi's Sephardi bookstore, the Mizrahi Book Store, is based in New York and has an online presence at <http://stores.ebay.com/Jewish-Bookshop>. For more information about Mizrahi, see <http://forward.com/culture/books/307727/the-sephardic-bibliophile-of-brooklyn/>.

² For more information about the Library, see <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/judaica/>.



Figure 1. The Yemenite codex

for personal mourning, as well as texts regarding funerary practices and burial procedures. The texts are vocalised throughout with Babylonian vowel signs. The codex itself is a curious and crudely constructed object: the first few pages of its text are repeated again on folios 2–3; additional pages on different paper and in different scripts have been added in between the main quires; and pages



Figure 2. Parchment leaf used to fortify the binding

exhibiting pen trials and a *get* (divorce writ) formulary appear towards the back of the book. Hiding in between one of the folios and bound into the leaves is a colourful piece of patterned red cloth; some loose green threads are found in the binding next to the *Kaddish* prayer, and some plant leaves – probably sorghum – are wedged between two pages, and there is also what appears to be traces of flour in between the folds of several folios. Inside a cracked leather and loose sack cloth binding we see older, crumbled manuscript leaves being used to fortify the binding. One of these is a parchment leaf containing text from the Mishnah (see figures 2 and 3).³

This article, in addition to providing an analysis of the object itself and a general overview of the manuscript's content and vocalisation, will examine a sample text from the codex, the classical Hebrew hymn שני חיי by Solomon Ibn Gabirol. This text will be analysed for its layout, poetic notation, orthography, vocalisation, morphology and syntax to compare the differences between this Yemenite edition and the standard, published version. In addition, the Yemenite edition of שני חיי will be compared to earlier vocalised manuscript versions of the poem from the Cairo Genizah,⁴ revealing similar practices in the everyday recitation of Hebrew hymns among the Jewish communities of Western Asia.



Figure 3. Hidden leaves in the binding

³ The codex can be viewed online at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00058758/00001>, and the finding aid for the physical item is at <http://www.library.ufl.edu/spec/manuscript/guides/yemenite.htm>.

⁴ These versions are taken from Jefferson, 2004, pp. 14–49.

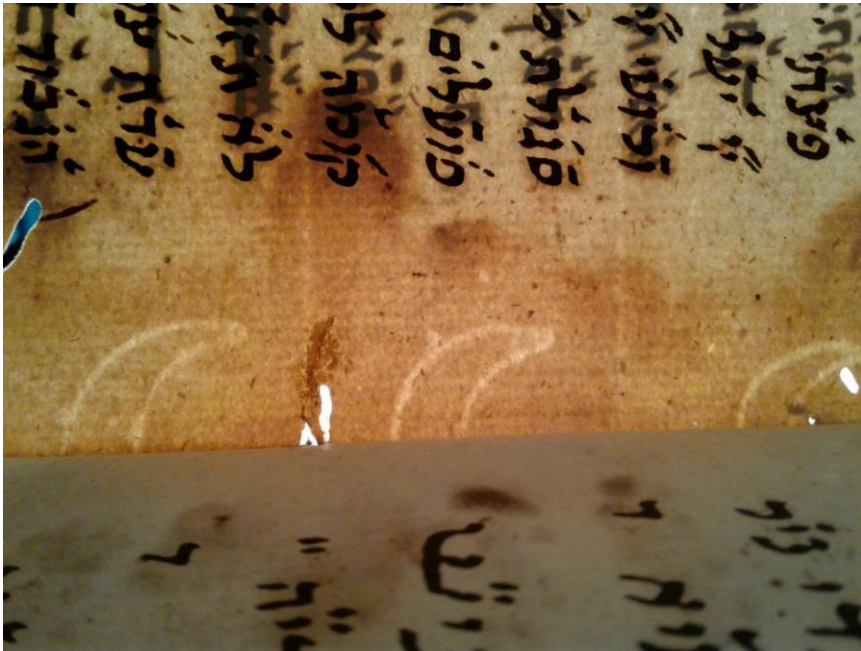


Figure 4. The *tre lune* watermark

2 Codicology: Materials

Most of the leaves in this codex are produced from good quality late 18th–early 19th century Italian paper from the Galvani mills in Venice. The Galvani paper is identified by its tell-tale *tre lune* (three crescent) watermark and VG initial counterfoil (for Valentino Galvani, the company’s founder), many of which are found in the gutter margins of this codex (see figures 4–6). The crescent symbol is identifiable in paper produced by Genoese mills as early as 1520, but it was developed largely with export to the Ottoman Empire in mind, and it is found in Islamic documents and manuscripts occurring in endless variations. *Tre lune* watermarks found together with the counterfoil initials of VG or AG signify that the paper was produced in the Galvani paper mills in the province of Friuli between Venice and Trieste by either Valentino Galvani (the founder, who died in 1810) or his son Antonio or grandson Andrea, who continued the family business until the mid-19th century.⁵

The majority of the leaves in this codex are cut to a similar size and shape; the paper quality is thick and fibrous, with seven chain lines running horizontally at one inch apart. However, quire 7 is distinct from most of the rest of the

⁵ Walz, 2011, p. 88.

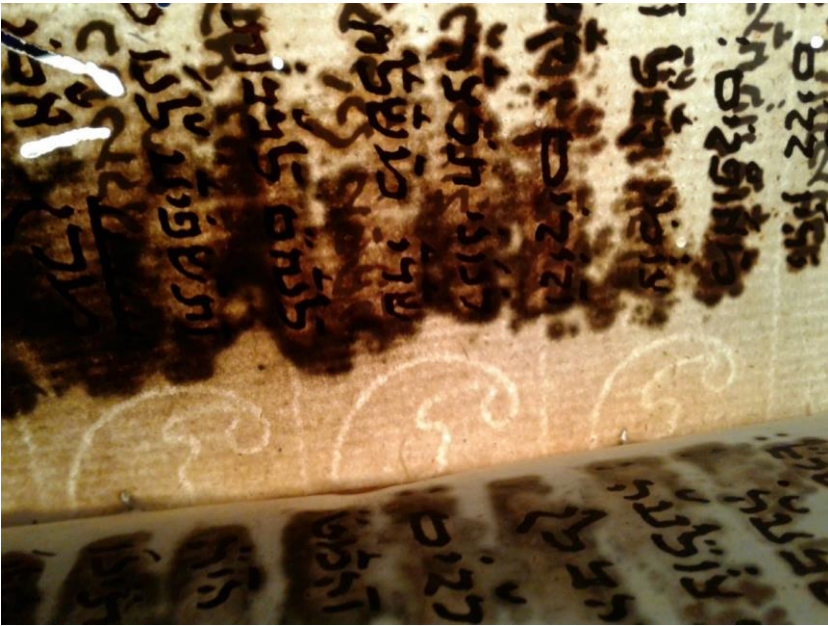


Figure 5. Later curly moon version of the *tre lune* watermark

codex: its fibres are much smoother, the page size is smaller and the watermarks show much more elaborate, curlier moon faces. This type of *tre lune*

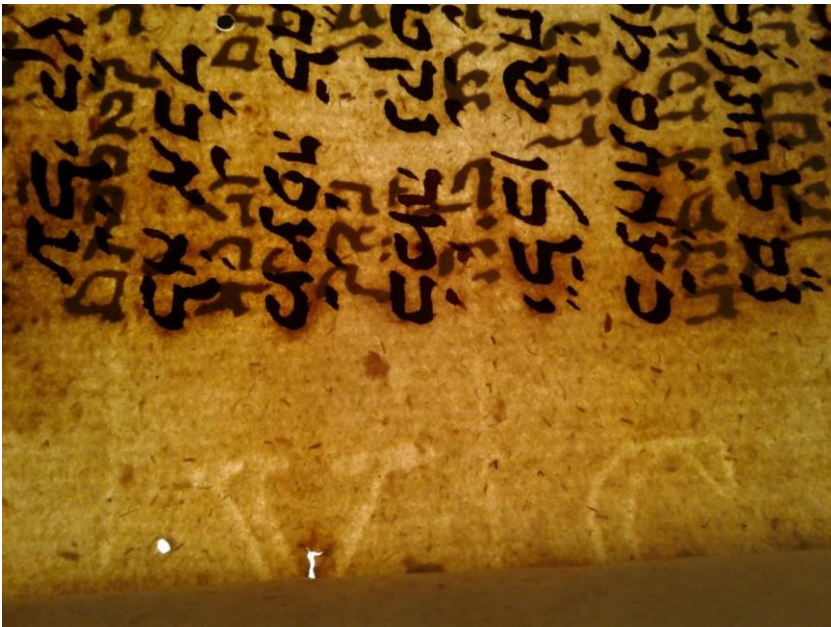


Figure 6. VG initial counterfoil

watermark is also found in the Galvani papers but of a slightly later date.⁶ The paper bifolium at the end of the book, while on thicker, less smooth paper, also has the curlier-shaped crescent watermark.

The pages in the first quire and the end two quires are in poorer physical condition than those in the middle quires, which are still very well preserved. The paper in the middle quires is of a lighter colour, whereas the paper in the outer quires is darker, and at the back of the codex the paper exhibits signs of water damage.

3 Codicology: Binding and quires

The entire manuscript codex is contained within one modern cardboard binding, which has modern paper end leaves, and evidence of a former sack cloth and leather binding now only exists at the back of the codex. The manuscript itself comprises 111 manuscript leaves (or folios), of which 110 are handmade paper – 104 leaves are laid papers with horizontal chain lines, 6 leaves (at the front and back of the codex) have no visible lines and appear to be made from woven paper – and one leaf (an insert) is made from modern, commercially produced lined paper. The leather and sack cloth binding at the back contains approximately six leaves of paper (which are severely damaged and crumble to the touch) and one leaf of parchment.



Figure 7. Inserted pages

⁶ Walz, 2011, p. 87. The paper itself began to be described by this prevalent watermark *tre lune*, and by the 1820s it had developed from a simple crescent shape to a moon face.

Two outer leaves at the beginning of the manuscript codex are conjoined to two leaves at the end, and these keep the entire manuscript together. Inside these outer leaves, the rest of the codex is constructed in a haphazard manner with eight distinctly bound sections plus three additional leaves. The first quire is comprised of the following sections (which are all sewn together with a thread going down the spine): two bifolia (4 folios) which surround the other three inner sections; one senion (6 bifolia or 12 folios) sewn through the gutter of the middle two pages; and a bifolium (2 folios) and an octonion (8 bifolia or 16 folios) sewn together through the middle pages. The second quire simply consists of one octonion sewn through the middle pages. Quire 3 has one ternion (3 bifolia or 6 folios) sewn through the middle. The fourth quire has a senion (6 bifolia or 12 folios) together with 2 singletons (f. 7 and f. 9) tipped in. The fifth quire is formed by one bifolium which comprises the outer leaves, inside of which are two binions (8 folios) attached to another bifolium. The sixth quire has a bifolium joined to a binion (which is sewn down the middle) attached to another bifolium (8 folios). Quire 7 was originally a ternion, although the end leaf is missing and is replaced by a modern, lined paper (see figure 7). The last quire is a quaternion (4 bifolia or 8 folios) which is sewn through the middle pages. There are three additional leaves after the last quire: two form a bifolium, and one originally joined to an outer leaf at the beginning of the book which is now missing.

Variations in the size of the quires is something that is also found in the Cairo Genizah poetry manuscripts.⁷ However, as no systematic and comprehensive codicological study of Cairo Genizah manuscripts has been undertaken yet, it is difficult to say how widespread such variability is within those manuscripts. The findings and statistics of the major Hebrew manuscript codicology project, SfarData, are based on complete or near-complete dated Hebrew manuscript codices, of which there are only a small number in the Genizah. The SfarData project shows that most Hebrew manuscript codices have some variability in the size of the quires. Such variability was due to the exigencies of ensuring that the content fit the pages or due to there being multiple working stages in the process of the codex construction.⁸ Nevertheless, every codex examined had a clear dominant structure; for example, the dominant structure found in Oriental Hebrew manuscripts is the quinion.⁹ The lack of an overall dominant structure in this Yemenite codex further supports the idea that it was an informal user-produced manuscript.

⁷ See the reconstruction of MS JTS ENA 641 in Jefferson, 2004, p. 28, where the extant leaves enable us to deduce that part of the original medieval codex quires consisted of a ternion, a quinion and a quaternion.

⁸ Beit-Arié, 2012, p. 28. SfarData, The Codicological Data-Base of the Hebrew Palaeography Project at The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, is online at <http://sfardata.nli.org.il/sfardatanew/home.aspx>.

⁹ Beit-Arié, 2012, p. 30.



Figure 8. Binding structure

The quires are bound together using three main cords, as well as several long strings threaded through the folds on the spine, which are then tied to one central knot (see figure 8). The three main cords are threaded through the sack-cloth binding and glued to the outside where they would have been covered by the leather binding (see figure 9).

4 Contents of the codex

The first section of the first quire contains a selection of *qinot* (lamentations) for the Ninth of Av, mostly from the Yemenite and Sephardi rites. In the case of the first *qinah* אש תוקד בקרבי, this is a hymn known to all the major liturgical rites. The scribe, however, erroneously ascribes the poem to Judah Ha-Levi



Figure 9. Cords used for binding the codex

when it was written by Abraham Ibn Ezra. A few hymns are found only in the Yemenite rite, such as על נהרות בבל and אז בבית שבונו.¹⁰ Some of the hymns do not seem to be part of the traditional Ninth of Av liturgy, but are known from the *diwanim* (major poetic collections) of Judah Ha-Levi and Abraham Ibn Ezra; these include, for example, the hymns אמרה ציון איך and יונה מה לך.

Following that section, a bifolium of two conjoined pages has been inserted into the main quire. Its contents include selections of biblical text from the Book of Prophets entitled נחמה ('comfort'), followed by a *pizmon* by Judah Ha-Levi יעלו לאלה ולרבה כבני ציון, a list of poetry titles, a Judaeo-Arabic astronomical text concerning the lunar mansions, prognostications by quivering, another poem and finally more lists of poems.¹¹

In the second section of the first quire, we find a selection of penitentiary hymns (*selihot*) all beginning with the title אל מלך. These hymns continue through to quire 5, where we find some crudely written text, which could be writing practice, entitled תמאם בן אדם לעול. More penitentiary hymns follow in the next section, but these are all in Aramaic and titled מרן or מרנות. The Aramaic hymns continue through quires 6 and 7, and the final three pages of quire 7 are written in Judaeo-Arabic and deal with the lunar mansions, with the Hebrew title ובה מולד השנה.

Quire 8 begins with the title קינות שאומרים על המתים ('lamentations to recite over the dead'), and it also contains the Yemenite Baladi version of the *Kaddish* prayers,¹² followed by more lamentations, each with the heading מספד. Folio 7 verso of quire 8 contains a *get* (divorce law) formulary based on the text in Mishneh Torah, *Sefer Nashim, Halakhot Girushin* 4:12. The date שנת שנת according to the Seleucid Era 'one thousand nine hundred and so-and-so years' is also supplied. This date stands for the entire period 1900–1999 SE (1588–1687 CE), enabling the precise date to be inserted as necessary. By comparison, a divorce formulary in a 16th century Yemenite prayer book (JTS MS ENA 2249) does not supply a date range but rather keeps the statement open as follows: בשנא דהוא כך וכך לירח שלשנת כך וכך. Evidence for an older date being used in a more modern prayer book is found in the Karaite tradition, and it suggests that the scribe was emphasising the importance of accurately transmitting long-established legal traditions.¹³ On the same page at the bottom, we find the words נסיון הדיו וקלמוס ('pen and ink trial') several times.

Subsequent pages continue to present *piyyutim* and prayers, יעלו אלאף, by Judah Ha-Levi, for example, which is also marked with the word נסיון ('trial') at the head of the page. Other pages of writing include Mishnaic

¹⁰ Liturgical rites and hymns are listed, and sometimes transcribed and sung, on the National Library of Israel website and database אתר הפיוט והתפילה (<http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/song>).

¹¹ These texts were identified by Nadia Vidro at UCL. A similar astronomical text concerning the lunar mansion is found in Kunitzsch and Langermann, 2003, p. 166.

¹² A comparable version is available at <https://kaddishyatom.net/2009/בלדי-תימן-בדלד/>.

¹³ See Olszowy-Schlanger, 1998, p. 117.

texts (Tractate Avot) and some Talmudic passages, followed by unidentified text in Judaeo-Arabic (in a lighter ink and smaller script). The final page, which wraps around the entire codex and joins to the first pages of the codex, contains more מלך אל hymns in the same ink and script as the beginning of the book.

The binding, as mentioned previously, contains older manuscripts used to fortify the structure. This was a known practice of Yemenite bookbinders who regarded the binding as a type of *genizah*.¹⁴ One piece is quite legible: a leaf of parchment containing text from Pirkei Avot, Mishnah 1:4–8, with Babylonian vocalisation. The other six leaves are unfortunately irretrievable: they comprise very crumbled papers with severely damaged and largely illegible text, although some words in Aramaic and some biblical verses in Hebrew are apparent.

Overall, the contents of the book suggest that the scribe was copying his text directly from the old Yemenite Baladi (local) prayer book, the *Sefer Tiklāl*.¹⁵ In addition to prayers and liturgical poems, the *Sefer Tiklāl* also included elements from Saadia Gaon's *Siddur*, the Haggadah, Megillat Antiochus, Tractate Avot, Halakhic compendia and calendric tables, all of which point to the idea that these manuscript prayer books additionally served as a sort of religious almanac or guidebook on religious conduct.¹⁶ Thus, our Yemenite codex may have once formed part of a larger codex, or it may have been copied from an older text for practice. At the time it was written in around 1830, most Yemenite synagogues had adopted the Sefardi rite and only a handful clung to the older rite.¹⁷

5 Handwriting

A number of scribes have worked on the pages in this book. The scribe who copied the *qinah* poems in the first section of the codex has a different handwriting to the scribe who copied the *selihot*. The differences are to be found in the size of the letters and the number of words placed on a line. The scribe who wrote the non-liturgical materials (lunar mansions and prognostications) had smaller handwriting than the copyist of the poems, and he uses a distinctive 'alef-lamed ligature. Towards the end of the codex, where there is also non-liturgical material, the script again becomes dense, with more words fitting on a line.

¹⁴ Krupp, 2014, p. 287. Krupp discusses the wealth of old European manuscript fragments discovered in the bindings of a Yemenite manuscript collection.

¹⁵ Hubarah, 1964, pp. 221b, 222a.

¹⁶ Kohler, 1897, pp. 234–235. Kohler describes the Yemenite Siddur found in MS Gaster Codex 4 with its many additional materials as a type of “religious almanac”.

¹⁷ Klorman, 2014, p. 22.

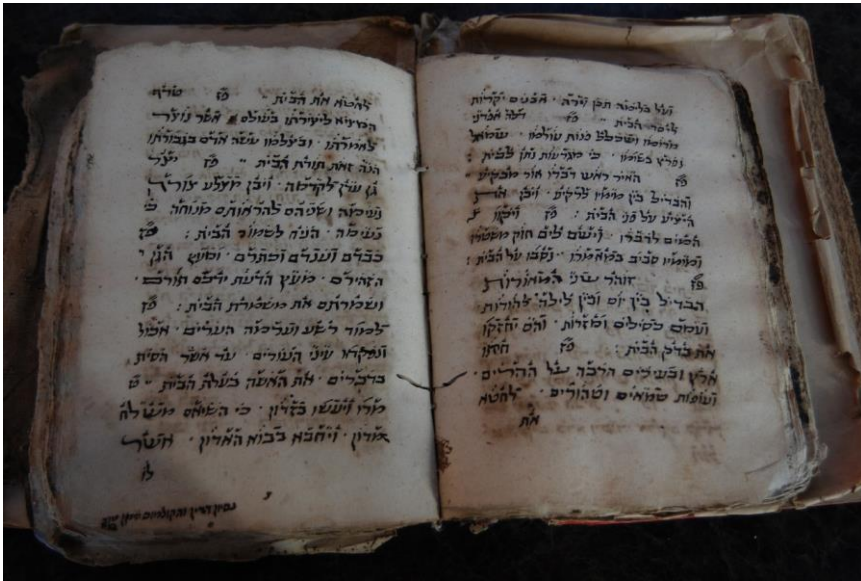


Figure 10. Pen and ink trials notation

Here and there throughout the codex, we find a scribe testing his pen. At the end of folio 70, the words confirming the efficacy of a pen and ink trial טוב וקולמוס דדיו נסיון דדיו והקולמוס סימן טוב appear at the bottom of the page written in smaller characters in ink (see figure 10). The writer of the selection of biblical passages in the first quire has a hand that is childlike; the copyist of the Aramaic poems in quires 5–7 has handwriting similar to the writer of quire 1. The additional hymns, prayers and Judaeo-Arabic texts at the back of the codex are also written in two or three separate hands. All the scribes throughout the codex added catchwords to the bottom of the pages to assist with the binding. In the first section of the first quire, a catchword appears on every page (which isn't necessary for ordering the pages); subsequent sections, however, only have the catchword at the bottom of the verso. Some of the scribes embellish the titles or קינות or סליחה or אל מלך with decorative patterns. Later hands have added small notes in pencil, and on the verso of folio 1 a comment has been written in blue ink.

6 Insertions

The existence of multiple readers/owners is attested by the addition of explanatory notes, such as אני יהודה הלוי ברבי שמואל added to the beginning of the *piyyut* פלאי אלהים אבאר, קצת פלאי אלהים, which inform the reader about the poem's author and acrostic, and which are added in a different ink or smaller script. Other



Figure 11. Plant leaves found in the codex

smaller notes on the content have been added to the margins here and there throughout the codex.

In between folios 38 and 39 of the codex we find a small bunch of dried leaves, which look like sorghum (see figure 11). This plant is native to the Yemen and was used for baking breads like *lahoh*. The presence of these leaves together with a white substance (flour?) in the gutters of folios 47–48 (all part of the same quire) suggest that one of its owners may have been involved in the production or sale of wheat or bread. Yemenite breads feature regularly in Jacob Sapir’s account of his visit to Yemen in the 1850s.¹⁸ Another ‘foreign’ insert is found between folios 77 and 78, where we find a small torn page from a printed text of *zemirot* (this may have belonged to the later Moroccan owner) which perhaps served as a bookmark.

A page of text on modern commercial paper is sewn into the codex at the end of the seventh quire. The text appears to be a continuation of some calendrical text in Judaeo-Arabic, and it may have been added in later to replace the missing folio from the back of the quire; however it has been placed in the wrong way around.

In quire 8, in between folios 3 and 4, next to the *Kaddish* prayers, are some green and red threads. Towards the back of quire 8, between folios 7 and 8, where the text has a practice *get* formulary, several pen trials and the continuation of the poem from the previous folio, a piece of cloth is bound into the quire. It is mostly red with repeated thin green stripes and geometrical patterns

¹⁸ See e.g. the description in Lavon, 1997, p. 70.



Figure 12. Inserted strip of cloth

(crosses and key shapes) in a beige colour (see figure 12). In colour and design it could be derived from a Yemenite or Moroccan textile.

7 שני היי The penitentiary hymn

In order to look more closely at the ways in which the hymns in this Yemenite codex were popularly recalled and read, we will examine a sample text, the penitentiary hymn (*selihah*) entitled שני היי ('These are the Days of My Life'), by the medieval Spanish poet Solomon Ibn Gabirol. The penitentiary hymn was introduced in the pre-classical period of *piyyut* (around 5th–6th century CE) to accompany the fixed penitential prayers. During the Andalusian period of *piyyut* (10th–12th century CE), the emotional charge of the High Holidays led to an increased desire for audience participation to which the poets all responded by composing *selihot* with the addition of popular choruses or refrains (*pizmonim*). Solomon Ibn Gabirol, for example, composed at least ten of these hymns, according to Jarden's edition of his liturgical poems. The old traditional Yemenite prayer books according to the Baladi (local) rite were replete with *selihot*.

The poem שני היי has lines of verse divided into three metrical units: two units have three long syllables and rhyme with each other; the third has six long syllables and carries the rhyme of that strophe; short vowels like vocal *shewa* and the *ḥaṭefim* are disregarded in the metre. The internal rhymes and rhythms in this poem create a memorable and compelling sound. A refrain (*pizmon*) based on the biblical verse כי גר אנכי עמך ('for I am a stranger with

thee ...’, Ps. 39:12) is regularly repeated throughout the hymn. The initial letters in the first three lines of verse spell out the identity of the poet, “Solomon”.

7.1 Manuscript and printed editions of שני היי

Ibn Gabirol’s שני היי was included in the Tlemcen (North African) *mahzor* (festival prayer-book) for the Days of Awe, in the Romanian and Lithuanian liturgical rites, and it is found in numerous anthologies of *seliḥot*.¹⁹ The Israeli scholar Dov Jarden produced a modern critical edition in his two-volume edition of Solomon Ibn Gabirol’s liturgical poetry.²⁰ The critical edition does not follow any one manuscript version exclusively but rather presents an idealised version of each text based on a thorough analysis and comparison of all the known manuscript editions (although greater weight is given where a substantial number of manuscripts are in agreement). Jarden was able to trace 49 manuscript versions of שני היי.²¹ Another previously unknown medieval copy was discovered by Jefferson in CUL MS T-S AS 116.338; this version, however, is badly damaged and only sporadically vocalised.²² Jefferson has also identified another copy of the poem in a Yemenite manuscript from 1472 CE (JTS MS ENA 2250).²³

Of the manuscripts on Jarden’s list, twelve are from the Cairo Genizah collections, and four of these are fully vocalised: CUL MS T-S NS 299.185, an informal copy on re-used paper; JTS MS ENA 641, ff. 7–8, from a collection of *seliḥot* originally bound into multiple quires of varying lengths; CUL MS T-S NS 299.98, a version from a collection of *seliḥot*, with more attention paid to presentation; and JTS MS ENA 3239, f. 26, a neat copy derived, perhaps, from the same line of transmission as T-S NS 299.98. All four vocalised Genizah versions appear to stem from closely related lines of transmission. This is evident in shared textual variations, vocalisation traits and variations of syntax. Similarities can also be found between the 19th century Yemenite manuscript discussed here and JTS MS ENA 2249 (the first part of the above-mentioned JTS MS ENA 2250) from the 15th century, which may prove a long and extensive line of transmission for what appear to be more commonly used and copied versions of the poem.

7.2 Aids to reading the hymn שני היי

Like all the other *seliḥot* in this Yemenite codex, the hymn שני היי is supplied with the heading אל מלך “God, the King”, a shortened form of the phrase אל

¹⁹ Davidson, 1961, vol. III, no. 1961.

²⁰ Jarden, 1971–1972, vol. II, no. 220.

²¹ Jarden, 1971–1972, vol. II, p. 696.

²² Jefferson, 2004, p. 16.

²³ JTS MS ENA Collection, 2250, folio 249. This version is also vocalised with supra-linear Babylonian vowel signs.

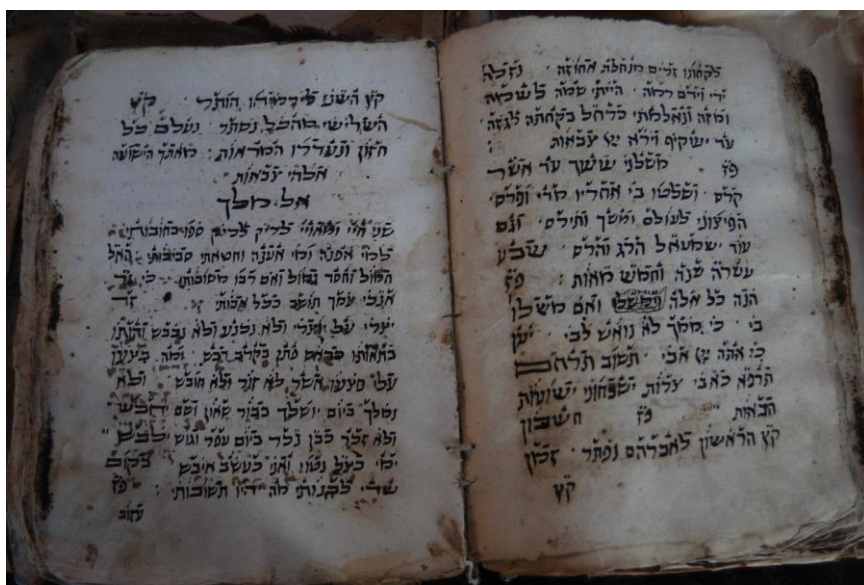


Figure 13. The text of שני חיי

:אל מלך יושב: “God, the King Who sits” from the introduction to the ‘Thirteen Attributes’, which form the core of all the *selihah* prayers.²⁴ In this codex, Ibn Gabirol’s *selihah* appears in quire 4, ff. 4–5 or ff. 62–63 of the whole manuscript (see figure 13). It follows another *selihah*, שנותיו ספו בדלות וקלות, also by Solomon Ibn Gabirol. In addition to the אל מלך title, which indicates the start of a new hymn, the scribe helps the reader know how to accentuate the pauses in the poetic text by placing a dot and a space after each line of verse, and a colon at the end of each stanza together with the abbreviation פז *pizmon* (chorus/refrain). For aesthetic purposes, he employs either three dots, a line or an expanded final letter as a space filler to keep the one-inch margins around the text even, as no ruling or guiding lines have been drawn. The scribe’s methods of textual layout are similar to those used in the medieval manuscripts of the Cairo Genizah.²⁵

7.3 Transcription of שני חיי

The supra-linear signs used to represent the Babylonian vowel signs in this transcription are as follows: א̣ (*hireq*), א̣ (*šere*), א̣ (*shewa* or *ḥaṭefim*), א̣ (*ḥolem*), א̣ (*pataḥ* or *seghol*), א̣ (*qameṣ*), א̣ (*šureq*).

²⁴ Elbogen, 1993, p. 178.

²⁵ See e.g. ‘Aids to reading’ in Jefferson, 2004, p. 23.

4. אל מלך
5. שני חיי ומאיי לריק לריק ספו בחובותי
6. למי אפנה ומי אענה וחטאתי סביבותי האל
7. המול והסוד גמול ואם רבו משבותי כי גר
8. אנכי עמך תושב ככל אבותי: זד
9. יצרי על יוצרי ולא נכנע ולא נכבש והותו
10. בתאותו כראש פתן בקרב דבש ומה בצעו
11. עלי פצעו אשר לא זור ולא חרש ולא
12. נמלך ביום ישלך כבור שאון ושם יחבש
13. ולא זכר כבן נזר ביום עפר וגוש ילבש
14. ימי כצל נטוי ואני כעשב איבש בקום
15. שדי לבנותי מה יהיו תשובותי פז
16. עזוב

1. עזוב ליבב נתיב שובב ורוץ כצבי והנצל
2. פשוט הכל לבוש אבל והאזור והאצל וקום
3. ליל כבן חיל ואל תישן שנת עצל ולין
4. בודד ומתנודד ובככי אונך צלצל והתנחם
5. ואז תרוחם ואולי נפשך תצל ומה יצדק
6. אבק דק ואיך יוכל להנצל כציץ יצא
7. וימל ויברח כצל ומה יתרון להרבותי
8. לאלפי וריבבותי פז גדול
9. הסוד אשר יסוד גלמי ורקמתי אדון
10. עולם אשר נעלם והוא נצב לעומתי
11. ארנן ואתחנן בכל שבתי וקימתי
12. פדות מהר ולב טהר והעבר את כלמתי
13. עין פקח ושוועי קח ואל תפקוד עלומתי
14. רעה אותי עדי מותי ליום שובי לאדמתי
15. ותיטיב סוף ביום תאסוף לך רוחי
16. ונשמתי

1. ונשמתי מבין נתיבותי ויודע מחשבותי

²⁶ Line 7: The vocaliser seems to have added two vowel signs above the letter *bet* in בקרב.

Line 9: The vocalisation isn't clear here – there are two dots above the *yod* in יחבש, but these are probably marked in error.

Line 12: The scribe has placed a small letter over the *bet* in לבנותי, perhaps indicating that it has been copied in error.

²⁷ Line 1: The *šere* in והנצל is not clear as the sign is blurred from other marks on the page.

7.4 Textual variants between the Yemenite edition and other editions

The first variant in this Yemenite edition of שני חיי is the erroneous copying of the words לְרִיק (‘for nothing’) twice in the first line of verse. A second variant is the use of the phrase וְאִמִּי אֶעֱנֶה (‘and to whom shall I reply’) on f. 62 r. 3 where all the other MS versions examined here, including the model printed text, have the phrase וְכִמָּה אֶעֱנֶה (‘and how shall I reply’). On f. 62 r. 6, the scribe has written לְעַל יוֹצְרִי (‘on my creation’) where the model version has the poetic form עָלַי (‘upon’). The same formulation is found in JTS MS ENA 2250, f. 249. One case where our Yemenite manuscript and the other manuscript versions are all in agreement is the use of the words וְשָׁם יִהְיֶה (‘and there imprisoned’) in the verse of f. 62 r. 9, in contrast to the published ‘model’ text which has וְגַם יִהְיֶה (‘and also imprisoned’). On f. 62 r. 12, the scribe has used the phrase לְבָנוֹתַי (‘for my daughters’) where the model text has לְרִיבוֹתַי (‘for my quarrels’), but a letter has been placed underneath the *bet* perhaps signifying that this is an error. In addition, it appears as though he has vocalised the suffixes of these words with a *hireq* rather than with the *qames* needed to signify the plural: בְּקוֹם שְׂדֵי לְבָנוֹתַי מָה יִהְיֶה תְּשׁוּבוֹתַי (‘when the Lord rises for my daughters what will be my replies’). It is possible that the curved strokes of the *qames* were made so quickly they appear like dots.

On f. 62 v. 2, the scribe has used the words וְהָאֵזוֹר וְהָאֵצֶל (‘and an area/band and a throne’) where the model text has וְהַגִּזְרִי וְהָאֵצֶל (‘and a crown and a throne’). This variant, although spelt as וְהָאֵזוֹר with an additional *yod*, also occurs in CUL MS T-S NS 299.185. On f. 62 v. 4, the scribe provides the present tense form וְאִתְּנוּדֵד (‘and staggering’) where the published edition has וְאִתְּנוּדֵד (‘and staggered’). However, the present tense form does occur in all the other medieval Cairo Genizah manuscript versions of this text, and also in the Yemenite Codex JTS MS ENA 2250, f. 249.

On three occasions, words that appear in the model text are missing from the Yemenite manuscript. In two of these cases, the missing words are necessary to the sense of the verse, and in all three cases the additional syllables are needed for maintaining the prosody. The first of these missing words is וְגַם (‘and also’), where the model has וְגַם רַקְמַתִּי (‘and also upon my flesh’); וְגַם is likewise missing from JTS MS ENA 641, ff. 7–8. The word לֶךְ (‘go’) is absent from the text at the beginning of f. 62 v. 11; לֶךְ אַרְנוֹן (‘go to Arnon’) is attested in both the JTS medieval version and in the model text. The third missing word is the imperative form צוֹר (‘create’), absent in f. 63 r. 1 but found at the beginning of the line of verse צוֹר מִבֵּין נְתִיבוֹתַי (‘create from my paths’) in both the JTS manuscript and the published version.

Finally, two verses appearing on f. 62 v. 12–13 are placed in reverse order to the way they appear in both the JTS medieval manuscript and the printed version, where what corresponds to line 13 here comes before line 12.

7.5 Orthography

The scribe consistently uses *waw* as a vowel letter where the model version prefers the *defectiva* spellings without *waw*. The use of *plene* spellings is standard in Rabbinic Hebrew (RH) orthography, and it occurs regularly in the medieval manuscript versions of this hymn from the Cairo Genizah,²⁸ and in the 15th century Yemenite manuscript JTS MS ENA 2550, f. 249. Thus, for example, all the manuscript versions have the imperatives הַמּוֹל ('take pity'), גַּמּוֹל ('bestow') and עוֹזֵב ('leave') spelt with a *waw*, and also the *pu'al* forms תִּרְוּחָם ('you will find compassion'), הוּבַשׁ ('covered') and יוּשְׁלָךְ ('be discarded') have *waw* for the 'u' vowel, where the model text has the defective spellings with *qibbuṣ*. In addition, the Yemenite scribe spells לֵב ('heart') with a *yod*, לֵיבֵב (f. 62 v. 1).

7.6 Vocalisation

The vocalisation signs appear to be in the same ink as the consonantal text and all words are vocalised in this poem, except for one on f. 62 r. 3: וְהִטָּאתִי ('my sins'). There are no diacritics, and the scribe/vocaliser consistently uses the *shewa* sign for the *ḥaṭefim*, which is a graphical convention found in medieval Hebrew manuscripts.²⁹ Vocal *shewa* is marked regularly, except for once in וְרִבְבֵנִי ('and the tears of', f. 62 v. 4) and again in נִעְלָם ('disappeared', f. 62 v. 10). In a similar way, silent *shewa* is mostly left unmarked, except in one phrase, יוֹצְרִי ('my creation', f. 62 r. 6). Consistent with the modern Yemenite reading tradition, the scribe/vocaliser uses a single vowel sign for *pataḥ* and *seghol* (marked in this transcription with a symbol resembling the small 'ayin shape of the Babylonian equivalent of *pataḥ*, the *mīptah pumma* sign).³⁰ Lastly, on a number of occasions, the scribe/vocaliser places the *hireq* sign above the following letter, usually (but not always) where *yod* is used as a vowel letter – for example, in לְרִיק ('for nothing', f. 62 r. 2) – or following consonantal *yod*, as in יתְרוֹן ('advantage' or 'benefit', f. 62 v. 7).

In a few places, we find that the scribe/vocaliser has used the *pataḥ* vowel sign where *qameṣ* is expected. Most of these examples occur where the model text produces a pausal form (see section 7.7 below). However, in three cases, the unexpected use of *pataḥ* cannot be explained by the scribe/vocaliser's inconsistency in marking the pause. These examples are: in the last syllable of וְלֹא נִכְנַע ('and did not surrender', f. 62 r. 6), in the last syllable of אֲבֵק ('dust', f. 62 v. 6), and above *het* in לְהַרְבוֹתֵי ('to my swords', f. 62 v. 7). Similarly, we find two instances in this text where the scribe/vocaliser has used the *qameṣ* sign and not the expected *pataḥ*: first, on f. 62 r. 9 in the final syllables of the

²⁸ See e.g. Jefferson, 2004, p. 20.

²⁹ See Jefferson, 2004, p. 266.

³⁰ Khan, 2013, p. 955.

first and third words, נמלך ביום יושלך ('succeed on his being overthrown'); and then again on the first syllable of the final word in this text, מחשבותי ('my thoughts'), but here the vowel sign is faint.

The scribe/vocaliser has employed the *šere* sign in an unusual way twice in the lines of verse between f. 62 v. 3–4: firstly, in the phrase ולין ('and sleep') where one expects *hireq*, and secondly in the final syllable of ויהתנחם ('and consoled himself'), instead of *qameš*. The first word appears in a section of the poem in which most of the words have *šere* in the final syllable; the second word appears at the start of the next line of verse, and so perhaps the scribe/vocaliser 'heard' the 'e' vowel dominating throughout these particular words. An unexpected use of *šere* also appears on the next line (f. 62 v. 5) in ואולי ('and perhaps') where *pataḥ* is expected. The text also reveals one example where *šere* has been used for *holem*, in the word אנכי ('I', f. 62 r. 5). This may reflect the closeness of the *šere* and *holem* in the Yemenite pronunciation tradition.³¹ In the last line of verse (f. 63 r. 1), it appears that the vocaliser may have simply placed his *šere* and *hireq* vowels in the wrong order: מבין ('understands'). In another singular case within this text, we find *holem* used in place of *qameš* in גדול on f. 62 v. 8 where the model text has the imperative גדל ('grow/increase'). Again, this may reflect the close quality of the vowels in the Yemenite pronunciation of *holem* and *qameš*.³²

7.7 Pausal forms

The vocaliser vocalises pausal forms inconsistently. Thus, for example, he omits to use them at the end of the first three verses of the first stanza (f. 62 r. 1–5) – בהובותי ('with my iniquities'), סביבותי ('all about me') and משובותי ('my thoughts') – but he does use it for the final verse of that stanza – אבותי ('my fathers'). This same pattern of vocalising is also prevalent amongst the Cairo Genizah manuscript versions of this hymn.

7.8 Morphology

This sample text from the Yemenite codex provides one example where the scribe/vocaliser has vocalised the form of the trilateral root in such a way that it presents a different form of the verb than the one appearing in the model text. Thus, יסד has been vocalised on f. 62 v. 9 as though it were the *pa'al* form, יסד ('he founded'), rather than the *pi'el* form יסד ('it was founded') present in the model text.

³¹ Khan, 2013, p. 956.

³² Morag, 1963, p. 92.

7.9 Syntax

The Yemenite scribe copied the phrase **וְרוּץ כְּצִבִי וְהִנָּצֵל** ('and run like a hart and save yourself') on f. 62 v. 1 where the model text has **וְרוּץ כְּצִבִי לְהִנָּצֵל** ('and run like a hart to save yourself'). The version in the Yemenite codex is also found in all the Genizah manuscripts consulted here. In another example where the Yemenite scribe produces variant syntax, we find on f. 62 v. 8 the phrase **יֵאֵלֶּפֶי וְרִבְבוֹתַי** ('to my thousands and my tens of thousands'). The published, standard edition of the poem, however, has **יֵאֵלֶּפֶי וְרִבְבוֹתַי** ('and to my thousands and to my tens of thousands'). The version in the codex is also found in JTS MS ENA 3239, while a different version, **וְאֵלֶּפֶי וְרִבְבוֹתַי**, occurs in the Yemenite JTS MS ENA 2550, f. 249. These manuscript versions ignore the prosodic rules which require the additional syllables provided by the addition of *waw* conjunctive and by the addition of the preposition **לְ** 'for'.

8 Conclusion: The writers, readers and owners

Our Yemenite codex was a much-used book with multiple scribes, readers and owners. The different scribes/vocalisers, with at least five of them, can be detected in the variable handwriting found across the quires. Later readers of these texts are apparent in the notes they added in the margins, which are also rendered in at least three separate hands. And at least one of the owners has left physical traces within the codex: an additional page of modern printed paper and the non-textual physical items tucked in between the pages, as well as the later addition of a cardboard outer binding (which may have been added in Morocco or the United States).

Thus, the codex is something of a conundrum: a medieval-style manuscript on 19th century Venetian paper surrounded by modern cardboard. The sewing of the quires and spine reveals a mixture of informal and formal techniques, including stab and slip stitches; the manuscripts used to fortify the binding reflect the old Yemenite practice of bookbinding, and the irregular sizes of the quires recall common codicological practices hinted at by the leftover fragments of the Cairo Genizah. The text itself has older and newer elements: notes in the margins and above poems are suggestive of a later reader/interpolator; whereas the sections of the Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic text recall the liturgical practices of the traditional Yemenite Baladi rite, and parts of the codex (particularly the sample poetic text examined here) echo earlier non-standard readings found in medieval Cairo Genizah manuscripts, as well as some non-standard readings in an earlier Yemenite codex from the 15th century. Indeed, the non-standard vocalisation traits described above confirm that a high degree of orality surrounded the reproduction of Hebrew hymns throughout the ages and across Jewish cultures, and that greater latitude was continually exercised in the rendering of poetic texts as opposed to biblical or formal religious texts.

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The *Status Quaestionis* of Research on the Arabic Bible

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In what follows, I seek to offer a *status quaestionis* of research on the Arabic Bible. As a newly emerging field of academic research, it has a need to clearly define itself and to develop methodological standards. This is necessary not least to close scholarly *lacunae* and produce new, seminal perspectives on the field. Many questions as to the origins of biblical versions in Arabic, their various text types, their *Vorlagen* and translation strategies, their geographical, chronological and denominational distribution, as well as to the ways they were produced, disseminated and consumed can, for the time being, only be answered tentatively. This contribution thus attempts to bring together different strands of a dynamic field, which has received considerable momentum since the turn of the new millennium. It lies in the nature of posing a *status quaestionis* to be descriptive and programmatic at the same time. I have relegated tangential discussions, as interesting they may be, to the footnotes, which are at times quite lengthy. Much of the recent scholarship draws from understudied primary sources. All of these sources share a common denominator: they bear witness to the attempts of various communities to realign the biblical text with a new era in a time of profound political, social and cultural change, on the one hand, and to the need for comprehensible versions in Arabic, the new vernacular, on the other. Further, they attest to a great variety of textual traditions and a mobility, partly intercommunal, of these traditions.

The total number of manuscripts containing Arabic versions of the Bible, which can only be an estimate as there is no comprehensive union catalogue, amounts to about ten thousand items.¹ While only a very small, almost minute, portion of this corpus has been duly identified or published in critical or semi-

¹ In contrast to the situation with Arabic Bible manuscripts, inventories exist for other corpora. For the Septuagint, for example, we have Rahlfs, 1914; Aland, 1975; Rahlfs and Fraenkel, 2003; and Septuaginta-Unternehmen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, 2012 (<https://rep.adw-goe.de/handle/11858/00-001S-0000-0022-A30C-8>, accessed January 2018). For the Greek New Testament, see Gregory, 1908; Aland, Welte, Köster and Junack, 1994; and also the New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (<http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste/>, accessed January 2018). For the Bible in Syriac, see Peshitta Institute, 1961.

critical editions, the corpus is now increasingly available online as digital images. This corpus, if we may call it such, is quite diverse. It encompasses books of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, and also of the New Testament. There are also deuterocanonical books. Of the manuscripts, some resisted the corruption of time as intact codices, while a not insignificant number only survive in a fragmentary state or as objects of reuse, today kept in public or ecclesiastic collections all over the world. Their time of production ranges from the 9th to the 20th centuries. Furthermore, some Arabic versions are of Jewish provenance, others of Christian or Samaritan origin. Each group created and maintained a corpus of biblical translations into Arabic, based on the various source texts (the Masoretic Text and the Greek New Testament, as well as Greek, Syriac, Coptic and Latin versions).

In the course of history, these communities demonstrate a great variety in their translations and in a certain way they cultivated this. While previous research has tended to obscure the horizontal ties of translations, there is no doubt that specific translations were used by and transmitted among two or all three denominations at the same time.² Not only did Jews, Christians and Samaritans share parts of their scriptures, they also often used the same translations, and they examined each other's translations with curiosity and attention to detail. This nexus can be seen in multidimensional personal relationships, scholarly modes of interaction and circulations of biblical texts. In the course of diffusion from one contemporaneous cultural context to another, translations were often significantly transformed and adapted to the setting of the receptor community. Texts are passed on to and take root in contexts different from those in which they emerged, and thereby assume new meaning without being completely cut off from their original context. Changes also occurred in diachronic transmission over time. Older registers of Arabic or particular translation techniques may not have been understood by later copyists and readers and this therefore necessitated textual changes. As a result, there is an astonishing plurality of biblical versions in Arabic; the number of versions far exceeds all other translation traditions. The appearances of these manuscripts

² Scholarly interaction between Jews and Christians in the realm of biblical translation long preceded the Islamic world, and is known to have existed since Antiquity. These early interactions – which can be seen, for example, in the work of Origen – are important, since they underlie later discourses and would seem to provide a way of looking at the later interconnected scriptural history, after the Islamic expansion inaugurated the shift of Late Antiquity into the Umayyad and Abbasid periods; see for example Vollandt, 2016a. Further examples of scriptural entanglement can also be adduced from the Old Testament Peshitta found in the Syriac Christian tradition. There are many cases in which this Syriac text provides a translation in harmony with the usual Jewish interpretation of early Late Antiquity. The source of many, if not most, of these interpretations can be found in the *targumim*, which themselves represent Jewish versions of the Hebrew Bible translated into Aramaic dialects; see Brock, 1979b; Brock, 1982; and Brock, 1995. In the book of Proverbs, there is even a case where the Syriac text coincides almost verbatim with the Jewish Aramaic *targum*. It has been suggested that the Peshitta text of this book reflects a Jewish translation from northern Babylonia, which also provided the basis for the surviving Jewish *targumim* of Proverbs; see Weitzman, 1999.

are manifold, and to this one can add further distinctions as to the script used (Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac and rarely Greek), the writing materials, layout, the translation's intended use, and so on.

These Arabic versions of the Bible were shunned by the dominant strain of biblical scholars in the late 19th century and for much of the 20th century, as they were perceived to be of no value for textual criticism. In the view of these scholars, not only did these versions lack the primacy of age compared to earlier versions in Greek or Syriac, most versions were in fact of a tertiary rank, translated translations as it were.³ What is more, Arabic ceased to play a significant role in biblical scholarship after the discovery of ancient East Semitic and North-West Semitic languages, such as Akkadian and Ugaritic, in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. Research on this topic likewise remained rare in Judaic Studies until the 1980s, although the scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in 19th century Europe had dedicated a notable part of their research to the Arabic literature of the Jews in the medieval Islamicate world and their biblical versions in Arabic.⁴ Furthermore, the scholarly study of Arabic philology in Europe and elsewhere, in particular in the 20th century, gradually converged with the study of Islam.⁵ Once these became almost synonymous, anything Jewish or Christian in that language was sidelined in this disciplinary setting as marginal.⁶

An additional reason for the marginalisation of Arabic versions of the Bible was an almost arbitrary historic preconception. Unlike in the fields of philosophy or the natural sciences, scholars of scripture held a belief that the Islamicate world of Late Antiquity led to, at best, an intellectual stagnation or, at worst, a complete state of *tabula rasa* among Jewish, Christian or Samaritan communities now under new rulers. The idea that Late Antique scriptural heritage could be seen as flourishing or even achieving an unprecedented moment of originality under Islamic hegemony and in Arabic, the literary *koine*, would have disrupted this preconception.⁷

³ Earlier scholars were less dismissive, as will be seen below.

⁴ See Cohen, 1994, pp. 3–14; Polliack, 2006; Stillman, 2010.

⁵ Arabic studies, as well as Oriental studies generally, emerged as an ancillary to Biblical studies; see discussion in Bobzin, 1998. Arabic scholarship before the 20th century is far from centered predominantly on Islamic texts, as is demonstrated by the many examples in Toomer, 1996, Jones, 1988 and Fück, 1955. As a further illustration, Polaschegg, 2004, p. 83 points out that Paulus, 1790–1791 covers a variety of topics, from Muslim pilgrim reports and Hebrew ostraca to Syriac and Samaritan chronicles. The same holds true for Eichhorn, 1777–1786. In her view, “the attested, both phobic and affirmative, obsession with Islam” in Oriental studies is a phenomenon of the 20th century (p. 97).

⁶ Christian Oriental philologies, which could occupy themselves with Syriac or Christian-Arabic literature, have become a rare luxury at European universities.

⁷ Recent studies, such as those of Peter Brown and his students, have stressed the continuity between the Late Antique and Early Islamic periods; see also Fowden, 2014. Their perspective can be extended to exegetical practices and literary production among the communities now under Muslim rule. For a Jewish context, this can be illustrated by Geoffrey Khan's studies on the Masorah in Khan, 2013. For a reassessment of the literary production in Greek, see Mavroudi, 2015 and Mango, 1999.

The Arabic Bible had thus become orphaned within scholarship, and remained so for most of last century.

1 Contested origins

We cannot rule out the possibility that Jewish and Christian communities in the Arabian Peninsula orally translated parts of the Bible into Arabic in liturgical settings; indeed, this a likely scenario,⁸ and in fact the Qur'ān and early traditionalist literature offer us the strongest evidence for this.⁹ Biblical narratives often resound in this corpus as a kind of subtext, in a manner that presupposes a great familiarity with them on the part of the new community of believers that was coalescing in the formative years of Islam. They serve as a point of reference to corroborate Qur'ānic prophetology. Direct quotations, however, are strikingly absent.

If we leave aside this intricate interplay with the text of the Qur'ān, the Bible makes its first appearance in Arabic in the writings of Christian apologists in the 8th century CE, although manuscripts of complete translations into Arabic are only found from the 9th century. It appears that social changes in the status of non-Muslims, which resulted from the 'Abbāsīd revolution (750 CE), encouraged the composition and textualisation of Arabic versions of the Bible.¹⁰ In contrast to the Umayyad period, by this time more extensive conversion to the new faith, Islam, appears to have taken place.¹¹ Non-Muslims were becoming a well-defined legal category, whose rights and obligations were regulated by *dhimma*, a state of protection.¹² These prescriptions regarding non-Muslim subjects in the first 'Abbāsīd century had obvious implications for the Jewish, Christian and Samaritan communities and their literature. The increased number of apologetic tracts, on the one hand, and the strenuous effort to translate biblical books, on the other, reflect these communities' collective endeavours to respond to this new setting. In addition, committing Arabic biblical translations to writing was surely fostered by the general tendency, from the rise of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate onwards, to write down oral traditions.

⁸ See Vollandt, 2015, pp. 40–51; Griffith, 2013, pp. 7–53.

⁹ Cf. Griffith, 2013. Apart from the Qur'ān itself and post-Qur'ānic literature, evidence of biblical knowledge among Arabs before the arrival of Islam can also be found in early Arabic poetry, for example that of Umayya ibn Abī al-Ṣalt, a contemporary of the Prophet; see Seidensticker, 2011 and Sinai, 2011. His poems draw heavily on episodes from biblical history and exemplify how biblical traditions were recounted in Arabic in the immediate milieu of the Qur'ān. Compare also the Christian poet 'Adī ibn Zayd al-'Ibādī (al-Ḥīra, died c600); see Dmitriev, 2009 and Toral-Niehoff, 2008.

¹⁰ As first pointed out by Griffith, 1985.

¹¹ Bulliet, 1979.

¹² See Levy-Rubin, 2011, which has now replaced older studies on this subject: Tritton, 1970; Fattal, 1958; and Noth, 1987.

While there is no corroboration of the existence of written translations before the rise of Islam or during its formative centuries, the view that such written translations must have existed had and continues to have its advocates.¹³ The premise that the prevalence of biblical motifs among early Muslims, alluded to above, must be linked to written translations that circulated is flawed.¹⁴ It presumes that the Qur’ānic revelation unfolded in a total rupture from the Late Antique scriptural heritage, creating intentionally or unintentionally an artificial amnesia of previous exegetical and translational practices. The seeming silent vacuum that this view postulates had to be bridged by assuming pre-existing translations into Arabic. What is more, such an assertion expresses interest in staking possessory claims. It carries inherently the charge of epigonality. Early Muslim literature, first and foremost the Qur’ān, becomes the mere product of Christian or Jewish influence.¹⁵

Turning now to the history of early modern and modern research on the Arabic Bible is too long to survey here in detail, so I will give only the main characteristics. It was in the form of early printings that European scholars first became aware of Arabic versions of the Bible on a large scale. Specimens of this achievement include the 1516 polyglot Psalter of Agostino Giustiniani, as well as the later Paris Polyglot and the London Polyglot.¹⁶ With minor exceptions, print editions remained the main focus of attention for scholars interested in Arabic biblical translations for much of the next two centuries.¹⁷

¹³ E.g. Baumstark, 1931; Baumstark, 1934. See also Rhode, 1921, p. 14; Algermissen, 1933, pp. 10–13; al-Maqrīṣī, 1933; Peters, 1936; Peters, 1940; Peters, 1942; Khoury, 1972, p. 258; Khoury, 1989; Shahid, 1984, p. 440; and Newby, 1988, p. 67, who even speaks of a “flood of translations”. All of these authors, often following Baumstark’s line of argumentation or referring to him directly, have no doubt that pre-Islamic translations existed. M. C. A. Macdonald and Corriente independently dated the Violet fragment (on which see below) to the pre-Islamic era – see Macdonald, 2009, vol. I, pp. 100–102, vol. III, pp. 50, 68 n62; and Corriente, 2007. In a paper written later, Macdonald reconsidered his earlier dating and corrected it to the Islamic period; see Macdonald, 2008. Kashouh, 2011, pp. 162–165 argues for a pre-Islamic dating of one of the oldest surviving manuscripts containing the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles (Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 13) and suggested Najrān as its possible place of emergence. This scenario, however, was convincingly rejected by Griffith, 2013, pp. 114–118.

¹⁴ This premise is maintained to varying degrees by by Abbott, 1967, vol. II, p. 257; Cheikho, 1912–1923, vol. I, p. 254; Newby, 1988, p. 67; and Sprenger, 1869, p. 132. Possibly it is also implied in Samir, 2008, p. 159.

¹⁵ On the claimed epigonality of the Qur’ān, see for example Griffith, 2013, pp. 7–8, where he quotes Massignon’s famous dictum that the Qur’ān is nothing but “une édition arabe tronquée de la Bible”. Cf. Neuwirth, 2010, pp. 42–44.

¹⁶ Giustiniani, 1516; Lejay, 1628–1645; Walton, 1653–1657.

¹⁷ For example, the studies of Saadiah’s *Tafsīr* by Tychsel, 1782 and Schwarzstein, 1886 are based entirely on the Polyglots. The copy that Schwarzstein used had the shelf mark Df. 118 at the Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe (http://ipac.blb-karlsruhe.de/index.php?img_id=283346;nav_id=283351;cat_id=1;scroll=0) before it perished in the turmoil of war after 1942. Similarly limited to the texts in the Polyglots were studies of al-‘Alam’s translation of the Prophets, such as Gesenius, 1820–1821 for Isaiah; Cornill, 1886 for Ezekiel; Wald, 1784, Gehman, 1925 and Löfgren, 1936 for Daniel; S. M. Reynolds, 1943 for Zechariah; Ryssel, 1885 for Micah; Reinke, 1867 for Nahum; and Reinke, 1868 for Haggai. ‘Abdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī’s version of the Psalms, found in the Polyglots, was studied by Döderlein, 1778–1779.

A new approach was inaugurated by Guidi's 1888 study of the Arabic and Ethiopian versions of the Gospels and Vaccari's studies in the early 1920s on the Arabic versions of the Prophets.¹⁸ They were the first to produce a comprehensive inventory of the available manuscripts.¹⁹ Both also introduced a comparative method for examining textual evidence. After an initial classification according to their *Vorlagen*, the versions were grouped in subcategories based on different branches of transmission. In particular, Guidi drew attention to the fact that textual changes frequently occur within a given version over the course of time, whether as the product of secondary revisions, adaptations or linguistic development. As a consequence, he stressed the necessity of introducing an additional distinction according to text types. As obvious as it may seem now, this approach was unprecedented and had never been applied to biblical translations into Arabic.

Subsequently, Graf followed this method in his epochal *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*.²⁰ This work, while it is in need of additions and corrections in the light of recent research, remains the major reference for Christian Arabic versions of the Bible.²¹ Then in the 1960s, microfilms of the Arabic manuscripts of St. Catherine's Monastery became widely available, after Kenneth W. Clark led an expedition to the Middle East under the auspices of the Library of Congress and its partners in 1949 to microfilm old manuscripts in various libraries of the Middle East, the largest and most pivotal of which was that at St. Catherine's. Among these manuscripts were some early biblical codices that were unknown to Graf, and this prompted renewed scholarship in the study of the Arabic Bible of Christian provenance.²² In a similar manner, the major factor that has impacted recent scholarship on Jewish versions has been the hitherto unprecedented availability of new manuscript collections, such as the Cairo Genizah (from the 1980s onwards) and the Firko-vich collections (after the fall of the Iron Curtain).

Vaccari's, Guidi's and Graf's comparative method has also been employed in a number of specialised inquiries focused on particular books.²³ After an

¹⁸ Guidi, 1888; Vaccari, 1920; Vaccari, 1921; Vaccari, 1922.

¹⁹ A number of authors before them described and analysed selected manuscripts: Adler, 1783–1784; Paulus, 1789; Gildemeister, 1865. However, their work was rather dependent on the sources at their immediate disposal.

²⁰ Graf, 1944, vol. I, pp. 85–195.

²¹ Samir, 1982 offered constructive criticism and suggestions for improving Graf's work.

²² For example, see the four volumes of Staal, 1984; van Koningsveld, 1975; Leemhuis, 1984; Leemhuis, 1989; Leemhuis, Klijn and van Gelder, 1986; Drint, 1997; Drint, 1999. Some photographs of manuscripts in Graf's *Nachlass*, kept at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, indicate that he only had very limited access to manuscript collections in the Sinai, and then only at a late stage in his life. Graf seems to have derived his information on Sinaitic manuscripts mostly from the *Studia sinaitica* series. Apart from that, Graf was acquainted with a number of *membra disjecta* from Sinai that circulated in Europe, and especially in Germany, as for instance the Grote collection, on which see Tarras, forthcoming.

²³ For example, Rhode, 1921 examined the Pentateuch translations employed in the Coptic Church; Polliack, 1997 has looked at Qaraite translations of the Pentateuch; Vollandt, 2015

initial classification according to their *Vorlagen*, all of these studies group each version into subcategories. However research on the diverse versions which have been found has taken different directions, which will be briefly surveyed in the following sections.

2 Textual criticism

The value of Arabic versions of the Bible for textual criticism was generally accepted by the Republic of Letters and is stressed, for example, in the 1524 publication *Oratio de laudibus & utilitate trium linguarum* by Robert Wakefield, the founding father of Hebrew studies in Renaissance England.²⁴ Franciscus Junius the Elder, too, relied on Arabic versions for his New Testament textual criticism. In 1578 he issued a Latin translation of an Arabic translation of the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles to the Corinthians, to which he appended a discussion of the value of the Arabic variants for the received Greek text.²⁵ His translation of and comments on 1 John, Galatians and Hebrews remained in manuscript. A similar approach was pursued by Petrus Kirstenius in his 1608 book, *Vitae quatuor Evangelistarum, ex antiquissimo codice Arabico Caesario*, and also in his later *Notae in Evangelium S. Matthaei, ex collatione textuum Arabicorum Aegyptiacorum, Hebraeorum, Syriacorum, Graecorum, Latinorum*.²⁶ Similar statements of the importance of Arabic versions are found in Gabriel Sionita and Joannes Hesronita's *Grammatica Arabica Maronitarum* and in the preface to Thomas Erpenius' *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè*.²⁷

Arabic versions were also occasionally used in critical editions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in the 19th century. Holmes' 1822 work, *Vetus Testamentum ex versione Septuaginta interpretum* acknowledges its use of four unspecified Arabic versions from the Bodleian Library. Von Tischendorf employed Arabic versions of the Gospels to improve his 1849 edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*.²⁸ The manuscripts he used include Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 13 (referred to with the siglum ArVat), which is an early Arabic version of the Gospels, and St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts,

analyses the Pentateuch generally; Löfgren, 1936 and Hjälml, 2016 focus on Arabic versions of the book of Daniel. Other examples include Knutsson, 1974 for Judges; Madros, 1984 for Psalms; Samaan, 1994 for Ecclesiasticus; Bengtsson, 1995 and Bengtsson, 2003 for Ruth; Blackburn, 1999 for Job; and Kashouh, 2011 for the Gospels.

²⁴ Wakefield, 1989.

²⁵ Junius, 1578. For details, see Hamilton, 1985, p. 81; Smitskamp, 1976, pp. 119–120; de Nave, 1986, pp. 100–101.

²⁶ Kirstenius, 1608; Kirstenius, 1611. Petrus Kirstenius based his investigations on Vienna, ÖNB, MS N.F. 97, which contains an Arabic translation of the Gospels with many text-critical marginalia. His personal copy of the preface and epilogue of this manuscript are now Hamburg, Stadtbibliothek, MS Or. 27.

²⁷ Sionita and Hesronita, 1616, sig. aii^r–aai^v; Erpenius, 1622.

²⁸ Von Tischendorf, 1849.

MS D 226 (with siglum ArPet). A full list of Arabic manuscripts used is found in the third volume of the *Novum Testamentum Graece* published by Gregory in 1894.²⁹ The first four editions of Alford's New Testament also presented variants taken from Arabic translations.³⁰ However, following criticism that they were "of very little use in the present stage of critical investigation of the text", later editions dispensed with them.³¹ The apparatus of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* also contains references to the Arabic parts of the Paris Polyglot.³²

However, 19th and 20th century biblical scholarship was generally unfavourably disposed to the study of biblical versions in Arabic. De Lagarde wrote that "there are more Arabic translations of the Gospels than theologians pressed with more urgent priorities can care about; their value is comparatively limited".³³ In the same vein, Nestle, in the *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, conjectured that Arabic versions "are not worth much for biblical criticism and exegesis, because, with only minor exceptions, they are secondary translations".³⁴ Margoliouth called them "of the slightest possible importance".³⁵ Tregelles added: "The Arabic versions existing in MS. exhibit very various forms: it appears as if alterations had been made in the different countries in which they had been used; hence it appears an endless task to discriminate amongst them precisely."³⁶ Writing in 1957, Roberts had no doubt that biblical translations in Arabic are "at most of secondary value for the study of the biblical text".³⁷

On the other hand, also in the 20th century, Levin allows that Arabic translations have a "textual significance".³⁸ Peters stresses the text-critical importance of some translations, such as that by al-Hārith b. Sinān for the Hexapla, Origen's opus magnum of the Greek Old Testament, in which he laid out six parallel columns with different texts across each or that by Isaac Velasquez for the Latin Gospels.³⁹ The value of al-'Alam's translation for the study of the Alexandrian text type has been pointed out frequently.⁴⁰

²⁹ Gregory, 1894.

³⁰ Alford, 1859–1870.

³¹ Empson, 1851, p. 29; see Davidson, 1852.

³² Kittel, 1905–1906.

³³ De Lagard, 1864, p. 1: "Arabische übersetzungen der evangelien giebt es mehr, als der mit drängenden arbeiten überhäuftten theologie lieb sein kann, ihr werth is verhältnissmässig gering [sic]".

³⁴ Nestle, 1897, p. 91: "Für die Biblische Kritik und Exegese haben sie nur wenig Wert, da sie mit wenigen Ausnahmen Tochterübersetzungen sind".

³⁵ As quoted in Jellicoe, 1968, p. 267.

³⁶ Tregelles, 1893, p. 1615.

³⁷ Roberts, 1957, p. 1, cols 1200–1201: "bestenfalls nur von zweitrangigem Wert für die Untersuchung des Bibeltextes".

³⁸ Levin, 1938, p. 1: "textgeschichtliche Bedeutung".

³⁹ Peters, 1942.

⁴⁰ See e.g. Graf, 1944, vol. I, pp. 132–133; Vaccari, 1921; Gesenius, 1820–1821, vol. I, pp. 98–106; Cornill, 1886, pp. 49–56; Wald, 1784; Gehman, 1925; Löfgren, 1936; S. M. Reynolds, 1943; Ryssel, 1885; Reinke, 1867, pp. 65–70; Reinke, 1868, pp. 34–37. See also the discussion in Wevers, 1970, pp. 8–11.

3 Printed editions

A number of printed editions exist, some of them from the early modern period. As mentioned in section 1, the orientalist Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536), who was bishop of Nebbio, issued a polyglot Psalter in 1516.⁴¹ Its eight columns (whence its designation *Psalterium Octaplum*) contain the Masoretic Text, a Latin translation of that text, the Vulgate, the Septuagint, an Arabic version, the Targum Onkelos with a Latin paraphrase and running *scholia*. Eliezer Soncino published a polyglot Pentateuch in 1546 that became known as the Constantinople Polyglot, which contained the Hebrew text accompanied by Targum Onkelos, Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, a Judaeo-Persian translation by Jacob ben Josef Ṭāwūs and Rashi's commentary.⁴² Eliezer's edition of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* holds the distinction of being the earliest printed Judaeo-Arabic text as well as the first printed Arabic Pentateuch. However despite the importance of Eliezer's undertaking, few details are known concerning its production, the size of the print run or its distribution.⁴³ A psalter in Karshūnī and Syriac was published in 1610 at the Monastery of Mar Antonius, Quzḥayya, supervised and sponsored by Sergius al-Rizzī, alumnus of the Maronite College in Rome.⁴⁴ Another important work is the *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè*, printed in 1622; it is of rather modest size in comparison to the Constantinople and Paris Polyglots, which it falls between chronologically. However Erpenius, its initiator, was one of the foremost Arabists of his time.⁴⁵ His edition was based on a manuscript that had been owned by Scaliger, today kept under the shelf-mark Leiden, University Library, MS Or. 236, which represents later North African traditions of Judaeo-Arabic biblical translation, generally grouped under the term *shurūḥ* (sing. *sharḥ*). In 1632 the sixth volume of the Paris Polyglot appeared, with the Peshiṭta and a translation on the left-hand pages and the Arabic text with Latin on the right-hand pages.⁴⁶ The Arabic version is based on MS Paris, Ar. 1.⁴⁷ The London Polyglot, dedicated to Oliver Cromwell, was the last and greatest of the Polyglots, being completed in 1657.⁴⁸ The Arabic portions, however, simply reproduced the text of the Paris Polyglot, with minor changes.

In 1867, Paul de Lagarde edited Leiden, University Library, MS Or. 377, a manuscript that contains Saadiah's translation of the Pentateuch in a Christian

⁴¹ See Vercellin, 2001, pp. 70–75. On Giustiniani's biography, see Bobzin, 1990.

⁴² Soncino, 1546.

⁴³ Prestigious parchment copies are attested; see Freimann, 1901, p. 56. The edition was popular in Egypt, as illustrated by the numerous fragments in the Genizah, e.g. CUL MSS T-S NS 214.74, 266.61, 267.5, 267.210, 269.32, etc.

⁴⁴ Al-Rizzī, 1610.

⁴⁵ Erpenius, 1622. A full-scale biography of Erpenius is not available. The fullest account is found in Juynboll, 1931, pp. 59–118, but this is in need of additions and corrections in the light of recent research.

⁴⁶ Lejay, 1628–1645. Cf. Vollandt, 2012.

⁴⁷ On this manuscript see Vollandt, 2016b.

⁴⁸ Walton, 1653–1657. On the London Polyglot, see Toomer, 1996, pp. 202–210; Miller, 2001.

recension.⁴⁹ Gibson and Stenij provided the first editions of manuscripts that originated from St. Catherine's Monastery at Sinai, both exhibiting parts of the Pauline Epistles.⁵⁰ With the microfilms having become available in the 1960s, a number of editions based on this collection ensued, with editions of: MS Sinai, Ar. 151, containing the Acts, Pauline and Catholic Epistles; the book of Ben Sira in MS Sinai, Ar. 155; and MS Sinai, Ar. 589 with the Apocalypse of Baruch and IV Ezra.⁵¹ More recently, further editions from Eastern manuscripts have included, for instance, Arbache's edition of Luke from MS Sinai, Ar. 72 and Monferrer-Sala's edition of Philemon from MS Vatican, BAV, Ar. 13.⁵² Further, Monferrer-Sala has edited Revelation and the three Johannine Epistles of MS Madrid, El Escorial, Ar. 1625; Bonhome Pulido has edited Galatians from the same manuscript; and Potthast edited Romans from MS Madrid, BNE, Or. 4971⁵³ – all of these are Andalusian versions. The editors have usually appended their editions with studies of the *Vorlagen* as well as the linguistic features of the texts. However, all of them share one characteristic: they are based on a *single* manuscript and flatten complex histories of transmission, often manifested in quite a substantial number of copies, into something rather one-dimensional.

Another approach has been proposed by Knutson in his edition of three Arabic versions of the Book of Judges in 1976.⁵⁴ He added a critical apparatus that includes readings from *all other known* manuscripts. The same is the case for Bengtsson's edition of the Arabic versions of Ruth.⁵⁵ Both Samaritan-Arabic versions of the Pentateuch were published by Shehadeh in 1989 and 2002 – the older, which he calls the Old Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch (and which dates to before the second half of the 13th century) and the later, revised version of Abū Sa'īd (13th century Egypt).⁵⁶ Importantly, the edition once again takes into account all known copies of the texts. Among recent editions, equally comprehensive in their use of sources, we find Yefet ben 'Eli's commentary and translation on the books of Ruth, Jonah, Hosea and Obadiah, Esther, Jeremiah, and Proverbs, and also passages from the book of Genesis.⁵⁷ The critical edition of Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Assāl's translation of the Gospels was published by Samuel Moawad in 2014, including the text-critical

⁴⁹ De Lagarde, 1867, vol. I. See also Hughes, 1914 and Vollandt, 2015, p. 225.

⁵⁰ Gibson, 1894; Stenij, 1901.

⁵¹ For example, see the four volumes of Staal, 1984; Frank, 1974; Leemhuis, Klijn and van Gelder, 1986; Drint, 1997.

⁵² Arbache, 2012; Monferrer-Sala, 2015.

⁵³ Monferrer-Sala, 2000; Monferrer-Sala, 2002; Bonhome Pulido, 2013; Potthast, 2011.

⁵⁴ Knutson, 1974.

⁵⁵ Bengtsson, 1995.

⁵⁶ Shehadeh, 1989; Shehadeh, 2002.

⁵⁷ See Butbul, 2003 for the book of Ruth; Andruss, 2007 for Jonah; Polliack and Schlossberg, 2001 for Obadiah; Polliack and Schlossberg, 2009 for Hosea; Wechsler, 2008 for Esther; Sabih, 2009 for Jeremiah; Sasson, 2016 for Proverbs; Ben-Shammai, Sklare, Batat, Butbul and Strousma, 2000, for Genesis; and Zawanowska, 2012 also for Genesis. The second volume of Sasson's work is to appear, as is a work by Sadan on Yefet's book of Job.

marginalia and based on the oldest eight manuscripts.⁵⁸ A team, consisting of C. Adang, Miriam L. Hjälml, J. P. Monferrer-Sala, S. Schmidtke and myself is presently working on a critical edition of an early Melkite version of the Pentateuch in Arabic that was produced by al-Hārith b. Sinān b. Sunbat al-Harrānī. He used as the basis of his translation the fifth column of the Hexapla, which contained Origen’s revision of the text of the Septuagint, and endowed his translation with a set of introductory chapters and a hexaplaric apparatus.

Sara Schulthess has suggested in recent years new ways of editing in a digital age.⁵⁹ In two sample projects, the texts of 1 Corinthians, as found in MS Vatican, Ar. 13 (<http://tarsian.vital-it.ch/>) and the Acts, the Catholics letters and the Pauline letters in Greek, Latin and Arabic, as found in MS Venice, Marciana, Gr. Z. 11 (<http://humarec-viewer.vital-it.ch/>), have been made available to the scholarly public.

Despite this quite active development in editing over the past few decades, it needs to be stressed that there is still much to do. For example, there are no critical editions of some of the most central and influential translations, such as Saadiah’s *Tafsīr* on the Pentateuch.⁶⁰

A complication emerges for translations with no attributions. While some translations have a clear authorial voice – such as in the translations of Saadiah (882–942), al-Harīth ibn Sinan (first half of the 10th century) or Bishr ibn al-Sirri (9th century), to name just a few – for most translations there was probably never a single translator. A large majority of translations are anonymous and of a provenance that only further research will perhaps discern. In addition, their textuality is fluid due to a combination of authorial anonymity and a high degree of variation. Sometimes differences between the extant manuscripts of a translation are so great that we are obliged to view them as representing separate versions or redactions. Occasionally these versions or recensions are so different that, even while showing clear textual affinities, it is impossible to imagine how they could go back to a single original. We have to see them as representing separate manifestations of an underlying oral transmission. A comparison of surviving manuscripts in order to identify and eliminate those features of their texts which pertain to scribal interference rather than to an authorial figure, traditionally the task of an editor, is virtually impossible. Trying to reverse “the process of transmission and restore the words of the ancients as closely as possible to their original form” seems a futile task.⁶¹ The term *mouvance* has been used to describe this textual mobility, and it calls for a particular editorial practice, carried out, for example, in a

⁵⁸ Most of these Gospels represent Family (L^a) in Kashouh, 2011, pp. 258–274; see also Moawad, 2014, p. xxxix. On the marginalia, see Vollandt, 2015.

⁵⁹ Schulthess, 2012; Schulthess, 2013; Clivaz, Schulthess and Sankar, 2017.

⁶⁰ A critical edition has been announced by Eliezer Schlossberg (Bar-Ilan University). New sources towards this new edition have been presented by Avishur, 1992 and Blau, 1998.

⁶¹ L. D. Reynolds and Wilson, 1974, p. 212.

non-stemmatic, synoptic way.⁶² It remains to be seen whether digital editions can also prove to be the right tool for these traditions.

4 Language

It is clear that there is no single direction of research in modern scholarship on the Arabic Bible. Biblical scholarship, as has been shown above, completely rejected the usefulness of studying Arabic translations for gaining insights into the text(s) of the Bible itself. By contrast, a number of scholars, including Levin, Knutsson, Bengtsson and, most recently, Dikken, have proposed concentrating on the Middle Arabic features in these texts.⁶³ This approach is best captured in Knutsson's statement that

the text-critical aspect of the Arabic versions of the Pentateuch is only one amongst many. ... The Arabic versions deserve to be examined from several other viewpoints, of which the purely linguistic one is the most important.⁶⁴

The Violet fragment, a bilingual Greek-Arabic fragment of Psalm 78:20–31, 51–61 (LXX 77) which was found at the end of the 19th century in the *Qubbat al-Khazna* (the Treasure Dome) in the compound of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus and was first published by Violet in 1901, instigated not a little scholarly attention.⁶⁵ Yet of greatest interest was the fact that the Arabic column was written in Greek letters, and it was therefore of linguistic importance.⁶⁶ The same fragment in Arabic script would have hardly caused comparable consideration.

A particular strand of studies on Saadiah's *Tafsīr* is similarly primarily concerned with the linguistic aspects of this work.⁶⁷ Early 'non-Saadianic' translations, and also Jewish translations that emerged from the 14th century onwards (the so-called *shurūh*), have increasingly attracted the attention of scholars during recent decades, and the same holds true for them.⁶⁸

⁶² On *mouvance* see Zumthor, 1972. This idea can be compared to other textual traditions with shared characteristics and their synoptic editions, e.g. Schäfer and Becker, 1995; Schäfer, Schlüter and von Mutius, 1981; or Bumke, 1996.

⁶³ Levin, 1938; Knutsson, 1974; Bengtsson, 1995; Dikken, 2012.

⁶⁴ Knutsson, 1974, p. 4.

⁶⁵ It is known as the Violet Fragment in honour of its discoverer. See Violet, 1901.

⁶⁶ Mavroudi, 2008; Hopkins, 1984, pp. 1–2; Blau, 2002, p. 68; Blau, 1967, vol I, p. 31 (his grammar usually excludes Bible translations); Haddad, 1992; M. C. A. Macdonald, 2009, vol. I, pp. 100–102, vol. III, pp. 50, 68 n 62; M. C. A. Macdonald, 2008; Corriente, 2007. See also al-Jallad, forthcoming.

⁶⁷ E.g. Blau, 1998; Zewi, 1997a; Zewi, 1997b; Zewi, 2000; Zewi, 2001; Zewi, 2002; Zewi, 2014; Zewi, 2016.

⁶⁸ The first fragment, CUL T-S Ar. 53.8, an early fragment exhibiting a translation of the book of Proverbs, was published by Blau, 1992. The discovery of additional fragments has been announced; a study of their possible *Vorlage* was furnished by Hopkins, 2002. Extant translations from this period cover most of the Torah and, to a lesser degree, portions of the Prophets and

The linguistic aspect is certainly important, and should not be neglected. However, biblical translations often follow a grammar of their own, which is governed by a wish to imitate the exalted source text and maintain a high degree of literalism in the translation. Furthermore, this literalism played a functional role in instruction and emerged directly out of the didactic need to mirror the source text as closely as possible, as is the case for biblical translations in other languages as well. The language used could often be described as a professional translation language, in which frequently the choices made by translators are overly literal, imitative of the source text and expressed in a grammatically perplexing Arabic style that was not employed in any other literary genre. This means that these biblical translations reflect only a rather specific register of Middle Arabic. Thus the concentration on the linguistic aspects alone limits and undermines the historical significance of these translations.

5 Translation techniques

It has been emphasised in the past that a focus by scholars on linguistic features or on textual criticism often comes at the expense of analysing translation techniques and studying how a particular version is embedded in the broader context of the related theological, exegetical and grammatical traditions of which biblical versions have always been an inextricable part.⁶⁹ Equally neglected in research has been their embeddedness in liturgy, education or apologetics.⁷⁰ These contexts must have strongly conditioned the strategies which translators used to transfer particular structures, proper names or concepts from the source language into the target language.

Polliack's 1997 book on Qaraite translations not only offers a clear methodology for describing translation techniques, but also situates Arabic Bible translations in a larger exegetical context, in which they, together with running commentaries and linguistic thought (grammars and dictionaries), form what can be called an exegetical triangle.⁷¹ While earlier research addresses the underlying principles of translating only sparsely and selectively, Polliack starts from the relationship between translation and *Vorlage*, and describes in a systematic way the strategy employed by the translator to transfer particular structures, concepts or ideas from the source language into the target language.

Writings; see Blau and Hopkins, 2017. As an illustration of the linguistic approach with regard to the *shurūh*, see Hary, 2009.

⁶⁹ There is a great deal of literature, too abundant to cover here, on the translation techniques of other biblical versions. As examples, see Barr, 1979 for general discussion; Aejmelaeus, 1982 and Tov, 1979 for the Greek Bible; Brock, 1979a, Brock, 1983 and Szpek, 1992 for the Syriac Bible.

⁷⁰ Griffith, 2013 is a recent and rare exception.

⁷¹ Polliack, 1997, pp. 3–22.

Polliack has served as a valuable model for my own study on the Arabic versions of the Pentateuch, and also for Hjälms on the book of Daniel and Bengtsson's on the book of Ruth.⁷²

The translation techniques examined in the above-mentioned studies are organised under the headings of syntax, vocabulary, particles and morphemes, and style. The first three of these address decreasing textual units of the source text: from single verses or a cluster of verses, to single lexemes in a verse and smaller grammatical units. Style concentrates on stylistic modifications and paraphrases, such as additions, omissions and substitutions.

6 Paratextual approach

Some studies go beyond a mere critical presentation of the text of a given translation, its language or translation technique.⁷³ The introductions of translators, if they are available, serve as an important source for their intention and strategies. Saadiah's introductions, for example, have received much attention.⁷⁴ Al-Ḥārith b. Sinān added an introductory tractate to his translation, referred to as a *risāla* 'epistle', in which he goes into great detail about the earlier Jewish biblical translations.⁷⁵ After retelling the narrative from the Letter of Aristeas, al-Ḥārith goes on to describe Origen's Hexapla, including its arrangement in columns, the content of each column and the text-critical apparatus used to indicate variants between the Septuagint and the translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion. In this work there are also introductions to each book of the Pentateuch, which, following the custom of Syro-hexaplaric manuscripts, provide a short summary of the contents. Some manuscripts contain the original hexaplaric readings, including the so-called Aris-tarchian symbols.⁷⁶

Important information about the use of manuscripts can also be contained in non-authorial paratexts, such as prefaces by readers,⁷⁷ edificatory poems,⁷⁸

⁷² Vollandt, 2015; Hjälms, 2016; Bengtsson, 2003.

⁷³ For a similar approach to the Greek Bible, see Wallraff and Andrist, 2015.

⁷⁴ E.g. Stroumsa, 2007; Ben-Shammai, 2000; and Polliack, 1997, pp. 77–90.

⁷⁵ The introduction has been partly edited and translated into Latin. See Aldrich, 1692; Hody, 1705, pp. 622–625; White, 1779, pp. 8–29.

⁷⁶ On the marginalia, see Monferrer-Sala, 2017.

⁷⁷ See Vollandt, 2015, pp. 9–11; Vollandt, 2016a; and Vollandt, forthcoming.

⁷⁸ Some Christian manuscripts of Saadiah's translation are preceded by an edificatory poem which elaborates on abrogation of Mosaic Law (Arab. *al-sharī'a al-musawīyya*) – that is, the abrogation of the Torah – by the New Testament; it also contains a short summary of the contents, referred to as the 'study guide' (Arab. *dallāl*). The manuscripts close with an account, called an 'epilogue' (Arab. *al-khātima*) on how the Hebrew scriptures were handed down in an authoritative, unbroken line of transmitters, until they were eventually translated into a variety of languages and thus became corrupted. On this, see Vollandt, 2016c.

liturgical notes⁷⁹ or text-critical marginalia.⁸⁰ Glosses and notes can often illuminate the use of the manuscript; for example, liturgical marks might demonstrate their use in liturgy, or annotations by readers might be suggestive of a private study Bible. As manuscripts are physical objects that continue to exist through time, they are disseminated and consumed in ways which are also socially, economically and intellectually determined. This leaves traces on them, so that one might say that scripture grows along with its readers and through interaction with the reading community. For this reason, paratexts must be an import direction in future research. Paratextual elements provide contextualising evidence that is largely absent from the texts themselves.

7 Outlook

One of the major impediments which currently holds back research on the Arabic Bible – whether that research focuses on textual criticism, critical editions, the linguistic features of the text, translation techniques or paratextual features – is the difficulty scholars have in becoming aware of and accessing the relevant manuscripts. To study any particular biblical book, every scholar needs to begin with the cumbersome and time-consuming task of sifting through the manuscript material, which demands a fair amount of detective work and archival skill.

This process would be assisted by an online union catalogue of Arabic Bible manuscripts, which organises the translations into a *clavis* based on the biblical books they cover. To illustrate what this would involve, consider MS Paris, BnF, Ar. 1. The manuscript contains an almost complete Old Testament. A union catalogue would need to capture and describe in detail all textual as well as codicological units. On the one hand, the data on codicological features would include the multiple colophons from Ramaḍān 992 AH to Muḥarram 993 AH (which correspond to the period between September 1584 and January 1585 CE), and would describe the four different scribes who can be distinguished. On the other hand, the data on textual units would include a list of all books contained in the copy, including additional information on paratexts (for example, the introductions to the Pentateuch on ff. 1 v.–3 r. and the book of Daniel on ff. 346 v.–347 v.) and the extensive glosses. The catalogue would provide, into the *clavis*, all the basic information on the particular translations

⁷⁹ See Baumstark, 1929–1930, and more recently, Zaki, 2017.

⁸⁰ In 1252, al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibatallāh ibn al-ʿAssāl produced a critical revision of the Arabic Gospels that were in use among the Copts. Al-Asʿad noted the variants among the different manuscripts, and also gave text-critical notes, in the margins of his text with a set of marks, called *ʿalāmāt ʿsiglaʿ* in Arabic; cf. D. B. Macdonald, 1904. The text-critical notes were included in Moawad, 2014. See Vollandt, 2016a and Vollandt, forthcoming for further manuscripts containing such an apparatus.

exhibited in the manuscript; for example, that the manuscript contains a version of Saadiah Gaon's translation of the Pentateuch (ff. 3 v.–83 v.) and an anonymous translation of 2 Maccabees (ff. 429 v.–439 r.).

A comprehensive searchable online database of all known manuscripts is currently being developed by the Biblia Arabica team in Munich.⁸¹ This highly accessible database will enable users to identify, locate and cite any translation (through the *clavis*) or one of its manuscript embodiments (through the union catalogue), with full documentation and without demanding expert knowledge to sift through existing catalogues and inventories.

In addition to information on the text of the translation, the union catalogue will collect – as described above – codicological and paleographical data, and also describe paratextual elements (translators' introductions, prefaces by later readers or copyists, interpretative or text-critical glosses, liturgical marks, ownership) in great detail, enabling scholars to browse through the catalogue to answer various research questions. This data will establish a firm (eventually definitive) corpus, which will enable quantitative research. The database will allow navigation diachronically (e.g. search for all identified manuscripts of a particular translation, from the earliest to the latest copy) and synchronically (e.g. search for all translations of a particular biblical book, be it of Jewish, Christian or Samaritan provenance). A digital catalogue and *clavis* such as these for Arabic Bible manuscripts will provide a single starting point for manuscript research and direct users to each of the repositories offering manuscript images, cataloguing information and related bibliography.⁸²

The quantitative data gathered in the union catalogue and *clavis* will, furthermore, invite the investigation of chronologies and canonisation processes, thus revisiting what has been observed on a much smaller and less systematic scale in the study of particular groups of manuscripts. It will make it possible to determine when a particular translation emerged (earliest dated copy) and until when remained in use (latest dated copy). Scholars of the Arabic Bible believe that communities employed multiple and complementary versions side by side, with no rivalry among them. There does not seem to have ever been a binding canon of translations. This assumption will now be able to be

⁸¹ The URL will be www.biblia-arabica.com/clavis. Biblia Arabica – The Bible in Arabic, is a DFG-DIP funded project, co-directed by Camilla Adang (Tel Aviv University), Meira Polliack (Tel Aviv University), Andreas Kaplony (LMU, Munich) and myself (LMU, Munich), as well as formerly Sabine Schmidtke (now IAS, Princeton). Current members of the team in Munich, involved in the development of the database, are Nathan Gibson, Peter Tarras and Vevian Zaki, and previously also Miriam L. Hjälms.

⁸² The Biblia Arabica team in Munich, together with partners in Tel Aviv and independent collaborators, has been preparing an online *Bibliography of the Arabic Bible: A Classified and Annotated History of Scholarship* (<http://biblia-arabica.com/bibl>). This not only updates the items cited by Graf relating to Christian Arabic translations, but also includes Jewish and Samaritan translations and the post-Qur'anic Muslim reception of the Bible. Each bibliographic item has an entry displaying a full reference, a summary of the content, the manuscripts mentioned, a digital identifier (Uniform Resource Identifier or URI) and links to open-access online versions of the item where available.

tested in a quantitative manner, since it seems that some versions have survived in many more exemplars than others, suggesting perhaps that each community had its preferred and quasi-canonical version.

The union catalogue and associated *clavis* are important for another reason. They will future-proof and make durable collective efforts in research. By making these resources online and open-access, they also become available to scholars in related fields, such as Biblical Studies, Judaic Studies, Islamic and Arabic Studies and the study of Eastern Christianity. This will integrate individual findings into a much larger scholarly context, and thus create new synergies for future research. Finally, the union catalogue and *clavis* will encourage diverse heritage communities beyond the religious and linguistic divides to access the cultural archive of biblical translations into Arabic.

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ISSN 0585-5535

ISBN 978-91-513-0290-4

Distributor: Uppsala University Library,

Box 510, SE-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden

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