III. PHONOLOGY

As noted above in II.1. *Aims of the Study*, the intention here is not to give a systematic presentation of the phonetic features (nor morphological features) occurring in the bowl texts. Instead, the aim is to point out features which are on the one hand peculiar to our texts and, on the other hand, useful as markers with the aid of which the language of these texts may be compared with other relevant dialects of Aramaic.

It is of importance to note, as already mentioned, that due to the fact that our texts are unpointed, many features in the phonology cannot be studied properly.

III.1. NOTES ON THE SPELLING

Spelling tends to be *plene*; *waw* and especially *yod* are commonly used as *matres lectionis*. They probably indicate both long and short vowels, e.g. אסותא 'healing' (N&Sh 3:1); עינא 'eye' (N&Sh 8 III:1); איסקופתיה 'his threshold' (N&Sh 11:9); מידיעם 'thing' (N&Sh 3:3); עים 'with' (N&Sh 13:1); אינון נינטרוניה 'they will guard him' (BOR:9-10). Inconsistencies abound; for instance one frequently finds both כל and כול.[1] A vocal *shwa* is often indicated by *yod* (See below III.4. *Yod as a Counterpart of* shwa).[2]

The bowl texts prefer *'aleph* to indicate the final /ā/, but *he* is also commonly used, e.g. ואיסתרתא 'and female goddesses' (N&Sh 23:2); ונידרא 'and a/the vow' (N&Sh 23:4); מלאכה 'the angel' (N&Sh 23:5); הדין קמיעה 'this amulet' (N&Sh 24:1); לא תברא בימאמה 'not a misfortune by day' (N&Sh 25:8); היפיכה ערעה היפכה שיקא 'reversed is earth, reversed is *šyq'*-demon' (PB 1). This holds true both concerning the fem. sg. (absolute state) ending and the ending of the emphatic state.[3] No apparent significance is to be found in the way the

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[1] Rossell states in his 1953 study: 'There is nothing rigid or unchanging in the rules of orthography.' Rossell 1953: 13.

[2] It must be stressed that we actually know little about the vowel system in the various forms of BJA. Therefore, these remarks must be taken with a certain degree of caution. For the BJA vocal systems, see Boyarin 1978 and the literature reviewed there.

[3] This is further discussed with many examples in IV.8. *Inflection of Nouns* and especially in IV.8.3. *The Inflectional Endings for Nouns and Adjectives*. See also Montgomery 1913: 29; Naveh & Shaked 1985: 31-32; and Rossell 1953: 36.

final '*aleph* and *he* alternate;[4] some texts use *he* more than the majority of the bowls, while others employ '*aleph* as the sole sign of the final /ā/.[5]

Indication of the final /ā/ by '*aleph* is a typical Babylonian feature – as opposed to the Palestinian tradition, which employs *he* both as a sign of the determinate state and as a fem. indicator.[6] In TO, as in BTA, '*aleph* is employed to indicate the final /ā/.[7] As opposed to standard BTA, in Nedarim and Geonic Aramaic, the final /ā/ is often indicated by *he*.[8]

It is a puzzle why *he* commonly appears in this function in the bowl texts as well as in Nedarim and Geonic Aramaic, but it may be argued that the trait is connected with the generally conservative nature typical of these traditions of Aramaic. At least in the case of the bowl texts, it is possible that the scribes used *he* in an attempt to imitate Biblical Aramaic, which often employs *he* as the sign of the final /ā/.[9] Naveh and Shaked have pointed out that the Babylonian magical tradition contains elements borrowed from the Palestinian magical tradition – known especially from the Palestinian amulets.[10] Therefore, we also have to bear in mind the possibility that the use of *he* in the bowl texts may be due to Palestinian influence.

The letter '*aleph* is quite often used to represent /a/ or /ā/ in medial position, especially in the fem. pl. emphatic state endings (i.e. אתא/ה-) and names.[11] Further, the trait is more conspicuous than otherwise in some texts, such as AIT 19, 20, and 27, while in many others it appears only sporadically. The frequent use of '*aleph* as a graphical representation of /a/ or /ā/ in a medial position is one of the traits typical of reliable MSS. of BT.[12] It is noteworthy that the use of '*aleph* in medial position, though attested, is less frequent than in BTA. Note also that Nedarim accords in this respect with standard BTA.[13] In accordance with BTA, and most other JA dialects,

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4   Cf. e.g. סלה (N&Sh 25:12) *versus* סלא (N&Sh 4:3). Discussed further in IV.8.3.

5   See below IV.8 and IV.8.3.

6   Kutscher 1957: 28; 1976: 16.

7   Dalman 1905: 72ff.

8   See Rybak 1980: 114.

9   In Biblical Aramaic, the fem. (absolute state) ending is only sporadically spelled with '*aleph* whereas both '*aleph* and *he* may be employed to indicate the emphatic (determinate) state ending. See Rosenthal 1974: 23; Kutscher 1971c: 103, 105. In the course of this study it will be noted repeatedly that the bowl texts exhibit many conservative isoglosses, held in common with Official Aramaic, notably Biblical Aramaic.

10 See Naveh & Shaked 1993: 17ff., especially 20-22.

11 While a great number of the names are Persian, the treatment of them remains outside the scope of this study.

12 See Kutscher 1962: 173-174. According to Kutscher (1957: 26), the *plene* spelling with '*aleph* in medial position is a quite early phenomenon. He argues that examples are found already at Elephantine. These instances are, however, exceptional and mostly restricted to foreign names. See Muraoka & Porten 1998: 34.

13 See Rybak 1980: 114.

the bowl texts do not employ *'ayin* as a *mater lectionis*,[14] even though there may be some exceptions to this rule in the bowl texts (see below III.2. *Laryngeals and Pharyngeals*).

SOME EXAMPLES:

אסואתא 'healings' (AIT 3:1); בישאתא 'evil' (AIT 7:14); ובדמואתה 'in the forms' (N&Sh 18:1); וקבלאתא 'and charms' (N&Sh 23:3); מאתה 'town' (N&Sh 24:2);[15] בימאמה 'by day' (N&Sh 25:8); ומחאתם ביתא 'and countersealed is the house' (AIT 30:1); למאאדאראפרי בת מאנושי 'to M. daughter of M.' (N&Sh 3:1); קאים 'standing' (ZRL 4);[16] גוריי בר ברזאדוך 'G. son of B.' (N&Sh 15:2). Sometimes *'aleph* apparently represents /e/, e.g. סאלה 'Selah' (AIT 24:6).

III.2. LARYNGEALS AND PHARYNGEALS

As is well known, the laryngeals and pharyngeals became weakened in East Aramaic, with the exception of Syriac, which preserves them better than Mandaic and BJA, at least in the orthography.[17]

In general, it may be pointed out that laryngeals and pharyngeals are surprisingly well preserved in the orthography of the bowl texts, given the common presumption that the bowl texts were written by poorly educated scribes or even by amateurs.[18] Spellings testifying to the weakening in the laryngeals and pharyngeals do occur, but to a lesser degree than one would expect. Only exceptionally do we come across signs of complete confusion. The texts attest plenty of examples where it is uncertain whether a given example shows weakening in the laryngeals or pharyngeals. To give but one example, we may note ועקדה 'and flee' in Go G:7.[19] Since we have a parallel ויקדה in line 12, one could argue that in the former case

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[14]   For BTA, see Morag 1987: 44.

[15]   The word is written מתא in N&Sh 2:5; 9:13 and Ellis 3:6. Both מאתא and מתא are listed in Jastrow 1903: 859.

[16]   The reading is evident according to a facsimile. Further examples of the fem. pl. spelt אתא/ה- are given in IV.8.3. *The Inflectional Endings for Nouns and Adjectives*. See also Montgomery 1913: 29.

[17]   Kutscher is of the opinion – in the light of the material from Qumran, notably the famous Isaiah Scroll – that signs of the loss of the pharyngeals and laryngeals are evident already in the First Temple Period. See Kutscher 1976: 68 and the literature given there. For the pharyngeals and laryngeals in East Aramaic, see e.g. Greenfield 1978: 38-39; Morag 1987: 46-47; Nöldeke 1875: 57ff., where both Mandaic and BTA are treated; Macuch 1965: 79ff.; Nöldeke 1898: 23-26.

[18]   See e.g. Rossell 1953: 13; Harviainen 1983: 15. See also I.1. *Aramaic Magic Bowls: Preliminary Remarks*.

[19]   The reading is apparent in a facsimile of the text.

'ayin appears as a *mater lectionis*, but as pointed out by Gordon, it is probable that *'ayin* here 'is due to dittographic confusion with the preceding word, וְעִקְרִי.'[20]

Some texts preserve laryngeals and pharyngeals less well than others, which may indicate that they are written by less educated scribes than others. On the other hand, it is possible that (some) differences are to be attributed to local dialectal varieties within Babylonia.[21]

(a) *'aleph* (/'/)

'aleph is mostly retained at the beginning of a syllable, at least in the orthography, e.g. מלאכה 'the angel' (N&Sh 23:5); מבאשין 'corrupt' (N&Sh 6:7).[22] However, when it appears in this position (i.e. the beginning of a syllable) between two vowels, including *shwa mobile*, it often disappears, e.g ביש (< */bə'īš/) 'evil' (N&Sh 3:3).[23] Exceptions occur, e.g. גאוני 'the mighty ones' (N&Sh 13:15). Vacillation between the forms maintaining *'aleph* in this position and those with the elision is common, e.g. ראישא (N&Sh 13:4) *versus* רישיכו (N&Sh 13:15). Historical spellings are well attested. When an initial *'aleph* is preceded by a prefixed element, *'aleph* generally remains in the orthography, e.g. דאימיכי/ון (AIT 17:10); דאית (N&Sh 5:2); לאתר 'to a place' (N&Sh 25:11). However, contrary instances are also found (though seldom), e.g. דית (Go 8:8).[24]

When *'aleph* closes a syllable, it commonly disappears, e.g. יתון (< */ye'tūn/) (N&Sh 25:4);[25] דמתקרי 'who is called' (N&Sh 25:1);[26] מיכליכון 'your food' (N&Sh 13:10); ותיזלון 'and you go' (N&Sh 25:11); יחוד 'seize' (N&Sh 9:5); ניזי 'let us go' (N&Sh 13:15,19);[27] דלא ניחטון 'that they may not sin' (Go 6:3). Occasionally we encounter hypercorrections, such as יאידע (N&Sh 3:5).[28]

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20 See Gordon 1934b: 473.

21 Local varieties in the pronunciation of the laryngeals and pharyngeals are well known from Palestine. See Kutscher 1976: 68ff.

22 Probably a historical spelling of an *af.* participle (**mav'eš*). Cf. Syriac where /'/ in the sequence -C'V- is omitted, but, nevertheless, the letter *alaf* is retained in the orthography, e.g. *mṭ'b* is pronounced [maṭev] (see Nöldeke 1898: 23; Muraoka 1997b: 13). As an exception, we may note e.g. ויתסי 'may he be healed' in BOR:2 and elsewhere for ויתאסי. יתאסי testifies to the assimilation of /'/ to the preceding /t/. See also Harviainen 1981: 7.

23 בְּאִישְׁתָא in Ez. 4:12, but בְּאֵישׁ 'was bad' in Dan. 6:15. See Rosenthal 1974: 13.

24 For דאית. The reading of Gordon (in Go 8:8) is uncertain on the basis of a facsimile, but note דיתליה in N&Sh 2:6. Go 8 shows other signs of weakening in the laryngeals and pharyngeals, too. This may be taken as further proof for the reading דית.

25 Impf. 3rd p. masc. pl. from the root אתי 'to come.'

26 From the root קרא 'to call.'

27 From the root אזל.

28 The letter *'aleph* may also be understood as a mere vowel letter indicating /e/ and not as an attempt to spell correctly.

Some texts omit *'aleph* more often than usual. For example, in N&Sh 2 the omission of *'aleph* is more frequent than normal in the bowl texts.[29] Note the following examples, representing phonetic spellings: דימא 'of the mother' (N&Sh 2:3); דיתליה (N&Sh 2:6);[30] דלרעא 'of the earth' (N&Sh 2:8);[31] דיתתא 'of the woman' (N&Sh 2:9); ית יתתא (N&Sh 2:9).[32] Even here the omission of *'aleph* is not consistent in all positions.[33] It is noteworthy that some of these spellings, such as דימא, accord with the *qere* in Syriac.[34]

All in all, the spelling tradition of the bowl texts concerning *'aleph* is rather conservative, and phonetic spellings are quite rarely met with. Nevertheless, in all probability *'aleph* is retained so well in the orthography only because of the long established JA spelling tradition;[35] the actual phoneme behind the letter *'aleph* was possibly completely lost or, at least, was in the process of weakening.

(b) *he* and *ḥet* (/h/ and /ḥ/)

The graphemes ה and ח are identical in the script of the Aramaic bowl incantations.[36] Based on this, many scholars, such as Montgomery and Gordon, have argued, apparently with good reason, that the phonemes /h/ and /ḥ/ had merged in the dialect of the bowl texts,[37] with the reduction of /ḥ/ to /h/. However, besides the fact that these letters are identical – as is worth noting – we have little evidence showing weakening of these phonemes. Cases in which ה/ח is omitted from the script are relatively few, if compared with BTA. For instance, the common preposition תחות 'under' always appears in the bowl texts with the ה/ח,[38] as opposed to תותי in standard BTA.[39] Accordingly, interchange between ה/ח and א

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[29] For the special features of this bowl, see Naveh & Shaked 1985: 137.

[30] For דאיתליה.

[31] For דלארעא.

[32] For ית איתתא.

[33] Note מלאכה (line 6), מלאכי (8) and מלאכין (9).

[34] Cf. Nöldeke 1898: 23; Muraoka 1997b: 13.

[35] Cf. Greenfield 1978: 37-39.

[36] Yamauchi has argued that the fact that the Aramaic bowl texts make no distinction between *he* and *ḥet* is due to the influence of Mandaic (see Yamauchi 1967: 70). Fulvio Franco maintains that some of the texts published by him preserve the distinction between *he* and *ḥet* (see Franco 1979: 235ff.), but, at least, on the basis of the photographs published by him, I am a little sceptical in this respect. In any case, this is most exceptional.

[37] See Montgomery 1913: 28-30; Gordon 1984: 221.

[38] E.g. N&Sh 5:7; 13 13; AIT 16:6, 7, and several instances in a partly duplicate Ge C, e.g. תחות כורסיה דאלהא 'under the throne (of his) of God' (Ge C:6). Geller reads כורסיא, but *he* is equally possible, at least on the basis of the facsimile. Besides, in AIT 16:7, we have תחות כורסיה דאלהא, too. If the correct reading is אי-, the ending אי- could stand for יה-, with the reduction of /h/ (*kursəyeh > kursəye?*).

[39] Cf. Epstein 1960: 136.

(or ע) is infrequently attested.[40] Note the interchange between the roots אפך and הפך exemplified below.[41] Some of the forms which have been argued as showing interchange between /h/ and /'/, such as הלין 'these' *versus* אילין, are instead to be understood as morphological by-forms, at least in our texts.[42] As in the case of *'aleph*, the fact that ה/ח is mostly retained in the spelling apparently testifies to the conservative scribal practice – typical of Jewish texts in general. Therefore, the frequent survival of ה/ח in the spelling possibly proves nothing of the actual status of the phonemes /h/ and /ḥ/ in the Aramaic reflected in the bowl texts. In contrast, the fact that the graphemes *he* and *ḥet* are not differentiated probably implies, as suggested, that /ḥ/ was reduced to /h/. We should, however, bear in mind that the fact that these two letters are indistinguishable in the script does not automatically imply that the corresponding phonemes had merged: the letters *waw* and *yod* are likewise practically identical, but it is not to be argued that /w/ and /y/ had merged. On the basis of a few instances, we may argue that the original /h/ was in the process of weakening to /'/ or to total reduction.

Spelling errors in general are somewhat more frequent in the texts inscribed in clumsy handwriting, a fact which may indicate that they were written by less educated scribes or amateurs,[43] but signs of weakening are also found in the texts which are inscribed with a good hand.

EXAMPLES OF WEAKENING IN /h/ OR /ḥ/:[44]

אפיכה ארעה 'overturned is the earth' (Go 1:1);[45] אדין 'this;'[46] לי (N&Sh 13:16),[47] ויצוחת עלי 'and she cried at him' (N&Sh 12b:8);[48] לוהן (Go G:9);[49]

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[40] The possible interchange between *he* and *ḥet* cannot be observed due to the fact that no proper distinction is made between these letters. Some scholars have been more willing to find differences between the graphemes under discussion. For instance, Epstein sometimes corrects Montgomery's readings – in which these letters are apparently distinguished with the aid of etymology – in this respect. I have checked the texts published by Montgomery, and I believe that we have no consistent distinction between *he* and *ḥet* in these texts.

[41] Mandaic and BTA have *'pk* as opposed to Syriac and GA *hpk*. See Macuch 1965: 82. Some other instances of interchange between *he* and *'aleph* occur, e.g. וטומאהתא 'and impure' in Ge C:7 *versus* וטומהתתא in a duplicate AIT 16:8, as corrected by Geller (1980: 56).

[42] Cf. Rossell 1953: 17.

[43] Cf. for instance AIT 19.

[44] Note that the fact that the letters *he* and *ḥet* are practically indistinguishable in the script apparently conceals many examples of interchange between /h/ and /ḥ/.

[45] אפיכה appears for the standard הפיכה. Parallels to אפיכה are possible in two bowls from the Iraq Museum, published in part by Gordon (1941: 348, nos. 9726 and 9731).

[46] The form is possible in a bowl (no. 9736) from the Iraq Museum, published in part by Gordon. See Gordon 1941: 350. I cannot check the reading.

[47] For ליה.

[48] עלי may occur for עליה. See IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*.

[49] For להון. Was the actual pronunciation [lōn] ?

לאתם 'to there' (Go A:2);[50] ובתרון דיכסון ובתרון דיכסון דיכסון ובתרון ובתרון דיכסון 'and after them who cover and after them who cover and after them who cover.' (MB I:14).[51]

(c) 'ayin (/ʿ/)

According to Rossell, /ʿ/ is 'extremely weak' in the bowl texts,[52] whereas Montgomery states: 'In general gutturals are preserved, though ה and ח are no longer distinguished,'[53] apparently implying that the laryngeals and pharyngeals are generally preserved in the *script*.

In any case, Rossell overstates the case: signs of weakening in /ʿ/ are attested, but – in comparison with BTA – they are infrequent.[54] Moreover, texts showing total confusion in the use of 'ayin, as is the case in Mandaic,[55] are so far unattested.[56] It should be noted that, for instance על, in contrast with standard BTA, is regularly maintained in the script and not changed to א- (see also below IV.9).[57] The only exception known to me is in the combination אלמא 'why?' which appears several times in N&Sh 21, e.g. פתחת פומך אלמא 'why do you open

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50   For להתם. See Gordon 1934a: 323. The reading and interpretation given by Gordon is possible according to the facsimile.

51   בתרון appears for בתרהון. בותרון appears in line 18, but it may be a spelling error for בתרון. See below III.6 *Waw as a Counterpart of* */ā/ (qameṣ) and IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*.

52   Rossell 1953: 17.

53   Montgomery 1913: 30.

54   Cf. Epstein 1960: 17-18; Kutscher 1971a: c. 279-280; Nöldeke 1875: 57-58, especially p. 58, n. 2.

55   The only guttural extant in Mandaic is the unvoiced laryngeal /h/. The letters which originally designated laryngeals and pharyngeals are used as vowel letters without regard to etymology. Macuch 1965: 79. For laryngeals and pharyngeals in Mandaic, see Macuch 1965: 79ff., Nöldeke 1875: 57ff., and (concerning the situation in the Mandaic bowl texts) Yamauchi 1967: 75-76.

56   It should be noted as well that Syriac bowl N&Sh 10 clearly shows more instances of weakening both in /ʿ/ and /ḥ/ than Aramaic bowl texts in general. See discussion below in *Conclusions*.

57   The preposition על is very common in these texts. Some possible cases of interchange between על and -ל are found, as pointed out by Montgomery (1913: 31), but these are disputable. For instance, Montgomery (1913: 158) argues that in the phrase שמיע עליכין, על appears for -ל 'as constantly in these texts.' Note, however, that the preposition על is constantly spelled with 'ayin – and not with א- as in standard BTA – a fact which makes it uncertain whether the preposition על in the idiom שמיע עליכין can be taken as indicative of weakness in /ʿ/. Hunter (1995: 69) reads *w'l dywy w'l ptkry wl w'l lylyt'* in AIT 18:7 instead of Montgomery's original ועל דיוי ועל פתכרי ול ועל ליליתא. I find no reason for such an emendation here, and one may ask whether the corrections in Hunter 1995 are printing errors. Note that על is the regular form in TO, Nedarim, Geonic Aramaic, as well as in Karaitic Aramaic. See Dalman 1905: 229; Tal 1975: 22; Epstein 1960: 132-136; Rybak 1980: 96.

your mouth?' (N&Sh 21:3), for מא על. אלמא 'why?' is known in BTA.[58] Instances of weakening in *ʿayin* are generally those in which it is changed to *ʾaleph* or omitted completely from the script. In addition, we sporadically encounter hypercorrections.

EXAMPLES OF THE WEAKENING OF *ʿayin* (/ʿ/):

קמיא 'amulet' (Go. 7:1);[59] אזיזא 'strong' (N&Sh 13:3);[60] ניבר 'transgress' (AIT 6:11);[61] ניפקא (AIT 6:11);[62] אנקי 'necklace-spirits' (AIT 12:9);[63] צידיה 'his temples' (N&Sh 13:5);[64] זעקי 'blast-demons' (AIT 19:13);[65] ניתברון 'they will pass by' (BOR:8);[66] וסירין (AIT 1:12).[67] Further, the vacillation between מידיעם and מידעם may indicate weakness of *ʿayin* as noted below in IV.7. *Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns*.[68] Provided that the reading is correct, the verbal form אשבעיתי in Go 2:6 testifies to the weakness of *ʿayin*, too, since the ending ת‍י- appears otherwise only with *verba tertiae infirmae* (see below IV.10.1. *Perfect*). Hence, אשבעיתי probably implies the pronunciation [ʾašbēti].[69]

An example of a parasitic *ʿayin*, well attested in BTA, is found in N&Sh 5, where we may read ועד דערדקידהון 'and to their young ones' (N&Sh 5:4).[70] The

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58   See Epstein 1960: 142.

59   קמיא appears for קמיעא.

60   Probably for עזיזא. See, however, Naveh & Shaked 1985: 205, where another explanation is given.

61   For נעבר.

62   For ניפקע. The text at this point is emended by Epstein ניפקא כי ארזא. His translation goes 'qu'il crève comme un cèdre.' See Epstein 1921: 34.

63   For ענקי. Cf. Jastrow 1903: 1096. אנקתא appears in BOR:3. ענקתא appears for instance in N&Sh 19:6.

64   The root is *ṣdʿ* in both JA and Syriac. See Jastrow 1903: 1263, where we have צדעא 'temple;' and Payne Smith 1903: 474, where /ṣeḏʿē/ 'the temples of the head' is listed. See also Naveh & Shaked 1985: 207.

65   If the reading is correct, זעקי is apparently a hypercorrection of זיקי. Cf. AIT 12:8; N&Sh 13:3 (uncertain reading). See also Jastrow 1903: 396. However, the reading is uncertain, and Epstein emends זעקי to שקי (Epstein 1921: 50). On the basis of a photograph of the text, I cannot decide which reading, if any, is correct.

66   For ניתעברון.

67   Read according to the emendation by Epstein: וסירין למימחי 'et regardent pour frapper' (Epstein 1921: 30). The emendation is probable, though, paleographically, the reading of Montgomery (יסירין) is equally possible – at least on the basis of a photograph. No distinction is made between *waw* and *yod* in this text. According to Epstein, סירין is derived from סייר, familiar from BTA and Mandaic (from the root סער) (ibid.).

68   Cf. Syriac /meddem/.

69   Cf. e.g. ואיתיתי 'and I have brought' in AIT 9:7.

70   See Naveh & Shaked 1985: 162.

word דערדק may be compared with other variants of the same word: דרדק and דעדק.[71] The vacillation may be connected with possible weakness of /ˁ/.[72]

As pointed out by Harviainen, it is possible that 'the confusion of laryngeal consonants has called forth various neologisms' of the roots זוח, זוע, זחח, and נזח,[73] e.g. ניזיחון or ניזוחון 'they will depart' in BOR 8 and דתיזיעון in AIT 7:5.[74] However, other explanations may also be given for the appearance of various closely related weak roots with similar, but perhaps not identical, meanings.[75]

CONCLUSIONS[76]

As shown above, the bowl texts yield instances showing weakening in the laryngeals and pharyngeals. However, with the exception of the fact that the letters *he* and *ḥet* are not distinguishable in the script, cases which may be taken as definite proof of weakening are surprisingly rarely found. I refer to examples with interchange or omission of laryngeals or pharyngeals. Further, we have no texts where a scribe interchanged all of the laryngeals and pharyngeals without exception.

While the loss of these phonemes is well attested in BTA, and especially in Mandaic, it may be assumed that *'aleph*, *he/ḥet*, and *'ayin* are so well preserved in the script of our texts due to the fact that the scribes of these texts followed a long established literary tradition, typical of the JA texts in general.[77] Note that in BTA, too, despite plenty of evidence showing weakening of these phonemes in speech, the etymological spelling prevails: in the majority of cases *ḥet* and *'ayin* are preserved in the script, including reliable MSS.[78] Shelomo Morag argues that the Aramaic reflected in BT is literary Babylonian Jewish Aramaic (הארמית הבבלית הכתובה), used among the learned élite in the Babylonian yeshivoth until the end of the 5th century C.E., as opposed to the spoken Babylonian Jewish Aramaic (לשון הדיבור הארמית של יהודי בבל).[79] The language of the élite was clearly more conservative and did not accept all the changes which took place in the spoken

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71   See Naveh & Shaked 1985: 162.

72   Ibid.

73   Harviainen 1981: 4. See also Montgomery 1913: 130, 139.

74   Montgomery here translates 'remove.' One could, perhaps, translate 'may they tremble,' instead. Cf. Naveh & Shaked 1985: 269.

75   The vacillation of closely related weak verbs is a well-attested feature in various Semitic languages. Cf. Moscati 1964: 159-160.

76   General remarks are already made at the beginning of this chapter.

77   On BTA, see e.g. Nöldeke 1875: 57ff.; Morag 1987: 46-48; Kutscher 1971a: cc. 279-280.

78   See e.g. Morag 1987: 46-47. The loss of the laryngeals and pharyngeals is better attested in the Yemenite MSS. than otherwise.

79   See Morag 1987: 47-48 and the literature cited there. Morag suggests that the Yemenite MSS., which show more examples of weakening in these phonemes, may reflect a spoken form of BTA.

language.[80] He assumes that a kind of diglossia prevailed among the Babylonian Jewish élite, who used this literary language alongside the more changed spoken Aramaic. The theory set forth by Morag is very possible, but I am not convinced that we need such a complicated model.[81] In any case, we have to point out here that this 'literary Babylonian Jewish Aramaic' (= BTA) shows more instances of weakening in laryngeals and pharyngeals than our texts, which are approximately contemporary with the Talmudic texts, and which, if any, should reflect a spoken form of BJA.

Therefore, we cannot totally exclude the possibility that the bowl texts reflect a form of BJA which has preserved the laryngeals and pharyngeals better than the neighbouring dialects, even though the bowl texts are from a rather late date.[82] A possibility that the bowl texts represent a conservative dialect with a rural background as opposed to the more changed urban dialect represented by standard BTA is suggested by Harviainen.[83] As already pointed out in passing, it is known from Palestine that the laryngeals and pharyngeals were preserved better in some areas than in others.[84] Therefore, we could argue that the bowl texts imply a similar situation in Babylonia, and it remains a possibility that in those areas of Babylonia from which our texts come, the laryngeals and pharyngeals were still better preserved than in other areas.

However, I am inclined to believe that the question of the laryngeals and pharyngeals must be seen in the light of the general character of these texts: it will be shown in this study that the bowl texts show typically conservative linguistic elements alongside features of standard BTA. This is most likely explained by assuming that the conservative elements are in imitation of one of the conservative literary Aramaic models.[85] Similar but not identical models are reflected, for instance, in the Aramaic of TO and in the official documents preserved in BT. Thus, it is more likely also as regards the laryngeals and pharyngeals that they are preserved in the script rather well, since the scribes were trying to maintain them in accordance with a literary model known to them. By contrast, instances of weakening reflect the

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[80] Morag 1987: 47-48.

[81] It may be too far-reaching a conclusion to posit a diglossia situation. Would it not be easier to assume that due to the long established literary tradition, the learned élite was (partly) capable of maintaining (at least in the orthography) those phonemes which were disappearing in actual speech.

[82] For the dating of these texts, see I.1. *Aramaic Magic Bowls: Preliminary Remarks.* Note that already in the second century C.E. part of the Jewish population in Babylonia was unable to pronounce /ḥ/ properly (Morag 1987: 46).

[83] See Harviainen 1983: 110-113. See also I.2.4. *The Language of the Aramaic Magic Bowls* and V. *Conclusions.*

[84] As far as I know, no evidence has been shown for a parallel situation in Babylonia.

[85] Cf. below V. *Conclusions.*

actual vernacular in which these phonemes had more or less disappeared or, at least, were in the process of disappearing.

It may be pointed out here, in passing, that the Syriac magic bowl texts show surprisingly frequent instances of weakening in the laryngeals and pharyngeals.[86] One should bear in mind that, as is well known, Syriac in general preserves these phonemes better than other East Aramaic dialects.[87] Montgomery, followed by Hamilton, has argued that cases of weakening in these phonemes are due to Mandaic influence.[88] It may be so, at least in some of the cases, since we know for certain that bowl texts were transmitted from one religious group to another, and from script to script.[89] On the other hand, these instances may be used as further evidence suggesting that in actual fact the laryngeals and pharyngeals were lost in all East Aramaic dialects. For some reason these texts, written in various forms of the Syriac script,[90] do not cling to literary Syriac spelling conventions,[91] but manifest, it seems, features of the actual vernacular. By contrast, our Jewish texts are more conservative in this respect. As in the case of BJA texts, discussed above, we should bear in mind the possibility that the differences between the Syriac bowl texts and 'literary' Syriac reflect dialectal differences between various areas.[92]

Most interestingly, a puzzling Syriac bowl, published by Naveh and Shaked (N&Sh 10),[93] also shows among several instances of weakening of laryngeals and pharyngeals a BJA demonstrative /hādēn/ spelled *ḥdyn*.[94] Does this indicate a confusion of /h/ and /ḥ/ in BJA, in Syriac, or in both?

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[86] Some examples: *'thpyk* in Hamilton 8:1 (for *'thpyk*); *šlḥybt'* in Hamilton 9:9, 10:6 (for *šlḥybt'*); note the interchange between *ḥdr* and *hdr* (see Hamilton 9:9, 10:6; N&Sh 1:1:11); *mhymn'* in Hamilton 2:6 (for *mhymn'*); *d'mm* in N&Sh 10:4 (for *d'mm'*); *w'tqṭlw* in N&Sh 10:12 (for *w'tqṭlw*); *w'tbṭlw* in N&Sh 10:12 (for *w'tbṭlw*); *'dyh* 'his hand' in N&Sh 10:12 (for *'ydyh*); *šb'* in N&Sh 1:9 (for *šb'*); *tybdwn* in N&Sh 10:6 (for *ty'bdwn*); *nywn* in N&Sh 10:10 (for *nyhwn*); *ḥd'* in N&Sh 10:7, 11, 13 (for *hd'*); *d'yt* in N&Sh 10:6, 10 (for *d'yt*). See also Hamilton 1971: 51ff.; Naveh & Shaked 1985: 31; Montgomery 1913: 35-36.

[87] See, for instance, Greenfield 1978: 39.

[88] Montgomery 1913: 35-36; Hamilton 1971: 52-53.

[89] As discussed in I. *Introduction*.

[90] See Montgomery 1913: 32-35; Naveh & Shaked 1985: 31; Hamilton 1971: 38ff.

[91] Note, for example, the following instances, where the Syriac bowl texts as opposed to literary Syriac, employ *'alaph* to indicate /ā/ or /a/: *n'sklwn* (Hamilton 1:15), *y'twh* (Hamilton 1:6); *wbym'm'* (Hamilton 1:13); *w'šlm't'* (Hamilton 14:7). These may, of course, indicate that the texts may be based on BJA or Mandaic originals. See above I.2.4.1. *'Koiné' Features*.

[92] E.g. between the Edessan type of Syriac and a more southern type of Syriac.

[93] N&Sh 10 is of special interest, for it frequently shows instances of weakening in the laryngeals and pharyngeals. This bowl is also discussed above in I.2.4.1. *'Koiné' Features*.

[94] Line 13. It is noteworthy that *ḥdyn* appears in N&Sh 10 as a fem. form. See IV.4. *Demonstrative Pronouns* and I.2.4.1. *'Koiné' Features*.

III.3. WORD-FINAL CONSONANTS

In standard BTA, the word-final consonants /b/, /d/, /m/, /n/, /l/, and /r/ tend to disappear, e.g. תו for תוב; אזא for אזל; לכו for לכון; תכתבו for תכתבון.[95] By contrast, the final consonants, especially the final /n/, are often preserved in Nedarim and in Geonic Aramaic.[96] The same is true of other Aramaic dialects, including TO and TJ.

In the verbal forms, this trait is especially prominent in certain roots, such as אזל 'to go,' אמר 'to say,' שקל 'to take;' and עבד 'to do, to make.'[97] According to Daniel Boyarin, the loss of these 'final continuants' in certain verbs is most commonly attested in 'the late or Geonic Aramaic,'[98] somewhat less common in standard BTA and rare in 'the special (archaic) dialect of certain tractates.'[99] The loss of final consonants in these verbal roots is explained by Boyarin as follows: in certain morpho-syntactic conditions the above-mentioned consonants were assimilated to the liquids of particular affixes or enclitic prepositions.[100] The most important conditioning factor was the preposition *l*- used enclitically, e.g. *pršnlhw* 'we have explained them,' to which the final consonant was assimilated.[101] Later — when the length of a consonant was no longer phonemic in BJA — the assimilated consonant was re-analyzed as part of the affix, not that of the verbal root; and, ultimately, the phenomenon extended beyond its original environments by analogy.[102] The proposed development of these forms may be exemplified by the following instance: /ʼimar/ 'I will say' > /*ʼimarlik/ 'I will say to you' > /ʼimalik/ >

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95   See Kutscher 1971a: cc. 279-280; Rybak 1980: 86-90, 92-95. An interesting parallel occurs in many modern North Arabian (Arabic) dialects which exhibit a tendency to elide *r, l, m, n,* and *t* in final position. See e.g. Palva 1980: 135. A similar tendency may have been present in the Ancient West Arabian Tayyi' dialects. See Rabin 1951: 194.

96   Kutscher 1971a: cc. 279-280; Rybak 1980: 86-90, 92-95.

97   E.g. perfect 3rd p. sg. אזא (< אזל*); imperfect 1st p. sg. איזי and the sg. imperative אז; and the 1st p. pl. imperfect ניבי (< נעבד*). See Epstein 1960: 57ff.; Boyarin 1976b: 103-104; Kutscher 1971a: cc. 279-280.

98   Even though the plosives /b/ and /d/ are not continuants, Boyarin argues, with good reason, that they 'were realized as continuants post-vocalically.' Boyarin 1976b: 103, n. 2. Note that according to Kutscher and Rybak, cited above, these final consonants are in general better preserved in Geonic Aramaic than in standard BTA.

99   Boyarin 1976b: 103. By 'certain tractates' Boyarin apparently refers to Nedarim and its 'sisters,' e.g. Nazir.

100   Cf. e.g. אזינא 'I am going' for אזילנא. See Boyarin 1976b: 104. אזינא appears in the bowl texts, too. See below. Note also Modern Mandaic /emalla/ 'I said to her.' See Boyarin 1976b: 106.

101   Boyarin 1976b: 104ff. Cf. Syriac /nettel/ which may be argued as coming from /netten l-/. See Brockelmann 1962: 87.

102   Boyarin 1976b: 104ff.

/'ima/ 'I will say.'[103] The development of non-verbal forms, such as תו (for תוב),
is not dealt with in Boyarin's article.[104]

The word-final consonants are generally preserved in the bowl texts. However,
contrary examples are also found, especially as regards /n/, which is omitted far
more often than the other consonants. Examples of omission of these consonants
are found both in nominal and in verbal forms, and they will be noted in the course
of this study.[105] In addition, note the following examples discussed below:

(a) /b/
The opening particle תוב 'again,' which appears frequently in the bowl texts (e.g.
תוב אסרנא 'again, I charm' in AIT 4:4; תוב הדין אאאא 'again, this is?' in
N&Sh 4:1),[106] is generally written with the final *bet*; only sporadically תו, e.g. AB
F:1, Ge D:12 (see also IV.9). In standard BTA, תו is the regular form, whereas
תוב appears in most other dialects, including TO and the variant readings of
Nedarim.[107] תוב is very common in Geonic Aramaic, too.[108] In addition to תו, no
instances showing elision of the final /b/ occur in our texts.[109]

(b) The final /d/ is maintained in the script.

(c) /m/
The final /m/ is maintained in the script as exemplified by the following instances:
The common pronoun מיד(י)(עם) '(some)thing' is always written with the final ם-
(e.g. וכל מידיעם דביש 'and every evil thing' in N&Sh 3:2), as opposed to מידי
in standard BTA (see below IV.7. *Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns*).[110]

Note קאים in ZRL 4 as against standard BTA קאי.[111] קאים is standard in
TO, and the final *mem* is also generally preserved in Nedarim and Geonic Ara-
maic.[112]

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[103]   For details, see Boyarin 1976b: 104ff., especially p. 105.

[104]   In the case of תוב, /w/ is apparently assimilated to the preceding /ū/; /b/ was apparently
        pronounced as a voiced bilabial continuant [w] in BJA, as is probable in the light of the fact
        that אבד may be spelled אואד or אווד. See Malone 1973: 161; Kutscher 1971a: c. 280.

[105]   For instance, the omission of the final /n/ will be noted e.g. in IV.8. *Inflection of Nouns*,
        IV.10.2. *Imperfect*, and IV.10.4. *Participles*.

[106]   Note also e.g. AIT 2:1, 5.

[107]   See Kutscher 1971a: c. 279; Rybak 1980: 93. Mandaic has *twm* (ibid.).

[108]   Rybak 1980: 93.

[109]   Note also the possible variants of תוב, תוף (Go 11:8, 14), תובו (Go G:6) and תבו (Go
        G:11), discussed below in IV.9. *Notes on Prepositions and Adverbs*. The latter two may
        attest to the assimilation of /b/ – probably pronounced [w] – to the preceding /ū/.

[110]   See also Epstein 1960: 19.

[111]   Cf. Morag 1988: 216; Epstein 1960: 90; Kutscher 1971a: c. 280.

(d) /n/

The final /n/ is mostly retained in the orthography, e.g. בין is regular instead of standard BTA בי, which is rare,[113] but also instances indicating its omission are rather commonly met with. Plenty of instances of both the forms with the /n/ preserved and those with it omitted are given and discussed below in IV.8. *Inflection of Nouns*, IV.1. *Independent Personal Pronouns*, IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*, IV.10.1. *Perfect*, IV.10.2. *Imperfect*, and IV.10.4. *Participles*. In BTA, the omission of the final /n/ is especially prominent in pronominal and verbal suffixes.[114] In the bowl texts, instances are found especially in nominal forms (masc. pl. ending י- instead of ין-). Note, however, that it is often problematic whether a pl. form ending in י- should be understood as a pl. noun (or adjective) in the absolute state, with the elision of the final /n/, or in the emphatic state, with the ending -ē. Instead, the omission is infrequent in pronominal and verbal endings. Below follow some instances showing (1) omission and (2) preservation of the final /n/. As noted, the instances with the final *nun* preserved are far more common.

(1) בליביכו 'against your hearts' (N&Sh 13:14);[115] ולא תידחלי מצוח 'and do not be afraid to shout' (N&Sh 7:6);[116] הפיכי כוכבי ומזלי 'overturned are the stars and the planets' (N&Sh 2:3).[117]

(2) ידמכון 'may they lie' (N&Sh 3:2); ככבין 'stars' (AIT 4:4);[118] אתון 'you' (AIT 4:7);[119] מלאכין קדישין וחסידין 'holy and pious angels' (N&Sh 27:5).

(e) /l/

The final /l/ is almost always preserved in the script. The best example of its elision is ניזי 'let us go' (N&Sh 13:15,19).[120] ניזי may be compared with the corresponding 3rd p. masc. sg. form ניזיל in AIT 6:11.

Note also אזינא 'I go' (AIT 6:6), which apparently testifies to the same phenomenon.[121] Note, however, that in the same text we have an imperfect form with the final *lamed*, i.e. ניזיל (AIT 6:11).

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112 Rybak 1980: 89.

113 E.g. בין ידענא שמה בין דלא ידענא שמה 'whether I know his name or not' (N&Sh 5:4). For BTA, see Kutscher 1971a: c. 281. See also IV.9. *Notes on Prepositions and Adverbs*.

114 Kutscher 1971a: c. 280.

115 כו- instead of כון-.

116 תידחלי instead of תידחלין.

117 הפיכי instead of הפיכין.

118 As emended by Epstein (1921: 33).

119 אתו in standard BTA. See Epstein 1960: 20.

120 Note *wtyzh* in a Syriac bowl N&Sh 1:11, which may be from the same root.

121 Cf. Boyarin 1976b: 104ff. In AIT 9:1 we have, as emended by Epstein, [שקין]לנא as opposed to *šqyn'* in a Syriac parallel (AIT 32:3). See the discussion in Epstein 1921: 37. The Syriac AIT 32 shows many features typical of BTA. See Montgomery 1913: 228-229.

(f) /r/

No certain instances of the omission of /r/ are known to me in the bowl texts. To give but one example, the verb אמר appears with the final *reš* in our texts (e.g. אמר 'he said' in N&Sh 21:3) as opposed to standard BTA, which has אמא.[122]

CONCLUSIONS

The fact that the bowl texts generally preserve the word-final consonants /b/, /d/, /m/, /n/, /l/, and /r/ links these texts with the more conservative dialects – such as TO and Nedarim – as opposed to standard BTA. This is in accordance with the general conservative character typical of the bowl texts. Note, however, that instances showing omission are also found, a fact which may suggest that the forms with omission of the final consonants reflect features of the actual vernacular. At least one text, N&Sh 13, deviates from the majority and shows more instances of the omission than is regular in our texts.[123]

III.4. *YOD* AND *WAW* AS COUNTERPARTS OF *SHWA*

There are no words in the magic bowls accompanied by vowel-signs. In any case, bowl texts can be used to illuminate some points in the development of the BJA vowel system. The points are (a) the vocal *shwa* in BJA; (b) vowels in the final position; (c) the development of */ā/.

In our texts, the letter *yod* appears quite often in a place where – on the basis of vocalized texts and reading traditions – one would expect a vocal *shwa* (*shwa mobile*) to occur.[124] Montgomery pointed out: 'As in the Mandaic orthography the *šewā* is frequently designated by ', a circumstance which throws light upon the minor vocalizations.'[125] In this he is followed by several scholars, notably Rossell,[126] Naveh and Shaked,[127] and Harviainen.[128] The letter *waw* is exceptionally employed as a counterpart of the expected *shwa*, too. It should be emphasized,

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Epstein concludes that it is of Jewish origin. See Epstein 1922: 41ff. Hence, we could argue that *šqyn'* in AIT 32 testifies to JA influence, too.

[122] Cf. Kutscher 1971a: c. 280.

[123] Note the following examples: ניזי 'let us go' (lines 15,19); בליביכו 'against your hearts' (14); לקרניהו (16); להו (16). Yet in this text, too, the final consonants under discussion are mostly preserved.

[124] I refer especially to 'Classical Aramaic,' i.e. Biblical Aramaic, TO/TJ, and Syriac. Cf. Bar-Asher 1988: 39ff.

[125] Montgomery 1913: 30.

[126] Rossell 1953: 14, 20. He states, 'As in Mandaic, šewa is frequently designated by '.' (Rossell 1953: 20).

[127] Naveh & Shaked 1985: 32. They state, 'The *shwa* was sometimes written with a *yod*.'

[128] Harviainen 1981: 4, 23.

however, that in most cases an expected *shwa* remains unmarked by *yod* or by any other letter.

SOME EXAMPLES FOLLOW:

(a) *yod*

ויברתה 'and her daughter' (N&Sh 2:4); וינשי 'and women' (N&Sh 2:4); בישום 'in the name' (N&Sh 2:6);[129] ולא תילוט 'that she may not curse' (N&Sh 2:9);[130] פירישו 'they have explained' (N&Sh 5:4,5);[131] כיפיתון 'you are roped' (N&Sh 5:7);[132] ליכי (N&Sh 6:3; AIT 7:9);[133] דתישתקון 'that you may silence' (N&Sh 6:9);[134] ומידחלא 'and who frightens' (N&Sh 7:8);[135] ולפיתכרי 'and idol-spirits' (AIT 6:1);[136] ומין אימיהון 'and from their mother' (AIT 3:3);[138] דלא תיחבלון... ולא תישנון 'that you should not injure... nor bewilder' (AIT 7:16);[139] ניקיטין 'seized' (N&Sh 23:1); וירדפו 'they chased' (N&Sh 12b:9);[140] כיתניני 'like snakes' (N&Sh 13:11);[141] כיכלבי 'like dogs' (N&Sh 13:10); לא ידיעיתון 'you do not know' (N&Sh 13:17);[142]

עשרא מלאכיהון דאיתו 'ten of their angels who came' (N&Sh 13:21);[143] ליהו/ין (Go 2:1);[144] ניחת 'it descended' (PB 4).[145]

(b) *waw*

נירדופינהו 'let us chase them' (N&Sh 13:19); תיפרוסינון 'she shall sprinkle them' (AIT 28:4).

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[129] Or should we read בושום ? Cf. בְּחוּטְרָא, which is pronounced [būḥuṭro] in the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA. See Morag 1988: 92.

[130] 3rd p. fem. sg. imperfect of the root לוט.

[131] A *pe.* perfect, 3rd p. masc. pl. of the root פרש. Cf. Jastrow 1903: 1242-1243.

[132] A pl. passive participle of the root כפת + the enclitic personal pronoun 2nd p. pl.

[133] For לכי.

[134] A *pa.* imperfect of the root שתק. Cf. Jastrow 1903: 1640.

[135] A *pa.* participle of the root דחל.

[136] פתכרא e.g. in N&Sh 12:9; 13:7; 23:1. Cf. פָּתְכְרָא in Jastrow 1903: 1254.

[137] A pl. participle of the root זוז. Epstein (1921: 45) translates 'ils parent.'

[138] מין אבוהון ומין אימיהון 'from their father and from their mother' (AIT 3:3).

[139] Both are apparently *pa.* imperfect forms. See also Montgomery 1913: 153.

[140] Cf. ורדפו in a parallel 12a: 6.

[141] כי for -כ is well attested in BTA.

[142] Cf. e.g. עָבְדִיתוּן listed in Epstein 1960: 41.

[143] In the context איתו woud not make any sense as an *af.* form. איתו appears later in the same line, too. See also Naveh & Shaked 1985: 214.

[144] For להין/להון.

[145] The interpretation of the form is uncertain, but it may be 3rd p. masc. sg. perfect from the root נחת. Cf. נְחֵית/נְחַת in Jastrow 1903: 897.

DISCUSSION

The use of *yod* and *waw* as counterparts of the expected vocal *shwa* is connected with the complicated problem of vowel reduction in Aramaic. As for the dating of the reduction of short vowels in unstressed open syllables, various positions have been taken: some scholars argue that the reduction of /i/, /u/, and /a/ took place in the early Imperial Aramaic (Official Aramaic) period, while others assume that the reduction of short vowels took place much later.[146] For instance, Klaus Beyer asserts that the short vowels were preserved in unstressed open syllables until the middle of the 3rd century C.E.[147] Stephen A. Kaufman, in his important article dealing with the subject, comes to the conclusion that the evidence adduced by Beyer proves only that the total reduction (i.e. reduction of ultra-short vowels to the central vowel or to zero) took place at a late date, i.e. in the 3rd century C.E.; the process itself was gradual and began much earlier, in the Achaemenid period.[148] Similar thoughts on the dating of the reduction have been expressed by Rudolf Macuch, who considers the phenomenon to be of East Aramaic origin.[149]

Some traces of reduction can be seen in the Uruk incantation from the 2nd century B.C.E.[150] It is noteworthy from our point of view that the letter *yod* probably represents *shwa* in the Uruk incantation.[151] Kaufman argues that at this stage of development, i.e. the 2nd century B.C.E., /i/ was already partially reduced in open unstressed syllables, while /u/ and /a/ were at the beginning of the reduction process.[152] He also emphasizes that the situation reflected in the Uruk incantation may actually point back to earlier times: the text may be a copy of an earlier version, and, moreover, religious texts 'tend to be conservative.'[153] In a similar way, evidence from the Greek transcriptions in the New Testament and elsewhere suggest –

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[146] For details, see the review and discussion in Kaufman 1983: 47ff. and the literature given there.

[147] As reviewed in Kaufman 1983: 47-48. See also Beyer 1984: 128ff.

[148] Kaufman 1983: 48ff. In Hebrew, the reduction process of short vowels in open unstressed syllables is generally thought to have begun earlier than the 3rd century C.E. The process is attributed to Aramaic influence on the Hebrew reading traditions (see Harviainen 1986: 166). Harviainen is of the opinion that in Hebrew the 'final blending of vowel qualities in open unstressed syllables took place in Southern Palestine not earlier than the 5th century A.D.' (Harviainen 1986: 169.)

[149] See Macuch 1982: 61ff.

[150] Even though short vowels in unaccented, open syllables are generally retained in the Uruk incantation, 'there is the beginning of the tendency toward elimination.' For instance, *ga-[a]b-ri-e* appears alongside *ga-ba-ri-e*. Gordon 1939: 111. See also Kaufman 1983: 48-49.

[151] Kaufman states, 'we must allow for the possibility that *i* regularly indicates *shewa* in this text.' Kaufman 1983: 48. Gordon, for his part, argues that 'vocal *šewa* appears as *i*' in the Uruk incantation Gordon 1939: 110-111.

[152] Kaufman 1983: 48.

[153] Ibid.

according to Kaufman – that the reduction took place gradually from a full vowel to the total reduction.[154] He assumes that the reduction of /i/ probably preceded that of /a/.[155] During the first centuries C.E., various Aramaic dialects displayed different kind of development trends in the treatment of ultra-short vowels which originated in the reduction process of the original full vowels; for instance in Syriac 'all ultra-short vowels reduced to zero,' while in some others the situation was much more complex.[156]

Forms parallel to our examples with *yod* and *waw* as counterparts of the expected *shwa* are found in various Aramaic dialects of the Middle and Late Aramaic periods. Forms with ו in place of the *shwa* of the Tiberian tradition are also found in Babylonian Hebrew and in Hebrew documents from Qumran, e.g. יכתובו.[157]

As noted above, it is possible that already in the Uruk incantation, *yod* is used to designate vocal *shwa*. A few instances of the employment of *yod* and *waw* in this function are known to me in the orthography of TO and TJ, e.g. יקטולינון; יוכילינא.[158] Note, however, that in the *vocalization* of TO – which apparently reflects a Babylonian tradition – we find examples which are in keeping with BJA, including our texts. For instance, reduced vowels are avoided after laryngeals and pharyngeals, e.g. /ʼināš/.[159]

In the Late Aramaic period, one finds forms relating to those of our texts in various dialects. In BJA, we find instances of *yod* as the reflex of *shwa* in *pa.* imperfect prefixes, e.g. ארמלתא לא תירבֵּי כלבא; these are attested, for instance, in the Geniza MSS. of BT and Geonic works (see below IV.10.2. *Imperfect*).[160] Some MSS., such as MS. Hamburg, sporadically use *yod* to represent the expected *shwa* in the participle prefixes.[161] The Geonic work *Halakhot Pesuqot* commonly employs *yod* in this function both in *pa.* imperfect prefixes and sometimes in *pa.*

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[154] Kaufman 1983: 49. Further evidence for the conclusion of the process in the 3rd century is adduced by Kaufman on pp. 51ff.

[155] Kaufman 1983: 50, 55.

[156] Kaufman 1983: 55.

[157] See Yeivin 1972: 256ff.; Qimron 1978: 83, 90. Examples with full vowels in place of Tiberian *shwa*s are also familiar from some Palestinian punctuations of Hebrew texts. Harviainen 1986: 169.

[158] Cited in Cook 1986: 116. Cf. תיפרוסינון cited in the examples above. In the former example, *waw* (-טול-) appears as a counterpart of the expected *shwa*, while in the latter *yod* (-כיל-) occurs with the same function.

[159] See Boyarin 1978: 146. Cf. אינשא which commonly appears in the bowl texts (e.g. N&Sh 6:6). Note that in /ʼināš/, *qameṣ* is given in its etymological form, /ā/. I am not, of course, claiming that the reflect of *qameṣ* in BJA was /ā/. I am just not willing to take the question into account here. See below III.6. *Waw as a counterpart of* */ā/ (qameṣ).

[160] See Morag 1973a: 64.

[161] Ibid.

participle prefixes, too (see also IV.10.4. *Participles*).[162] According to Morag, *yod* is the rule in imperfect prefixes with regular verbs, but appears less commonly with weak verbs.[163]

Importantly, the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA has the vowel *i* in the 3rd p. masc. sg. and pl. imperfect form irrespective of whether *yod* is in the *ketiv* or not (i.e. -לי/-ני or ל-/נ-). In other persons, *shwa* is pronounced as an ultra-short [a], the regular counterpart of *shwa* in the Yemenite reading tradition.[164] By contrast, our texts show examples where *yod* apparently stands for *shwa* in other persons than the 3rd p. masc., of which we have no certain instance (see the examples above). Note that in the prefixes of participles, *i* is unattested in the Yemenite tradition,[165] as opposed to the spellings of the type מיזייחין (AIT 13:7) and מישבקין (Go 5:1) in our texts (see also IV.10.4. *Participles*).

Mandaic has a full vowel in many places where other Aramaic dialects have *shwa* (*mobile* or *quiescens*); this is the case, for instance, in *pa.* imperfect prefixes, but in *pa.* participle prefixes only when attached to suffixes.[166]

Sometimes *yod* designates an expected *shwa mobile* in the West Aramaic dialects, too, including, for instance, Targum Neophyti,[167] PsJ,[168] and Palestinian Christian Aramaic.[169] The trait is common in the Palestinian Christian Aramaic.[170]

Shelomo Morag assumes that the use of *yod* as a counterpart of *shwa* in various MSS. and the corresponding pronunciation in the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA does not indicate a general phonetic development, since the vowel *i* is not the basic reflex of *shwa*.[171] Instead, goes the argument, *i* is used in *pa.* prefixes (and elsewhere) as an analogy to the use of this vowel in the corresponding forms in *pe.* and other stems.[172] It may well be so, but in the light of our texts other possibilities exist.

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[162] See Malone 1973: 163 and Morag 1973a: 65. In participle prefixes, the trait is apparently restricted to *verba mediae waw/yod*.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Morag 1988: 93. Note that in this respect the Yemenite reading tradition differs from the tradition of *Halakhot Pesuqot* and from that of the bowl texts. The latter, too, make no distinction between the 3rd p. and other persons.

[165] Ibid.

[166] See Macuch 1965: 127-129; Malone 1973: 163; Harviainen 1981: 23.

[167] Golomb 1985: 19.

[168] Cook 1986: 113ff.

[169] Bar-Asher 1988: 39-40.

[170] Bar-Asher (ibid.) cites plenty of examples of both *yod* and *waw*. In addition, *'aleph* and *he* sometimes occur in the same function. See also Müller-Kessler 1991: 54.

[171] Morag 1988: 93.

[172] Ibid. Note that the Yemenite reading tradition displays many instances with vacillation between an ultra-short vowel and a full vowel, either short or long. Morag 1988: 92.

How are the instances attested in the bowl texts and elsewhere best accounted for? It should be noted that the distribution of *yod* as a counterpart of *shwa* is greater in the bowl texts than in the other BJA traditions, where it is mostly restricted to the verbal forms discussed above. Therefore, there remains the possibility, also pointed out by Morag,[173] that the realization of *shwa* was a vowel of *i* type in BJA or in some of its subdialects.[174] It is indeed possible, as Morag admits, that the realization of *shwa* in the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA (the basic reflex) as an ultra-short [a] may be due to Tiberian influence; Babylonian Hebrew has the same reflex.[175] We may thus conclude that the bowl texts reflect a BA tradition which has a vowel of *i*-colour – either a full vowel or an ultra-short vowel – as a realization of *shwa mobile* in other Aramaic traditions. Further evidence is provided by the fact that *i* is indeed used in BJA as an auxiliary vowel.[176] Note that we cannot either absolutely exclude the possibility that *yod* stands for a vowel (or an ultra-short vowel) of *e* type. As is well known, *shwa* is pronounced as [e] in many Hebrew-Aramaic pronunciation traditions,[177] though the fact that *i* is found both in the Yemenite reading tradition and in Mandaic makes it less likely that *yod* would stand for *e* in the bowl texts. The problem under discussion is also dealt with by Tapani Harviainen. He states:

> we can conclude that §y§ in the prefixes of pa''el indicates a 'full' vowel (i) as in Mandaic. Consequently, we have here one more isogloss which testifies in favour of the larger dispersion of the Mandaic dialect type in the past.'[178]

Harviainen considers this trait of the bowl texts to be one of the so-called 'Eastern Aramaic koiné' features.[179] In actual fact, we have little information which would enable us to say anything certain about the quantity of these vowels. The Yemenite reading tradition yields instances with vacillation between an ultra-short vowel (*shwa mobile*) and a full vowel; in the latter case, both short and long vowels occur.[180] Further, Mandaic as well as Palestinian Christian Aramaic often have a full vowel in places where some other Aramaic traditions, notably Biblical Aramaic, have either *shwa mobile* or *shwa quiescens*.[181] Hence, it is evident that in the Late

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173   See Morag 1973a: 64.

174   Bowl texts are one of the pieces of evidence which may imply such a possibility (ibid.).

175   Morag emphasizes that even though this were the case, we can still argue that in some subdialects of BJA, the pronunciation of *shwa* happened to be equal to the Tiberian tradition (i.e. an ultra-short [a]). See Morag 1988: 92, n. 4. See also Morag 1963: 135ff.

176   Cf. e.g. Boyarin 1978: 146.

177   For details, see Morag 1971: cc. 1137-1138.

178   Harviainen 1981: 23.

179   Ibid. See also I.2.4.1. *'Koiné' Features*.

180   See Morag 1988: 92.

Aramaic period, various Aramaic dialects went through different kinds of develop-
ment trends in the treatment of the ultra-short vowels. The picture reflected in the
bowl texts remains a puzzle for various reasons. First, no consistency may be noted
in the use of *yod*: sometimes it appears as a counterpart of the expected *shwa mobile*
and sometimes not. Some texts, especially N&Sh 2, use it more frequently than
others, but no text does so consistently. Secondly, *yod* sporadically appears as a
counterpart of the expected *shwa quiescens*. Note, for instance, ולביתיהון 'and to
their house' in AIT 12:2 and elsewhere. Further, sometimes *yod* is attested in places
where its significance remains obscure. Compare, for instance, בקומיתי 'in my
frame' (Go 11:1) with בקומתי in AIT 2:1 and elsewhere.[182] While it seems that
yod here indicates a vowel of *a* type, could we argue that this implies that *shwa* was
realized as a vowel of this colour in keeping with the Yemenite reading tradition?
Yet, while no other instances are found where *yod* expresses an expected *a* vowel,
the spelling here is probably an error. This kind of instance reminds us how diffi-
cult it is to draw conclusions on the basis of texts which abound with more or less
corrupt spellings.

   The most – I believe – that we may say with certainty is that the bowl texts
imply that at least some BJA dialects had a vowel of *i* type (a full vowel or a corre-
sponding ultra-short vowel) as the counterpart of a vocal *shwa* in some other
Aramaic traditions. The existence of a vowel of *i* type is also confirmed by
Mandaic. The form איתו (see the examples below) intimate that a similar vowel
was used with laryngeals, too.[183] איתו may be compared with אינש in our texts
and elsewhere; both of them may possibly yield a full vowel in the initial syl-
lable.[184]

   In addition to cases in which *yod* is used as a counterpart of the expected *shwa
mobile*, the texts occasionally yield instances with *yod* indicating an anaptyctic
vowel. The best example is תישילתון (for תישלתון) which appears frequently in
these texts, e.g. in Go 1:3. It may be compared with *ləmiqiryeh* 'to read it' in
Halakhot Pesuqot; the replacement of CVCCəCV by CVCiCCV is well attested
both in BJA and in the vocalization of TO and TJ.[185]

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181   See Macuch 1965: 127ff.; Bar-Asher 1988: 39-40; Müller-Kessler 1991: 54. Our texts as
      well as other BJA texts attest instances where it is apparent that instead of an ultra-short
      vowel we have a full vowel. Instances are common after laryngeals and pharyngeals, e.g.
      איכולי 'eat' (N&Sh 7:8); and אינשה which appears frequently. Cf. Epstein 1960: 68 where,
      for example, אֲכוּל is listed. See also Boyarin 1978: 146.

182   Further instances of this noun both in BJA and Mandaic are given in Epstein 1921: 30.

183   As a counterpart of *ḥaṭaf pataḥ* in some other JA traditions. According to the Hebrew
      transliteration in Hunter 1996: 228, איסירין appears twice in HUN (lines 3 and 4), but
      according to the facsimile, the correct reading is אסירין. While this form is present in the
      Latin transliteration as well, איסירין is probably a printing error.

184   Cf. Cook 1986: 115.

Regarding the use of *waw* in the verbal forms, exemplified above, it is important to bear in mind that – as noted e.g. by Kaufman – the letter *waw* is regularly employed to 'indicate a short *u/o* vowel' in 'post-Biblical' Aramaic as opposed to Biblical Hebrew and Arabic, in which *waw* generally designates only long vowels.[186] The definition 'short' here also includes 'ultra-short.'[187] Hence, it is apparent that the use of *waw* in spellings such as תיפרוסינון in the bowl texts and elsewhere indicate either an unreduced vowel of the type *u/o* or a corresponding ultra-short vowel (cf. the vocalization קֳדָם in Biblical Aramaic).[188] As pointed out by Kaufman, reduced *u* retained its quality better than *a* or *i*.[189] Note that in Babylonian Hebrew, a short *u* is well preserved, too, in comparison with vowels of *i* or *a* colour.[190]

Still one possibility remains: in our texts, the *waw* is mostly used as a counterpart of the expected *waw* in verbal forms with suffixed 3rd p. pl. object pronouns, as exemplified by תיפרוסינון above. By contrast, for instance, imperfect forms without suffixed pronouns show no instances with *waw* as the counterpart of the expected *shwa*, e.g. תיקטלון in AIT 6:10 (further instances are listed below in IV.10.2. *Imperfect*). Therefore, it is possible that the *waw* has remained in the forms with suffixes only because the 3rd p. pl. suffix is not a proper suffix, but an enclitic form, which does not cause the reduction of the short vowel between the 2nd and 3rd radicals of a verb, in contrast with all the other suffixes (see below IV.10.7. *Verbs with Object Suffixes*). The fact that *waw* is not used as a counterpart of *shwa* in the imperfect forms with no suffixed pronouns strengthens this theory.

We have plenty of instances suggesting that *C_ϑ + C_ϑ* resulted in *CiC-* in the Aramaic represented in the bowl texts, e.g. בישמיה 'in his name' (N&Sh 27:3,4; AIT 3:5 and elsewhere);[191] ויבטורא 'and on the mountain' (N&Sh 2:5); בישמך (N&Sh 27:1); ויבמתא 'and in the village' (N&Sh 2:5); דלישמיא 'of the heaven' (N&Sh 2:8); דימיחד (12a:3);[192] דיבהון 'whereby' (AIT 9:6); דינחשה 'of copper' (N&Sh 12a:3); בישלם 'in peace' (N&Sh 13:9). Inconsistencies abound in the spelling, e.g. ובנין ויבנן 'and sons and daughters' (AIT 3:2). The same development, i.e. *C_ϑ + C_ϑ > CiC-*, is evident in BJA in general and in the *vocalization* of TO/TJ, which is generally assumed to represent a Babylonian tradition.[193] In ad-

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[185] See Boyarin 1978: 146.

[186] See Kaufman 1983: 49.

[187] See ibid.

[188] Note the Hebrew idiom בשעולו 'with the hollow of his hand,' in N&Sh 12a:7 where *waw* is used as a counterpart of *ḥatef qameṣ* of the Masoretic tradition, cf. בְּשָׁעֳלוֹ (Is. 40:12).

[189] See Kaufman 1983: 50.

[190] Yeivin 1973: 63.

[191] We may assume here: *$b\vartheta+\check{s}\vartheta meh$* > /bišmeh/.

[192] A *pa.* participle 'unique;' the parallel bowl N&Sh 12b has מאחיד.

dition to the vocalization of TO, the phenomenon may be noted e.g. in the vocalization of *Halakhot Pesuqot*.[194] The vowel is of *i* colour also when preceding ה, as is apparent in the light of the following instances: ויחתימא 'and sealed' (N&Sh 2:5);[195] ויחתימין (N&Sh 2:8).

Such examples as ויבטורא and ויבמתא suggest that – in accordance with the Babylonian tradition – that the vowel is of *i* colour also when preceding a labial consonant,[196] as opposed to the Tiberian vocalization tradition, which has a labial vowel.[197]

BJA, including the bowl texts, are opposed in the treatment of *Cə + Cə by Syriac in which the combination results in *CaC*-.[198] Mandaic probably occupies a position intermediate between BJA and Syriac, with inconsistencies in the orthography: בידבאר alongside באדבאר 'in the desert.'[199]

III.5. WORD-FINAL VOWELS

In the bowl texts, vowels in final position are in the great majority of cases retained in the orthography, as indicated by *matres lectionis*. The presence of the final vowels, at least in the orthography, may be unexpected in the light of the common presumption that these texts were written by poorly educated scribes, who often wrote more or less as they spoke.[200]

As is well known, the vowels in unstressed open syllables at the end of a word have a tendency to disappear in East Aramaic.[201] Syriac mostly preserves the originally long final vowels in spelling (*ketiv*), though their disappearance is evident in speech (*qere*).[202] In Mandaic, the final unstressed vowels were omitted from the script as well.[203] In the orthography used for BJA, the final unstressed vowels are

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[193] See Boyarin 1978: 146. See also Yeivin 1985: 1151-1152.

[194] See e.g. Morag 1988: 46. The same is apparent in the Yemenite reading tradition, where we have, for instance, [bišlamå]. See Morag 1962: 235. Compare בישלם exemplified above.

[195] /wiḥtimā/.

[196] See Yeivin 1985: 1151-1152.

[197] As reflected in the Tiberian vocalization of Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic. See, for instance, Joüon & Muraoka 1991: 348; Rosenthal 1974: 37-38.

[198] Nöldeke 1898: 30.

[199] Cf. Nöldeke 1875: 10-11. Was the vowel something like [æ]?

[200] See above I.1. *Magic bowls: Preliminary remarks* and I.2.4. *The language of the Aramaic magic bowls.*

[201] See Kutscher 1971a: c. 275; Kaufman 1997: 121. Note that this elision concerns the originally long vowels, while the reduction and elision of short vowels in open unstressed syllables is a pan-Aramaic feature. See e.g. Kaufman 1997: 120-121.

[202] See e.g. Kutscher 1971a: c. 276; Nöldeke 1898: 35-36.

[203] Macuch 1965: 132-133.

sometimes preserved and sometimes have disappeared. This is due to the fact that BT yields alongside each other forms from the different phases of Aramaic, e.g. קטל alongside קטלו for the 3rd p. masc. pl. perfect form.[204] In his important review-article on BJA grammar, Kutscher argues repeatedly that in actual fact the situation indicated by the Syriac *qere* as well as by Mandaic was a reality in BJA, too.[205]

SOME INSTANCES WITH THE FINAL UNSTRESSED VOWELS PRESERVED IN THE ORTHOGRAPHY:

מנטרנא ליכי 'they already explained to me' (N&Sh 5:5); כבר פירישו לי 'I guard you' (AIT 7:9); פולי עלוהי 'fall upon him' (N&Sh 7:6); חתמו ואסורו 'seal and bind' (N&Sh 27:5-6); לנא 'to us' (AIT 8:7); איתבלעו שמיא וארעה דיבהון 'whereby heaven and earth are swallowed up ' (AIT 9:6).

SOME EXAMPLES INDICATING OMISSION OF THE FINAL UNSTRESSED VOWELS:

וקביל מומתכון 'and accept your exorcism' (AIT 18:9);[206] שמתא וגזירתא ואחרמתא דאיתנח 'the curses (masc. pl.) (lit. 'names') and the proscription (fem. sg.?) and the ban (fem. sg.?) which (all of them?) fell' (AIT 2:6); פתח 'open' (N&Sh 12a:4);[207] איתזח קצירי 'the sick rose' (N&Sh 13:20).[208]

In addition, we have instances where final ו- appears where it is unexpected. For instance, we attest to a couple of instances of *fem.* pl. imperatives with the ending ו-. While we also find instances where the form with no ending (i.e. masc. sg.) appears both in place of an expected masc. pl. and in place of an expected fem. sg., we may assume that the confusion of endings in the plural is a further indication of the omission of the final vowels in the imperative forms (see below IV.10.3. *Imperatives*).[209]

In sum, in all the relevant parts of the grammar, including such as personal and suffixed pronouns,[210] perfect forms,[211] and imperatives,[212] the final unstressed

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[204] See Kutscher 1962: 167.

[205] See Kutscher 1962: 165ff., where the omission of the final unstressed vowels is discussed in connection with the 3rd p. pl. perfect forms. See also Margolis 1910: 14.

[206] קביל appears in place of the expected קבילו.

[207] For expected פתחי.

[208] For איתזחו.

[209] Note that in Mandaic the sg. form is mostly used for the plural. See Macuch 1965: 274-275.

[210] E.g. אנתי appears as the independent personal pronoun for the 2nd p. sg. fem., as opposed to standard BTA, which has את for both genders. Notably, אנתי appears as the *ketiv* in Syriac, the *qere* being identical with the form of standard BTA. See below IV.1. *Independent Personal Pronouns*.

[211] The form of the 3rd p. masc. pl. is regularly קטלו, with the final *waw*, e.g. ושדרו וחבילו 'they sent and injured' (N&Sh 2:9).

vowels are normally preserved, at least in the orthography. Note that the same text may yield both forms with the omission and those with the final vowel preserved, e.g. ואמרו לה פתח לנא 'and they said to her: open for us' (N&Sh 12a:4);[213] כען שיקלי גיטכי וקבילי מומתיכי ויפרח ויקדח ופקי מן ביתיה 'now, take your divorce and receive your adjuration and fly and flee and get out of her house' (Go G:11-12).[214] Further instances are given and discussed in depth in connection with each relevant chapter on morphology, see especially IV.1. *Independent Personal Pronouns*, IV.8. *Inflection of Nouns*, IV.10.1. *Perfect*; and IV.10.3. *Imperatives*. The fact that these vowels are preserved is in agreement with the generally conservative character typical of the bowl texts. Interestingly, N&Sh 13 shows far more instances of the omission than the bowl texts in general. In this text, the ending of the 3rd p. masc. pl., ו-, is commonly omitted (see below IV.10.1. *Perfect*). N&Sh 13 has other trends in common with standard BTA.[215] The forms showing omission apparently indicate – as is generally assumed – that the final unstressed vowels were omitted in speech, even though the conservative scribal tradition tends to preserve them in the orthography.

III.6. *WAW* AS A COUNTERPART OF */ā/ (*QAMEṢ*)

As is well known, the phonology of BJA is rather imperfectly known,[216] a fact which is due to the lack of a fixed and generally-accepted vocalization tradition and the unreliability of the printed editions of BT.[217] Our knowledge of the vowel system of BJA is based on different oral and written traditions. The most significant of these are: (1) the oral tradition for reading BT preserved among the Jews of Yemen; (2) the *codex unicus* of the Geonic work *Halakhot Pesuqot* which contains a considerable number of vocalized words;[218] (3) the vocalization of the Paris manuscript of *Halakhot Gedolot*;[219] (4) the Babylonian vocalization of TO and TJ; and (5) various vocalized fragments of BT preserved in the Cairo Geniza.[220] Of

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[212] Pl. imperatives equally show forms with the ending ו- and those with no ending; in the 2nd p. fem. sg., the form with the ending י- predominates over the one with no ending.

[213] The final *waw* is preserved in the pl. perfect form אמרו 'they said,' but, by contrast, the fem. ending of the imperative form is omitted in פתח 'open.' Moreover, לנא disagrees with the standard BTA ן-, with the final vowel omitted. See below IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*.

[214] Refers to מזדוא בת אמא. In the facsimile, the reading seems correct.

[215] See V. *Conclusions*.

[216] As a matter of fact the same goes for the morphology as well.

[217] See Morag 1969: 89.

[218] MS. no. 263 of the Sassoon library. For this MS., see e.g. Kutscher 1962: 173-174; Morag 1988: 45-46.

[219] Codex Paris 1402 of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The vocalization of Codex Paris 1402 and that of MS. no. 263 of the Sassoon library is Babylonian. Morag 1969: 89.

importance are also some other MSS., such as the Hamburg Codex,[221] and on the
other hand, Mandaic and Syriac, which can be used in reconstructing the vowel
system of BJA. In contrast, the bowl texts – being unpointed – are of lesser
importance in this respect. They, however, yield some spellings which may be of
significance.

Notably, the letter *waw* is sometimes attested as a counterpart of */ā/,[222] e.g.
וחנק יותיה 'and he strangled him' (N&Sh 12a:5; B 1:5);[223] דיבני אינושה 'of the
sons of man' Go. H:3. Sporadically, we also meet with instances in which *waw*
appears for */a/, e.g. ועול 'came in' (N&Sh 12a:5); דיומא 'of the sea' (AIT
2:3).[224] In most of the cases, *waw* for */a/ is apparent due to the labial phonetic
environment. עול will be discussed below.

Instances of *waw* in place of */ā/ are found both in Aramaic and Hebrew
words (a full list of at least possible instances appears later in this chapter). These
spellings are used as a proof concerning the development of */ā/ and the phonetic
value of its reflex in BJA. In what follows I shall present the different inter-
pretations of the spellings under discussion, analyze the evidence, and then endeav-
our to combine the *waw*s of the bowl texts with what is otherwise known about the
development of */ā/ in BJA.

DISCUSSION

It has been argued that the use of *waw* here indicates rounding of */ā/ in BJA (or at
least in some of its strands).[225] Rossell states in his grammatical sketch:

> The vowel letter ו often indicates qameṣ, showing that the latter was pronounced ô in
> Babylonia, with â > ô.'[226]

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220 The literary and oral traditions enumerated above are given in Boyarin 1978: 141.

221 Cod. Hebr. XIX, Bibl. Hamb. For this MS., see Kutscher 1962: 174-175.

222 See Rossell 1953: 20; Naveh & Shaked 1985: 32. The phenomenon is also noted by several
     other scholars, such as Gordon, Morag, and Harviainen (see below). Boyarin (1978: 152)
     maintains that 'there is, however, extensive use of *w* where historically */ā/ obtained.' Even
     though I admit that there always remains the question how much is a lot, the argument that
     there is 'extensive' use of *waw* is simply not true (see below).

223 יות appears for ית.

224 As emended by Epstein (1921: 31).

225 Note that the rounding of */ā/ discussed in this chapter should, of course, be kept distinct
     from the well-known 'Canaanite shift' in the /ā/ in the *stressed* position (cf. e.g. Segert
     1997: 176). There seems to prevail total chaos in the choice of phonetic a-signs in Aramaic
     studies. Scholars, for instance, use ā and *ā* side by side as a sign for a long a-vowel. Many
     of these inconsistencies are apparently due to 'font problems.' In this study, when treating
     the problem of the rounding of */ā/, /ā/ equals IPA /ɑ:/, and not IPA /a:/. The rounding of
     the latter to /ɔ/ or /o/ would be quite exceptional. The choice of /ā/ is due to purely technical
     reasons.

226 Rossell 1953: 20. See also Naveh & Shaked 1985: 32.

Similar ideas – of course with different formulations – have also been put forward by various scholars, such as Gordon,[227] Morag, Sharvit, Boyarin, and Harviainen (see below).

Morag argues that *waw* representing */ā/ testifies in favour of the hypothesis of a rounded realization of *qameṣ* in Babylonia.[228] He argues that spellings such as לישמוך and הועולם indicate that those who wrote these forms heard *qameṣ* as approximating to the vowel *o* ('*o-*כתנועה הקרובה תנועת').[229] A more precise definition of the BJA *qameṣ* is found in his later studies: *qameṣ*, according to Morag, was realized in BJA – and in Babylonian Hebrew – as a long rounded low back vowel.[230] There was – in his view – both a quantitative and a qualitative contrast between the reflexes of */ā/ and */a/, viz. *qameṣ* and *pataḥ*.[231] The cornerstone of Morag's view is the fact that in the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA, *qameṣ* is a rounded low back vowel.[232] In that tradition, *qameṣ* and *pataḥ* are two different phonemes, although the merger takes place in many verbal and nominal categories.[233] Morag maintains that BJA is in the middle of the process in which the reflex of */ā/ merges with the reflex of */a/; the merger takes place in all positions in East Syriac and in Mandaic.[234] Note, however, that in the Yemenite reading tradition, the opposition between *qameṣ* and *pataḥ* is merely a qualitative one, between a back vowel and a frontal one. Therefore, Morag has to assume that the original quantitative contrast had become neutralized, only the qualitative one remaining.[235]

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[227] See e.g. Gordon 1941: 118, where he states '*waw* often indicates *qameṣ* showing that the latter was pronounced *o* in Babylonia.' Further, in Gordon 1937: 89 he argues that '*waw* sometimes indicates *â*, anticipating the Ashkenazic pronunciation of *â*, as Dr. H. L. Ginsberg has pointed out to me.' The realizations of *qameṣ* in different varieties of the Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew are [o] and [u]. See Morag 1971: c. 1127.

[228] Morag 1963: 102. Two main theories have been presented concerning the realization of the Babylonian *qameṣ*: some scholars, notably Benjamin Klar, Shelomo Morag, and Daniel Boyarin, argue that it was a rounded back vowel, while some others, such as Paul Kahle and Hanokh Yalon, have tried to prove that the Babylonian *qameṣ* was realized – like *pataḥ* – as a front vowel (pronounced [a] or the like). For different theories presented, see Sharvit 1974: 554-555; Boyarin 1978: 147ff. For details, see also Klar 1954: 43, 320-328; Morag 1963: 102-103; Morag 1988: 101; Kahle 1959: 73-75; Yalon 1971: 262-268.

[229] Morag 1963: 102.

[230] See e.g. Morag 1988: 95, 98, 101.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Morag's sign for this phoneme is å in Morag 1988, but /å/ in Morag 1962, a fact evidently resulting from the fonts at his disposal at different times. See Morag 1962: 221; 228; Morag 1988: 95, 101. Further support for the rounded realization of *qameṣ* is provided by some vocalizations used in *Halakhot Pesuqot*. Importantly, צֹ- (*qameṣ* + *waw*) appears in *Halakhot Pesuqot* as a variant of צוֹ- (*pataḥ* + *waw*). For details, see Morag 1988: 101.

[233] Morag 1988: 95ff.; Morag 1962: 221ff.

[234] Morag 1988: 99-101. In Morag's terms: 'å>a המעתק חל.'

Boyarin, for his part, has interpreted the data somewhat differently, and combined the *waw*s of the bowl texts with his overall theory concerning the development of */a/ and */ā/ in BJA. In his extensive paper on the subject, Boyarin has presented an alternative theory to that of Morag.[236] While Morag assumes that the reflexes of the historical phonemes */a/ and */ā/ were still distinct in the Geonic period (as shown by the Yemenite reading tradition and *Halakhot Pesuqot*), in the model assumed by Boyarin, these phonemes were distinct only at the earliest phase of development, which, according to Boyarin, is represented by the 'Babylonian pointing of the Targums,' i.e. that of TO and TJ.[237]

Boyarin posits that there were three stages in the development of BJA vocalism: (a) an archaic system which is represented in the Babylonian vocalization of TO and TJ (b) the later system of the spoken language which is represented in the vocalization of *Halakhot Pesuqot*; (c) 'an archaizing tradition' represented in the Yemenite reading tradition, in *Halakhot Gedolot*, and in other Geonic fragments.[238] As noted, only at the earliest stage of the development ('the Archaic Babylonian Aramaic Vowel System'), were the reflexes of */a/ and */ā/ distinct phonemes, but the historical quantitative opposition had changed into a qualitative one, /ä/ *versus* /å/ in the notations of Boyarin.[239] At the second stage, that of *Halakhot Pesuqot*, these phonemes were unconditionally merged, but the 'new phoneme /a/ had an allophone [ɔ].'[240] This allophone is indicated by the 'Babylonian *qameṣ*,' *miqpaṣ pumma* in the vocalized words of *Halakhot Pesuqot*.[241] In *Halakhot Pesuqot*, the signs *miqpaṣ pumma* (the Babylonan *qameṣ*) and *miftaḥ pumma* (the Babylonan *pataḥ*) are 'never in a position of contrast;' *miqpaṣ pumma* being a 'variable conditioned variant of *miftaḥ pumma*.'[242] Thus, the signs *miqpaṣ pumma* and *miftaḥ pumma* represent allophones of the same phoneme.[243]

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[235] Morag 1962: 228.

[236] For Boyarin's criticism of Morag's theory, see Boyarin 1978: 143-145.

[237] Boyarin 1978: 145.

[238] Ibid.

[239] Boyarin 1978: 145, 147, 153. The signs /ä/ and /å/ apparently correspond to IPA /æ/ and /ɔ/ respectively. If I have understood the matter correctly, there seems to be some incoherence in the signs used by Boyarin: On page 146 he states that 'the opposition between /a/ and /å/ or /ɔ/ was rephonologized,' but on page 153 he posits the opposition /ä/ *versus* /å/. If I understand correctly, the sign /a/ equals /ä/. Though it is sometimes difficult to follow the train of argument in Boyarin's article, the article is, nevertheless, an important attempt to solve the problem concerning the development of */a/ and */ā/ in BJA.

[240] Boyarin 1978: 145, 154. On p. 154, Boyarin presents 'the Later BJA Vowel System' reflected in *Halakhot Pesuqot*.

[241] Boyarin 1978: 145.

[242] Boyarin 1978: 153. The basic conditioning factor for the appearance of *miqpaṣ pumma*, i.e. the Babylonian *qameṣ*, is that 'the following consonant must be a voiced continuant (or θ)' (ibid.). In addition, one finds a secondary factor which increases the frequence of *miqpaṣ*

Despite the unconditioned merger of these two phonemes, the earlier phonemic opposition was still observed, at least among the learned élite when reading the Targum (or the Bible), and during the last stage, represented e.g. by the Yemenite reading tradition, the opposition between the reflexes of */a/ and */ā/, viz. '/a/ and /å/ or /ɔ/ was re-phonologized.'[244] To support his complicated model, Boyarin presents many types of evidence.[245] Among the material adduced in favour of his theory, Boyarin exhibits the peculiar *waw*s of the bowl texts. Boyarin follows Morag in maintaining that the Babylonian *qameṣ* was originally a low back round vowel.[246] According to him, 'the naive spellings of *w* (*waw*) for */ā/' are indicative of this – in addition to other sorts of evidence with similar implications.[247] He states: 'These spellings show that at least some reflexes of */ā/ had merged with *o* or were phonetically close to that vowel.'[248] However, he assumes as well that the bowl texts testify in favour of the merger of the reflexes of the historical phonemes */ā/ and */a/ in Geonic Aramaic.[249] He presents a twofold explanation for the *waw*s in our texts. First, the unlettered scribes identified the /å/ – maintained in the Hebrew and 'Targumic' words – as /o/.[250] Therefore – to Boyarin's mind – the *waw*s thus seem to be common with Hebrew and TO/TJ forms (see below).[251] He states: 'most of the cases of *waw* for *ā are where they would be predicted by my hypothesis, i.e., in words whose form or context proves them Hebrew or Targumic.'[252] Since /å/ had merged with /a/ – goes the idea – in the vernacular, it was most difficult for the unlearned to distinguish /å/ (when reading the Bible or the Targum) from /o/. There remains a problem, as Boyarin admits: *waw* also appears with non-Hebrew and non-Targumic words.[253] The occurrence of *waw* in these words may be explained by the fact that they occur in environments where Babylonian *qameṣ* (*miqpaṣ pumma*) – which represents allophonic [ɔ] – occurs in

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pumma – providing that the basic conditioning factor is present. This factor is a labial phonetic environment. For details, see ibid.

243   Boyarin 1978: 154.

244   Boyarin 1978: 145-146, 155.

245   See Boyarin 1978: 146ff.

246   Boyarin 1978: 147, 150, 152. Or should we say 'mid-low' instead of 'low'? Boyarin refers apparently to 'the Archaic Babylonian Aramaic Vowel System.' Cf. Boyarin 1978: 153.

247   Boyarin 1978: 147ff., especially 151-152 and 155-158.

248   Boyarin 1978: 152.

249   Boyarin's main argument for the merger is the vocalization of *Halakhot Pesuqot*. See Boyarin 1978: 153ff. Furthermore, he presents other kinds of evidence, including the spellings of the bowl texts under study here.

250   Boyarin 1978: 155ff.

251   Boyarin 1978: 155.

252   Ibid.

253   Boyarin 1978: 156-157.

Halakhot Pesuqot.[254] Actually, this explanation may perhaps explain the *waw*s in the Hebrew and 'Targumic' words, too.[255] Thus, *waw* as a counterpart of historical */ā/ represents basically the same phenomenon in the Aramaic magic bowls as *miqpaṣ pumma* in *Halakhot Pesuqot*: the representation of an allophone. In Boyarin's view, the occurrence of *waw* as a counterpart of */ā/ in a minority of the bowls can be explained by the fact that the scribes of the bowls in which the trait is attested, were 'clearly from the less tutored members of Babylonian Jewry.'[256] In his opinion, there is no reason to discern any dialectal difference between the bowls evincing the phenomenon and other bowls.[257]

Among the material adduced in favour of the merger of the reflexes of */ā/ and */a/ in the Geonic period, Boyarin also mentions some Hebrew texts from the Cairo Geniza with the vowel sign *qameṣ* used for an expected /o/.[258] These texts (and a few others) have also been discussed (from this point of view) by other scholars, notably Sharvit and Harviainen. In the Hebrew texts under discussion indiscriminate use of *qameṣ* and *ḥolem* is attested,[259] and they represent Babylonian tradition though they are marked with Tiberian signs.[260] Sharvit argues that these spellings support the possibility that the Babylonian *qameṣ* was realized as a rounded vowel at least in some areas; some other areas, by contrast, maintained, perhaps, a pronunciation of the [a] type.[261]

Harviainen has lately described a Karaite manuscript with a parallel interchange of counterparts of *qameṣ* and *ḥolem*. In this MS., both *qameṣ* and *ḥolem* may be transcribed in Arabic script by either *'alif* or *wāw*. Further, 'in a great number of instances of *ḥolem* spelt with Arabic *'alif*, the vowel sign *qameṣ* has been added to the *'alif* in this transcription.'[262] Harviainen concludes that the writer of the text was unable to keep apart the reflexes of *qameṣ* and *ḥolem*.[263] His conclusion is: 'The realization of *qameṣ* and *ḥolem* had become a rounded vowel, a kind of [o].'[264] Harviainen compares the phenomena in the Karaite MS. with the spellings in our texts and argues that the spellings in the bowl texts indicate 'the *beginning* of the change of long ā in the Aramaic of *some* areas of Mesopotamia.'[265] The change

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254 Boyarin 1978: 157. For the occurrence of *miqpaṣ pumma* in *Halakhot Pesuqot*, see above.
255 Ibid.
256 Boyarin 1978: 152.
257 Ibid.
258 See Boyarin 1978: 151-152, 155ff.
259 See Sharvit 1974: 547; Harviainen 1994: 37.
260 See Sharvit 1974: 553; Harviainen 1994: 37 and the literature given there.
261 See Sharvit 1974: 554-555; Sharvit 1992: 502.
262 See Harviainen 1994: 35-36.
263 Harviainen 1994: 37.
264 Ibid.

of long ā in Aramaic later affected a number of Hebrew reading traditions.[266] Harviainen has also argued that the use of *wāw* for */ā/ is one of the so-called 'koiné' features. Yet the trait is apparently restricted to the BJA bowls (see above I.2.4.1. *'Koiné' Features*).

These are the basic arguments concerning the interpretation of these spellings with *waw* as a counterpart of */ā/. Before drawing conclusions, we should take a closer look at the material at our disposal. The material (of at least possible occurrences where *waw* is used as a counterpart of */ā/) includes both Aramaic and, importantly, Hebrew words.[267] The following instances are known to me in the bowl texts. The list also includes some instances of *waw* for */a/, since these are to be taken into account in discussing the trait under study.[268] The Hebrew words are marked with an asterisk (*):

רוזא 'secret' (AIT 19:8);[269] סופרייא AIT 19:11;[270] דוך (AIT 28:2).[271] סמומית (N&Sh 12a:1; B1/B2:1);[272] מן קדומוהי 'from him' (N&Sh 12a:2; B1/2:2);[273] ועול 'came in' (N&Sh 12a:5; B1/2:5);[274] וחנק יותה 'and he strangled him'

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[265]   Harviainen 1994: 38.

[266]   Ibid.

[267]   My aim is to list below the occurrences known to me where one could argue that *waw* is used as a counterpart of */ā/. The validity of the instances is discussed further below.

[268]   Other instances with *waw* for an expected */a/ are given in Epstein 1922: 50-51.

[269]   Read according to the emendation by Epstein (1921: 49-50), which is, at least, probable on the basis of a photograph of the text. This word, commonly spelt ראזא or רוזא, is commonplace in our texts.

[270]   As emended by Epstein. He translates 'secrétaires.' See Epstein 1921: 50. Cf. Drower & Macuch 1963: 314.

[271]   As corrected by Epstein; he translates 'cette famille,' but the reading is far from certain. See Epstein 1921: 56. If the reading is correct, דוך would occur for דָךְ, familiar from Biblical Aramaic (See IV.4. *Demonstrative Pronouns*).

[272]   סמומית is apparently a proper name. Naveh and Shaked assume that it is 'related to Biblical Hebrew *śmāmīt* (Prov. 30:28).' See Naveh & Shaked 1985: 107. Besides, the assumption that *waw* appears here for */ā/ is based on the fact that in a parallel Palestinian amulet (amulet no. 15 in Naveh & Shaked 1985), one finds the spelling סממית (line 1), and the spelling סממיתא occurs in N&Sh 12b:4. Naveh and Shaked hold that this indicates that the vowel *qameṣ* was pronounced *o*. See Naveh & Shaked 1985: 32, 195.

[273]   Cf. קֶדָם in Biblical Aramaic. See Rosenthal 1974: 11 and elsewhere. מן קדומוהי also appears in a bowl from the Hilprecht Collection, published in part by Gordon (text 'g' published in Gordon 1941: 346-347). Christa Müller-Kessler (1994) has published a photograph of this text (HS 3003), which largely parallels N&Sh 12a. The text also appears in Oelsner 1989: 38-41. Also, some other forms from N&Sh 12a – with *waw* as a counterpart of */ā/ – find parallels in this text (see ibid.).

[274]   Here *waw* occurs in place of */a/, given that the interpretation of this form as 3rd p. sg. masc. is correct. The form is discussed below in the conclusions of this chapter. עול also appears in HS 3003.

(N&Sh 12a:5; B 1:5);[275] צוחת 'she cried' (N&Sh 12a:5; B1/2:5); וקומו 'and they stood up' (N&Sh 12a:6;B1/2:6);[276] *קומך (N&Sh 13:2);[277] קומה 'before her' (N&Sh 13:8); גודרא (N&Sh 13:16);[278] קדומיה 'before her' (N&Sh 3:4); מצוח 'to shout' (N&Sh 7:6); דנון 'this' (N&Sh 25:4);[279] מלאכוא 'the angel' (Go 1:2); *האורץ 'the earth' (Go 1:7); לישמוך 'for your name' (Go 2:1);[280] על זרעוה הודן 'against her seed, her house, and property' (Go 6:1).[281] ועל ביתוה פקינינוה *גוער 'this' (Go 7:1);[282] *הורוחות 'spirits' (Go. 7:3); *הורוח (Go 7:3, 5);[283] 'rebuked' (Go. 7:5);[284] *קודוש 'holy' (Go 7:6); קיניונהון 'their property' (Go 7:7); *הבוחיר בירושולים 'who chooses Jerusalem' (Go 7:10);[285] בסוטוני 'with Satans' (Go. 11:4);[286] וללויתון 'and to Leviathan' (Go 11:9);[287] ובלישון 'on the tongue' (Go 11:10, 12, 16); בחומרי בישותא 'with evil pebble-spirits' (Go 11:12); *אודון 'lord' (Go A:1);[288] *ולעלום 'and for ever' (Go A:4);[289] *בורוך 'blessed' (Hyvernat 5);[290] *צבואות (Go G:9);[291] רוחין בישותא 'evil spirits' (Go. H:2);[292]

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[275] יתהון in line 1. יותיה also occurs in HS 3003.

[276] The scribe of all these texts was evidently the same. See Müller-Kessler 1994: 6.

[277] קומך stands for קָמֶיךָ of the Masoretic text (Ex. 15:7 'those who rebel against you'). See also Naveh & Shaked 1985: 204.

[278] גודרא appears in the following sentence: דגברא מילבר אתא עליכון קנטיואל קנטיואל שמיה סכין גודרא בידיה נקיט לי>כה< 'that a man came against you from the outside, his name is Q. He held a cutting knife in his hand' (N&Sh 13:16). It is probably a participle used as a noun (in the *emphatic state*?), but it remains problematic, and it is uncertain whether it is connected with the problem under discussion here. See also IV.10.4. *Participles*.

[279] דנון could stand for דנן. Naveh and Shaked read דנין. The reading and interpretation are both uncertain. See discussion in IV.4. *Demonstrative Pronouns*.

[280] בישמוך in Go 8:1. According to Gordon, בישמוך appears in AIT 28:1, too. Gordon 1941: 120. Note, however, the discussion below. בישמוך has also been attested in a bowl (line 1) published by Smelik (1987), but since no photograph or facsimile is included, I have not been able to check the reading.

[281] See below IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*. -פ is obscure. Cf. Gordon 1941: 126. In line 3, Gordon reads ומן זרעוה ומן ביתוה פקינינוה and in line 7 ובזרעוה ובביתוה ובקינינה.

[282] Gordon reads אודון in Go A:1, but אידין (or אודין) is also possible, given that it is a variant of this pronoun. Another and more likely possibility is to take it as the Hebrew word אָדוֹן, 'Lord.' See Gordon 1934: 322. הודין (or הודן) occurs in HS 3003, discussed above.

[283] The readings are uncertain.

[284] ניעיר would also be possible, but the context is Hebrew.

[285] ירושלים for ירושולים.

[286] As Gordon (1941: 275) admits, the reading is uncertain.

[287] Cf. Jastrow 1903: 698.

[288] As noted, this may also represent a 'corruption' of the demonstrative pronoun הדין.

[289] The phrase is probably Hebrew, since it occurs frequently in our texts in Hebrew (ולעולם).

[290] As reproduced in Gordon 1934: 331-332. The original article by Henry Hyvernat has not been at my disposal, but according to Gordon (ibid.), the quality of the photographs in it is poor.

[291] The reading is uncertain.

דיבני אינושה 'of the sons of man' (Go H:3);[293] דשמולא 'on the left' (Go H:4);[294] הועולם* 'the world' (Hyvernat 5);[295] עולוך 'on you' (Isbell 70:5);[296] עלמוא 'world' Isbell 69:3;[297] בועותא 'request;'[298] בותרון 'after them' (MB I:18);[299] נורוא 'fire' (Boris 3:5).

First, we should make the following notes on the reading and interpretation of the instances listed above, since quite a large number of these are of uncertain reading or interpretation: מלאכוא in Go 1:7, at least on the basis of a photograph of the text, is hardly legible. Also, האורץ in the same text is most uncertain.[300]

Of major importance is the fact that in several examples we may with equal right read *yod* instead of *waw*, these two letters often being indistinguishable in the script. In actual fact, in several cases it is more accurate to read *yod*: Gordon reads לישמוך, בישמוך, and זרעוה etc. However, we should evidently read in these instances לישמיך, בישמיך, זרעיה etc., respectively (see below IV.3. *Suffixed Pronouns*). The same probably goes for עולוך, which should, perhaps, be read עוליך.Instead of קיניונהון, we should probably read קייניִנהון. The use of a double *yod* to indicate a consonantal *yod* (= /y/) instead of a vocal *yod* (/i/) is well attested in BTA.[301] Though this spelling convention is rarely met with in the bowl texts, it is at least possible here. Further, instead of הודין, as discussed below in IV.4. *Demonstrative Pronouns*, it is possible that the correct reading is with *yod*, הידין.[302]

Two occurrences of the root צוח 'to shout, cry,' the infinitive form מצוח and the 3rd fem. sg. perfect צוחת, do not apparently testify to the phenomenon dealt with here, since *waw* tends to be strong in this verb.[303]

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[292] The readings (with *waw* for */ā/) of Gordon in Go H seem secure on the basis of a facsimile of the text.

[293] דיבני אינושא in line 6; בני אינושה in lines 9 and 11. The spelling אינשה is also attested (line 10).

[294] דסמולא in line 9.

[295] As reproduced in Gordon 1934: 331-332. The original article has not been at my disposal.

[296] The form possibly appears in Jeruzalmi (pp. 140-151 = Isbell 70). I cannot check the reading.

[297] = Jeruzalmi pp. 127-139. I cannot check the reading.

[298] As read by Gordon in a bowl from the British Museum (text 19745 line 1). See Gordon 1941: 339. I cannot check the reading. Compare, however, Boyarin 1978: 152, n. 60.

[299] בותרון for בתרהון. The reading is apparent in a facsimile, but since בתרון appears several times in the same text (line 14), it may be that בותרון is an error for בתרון.

[300] Gordon reads מלא כל האורץ כבודו. Based on a photograph of the text, מלא and כבודו are quite certain, whereas the rest remain uncertain. Especially, the occurrence of *waw* in האורץ is questionable.

[301] The expected form is /qinyānhōn/.

[302] The same goes for אודון in Go A:1.

קומה 'from her presence,' which is a combination of the standard BTA variant of the preposition קדם and the 3rd p. suffixed pronoun, does not testify to the rounding of */ā/, even though we have good examples of basically the same preposition with *waw* for */ā/ (e.g. קדומיה). Instead, it shows the labialization of a short [a] type vowel in connection with [m].[304] Note that earlier in the same line, the same combination of a preposition and a suffix is spelled קמה. קומי is familiar from Mandaic, too.[305]

Of the relevant instances (cf. the notes above) which represent *waw* as a counterpart of */ā/, in a great number of cases *waw* is surrounded by a labial phonetic environment: צבואות, ולעלום, קומך, קומו, קדומיה, קדומוהי, סמומית, בועותא, and בותרון, עלמוא, דשמולא. However, we still have many cases which cannot be explained by the labial phonetic environment (cf. e.g. -יות). Further, in some of the instances *waw* appears before or after *resh*: הורוחות, האורץ, רוזא, נורוא, הורוח, and בורוך. In some other cases, *resh* occurs in the vicinity of *waw* (compare the instances).

When comparing the instances with phonetic environments where *miqpaṣ pumma* commonly occurs in *Halakhot Pesuqot,* one notes that the material fits the rules mentioned by Boyarin (see above): in all of the cases, the following consonant is 'a voiced continuant (or θ)' and in some of the cases the following vowel or preceding consonant is a labial.[306]

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions should be drawn: first, it is important to bear in mind that these spellings with *waw* in place of */ā/ are attested only in a small minority of the texts, and, importantly, certainly not all of them are 'vulgar texts.' This holds true especially of bowl 12a in Naveh & Shaked, a text with several parallel texts. It seems as if the scribe(s) of these bowls had added the *waw*s as if to make the text more familiar to his/their client(s); the basic version of the text is evidently of Palestinian origin.[307] Besides the use of *waw* for */ā/, there are no other traits of a 'vulgar text' found in that bowl text. The same may be said of N&Sh 13, which is without any doubt one of the best-formulated bowl texts. Thus, I find it difficult to believe that the *waw*s appear in the texts because of the 'poor tutoring' of the

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[303] Cf. Jastrow 1903: 1266; Payne Smith 1903: 475.

[304] Cf. Epstein 1960: 136, where the vocalization given for this preposition is קֻמֵּי. Besides, the second vowel in קומה 'from her presence' should, at least in the light of Syriac, be a long [ā] (See e.g. Muraoka 1997b: 19) and, nevertheless, it is not represented by *waw*.

[305] See Nöldeke 1875: 44.

[306] By 'continuants' Boyarin apparently refers to all segments but plosives, affricates, and nasals. Cf. Trask 1996: 91.

[307] For comparison of the different versions, see Naveh & Shaked 1985: 192-195.

scribes (see above). In addition, quite a number of the instances may be explained by other factors, too, besides the rounding of */ā/. The bowls which use *waw* as a counterpart of */ā/ do not yield a type of Aramaic dialect which would clearly distinguish them from other bowls, except for N&Sh 13, which shows more standard BTA features than bowls in general. In contrast, e.g. N&Sh 12a and Go 11 fit nicely the standard type of language typical of our texts, with several conservative linguistic features.

Second, in line with the ideas presented by Morag, Boyarin, etc. the *waw*s of the bowl texts suggest that the reflex of */ā/ was a back round vowel in BJA or in some of its subdialects. We cannot exclude the possibility that the occurrence of the trait only in some texts merely implies that the rounding of the original */ā/ was restricted only to some dialects within BJA, at least in the era when the practice of writing incantations on clay bowls was still observed. On this point, it is worth bearing in mind that the letter *'aleph* is often used in our texts as a counterpart of */ā/. Even though – as Boyarin reminds us – there was a tradition of using *'aleph* in this function – and, therefore, a shift in the pronunciation of */ā/ would probably not have affected this tradition – one may ask whether the use of *'aleph* would have been so frequent, if the reflex of */ā/ had been a rounded back vowel throughout BJA.[308] As noted by Sharvit, we know within the territory of Palestine, two different Hebrew pronunciations of *qameṣ*: the Tiberian and the Palestinian.[309] It is very possible that within the (much larger) area of Mesopotamia, different JA dialects displayed varying pronunciations of *qameṣ*. Note that Mandaic, a dialect with plenty of isoglosses in common with BJA, shows no rounding of the original */ā/,[310] though the trait is well known from West Syriac.

Further, it is possible that the rounding of the original */ā/ began in a labial phonetic environment, where *waw*s are frequently attested (see above). As pointed out by Boyarin, *miqpaṣ pumma* is common in a labial phonetic environment in *Halakhot Pesuqot*. The beginning of the rounding in a labial phonetic environment would be quite natural, since the rounding of a vowel may be understood as a

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[308] See the discussion in Boyarin 1978: 149. In actual fact, the use of *'aleph* in this function is a feature especially typical of good Talmudic MSS. See above III.1. *Notes on the Spelling*. It may be of importance that N&Sh 12a, one of the best examples of the use of *waw* for */ā/, shows no instances of *'aleph* for */ā/, except some names of uncertain interpretation. In N&Sh 13, one finds ראזי, with *'aleph* in this function. By contrast, Go 11 – which employs *waw* quite commonly for */ā/ – also uses *'aleph* quite regularly in the very same function. Note, for instance, חומרי בישאתא in line 10 as opposed to חומרי בישותא in line 12. This may be taken as a further indication that the rounding process was only at the initial stage.

[309] Cf. the discussion in Sharvit 1974: 554-555.

[310] See Nöldeke 1875: 21. Instead, 'a transition from *ā* to *ō*' is frequent in Modern Mandaic. See Macuch 1965: 118.

labialization.[311] Nöldeke pointed out in his day that a labial phonetic environment tends to labialize nearby vowels in Aramaic.[312] As noted, *waw*s also occur in connection with /r/ (see above). It has been argued that this consonant, too, is conducive to the change of vowels of [ɑ] colour towards [o] or [u].[313]

The fact that *waw*s are frequent with certain words, such as קדום- and -יות, may support, as well, hypothesis that the rounding process was still in initial stages. One might, in fact, go one step further and argue that the instances are lexicalized exceptions which may be explained by a labial phonetic environment (and by different other phonetic or other factors), and which, thus, do not tell anything about the phenomenon under study here. Were there no other positive proofs for the rounding of */ā/ at our disposal, this assumption would be quite plausible.

In actual fact, the *waw*s in our texts are among the earliest indications of the rounding of */ā/ in any Aramaic or Hebrew tradition.[314] As is well known, the trait is peculiar to Tiberian Hebrew, but the dating of this shift has been a matter of controversy.[315]

Morag has maintained that the rounding took place during the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls or even earlier,[316] but the more common opinion is that the shift 'ā > å seems to be very late, but not later than Jerome's time.'[317] Harviainen, on the other hand, has examined all the relevant material, and comes to the conclusion that the change did not take place before the 6th century, and, in fact, could have taken

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[311] 'Labial' may be defined as 'a different distinctive feature invoked to separate labial consonants and *rounded vowels* and glides (all [+lab]) from all other segments ([-lab]).' Trask 1996: 193 [italics mine]. See also Crystal 1985: 172, 268.

[312] See Nöldeke 1875: 17ff. See also Brockelmann 1908: 199-201. Note, however, that the instances enumerated by Nöldeke and Brockelmann include only a few cases with labialization of */ā/. Note /tammōn/ alongside /tammān/ in Syriac, as listed by Brockelmann. It might be of interest to investigate whether we have any evidence that the rounding of */ā/ in West Syriac began in a labial phonetic environment.

[313] See Kutscher 1959: 391-392; Schulthess 1924: 27. Again, note that the instances include no cases with the original */ā/. According to Kutscher, the change towards [o] or [u] is due to assimilation. Yet, from the phonetic point of view, I cannot find any apparent explanation for this 'assimilation.' I find it hard to think that dental (or alveolar) /r/ could effect rounding in nearby vowels, and it is equally difficult to conclude that sonorous /r/ would favour less sonorous vowels. Low vowels, such as [ɑ] and [a], are more sonorous than high vowels, e.g. [o]. Cf. Trask 1996: 327-328.

[314] See Harviainen 1977: 107.

[315] For the different theories presented, see Harviainen 1977: 104ff.

[316] Among the evidence adduced by Morag in favour of his theory is the fact that in the well-known Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QISa), there are several cases with *waw* in place of the Tiberian *qames* in the pointed texts, e.g. עולות for עֲלֹת. See Morag 1963: 104. These peculiar spellings may, however, be interpreted as originating from different phonetic or other factors. See Kutscher 1959: 495-496 and the cross-references given there. Note, however, that there is no model which would explain them as a whole.

[317] Blau 1971: c. 1571.

place even later, perhaps ca. 700 C.E.[318] In West Syriac, the shift took place as a regular phenomenon probably in the 7th or 8th century.[319]

Third, עול 'came in' (וקטליה ליברה וחנק יותיה סדרוס עימהון ועול 'with them there came S. and he killed her son and strangled them') might be of especial importance, given that the interpretation as 3rd p. masc. sg. is correct. If so, it would suggest that the historical opposition between the reflexes of */ā/ and */a/ was in the process of disappearance. The contamination of *verba mediae waw/yod* and *mediae geminatae* is well attested in Mandaic and is also known from the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA, where, importantly, /ʿāl/ 'he entered' appears for /ʿal/.[320] In any case, since no other instances are found, it is probable that in the period when the bowl texts were inscribed, the merger was restricted only to certain dialects within BJA. Besides, we may have some additional counter-evidence: among our examples there are a couple of instances with *waw* in places where in the Yemenite reading tradition /å/ merges with /a/: אינושא (/ʾinnaše/ in the Yemenite reading tradition).[321] While the Yemenite reading tradition attests to the */ā/-*/a/ merger in several positions, we could argue that most sporadic occurrences of the phenomenon imply that the bowl texts reflect an earlier phase in the development than the Yemenite reading tradition and *Halakhot Pesuqot*, which reflect the BJA pronunciation in the Geonic period (see above).[322] This possibility would be well in line with the dating of our texts.

However, there is another possibility for interpreting the instance cited above: it is possible that it is a 3rd p. masc. *pl.* form and not a *sg.* form. In BTA, the 3rd p. masc. pl. for *verba mediae waw/yod* is either קמו or קום.[323] The latter is vocalized by Epstein as קוּם, representing [qūm], which is also attested in the Yemenite reading tradition of BTA.[324] Instances of incongruency are noted below in connection with verbs. Note also that if the distinction between 3rd p. masc. sg. and pl. had become neutralized (or was in the process of neutralization), as suggested elsewhere in this study (see III.3 and IV.10.2), the occurrence of the 3rd p. pl. instead of the sg. was quite natural. If this interpretation is correct, עול 'came in' in N&Sh 12a

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[318]   See Harviainen 1977: 104-114, 118.

[319]   See Harviainen 1977: 108 and the cross-references given there.

[320]   See Morag 1962: 227. Note that in some pointed texts GA and TJ, too, attest forms where על is vocalized with *qames* or written with medial *ʾaleph* as עאל. See Dalman 1905: 328, 330.

[321]   Cf. Morag 1988: 96.

[322]   The Yemenite reading tradition of BTA apparently reflects BJA in the Geonic period. See e.g. Morag 1962: 219; 229.

[323]   See Epstein 1960: 89. Note the following instance: עול לגביה אביי ורבנן 'Es kamen hinein zu ihm A. und die Gelehrten' (Ar. 20a), cited in Schlesinger 1928: 56. Note that in the version of *Codex Monacencis*, one finds על for עול (ibid.).

[324]   See Morag 1988: 212.

and elsewhere should not be taken into account in this context. The fact that we find
no other parallel instances strongly supports this possibility. One may even take a
further step and argue that קומו in the same text is a contamination of the forms
קמו and קום. The letter *waw* in medial position would indicate the actual pronun-
ciation ([qūm]), whereas the final *waw* would be left as a historical spelling.

Now back to the theories presented by Boyarin. As noted, our instances sup-
port the possibility that */ā/ had a rounded realization in BJA (but not necessarily in
all the dialects within BJA). They may also support the possibility that the reflexes
of */ā/ and */a/ merged in BJA (i.e. probably /å/ with /a/), since we have at least one
instance (i.e. עול) where *waw* occurs for */a/,[325] too. Yet, as discussed above, the
instance may be interpreted in various ways, and the possibility that it might support
the */ā/-*/a/ merger is less likely.

Instead, it is hard to say whether the *waw*s (or some of them) indeed express
the allophone [ɔ] or the like, as Boyarin maintains (see above). Since we have no
evidence of any kind of /å/ - /o/ merger in BJA – besides the uncertain and ambigu-
ous evidence of the bowl texts and the later Hebrew texts of Babylonian back-
ground with the *qameṣ-ḥolem* merger – it is probable that the *waw*s in our texts and
the curious Hebrew texts discussed above imply that the phoneme /å/ (given that it
was the reflex of */ā/) merged with [o] in some BJA dialects.[326] In any case, it is
clear that either the reflex of */ā/ or some of its allophones were so near to the
original /o/ that the same sign, *waw*, could be used for both. Hence, we could argue
that the phoneme /å/ merged in some BJA dialects with /a/, as is the case in
Halakhot Pesuqot and to a lesser degree in the Yemenite reading tradition; the
merger was total in East Syriac and Mandaic (and also in Sephardic Hebrew).[327] In
contrast, some other dialects of BJA, West Syriac, and some Hebrew reading
traditions of Babylonian origin (represented in the above-discussed texts from the
Cairo Genizah) merged /å/ with [o];[328] note that the realization of */ā/ in the
modern West Syriac reading tradition is [o].[329] Interestingly, Harviainen presents
partly parallel trends in Yiddish, Scandinavian languages, and in Greek.[330] If it

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[325] Note that in the bowl texts we have no possibilities to detect such cases where *pataḥ* would
have been used for *qameṣ*.

[326] As is well known, the signs *qameṣ* and *ḥolem* are not interchangeable in the Babylonian
pointing system. Cf. Yeivin 1985: 368-373. Note, however, that we cannot totally exclude
the possibility that both the Rabbanite and Karaite texts discussed above and those bowl
texts with the peculiar *waw*s may testify to a different kind of tradition, with the /å/ - /o/
merger, which may have prevailed in some BJA dialects and, consequently, affected some
Hebrew reading traditions. See also Harviainen 1994: 37-38.

[327] Cf. Morag 1963: 105.

[328] Cf. ibid., especially n. 2. In the majority of these traditions, /o/ received another realization,
[ö], [u], etc., and thus it retained its phonemically independent status.

[329] See Harviainen 1977: 108.

[330] See Harviainen 1977: 120.

were as assumed here, examples of at least the latter trend of development would be attested in the bowl texts. Unfortunately, we lack far too many secure facts to reach watertight conclusions in this respect. In any case, it is apparent – for geographical reasons – that not all of the above-mentioned traditions can be connected with each other. Instead, one might argue that there has always been a certain tendency within North West Semitic languages towards the rounding of ā.

As for the theory presented by Boyarin, we should note as well that even though the *waw*s occur in the environments where *miqpaṣ pumma* occurs in *Halakhot Pesuqot*, the phonetic environment suggested by Boayarin is so broad that it proves little in this scant material (see above). Further, even though *waw*s commonly occur in 'Targumic' words, as Boyarin points out, this proves little either, since the bowl texts abound with 'Targumic' words, due to the generally conservative character of our texts.[331] The best proof for the theory of Boyarin is the common appearance of the *waw*s in Hebrew words (see above). It seems that, at least, some scribes of the bowl texts felt that *waw*s for */ā/ were indeed necessary in Hebrew words. This fact, as such, supports the theory proposed by Boyarin, but, nevertheless, there also remain other possibilities to account for the ambiguous evidence at our disposal. One should bear in mind that in the Hebrew texts from Qumran, as noted above, *waw* occurs in a number of cases in place of *qameṣ*, e.g. עוֹלוֹת for עֲלֹת. This fact may imply – whatever the correct interpretation of the *waw*s in the Qumran texts – that there was a (rather limited) tradition in *Hebrew* for employing *waw* in this function.[332] Besides, we lack proper evidence as to whether the rounding of */ā/ first originated in Hebrew or Aramaic.[333]

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[331] In fact, it is easier to find 'Targumic' forms in the bowl texts than those of standard BTA, as will be shown in the course of this study.

[332] Morag has argued that these spellings indicate a rounding of */ā/ in the Hebrew dialect represented by the Qumran texts. Yet, a different interpretation is given by Kutscher. See Morag 1963: 104 and Harviainen 1977: 105 where various interpretations of these spellings are reviewed.

[333] Some evidence of the rounding is provided by Phoenician, too. See Harviainen 1977: 107 and the cross-references given there.