

Studies in Semitic Vocalisation and Reading Traditions

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Cover image: Detail from a bilingual Latin-Punic inscription at the theatre at Lepcis Magna, IRT 321 (accessed from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Inscription_Theatre_Leptis_Magna_Libya.JPG). Leaf of a Syriac prayer book with Western vocalisation signs (source: Wikimedia Commons). Leaf of an Abbasid-era Qur'ān (vv. 64.11–12) with red, yellow, and green vocalisation dots (source: Wikimedia Commons). Genizah fragment of the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 11–12, Cambridge University Library T-S A1.56; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Genizah fragment of a Karaite transcription of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic script (Num. 14.22–24, 40–42, Cambridge University Library T-S Ar. 52.242; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Greek transcription of the Hebrew for Ps. 22.2a in Matt. 27.46 as found in Codex Bezae (fol. 99v; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

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QERE AND KETIV IN THE EXEGESIS OF THE KARAITES AND SAADYA GAON

Joseph Habib

1.0. INTRODUCTION

During the approximate period 500–950 CE, the Tiberian Masoretes set out to commit to writing the accepted reading tradition of the Hebrew Bible.¹ In order to facilitate this preservation, they invented a number of graphic symbols to represent the reading tradition as accurately as possible. These symbols were mapped onto the letters of the received consonantal text. The consonantal text adopted by the Tiberian Masoretes was one that, from a very early period, had been transmitted within mainstream Judaism

¹ See Yeivin (1980, 1–4, 49–80). To be sure, the process of precise transmission of the Biblical Text far predates the Tiberian Masoretes. M. Avot 1.1 states that Moses transmitted (וּמִסְרָהּ) the Torah to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, etc. Thus, from its very inception, it was necessary to pass on the text, via an oral tradition, accurately. Hence Dotan's (2007, 606) statement, "The transmission of the Bible is as old as the Bible itself." In this regard, Lea Himmelfarb (2007) concludes that the first Masoretes were, in fact, the Temple priests, who regularly engaged in the reading, teaching, and copying of the text.

with great care.² One important component of the preservation of the text was safeguarding the correct pronunciation of the consonantal text. The Tiberian Masoretes thus invented the vocalisation signs in order to ensure accurate pronunciation of the text.³ As a general rule, the consonants and the vocalisation signs are

² The need for an exemplary scroll made itself felt after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when an authoritative text could serve as a unifying element to the Jewish community (Contreras and De Los Ríos-Zarzosa 2010, 28). The Babylonian Talmud also reflects an early concern for the transmission of an accurate text. *Mo'ed Qaṭan* 18b prohibits tampering with the “scroll of Ezra” (ספר עזרא) on particular festival days. *Ketubot* 106a mentions “proof-readers of the scrolls in Jerusalem” (מגידי ספרים שבירושלים). According to *Qiddushin* 30a, there was also an awareness among the Babylonian sages that the authoritative text was located in Jerusalem (Khan 2013, 15–16). Qumran also reflects a situation whereby, as early as the Second Temple period, there was already an established (consonantal) text among mainstream Judaism. According to Tov’s latest estimation, 48 percent of Torah texts reflect the Masoretic Text (MT). Of the remaining portions of scripture, 44 percent reflect the MT, while 49 percent form the so-called ‘non-aligned’ group (Tov 2012, 108). Thus, even among the multiplicity of recensions at Qumran—a community not aligned with mainstream Judaism—a text-type that reflects the MT predominated. This strongly suggests that the situation was similar elsewhere in Palestine, although this cannot be verified (cf. Khan 2013, 22–24).

³ The other components of the Tiberian Masoretic tradition are the layout of the text, divisions of paragraphs, the accent signs, the notes of the text written in the margin, and Masoretic treatises, which were sometimes appended to the end of manuscripts (Khan 2013, 3).

in harmony. In a number of places within the Hebrew Bible, however, the consonantal text and the vocalisation signs reflect two different reading traditions of a particular word or phrase.⁴

During the process of supplying the consonantal text with the vocalisation signs, such differences between the received consonantal text and the orally transmitted reading tradition became apparent. One clear example was the divine name. Since uttering the form of the name reflected by the consonantal text was prohibited, the consonantal text יהוה was read אֲדֹנָי. The result was the form יְהוָה, in which the vocalisation prompted the reading [ʔaðo:ʕə:j] instead of that reflected by the consonantal text. Another example is the word written with the consonants עֲפָלִים ‘tumours (?)’ (Deut. 28.27; 1 Sam. 5.6, 9, 12). In these places, the reading tradition requires the word טַחְרִים ‘haemorrhoids’ instead, since it was considered less crass. Superimposing the vowels of טַחְרִים on the consonants עֲפָלִים was not, however, considered to be sufficient to trigger the memory of the reader to pronounce טַחְרִים, since this conflict between the consonantal text and the

⁴ Yochanan Breuer (1991, 191), also considering the cantillation marks, remarks, אף על פי שבדרך כלל הקשר בין שלושת היסודות האלה הוא באמת הדוק, ובנוסף המקרא שבידינו הם הפכו להיות מקשה אחת, מצאנו לעתים שכל אחד והנה, אף על פי שבדרך כלל הקשר בין שלושת היסודות האלה הוא באמת הדוק, ובנוסף המקרא שבידינו הם הפכו להיות מקשה אחת, מצאנו לעתים שכל אחד מהם הולך בדרך נפרדת. Indeed, even though the connection between these three elements is generally tight, and in our version of the Bible they became a unity, we sometimes find that each one of them goes its own separate way’. See also Hornkohl’s contribution to the present volume.

oral reading only occurs four times, compared with the 6,828 occurrences of the divine name.⁵ Thus, a different method for maintaining the written tradition while indicating the oral reading tradition was necessary. In the Aleppo Codex, the consonantal form **וּבְטָחִים** (Deut. 28.27) is pointed with the vowels of **וּבְטָחִים**, and an accompanying marginal note instructs **קרי ובטחים** ‘[wuvattʰo:ri:m] is read’. The oral reading tradition reflected by the vocalisation was known in the Masoretic tradition as *qere* ‘(what is) read’ and the written tradition of the received consonantal text was known as *ketiv* ‘(what is) written’.

Modern research on the phenomenon of *qere* and *ketiv* has been concerned primarily with tracing the origins and motivation for differences between the *qere* and *ketiv* and with classifying these differences according to various criteria (e.g., morphological, syntactic, euphemistic, etc.).⁶ I adopt here the view of scholars such as Barr (1981), Breuer (1997), and Ofer (2019, 85–107), according to which the *qere* and the *ketiv* represented parallel traditions. The question arises as to whether both traditions were considered equally authoritative or whether the *qere* was regarded as more authoritative than the *ketiv*. In the Talmudic period a practice developed of interpreting Scripture on two levels, one according to the consonantal text (*ketiv*) and one according to the way it was read (*qere*). This is reflected in the Talmudic dictum **יש אם למקרא ויש אם למסורת** ‘The reading has authority and

⁵ Ofer (2019, 21).

⁶ For a helpful and concise overview of *qere/ketiv* scholarship, see Ofer (2009, 271ff.); Contreras (2013, 449–53).

the traditional text has authority' (Naeh 1992; 1993). Some medieval Karaite scholars, e.g., al-Qirqisānī (Khan 1990a), objected to this practice and recognized the authority of only the reading tradition. In the Middle Ages the Karaites also produced Arabic transcriptions of the Bible that represented only the *qere* (Khan 1992). Some medieval Karaite scholars did, however, accept the possibility of interpreting according to the *ketiv* where it conflicted with the *qere*, e.g., the lexicographer al-Fāsi in his *Kitāb Jāmi' al-'Alfāz* (ed. Skoss 1936, vol. 1, 12–13) and Hadassi (Bacher 1895, 113).

In this paper I shall explore whether and to what extent the early medieval Karaite exegetes and Saadya regarded both the *qere* and the *ketiv* as authoritative bases of their interpretation of Scripture.

2.0. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

I present here my findings with regard to the extent to which the differences between the *qere* and the *ketiv* are reflected in the exegetical works of the medieval Karaites and Saadya Gaon. A search in Accordance Bible Software for every instance of the *qere/ketiv* in the Hebrew Bible yielded 1,384 hits, from among which I chose samples that were relevant for my investigation. In choosing examples of *qere/ketiv* to analyse, it was necessary that some restrictions were in place. First, I chose only examples from biblical books for which the translations and/or commentaries of Saadya and at least one or two medieval Karaite scholars are extant. The main limitation was that the extant commentaries and

translation of Saadya do not include the entire Bible.⁷ Second, I chose only examples of differences between *qere* and *ketiv* that reflected differences in meaning. Consider the following example:

- (1) כִּי־מִי אֲשֶׁר יבַּחַר [יִחְבֹּר] אֶל כָּל־הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן...
 ‘For, whoever is joined to life has hope...’ (Eccl. 9.4a)⁸

In this example, the *qere* is from the Hebrew root חב"ר, which signifies the ‘joining’ of one person or thing to another. The *ketiv*, however, is from the root בח"ר, which signifies ‘choosing’. In my translation above, as in most English Bibles, I translated the half-verse according to the *qere*. As will be shown below, a translation of this half-verse according to the *ketiv* would also make perfect sense: ‘For, whoever chooses life has hope.’

In considering examples which make a difference in meaning, two additional caveats applied. First, *qere/ketiv* pairs that differ in agreement between subject and verb, as well as in regard to the antecedents of pronominal/object suffixes were excluded.

⁷ The extant portions include the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, and Ezekiel (see Zewi 2015, 31 n. 30).

⁸ In this and following examples, the *ketiv* appears unvocalised, and the *qere* appears vocalised in brackets. In my translations that follow each example, I translate according to the *qere*. In Gordis’s (1971, 152) rubric ‘Unclassified KQ (= *ketiv/qere*)’, this verse appears in the list ‘Q preferable to K’. This verse does not appear in Cohen’s (2007, 7–11) recent work on *qere* and *ketiv*, the corpus of which was limited to the Pentateuch and Former Prophets.

The reason for this is that the rules governing agreement in Arabic and Biblical Hebrew differ sufficiently that it could not be said for certain whether the Arabic translations of Saadya and the Karaites reflected one of the two options. For example:

- (2) וְעָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ יָדֵינוּ לֹא שִׁפְכוּ אֶת־הַדָּם הַזֶּה:
 ‘And they will testify and say, “Our hands did not shed this blood”’ (Deut. 21.7)

Here, the *qere* indicates that the reading of this verb should be the 3mpl form, whereas the *ketiv* reflects either a 3fs form, or a remnant of the archaic 3fpl form of the perfect.⁹ Regardless, the translation of the phrase ‘X יָדֵינוּ לֹא שִׁפְכוּ’ (where ‘X’ represents a form of the verb שִׁפַּךְ) into Arabic will not reflect which form the translator was translating. Thus, Saadya translates the above phrase

⁹ This 3fpl form would have dropped out at a later stage of the language due to its similarity to the 3fs of the perfect. Some controversy surrounds the construal of perfect verbs ending in הִ- with plural subjects (e.g., here, Num. 43.4; Josh. 15.4; 18.12, 14, 19; 2 Kgs 22.24; Jer. 2.15; 22.6; 50.6; Ps. 73.2; Job 16.16). Gordis (1971, 104–5), Kutscher (1982, 39–40), and Cohen (2007, 77–79) maintain the view that this is indeed a remnant of the archaic third person feminine plural form. Bergsträsser (1962, II.15) states that this situation is possible, but not certain, as these cases may simply be “errors or deviations (Fehler oder Abweichungen)” of congruence. Joüon (1947, 100–1), following Nöldeke (1904, 19, n. 3), maintains that these occurrences are simply the 3fs form and that the *ketiv* was a result of a misspelling due to Aramaic influence, which preserved the form ending in הִ-.

as אִידִינָא לֹא חֲסַפֵּךְ (NLRSP¹⁰ Yevr II C 1, fol. 206v, ln. 1), in which, according to Arabic grammatical norms, he uses the 3fs form. It is not clear whether this reflects the *qere* or the *ketiv*. Saadya's *Tafsīr* conforms, for the most part, to the norms of Classical Arabic grammar in order to convey to his audience the sense of the biblical text, rather than a wooden literal translation.¹¹ Classical Arabic requires a feminine singular verb when the preceding subject is a broken plural.¹² Yefet translates this verse: אִידִינָא מֵא סַפְכוּ (BL Or 2480, fol. 31r, lns. 4–5). Yefet's biblical translations exhibit a word-for-word, even morpheme-for-morpheme, imitation of the Hebrew source text.¹³ It would appear, then, that Yefet's translation reflects the *qere*. In his commentary, however, the verse is transcribed for comment as follows: פִּאמֵא קוֹלָהֶם יִדִּינוּ לֹא סַפְכָּה 'Now, as for their expression, "יִדִּינוּ לֹא סַפְכָּה"...' (BL Or 2480, fol. 31r, lns. 8–9), thereby reflecting the *ketiv*, without an idiomatic translation following.

Second, I excluded euphemistic *qere/ketiv* pairs, such as the שָׁגַל (K)/שָׁכַב (Q) 'to violate' pair (Deut. 28.30; Isa. 13.16; Jer 3.2;

¹⁰ Henceforth NLRSP = National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg; BL = The British Library, London; NLF = The National Library of France, Paris; IOM = Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, the Russian Academy of Sciences.

¹¹ See Pollicak (1997, 82–90); Vollandt (2014, 69–74).

¹² Wright (1898, 2:296).

¹³ Polliack states that 'The literalism of Yefet's translations effects [*sic*] their Arabic style which often appears slavish and ungrammatical' (1997, 40). See also Vollandt (2014, 74–77); Sasson (2016, 25–30).

Zech. 14.2), and the עפלים (K)/טחורים (Q) ‘tumours/haemorrhoids’ pair (Deut. 28.27; 1 Sam. 5.6, 9, 12), since, in these instances, the *qere* “suggests the exact same meaning without saying it directly” (Ofer 2019, 99).

With these limitations in place, I analysed 48 verses among Saadya’s works and as many Karaite texts for those verses as was available to me.¹⁴ This yielded a total of 138 items of data. In what follows I offer a brief statistical overview of the extent to which Saadya and the Karaites follow the *qere* or the *ketiv* in their translations and commentaries. I then discuss these statistics in greater detail, offering relevant examples. I conclude with some final remarks and observations.

3.0. GENERAL RESULTS ACROSS THE WORKS OF SAADYA AND THE KARAITES

The works of Saadya, out of a total of 48 items of data, yield the following statistics: 35 instances reflect the *qere* (72.92 percent); nine instances reflect the *ketiv* (18.75 percent); three instances reflect both the *qere* and the *ketiv* (6.25 percent); one instance reflects neither the *qere* nor the *ketiv* (2.08 percent). Collectively, the works of the Karaites, presenting a total of ninety items of data, yield the following statistics: 72 instances reflect the *qere*

¹⁴ Gen. 30.11; Isa. 9.2; 10.32; 25.10; 30.5; 32.7; 49.5; 52.5; 65.4; Ezek. 42.9, 16; Ps. 9.13, 19; 10.10, 12; 74.11; 100.3; 139.16; Prov. 3.34; 14.21 8.17; 15.14; 16.19; 17.27; 19.7, 19; 20.20, 21; 21.29; 23.26, 31; 26.2; 31.4; Job 6.2, 21; 9.30; 13.15; 21.13; 30.22; 33.19 Song 2.13; Ruth 3.5, 12; 3.17 Eccl. 9.4; 12.6; Dan 9.24; 11.18.

(80 percent); six instances reflect the *ketiv* (6.67 percent); twelve instances reflect both the *qere* and the *ketiv* (13.33 percent).

These data suggest that Saadya and the Karaite exegetes translated and interpreted Scripture according to the tradition of the *qere* in the majority of instances. They did not, however, feel totally bound to that tradition and occasionally deviated from it, suggesting that they considered both traditions authoritative. Examination of the examples where precedence is given to the *ketiv* indicates that in almost every case this was due to an attempt to harmonise a reading with a parallel passage in the surrounding context or elsewhere in Scripture. This suggests that the primary concern of both Saadya and the Karaite exegetes was a clear exposition of each verse consistent with its context. Most of the time the meaning of the *qere* tradition yielded this satisfactory sense. Occasionally, however, this objective could be achieved only if translation and exegesis were based on the *ketiv* or on both traditions.

Saadya never mentions the phenomenon of *qere/ketiv* by name. Among the Karaites, I was able to find twelve instances in which they mention the phenomenon explicitly; I will list these instances below in the sections on the relevant scholars.

4.0. SAADYA GAON

Saadya (882–942) was born in Fayyūm, Egypt, and was known in Arabic as Saʿīd ben Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī. After spending some

years in Tiberias,¹⁵ in 928 he was appointed the head (Gaon) of the Babylonian *yeshiva*. One of his most important works is his translation of the Bible into Arabic, known as the *Tafsīr*. Saadya's *Tafsīr* is not uniform in its shape. For this reason, scholarly mention of the *Tafsīr* usually refers to one (or more) of three things: (1) an exegetical work on a part of the Pentateuch that consists of a translation of biblical verses embedded within a 'long commentary'—another name by which scholars refer to this body of work; (2) a translation of the Pentateuch without commentary, sometimes called the 'short *Tafsīr*'; (3) a translation and commentary on some of the remaining books of the Bible.¹⁶ Based on one of his introductions to the short *Tafsīr*, scholars accept the fact that he began the work after he left his home town in Egypt.¹⁷ They remain divided, however, as to when exactly he began his translation, and its subsequent development.¹⁸ The works in

¹⁵ His time in Palestine in general, and Tiberias in particular, is known from two principal sources. The first is a letter he wrote to former students. The scenario is as follows: Saadya and R. David were both in Babylon. R. David received a letter from Saadya's students, who ask about a calendrical dispute of which Saadya is a part. Puzzled as to why his students did not write to him, Saadya wrote back to them: כסבור אני כי לא כתבתם אליו מבלעדי בלתי כי דימיתם כי עד עתה עודני בארץ ישראל (Brody 2013, 26; see Schechter 1901, 60 leaf 1v lns. 6–8 for the original letter fragment). The second comes from an account by the historian al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) (de Goeje 1894, 112–13; Polliack 1997, 11–12).

¹⁶ See Brody (1998, 301).

¹⁷ Ben-Shammai (2000).

¹⁸ For opinions regarding the beginnings of the *Tafsīr*, see Vollandt (2015, 80, n. 119). For treatments regarding its development, see Brody

group (1) consist of fragments of the commentaries on Genesis (Zucker 1984), Exodus (Ratzaby 1998), and Leviticus (Leeven 1943; Zucker 1955–1956, 1957–1958).¹⁹ The main edition for the work of group (2) is that of Derenbourg (1893), although an updated critical edition is being prepared by Schlossberg (2011).²⁰ The works of group (3) consist of Isaiah (Derenbourg and Derenbourg 1895; Ratzaby 1993), Psalms (Qafih 1966), Proverbs (Derenbourg 1894; Qafih 1976), Job (Qafih 1973), the Five Scrolls (Qafih 1962), and Daniel (Qafih 1981; Alobadi 2006). Al-lony (1944) has also published fragments of Saadya's translation of Ezekiel.

The works of Saadya primarily reflect the *qere* (72.92 percent), but to a lesser extent than the Karaites collectively (80 percent). In nine instances (18.75 percent), Saadya's work reflects the *ketiv*, all which take place within the *ketuvim*;²¹ in three of these instances (Ps. 139.16; Job 6.21; Prov. 19.7), the *qere/ketiv* pair is לוֹ 'to him' (Q)/לֹא 'no, not' (K).²² In one of these instances (Ruth 3.5), the *qere* reflects the presence of a prepositional phrase [אֵלַי], whereas the *ketiv* reflects its absence. This instance

(1998, 303), Ben-Shammai (2000, 205–206), Steiner (2010, 76–93). More recently, see Zewi (2015, 27–29) for an overview of opinions about the *Tafsir*'s developments.

¹⁹ See also Qafih (1984) and Ratzaby (2004) for additional fragments.

²⁰ See Zewi (2015, 32–34) for a discussion of Derenbourg's edition.

²¹ Ps. 10.10, 12; 139.16; Prov. 14.21; 15.14; 19.7; Job 6.21; Song 2.13; Ruth 3.5.

²² This specific *qere/ketiv* pair is discussed in detail below, since it receives exceptional treatment by both Saadya and the Karaite exegetes.

	Lines	
תראה	8	You see him,
יתכאצע ויתכאפץ חתי יקע	9	He lowers himself, he sinks down so that the helpless fall
אלבאיסין		
פי חאל תעטמה	10	by the might of his strength
וקולה ידכה ישוח	19	Now, the phrase יִדְכָּה יִשְׁחֵ
הי צפה פי פעל אלאסד	20	is a description of the ac- tions of the lion.

It is clear that Saadya's translation reflects a single word (חלכאים), and therefore is a rendering of the *ketiv* (אלבאיסין). All of the Karaites' translations here, with the exception of Salmon ben Yeruḥam, reflect the *qere*.²⁶ The reason Saadya may have preferred to translate the *ketiv* here is most likely due to the surrounding context. As he says in his commentary, the actions of the verbs יתכאצע (= יִדְכָּה) and ויתכאפץ (= יִשְׁחֵ) describe that of the lion mentioned one verse earlier (9) as a metaphor for the wicked person. Thus the metaphor extends into this verse (10). Earlier, in verse 8, the wicked person is described as targeting the 'helpless' (חלֵכָה). This same word is used in verse 14 to describe the victim once again (חלֵכָה). The only difference in these two instances (vv. 9, 14) is the orthography, where the word ends in *heh* instead of *'alef*. Considering this context, it appears that

²⁶ Yefet: גיש אלמנכסרין 'the army of the broken ones' (NLF Ms Hebr 290, fol. 67v, ln. 4); Al-Fāṣī: יסאר אלכאמדין 'the comfort of those perishing' (Skoss 1936, II.82, ln. 15); Ibn-Nūḥ: אכתצר פיהא אליוד והי כלמתין 'The *yod* has been elided and the form is two words' (Khan 2000, 223, ln. 16).

Saadya chose to translate the *ketiv* in order to maintain consistency within the chapter.

(4) הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנֻטָּה פְּגִיָּה וְהַגָּפְנִים | סְמָדָר גִּתְּנוּ רֵיחַ קוֹמִי לְכִי [לָךְ] רְעִיָּתִי יִפְתִּי וּלְכִי־לָךְ:

‘The fig tree ripens its fruit, and as for the vines, their buds give forth fragrance. Arise, my friend and my beautiful one, go!’ (Song 2.13)

The *qere* reflects the so-called dative of interest, whereas the *ketiv* seems to reflect the feminine imperative form of the verb of the verb הָלַךְ, viz. ‘go!’²⁷ Saadya’s translation (Qafih 1962, 53) is as follows:

	Lines	
אלתינה קד עקדת גִּצְהָא, ואלגפון	10	The fig has already produced its fruit in clusters, and the <i>Smandar</i>
אלסמנדר קד אעטת אריאחהא, פקומי אמצי יא צאחבתי יא גמילתי ואנטלקי לך	11	vines have already given off their fragrance, so arise! Continue! O my friend, my beautiful one, and set off!

Saadya uses אַמְצִי (اَمْضِي), the feminine imperative of the Arabic verb مَضَى ‘to go away’, thus reflecting one possible form of the *ketiv*. The reason seems to be that, in the Hebrew Bible, whenever

²⁷ For the dative of interest or ‘ethical dative’, see Joüon and Muraoka (2006, 458–59). The *ketiv* may also be analysed as reflecting the old Semitic 2fs -ī ending (see Joüon and Muraoka 2006, 267). Thanks to Aaron Hornkohl for bringing this to my attention.

the imperative form of the verb קום ‘arise’ is followed by the consonants לך(י), the latter is vocalised as the preposition plus a pronominal suffix only once, viz. in Song 2.10 קומי לך. By contrast, the consonants לך(י) are realised as an imperative form of the verb קום eleven times following an imperative form of the verb קום.²⁸ Thus, here, Saadya may have preferred a *ketiv* form since it reflects a more regular construction.

A similar preference for following the more regular construction is seen in his translation of Song 2.10’s קומי לך. Here there is no difference between *qere* and *ketiv*, but Saadya omits the dative of interest in his translation (according to Qafih 1962, 51):

(5) ענה דודי ואמר לי קומי לך רעיתי יפתי ולכי-לך:

	Line	
אבתדי ודידי וקאל קומי יא צאחבתי יא גמילתי ואנטלקי לך	13	My beloved began and said, ‘Arise, O my friend, O my beautiful one and go forth.

Saadya’s translation renders the second dative of interest intact לך (ולכי-לך =), but not the first one. This is a further example, therefore, of how Saadya translated according to the normal construction with two imperative verbs, even if in this case there is no *ketiv* reading that reflects the imperative.

On three occasions, Saadya’s works reflect both the *qere* and the *ketiv*:

²⁸ Gen. 28.2; Num. 22.20; Deut. 10.11; 1 Sam. 9.3; 2 Sam. 13.15; 1 Kgs 14.12; 17.9; Jer. 13.4, 6; Jon. 1.2; 3.2.

- (6) כַּעֲפֹר לָנוּד בְּדָרוֹר לָעוֹף בֵּן קָלִילֵת חֲזָם לֹא [לִי] תָּבֵא:
 ‘As a bird wandering to and fro, and as a swallow in flight,
 thus is an empty curse, it will return to him’ (Prov. 26.2)

In this example, the *qere* reflects a translation as I have given above. The *ketiv* reflects the reading ‘it will not come’. Saadya’s translation and commentary (Qafilh 1976, 182) are as follows:

	Lines	
וכעצפור ינוד וכדרי	1	As a small bird sways to and fro, and as a sparrow
יטיר כדאך לען אלמגאן לא יציב...	2	flies, thus a curse without cause does not strike...
שבה איצא אללענה אלתי ילען אלנאס	13	He/it also likens the curse—with which people
בעצהם בעץ בשיין, אחדהמא אכתר חרכה מן	14	curse each other—to two things, one of them moves more than
אלאכר, לאן אלטיראן אסרע חרכה מן אלנוד,	15	the other, because flying is a faster movement than swaying.
כדאך מן ילען צאחבה בגיר אסתחקאק. אמא	16	Thus is the one who curses his neighbour without claim (i.e., for no reason). Either
אן תזול ען אלמשתום ולא תרגע אלי אלשאתם	17	it turns away from the cursed and does not return to the one who cursed,

בטיראן אלדורי אלדי יבעד רגועה, או יכון	18	just as the flight of a sparrow, which is unlikely to return. Or,
מע זואלהא ען אלמסבוב תעוד עלי אלסאב	19	when [the curse] turns away from the cursed, it returns to the one who curses,
כנוד אלעצפור ועודתה אלי מוצעה	20	just as the swaying of a small bird and its return to its place.

Saadya's translation reflects the *ketiv* (ln. 2). His commentary, however, depicts the resulting images of both the *qere* (lns. 19–20) and the *ketiv* (lns. 16–18). The reason for this does not seem to be the tendency to harmonise with the context or other places in Scripture. Rather, it is due to the exceptional treatment of this particular *qere/ketiv* pair, which I will treat below.²⁹

In one instance, Saadya's translation reflects neither the *qere* nor the *ketiv*:

²⁹ The other instances in which Saadya's translation reflects both are Ps. 100.3—for the *qere* see Qafih (1966, 221, lns. 8–9); for the *ketiv* see Qafih (1969–1970, 41, lns. 22–24) and Rosenblatt (1948, 47); and Job 9.30—for the *qere* see Qafih (1973, 59, lns. 2–14); for the *ketiv* see Qafih (1979–1980, 229, lns. 22–26) and Rosenblatt (1948, 372).

(7) כָּל הַבְּאִישׁ [הַבִּישׁ] עַל־עַם לֹא־יִזְעִילוּ לָמוֹ לֹא לְעֶזֶר וְלֹא לְהוֹעִיל כִּי לְבֹשֶׁת
וְגַם־לְחִרְפָּה:

‘All are put to shame because of a people who does not profit them. They are not for help nor profit, but for shame and reproach’ (Isa. 30.5)

The *qere* reflects הוֹבִישׁ ‘to be ashamed’; the *ketiv* seems to reflect הִבְאִישׁ ‘to stink, cause to stink’. Saadya’s translation (according to Ratzaby 1993, 61) is as follows:

	Lines	
בִּאֲזָא מֵא עֲצוֹנִי לְחֹאֵל קוּם לֹא יִנְפַעוֹנָהֶם	17	Considering the fact that they rebelled against me on account of the situation of people who would not benefit them
אִךְ הֵם לֹא לְעוֹן וְלֹא לְנִפְעָה בִּלְכִּיבָה וְעָאֵר	18	because they are not for assistance, not for benefit, instead, they are for failure as well as
אִיצָא	19	shame

The reason for Saadya’s paraphrase is unclear. It seems he translates the portion in question in order to indicate *why* the people (in this case, Israel) would be ashamed (Q)/stink (K), viz. because they rebelled (= עֲצוֹנִי).

5.0. THE KARAITES

The period of medieval Karaism before the twelfth century CE may be divided into two periods. The first period runs roughly

from the middle of the eighth century until the first half of the tenth century. The primary names associated with this period are scholars from Iran and Iraq, such as ‘Anan ben David, Daniel al-Qūmūsī, and Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisāni. The second period is from about 950 until the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 1099, and is associated with scholars active in Palestine, in particular in the Karaite school (*dār al-‘ilm* ‘house of knowledge’) in Jerusalem, such as Salmon ben Yeraḥam, Yefet ben ‘Eli, David ben Abraham al-Fāsī, David ben Boaz, ‘Abū Ya‘aqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ, ‘Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, and Jeshua ben Judah.³⁰

Above (§3.0), I presented the statistical results for the Karaite exegetes collectively. Although useful for comparison to Saadya, this would not be a true representation of the Karaites’ tendencies with regard to *qere* and *ktiv*. The data suggest that, even though the Karaites’ works reflect the *qere* the majority of the time, instances of deviance were not uniform, but differed according to the exegesis of each individual scholar. Thus, in what follows, I will present the data for each Karaite scholar in their rough chronological order.

5.1. Salmon ben Yeraḥam

Salmon, probably born between 910 and 920, was active in Palestine through the middle of the tenth century and is best known for his polemical work against Saadya Gaon, *Sefer Milḥamot ha-Shem* ‘Book of the Wars of the Lord’. His commentaries on Psalms,

³⁰ See Frank (2004, 1–22); Lasker (2007).

Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and a few folios of his commentary on the Pentateuch have been identified.³¹

In total, I was able to find eighteen items of data for Salmon.³² The works of Salmon reflect the *qere* twelve times, or 66.67 percent of the time. This is statistically the lowest incidence among the Karaites for which a significant number (five or more) of instances were found. His works reflect the *ketiv* twice (11.11 percent), and both the *qere* and the *ketiv* four times (22.22 percent). Statistically, his reflection of both is the highest among the Karaites. Both instances in which Salmon reflects the *ketiv* involve the *qere/ketiv* pair עניים 'poor' / עניים 'humble'.³³ These two terms are usually treated as synonyms due to the fact that in some instances עניים is the *qere* while עניים is the *ketiv* (e.g., Isa. 32.7; Ps. 9.19), and in others the reverse is the case (e.g., Ps. 9.13; 10.12). In all instances except one (shown below), regardless of which is the *qere* and which is the *ketiv*, Salmon translates עניים 'humble'.³⁴ The one instance in which he interprets according to

³¹ See Frank (2004 12–20); Zawanoska (2012, 20–21).

³² Ps. 9.13, 19; 10.10, 12; 74.11; 100.3; Prov. 3.34; 8.17; 14.21; 16.19; 17.27; 19.7, 19; 20.21; 26.2; 31.4; Eccl. 9.4; 12.6.

³³ Ps. 9.19; Prov. 14.21.

³⁴ Ps. 9.13: אֶלְמִתּוֹאצֵּעַן (*qere*; NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1345, fol. 60v, ln. 13); Ps. 9.19: אֶלְמִתּוֹאצֵּעַן (*ketiv*; NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1345, fol. 61v, ln. 15); Ps. 10.12: אֶלְמִתּוֹאצֵּעַן (*qere*; NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1345, fol. 65r, ln. 3); Prov. 3.34: אֶלְמִתּוֹאצֵּעַן (*qere*; NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1463, fol. 4r, ln. 24); Prov. 16.19: אֶלְכַּאשְׁעַן (*qere*; NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1463, fol. 17r, ln. 2).

the reading עניים 'poor' is Prov. 14.21, due to the immediate context (NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1463 fol. 15v).

- (8) בְּזֹ-לִרְעָהוּ חוֹטֵא וּמְחֹנֵן עֲנִיִּים [עֲנָנִים] אֲשֶׁרִּיו:
 'The one who despises his neighbour is a sinner, but who-
 ever has compassion on the poor is blessed' (Prov. 14.21)

	Lines	
למא דכר מא יקע מן אלנאס טבאעא פי בגצה	11	When it mentions how people normally act with regard to the hatred of the poor (in the previous verse), it (then) says בְּזֹ-לִרְעָהוּ ('he who despises his neighbour') because it is not standard (i.e., it is not normal behaviour). As for
אלפקיר קאל בז לרעהו מן חית אן דלך לים מסתוי ואמא אן אזזראה לנקץ	12	if he were to despise him (his neighbour) due to a lack of
עקל או דין פלא גנאח: ומחונן ע א לאנה יפעל בלאף דאך	13	sense or religion, then that is no sin. Now, the phrase is because he does the opposite of that (i.e. the opposite of hating the poor).

Salmon interprets this verse in light of the one preceding (ln. 11). The preceding verse, Prov. 14.20, deals with the poor and the rich. This verse (Prov. 14.21) contrasts the previous one in terms

of normal versus abnormal behaviour. People normally despise the poor (Prov. 14.20); earlier in the commentary, Salmon says that people normally despise the poor not out of hostility, but due to the fact that the poor can exploit others for the sake of their own needs. Despising your neighbour for no reason, however, is abnormal (Prov. 14.21). Salmon says the one who has compassion (וּמְחַוֶּנֶן) does the opposite of ‘that’ (דֵּאֵךְ; ln. 13). ‘That’ could refer to despising either a neighbour (Prov. 14.21) or the poor (Prov. 14:20), or even both. Due to Salmon’s treatment of both verses together, it is most likely he is reading the word ‘poor’ (עֲנִיִּים), in which case he is interpreting the *ketiv*.

Statistically more than any of the other Karaites—in four instances—Salmon’s works reflect both the *qere* and the *ketiv*. In two of these instances the pair is לוֹ (Q)/לֹא (K), and in both he explicitly mentions *qere/ketiv*.³⁵ In the remaining two instances (Eccl. 9.4; 12.6), the *qere* and *ketiv* appear to be from separate roots.³⁶

³⁵ See above, n. 22. Ps. 100.3 בּוֹ וַיִּקְרָא בּוֹ וְלֹא מִכְתּוּב בְּאֵלֶיךָ וַיִּקְרָא בּוֹ is written with ‘alef and read with waw’ (NLRSP Ms. EVR I 558 fol. 36r, lns. 2–3); Prov. 26.2 וְהוּא כְּאֶתְבָּה וַיִּתְפַּסֵּר עָלָי אֲלוֹגְהֵן ‘That (form is the) written, and it may be interpreted in both ways’ (NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 1463 fol. 27r, ln. 33).

³⁶ In Gordis’s lists (1971, 152, list 82), these two verses are ‘unclassified’ and appear in the list ‘Q Preferable to K’.

- (9) כִּי־מִי אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר [וַיִּחְפֹּר] אֶל כָּל־הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן כִּי־לְכָלֵּב חַי הוּא טוֹב מִן־
הָאֲרִיָּה הַמֵּת:

‘For, whoever is joined to all of life has hope, because a living dog is better than a dead lion’ (Eccl. 9.4)

The *qere* is a *pual* form from the root חב"ר ‘to join’, while the *ketiv* appears to be from the root בח"ר ‘to choose’. Salmon’s treatment of this verse (NLRSP Ms. EVR I 559 fols. 144r–145v) is as follows:

	Lines	
אֵן מִן אֵלֵדִי יוֹלֵף אֵן יִצְאָף	4	Whoever is joined, i.e. whoever is added,
אֵלִי כָל אֵלֵאחִיָּא אִיס אֵטמֵאנִיָּה אֵן לְכָלֵּב חַי	5	to all of the living, there is assurance (for him). Surely a living dog
הוּ אֵכִיר מִן אֵלסֵבֵעַ אֵלמִית למֵא קֵאל	6	is better than a dead lion. Whenever it said
וֵאחֲרֵיו אֵל הַמֵּתִים וּדמָהֵם עֵנֵד מֵא עֵאשׂו	7	‘And afterwards, to the dead ones’ (Eccl. 9.3), he castigated them when they lived
פִּי מֵעֵאצִּיהֵם וּצֵארוּ אֵלִי אֵלמֹת גִּיר מֵחֵמוּדִין	8	in their rebellion and they ended up in death unpraised.
קֵאל אֵלאֵן אֵן מֵמֵא יִצְאָף בֵּעֵץ אֵלִי בֵעֵץ הַתִּי	9	Now, he says that, a case of what is added to something else so that

יערף פצילתה אצאפה אלאחיא אלי אלאמואת	10	its advantage may be known is the adding of the living to the dead.
פאן ללאחיא עלי אלאמואת פצלה כבירה והי	11	And, indeed, the living have a great advantage over the dead. It is that
אן אלאחיא קלובהם מטמאנה אנהם יקדרו	12	the heart of the living is at ease, that they are able
יתובו ויזדאדו פי אלאפעאל אלצאלחה ליזיד אללה	13	to repent and increase in pious works so that God adds
פי תואבהם	14	to their reward.
פקו אלן יחבר יכתב יבחר	4	So, now, the expression יבחר is written.
קד שרחנא מעניה ואמא קו פי באטן אלמעני	5	we have already explained its meaning. As for the 'inner' meaning
יבחר יעני אן יגב עלי אלאנסאן יכתאר אלחיא	6	of יבחר it means that people must choose life
עלי אלמות לפעל אלכיר פקט לא לעשק אלדניא	7	over death in order to do only good, not to love this world.

In this example, the *ketiv* is used as a source for the interpretation of the 'inner' (באטן, fol. 145v, ln. 5), i.e., hidden, non-literal,

meaning.³⁷ This contrasts with the meaning of the *qere* ‘is combined’ (יולף, fol. 144r, ln. 1), which is glossed as ‘is added’ (יצאף, fol. 144r, ln. 1).³⁸ The interpretation is that the advantage the living have over the dead is that they are able to serve God (fol. 144r, lns. 11–14). Salmon states that the word יחבר is ‘written’ (יכתב, passive יִכְתֹּב) as יבחר, thereby explicitly referring to the distinction between *qere* and *ketiv*. The ‘inner’ meaning is then that people must choose (= יבחר) life in order to do good works.

עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִרְחַק [יִרְחַק] חֲבֵל הַכֶּסֶף וְתַרְזֵן גִּלְתִּי הַזֶּהָב וְתִשְׁבֵּר בֶּדֶל עַל־
הַמְּבוֹעַ וְנִרְצֵן הַגִּלְגֹּל אֶל־הַבּוֹר:

‘(Remember your Creator while you are young) before the silver cord is no longer bound, and the golden basin is crushed, and the pitcher is shattered on the fountain, or the wheel is crushed on the cistern’ (Eccl. 12.6)

The *qere* is from the rare root רח"ק ‘to bind’. The *ketiv* appears to be from the root רח"ק ‘to be distant’. The explanation for the two readings seems to be orthographical confusion of the second radical.³⁹ Salmon’s treatment (NLRSP Ms. EVR I 559 fols. 178r–178v) is as follows:

³⁷ For a discussion of the literal (*al-ẓāhir*) and the inner (*al-bāṭin*) meanings of Scripture, see Ben-Shammai (2003, 43). For a discussion of these concepts in the wider Islamic world, see Velji (2016, 14–21).

³⁸ For alternative readings among the Karaites, see Polliack (1993).

³⁹ Barthélemy (2015, 877) explains the reason for this confusion as due to misreading of the phrase עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא. He contends that לֹא has a non-negative meaning since the entire phrase is a Hebraicization of the Aramaic עַד דִּלְא ‘but’.

	Lines	
תוב אלי אללה	9	Repent towards God
קבל אן לא יתסלסל ויתבאעד	10	before the silver cord is not
חבל אלפצה ותנרק		linked and is far away, and
גמגמה אלדהב ותנכסר אלגרה	11	the golden
עלי אלמנבע		bowl is crushed and the jar
ויחאצר אלבכר אלי אלביר	12	is broken upon the spring
ישתק ירתק		and the spools are brought
		to the well. The word ירתק
		is derived
מן ברתוקות זהב עשה הרתוק	13	from ברתוקות זהב 'the
ופסרו גלת		golden chain' (1 Kgs 6.21),
		עשה הרתוק 'Make chains!'
		(Ezek. 7.23). They ex-
		plained גלת
הזהב מן גלגלתו גלגלת קו עד	14	the jar of gold' from
אשר לא ירתק		גלגלתו 'his skull' (Judg.
		9.53; 1 Chron. 10.10), גלגלת
		'skull'. The phrase עד אשר
		לא ירתק
חבל הכסף יעני תוב וארגע קבל	1	תבל הכסף meaning 'Repent
אן יתסלסל		and return before the silver
חבל אלפצה ישיר אלי כרז	2	cord is (not) linked', refers
אלצלב וקד אסמתהא		to the spinal vertebrae. The
		ancients
אלאואיל שלשלת של שררה	3	called it the 'chain of
ולדלך קאל פיה		power', for that reason he
		also said

איצא ירחק יעני תבאעד בעצהא מן בעץ	4	concerning it, ירחק, meaning they would separate one from the other (the vertebrae).
ולדלך יטול אלמות אכתר ממא כאן והו חי	5	For that reason, death lengthens (it) more than when it was alive,
לאן אלמפאצל איצא תמתד וסמא אלסלסלה	6	because the joints also stretch out. Now, he named the spine
חבל הכסף לאנהא שדאד אלגסם ורבאטה	7	a silver cord, because it is the strengthener of the body and a band
בהא	8	within it

Both the *qere* (= יתסלסל) and the *ketiv* (= ויתבאעד) are translated (fol. 178r, ln. 9). In order to accommodate both meanings, the ‘silver cord’ is interpreted as a metaphor for the spinal cord (fol. 178v, ln. 2). Signs of ageing include that the vertebrae of the spinal cord are ‘no longer linked’ (ירחק, *qere*; fol. 178v, ln. 2) and ‘are distancing themselves from each other’ (ירחק, *ketiv*; fol. 178v, ln. 4) due to the weakening of the joints. Salmon does not introduce the *ketiv* by stating in any way that it is ‘written’. Rather, he refers to it by קאל ‘it/he said’.

5.2. Yefet ben ‘Eli

Yefet, known in Arabic as ‘Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Lāwī al-Baṣrī, most likely immigrated from Baṣra, ‘Irāq, to Jerusalem,

where he was active during the second half of the tenth century.⁴⁰ Few other details of his life are known. Yefet produced a translation and commentary of the whole Bible. This is extant in hundreds of manuscripts, which were copied between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries.⁴¹ Consequently, Yefet's treatment of every verse used in this study was available to me.

Out of 48 instances, 38 (79.17 percent) reflect the *qere*; statistically, this is the highest among the Karaites. Two instances (4.17 percent) reflect the *ketiv*; statistically, this is the lowest among the Karaites. Eight instances (16.67 percent) reflect both.

Both instances of Yefet's reflection of the *ketiv* stem from harmonisation with either the immediate context or other places in Scripture.

Consider Job 6.21:

(11) בִּי־עֲתָה הָיִיתָם לֹא [לֹא] תִרְאוּ חֲתָת וּתִירְאוּ:

It is not entirely clear how to translate this verse according to the *qere*: the preposition לְ plus the 3ms suffix. The *ketiv* is לֹא 'no, not'. This example (as per Hussain's [1987, 93] edition) is particularly illustrative of Yefet's tendency to deviate from the *qere* according to the context:

	Lines	
פֶּאן אֵלֶאן צִרְתָּם לֹא שִׁי תִנְצֹרוּ אֵלְדֶּעֶר וּפִזְעִתָּם	2	So, now you have become nothing. You saw the terror and you became afraid

⁴⁰ Mann (1935, 20–23); Sasson (2016, 5). Also see Ben-Shammai, (2007).

⁴¹ Sasson (2016, 5).

קאל איזב אנתם יא אצחאבי צרתם לא שי אי ליס פיכם מן ישפק וירחם	3	Job said, "You, O my friends, have become nothing." That is, "There is no one among you who would take sympathy and pity and console my heart. Instead, all of you are against me." Now the phrase תִּרְאוּ הִתַּת 'You see my calamity' means that 'If you see what has befallen me, you would inevitably be afraid that what happened to me would happen to you, and you would not be able to save yourselves from afflictions of this world. The word תִּרְאוּ has ga'ya and is in place of ga'ya and is in place of תִּרְאוּ with short vowel (i.e., the <i>hireq</i>).
ויעזי קלבי בל כלכם עליי וקו' תראו חתת יעני יגב עליכם אן תנטרו	4	
מא נזל בי [פתכונון] ⁴² קד פזעתם אן ילחקכם כמא לחקני פליס תתקו אן תכלצו	5	
מן אלבלא בתאע אלדניא תראו הו געיה פהו מקאם תראו חטף.	6	

Yefet's translation clearly reflects the *ktiv* (לא שי 'nothing'; ln. 2). This interpretation is appropriate in the context. 'Nothing' refers to the fact that, among Job's friends, there is no one left to pity him (lns. 3–4). The reason they leave him is because they see

⁴² Reading taken from NLRSP Ms. EVR ARAB I 247 fol. 75r ln. 11. Hussain's edition has פתכוני.

(= תִּרְאוּ) his calamity and do not want the same to befall them (Ins. 4–5).⁴³

Of the eight instances in which Yefet’s translation and/or commentary reflect both the *qere* and the *ketiv*, four instances involve the pair לוֹ (Q)/לָא (K). Other cases include the following:

(12) ומתחתה לשכות [ומתחת הלשכות] האלה המבוא [המביא] מהקדים
בבואו להנה מהחצר החצונה:

‘Below these chambers, (there shall be) a passage from the east for one’s entering them from the outer courts’ (Ezek. 42.9)

This example contains three pairs of *qere/ketiv*; the third instance is the one in question. The *qere* has the *hifil* participle מביא ‘to bring’, perhaps nominalised to mean ‘passage’. The *ketiv* has the noun ‘entrance’ plus the definite article. Yefet’s treatment (BL Or. 5062, fols. 176r–176v) is as follows:

	Lines	
מן אספל הדה אלחגר אלמדכל אלי אל	15	And below these chambers (lies) the entrance for
[מ]גיב מן גהה אלשרק מן דכולה אליהן מן	16	the one who brings in from the east side, whose entrance into them is from
[אל]צחן אלבראניה. וקולה המביא	17 3	the outer court. The term המביא

⁴³ The other instance of Yefet’s translation reflecting the *ketiv* is Prov. 20.20 בַּאֲשׁוֹן (Q)/בַּאֲשׁוֹן (K) (Sasson 2016, 380 ln. 12, 381 lns. 1–2)—most likely a harmonisation with Prov. 7.9, where the *ketiv* form of 20.20 is the only reading (Sasson 2016, 233, lns. 10–11).

מִהֲקִדִּים יִשִּׁיר בָּה אֵלֵי כַהֲנִים [הַלְוִיִּם]	4	מִהֲקִדִּים refers to the Levitical priests
אֵלֵדֵי הֵם מִשְׁרְתֵי הַבַּיִת וּמִשְׁרְתֵי הָעָם]	5	who are ministers (at) the house (of God) and on behalf of the people
יַעֲנִי אָדָא יִגִּיבוּ אֶלְחָטָא וְאֶלְאָשָׁם וְאֶלְמִנְחָה	6	So, when they bring the sin offerings, the guilt offerings, and offerings of thanksgiving
הָתִי יִטְבְּכוּנָהּ עֲנֵד הָדָה אֶלְלִשְׁכוֹת פֶּאֲנָהּ	7	in order to cook them at these לשכות, then they
יִגִּיבוּנָהּ מִן נֶאֱחִיָּה [ק]דִים וְיִדְבְּלוּן אֶלֶיהָ	8	should bring them from the east side and should enter it
מִן חֲצַר חִיצוֹנָהּ וְהוּ אֶלְצָחוֹן אֶלְוִסְטָאנִיָּה	9	from the חֲצַר חִיצוֹנָהּ, which is the middle chamber.

Yefet's translation reflects both the *qere* (= [מ]גיב, fol. 176r, ln. 16) and the *ketiv* (= אלמדכל; fol. 176r, ln. 15). He links the two with the preposition *אֵלֵי*, which here means 'for'.⁴⁴ There is nothing in the immediate context that provides a definitive answer as to why both words are represented in the translation. Yefet identifies the participle of the *qere* with the Levitical priests. The context, however, is mostly concerned with the architecture of the temple in Ezekiel's vision. It is possible that the retention of the *ketiv*, which represents an architectural feature, allows for continuity in spite of the shift to refer to the activities of the priests.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See Blau (2006, 19).

⁴⁵ The other three instances which are not לֹו (Q)/לֹא (K) are Gen. 30.11 (NLF Ms. Hebr 278, fol. 87r lns. 10–11, fol. 87v, lns. 6–7), Ps. 10.12

Within the four instances of the לִי (Q)/לֹא (K) pair, Yefet explicitly mentions the phenomenon of *qere/ketiv*. One of the four instances in Yefet's works (Prov. 26.2) has already been identified by Sasson (2013, 18), in which she also draws attention to the way in which Yefet designates *qere/ketiv*: "Yefet's description of *kativ* as 'that which is written inside' and *qere* as 'that which is written outside' testifies to the page arrangement of the codices that were at his disposal."⁴⁶ The two terms are *maktūb dāḥil/yuktabu min dāḥil* 'written inside', and *maktūb barran/yuktabu min barra* 'written outside'. Yefet refers to *qere/ketiv* in this manner in Prov. 19.7 (Sassoon 2016, 360, lns. 1–13), and Job 13.15 (BL Or 2510 fol. 69r, lns. 6–8). But consider Ps. 139.16:

- (13) גְּלִמִי | רָאָה עֵינֶיךָ וְעַל־סִפְרְךָ כָּל־יָמַי יִכְתְּבוּ יָמִים יָצָרוּ וְלֹא [וְלֹא] אֶחָד בָּהֶם:
 'Your eyes have seen me when I was incomplete, the days
 formed for me are all written in your book; in it is one of
 them' (Ps. 139.16)

In Yefet's treatment (according to NLF Ms Hebr 291, fols. 147v–148v) he mentions only that which is 'written' and does not specify 'outside' or 'inside':

	Lines	
גסמי נטרו עיניך ועל דיואגך כלהם יכתבון	5	Your eyes have seen my body, and upon your rec- ords all of the days

(NLF Ms. Hebr 290, fol. 68v, lns. 6–13), and Isa. 52.5 (NLRSP Ms. EVR I 596 fol. 221r lns. 8–10, fol. 222v lns. 8–12).

⁴⁶ See further Sasson (2013, 18–20). For this verse see Sasson (2016, 447, lns. 9–15).

אלאיאם אלדי צורו ולא כל ואחד מנהם.	6	are written which were formed—not any one from them.
וקו ולא אחד בהם יעני וללכאלק	15	Now the phrase וְלֹא אֶחָד בָּהֶם means ‘and to (as for) the creator’—
כל ואחד מן הדא אלאעצא יחדת פיהא	16	In all these limbs, He brings about
נמו אלאעצא ויתגה איצא אן יפסר ולא אחד	17	the growth of the limbs (i.e., the translation would be ‘each of them’). Now it is also possible to interpret וְלֹא אֶחָד
עלי [אלמכתוב] ⁴⁷ והו אנה יריד בה ולא ואחד	18	according to that which is written. In this way, it indi- cates, ‘not one
מן הדא אלאיאם אלדי צורת אעטאיי פיהא	19	of these days in which my limbs were formed
כפייה ענדך בל אנת עארף מא יכון פי כל	1	are hidden from you. Ra- ther, You know what will happen from
יום ויום	2	day to day.

5.3. Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ

Abū Ya‘aqūb Yūsuf ben Nūḥ, a native of Iraq, lived and worked in Palestine in the second half of the tenth century and beginning

⁴⁷ Reading taken from IOM Ms. A 215 fol. 75r ln. 8; IOM Ms. A 66 fol. 173v ln. 3. The reading in NLF Ms. Hebr. 291 contains the form אלכתבא.

of the eleventh century. He founded a college in Jerusalem called *dār li-l-‘ilm* ‘house of learning’ at the beginning of the eleventh century, a compound for biblical study and worship.⁴⁸ Ibn Nūḥ was well known as a grammarian and commentator (see §5.0 above).

I found a total of six instances from the published portions of ibn Nūḥ’s grammatical commentary known as the *Diqduq* (ed. Khan 2000). In all instances, his work reflects the *qere*, even where another scholar’s work may have reflected the *ketiv*. For example, in Ps. 10.10 Saadya’s translation and commentary indicate the *ketiv*.⁴⁹ Ibn Nūḥ’s treatment of this verse (as found in Khan 2000, 222–23) is as follows:

	Lines (Arabic)	
תפסיר לגישה וקד אכתצר	15	The meaning of לְגִישָׁה is ‘for your army’. The <i>yod</i> in it has been elided. Analogous to it is חֲלָפָאִים (Ps. 10.10), in which the <i>yod</i> has been elided and which consists of two words.
פיה אליוד ומתלה חלכאים אכתצר פיהא אליוד והי כלמתין	16	

Ibn Nūḥ refers to the *qere* of the form in Ps. 10.10, which consists of two words.

⁴⁸ See Margoliouth (1897, 438–439); Khan (2000, 5–7).

⁴⁹ See example 3.

5.4. David ben Abraham al-Fāsi

Al-Fāsi was a native of Morroco and lived in Palestine some time during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. During this time he composed his dictionary the *Kitāb Jāmīʿ al-alfāz*, which also contains grammatical and exegetical discussions.⁵⁰

I was able to gather a total of thirteen items of data from al-Fāsi. In twelve instances (92.3 percent), his works reflect the *qere*. In only one instance (7.7 percent), his work reflects the *ketiv*:

- (14)
- מְקַלֵּל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ יִדְעָד נֵרוֹ בְּאִישׁוֹן [בְּאַשְׁוֹן] חֹשֶׁךְ:
- ‘He who curses his father and his mother—his lamp will be snuffed out in darkness’ (Prov. 20.20)

The *qere* is a *hapax legomenon*, whereas the *ketiv* appears to be the word for ‘pupil’, used rarely in the Bible (cf. Deut. 32.10; Prov. 7.2, 9; Prov. 17.8). Al-Fāsi (according to Skoss 1936, I:79, lns. 174–75; I:159, lns. 88–89) treats the word as follows:

	Lines	
וכקולה ידעד נרו באישון חשך. וקד סמאה אישון	174	יִדְעָד נֵרוֹ בְּאִישׁוֹן חֹשֶׁךְ: (Prov. 20.20). Now, he called it אִישׁוֹן
חשך לאנה גפון אלטלמה עלי אלחקיקה מאנעה ללצו	175	חֹשֶׁךְ because it is literally ‘eyelids of the darkness’, which block the light.

⁵⁰ See Zawadowska (2012, 24); Skoss (1936, xxxi–lxv).

ידעד נרו באשון חשך פי גפון אלטלמה. וקד	88	(It says in the <i>qere</i>) ידעד נרו בַּאֲשׁוֹן חֶשֶׁךְ, (this also means) 'in the eyelids of darkness'. I have already explained all that is re- quired regarding the word בַּאֲשׁוֹן in the section 'alef- yod.
אוצחת כל מא יקתצי לפטה אשון פי באב א' י	89	

Al-Fāsi's reference to the 'eyelids of darkness' (גפון אלטלמה) appears to mean the darkness when one's eyelids cover their eyes. This mention of a part of the eye appears to refer to the lexeme אִישׁוֹן (= *ketiv*). In the section of the dictionary where the lexeme בַּאֲשׁוֹן would have appeared, al-Fāsi, refers the reader back to the entry for אִישׁוֹן, indicating that he regarded the two words as synonymous. In his interpretation of Prov. 20.20, therefore, al-Fāsi uses the more familiar form of the *ketiv* as the basis of the interpretation of the hapax legomenon of the *qere*.

5.5. 'Alī ibn Sulaymān

'Alī ibn Sulaymān lived during the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries and probably lived in Jerusalem for some time.⁵¹ He is best known for his dictionary, which was based on an abridgement of al-Fāsi's.⁵²

I was able to find only one example for 'Alī which reflects the *qere*:

⁵¹ Skoss (1928, 30–31).

⁵² Skoss (1928, 31).

from the *qere* eleven times (57.9 percent). In some cases—Exod. 21.8; Lev. 11.21; 25.30—the surrounding context made the *ketiv* highly implausible, so I left these out of my investigation. Indeed, Lieberman (1988, 82) argues that, in these three cases, the *qere/ketiv* distinction is actually a false one, and that they constitute “an outgrowth of midrashic inference.” Thus, I limited myself to instances where an obvious exegetical difference was observable.⁵⁶

The reason for the frequent divergence seems to be related to the long and complicated history of the transmission of the verses containing these alternatives. In his study of this *qere/ketiv* pair Ognibeni (1989, 131–33) concluded, from the textual witnesses of the versions, that the reading tradition of the *qere* (ל) is indeed ancient. The Dead Sea scrolls shed new light on the development of the *ketiv*. According to Lieberman (1988, 84), in about 80 percent of the instances of the verses that are attested in Masoretic lists, the *plene* spelling לו is attested. Within K. A. Matthew’s orthographical typology, the spelling לו belongs to the Hasmonian type (Freedman and Matthews 1985, 56–57). Ognibeni (1989, 136) concludes that “scribes copying from manuscripts of [the Hasmonean] type but writing according to other orthographic conventions may have occasionally fallen into error in the interpretation of this homograph.” Lieberman (1988, 83–84) has shown that this *qere/ketiv* pair evolved from multiple sources and that all instances have manuscript variants which support either reading. Based on his study of some Genizah fragments of Job 6.21, he states that ‘it becomes quite evident that

⁵⁶ I analysed Isa. 49.5; Job 6.21; Ps. 100.3; 139.16; Prov. 19.7; 26.2.

until very late... we have a text in a state of flux' (Lieberman 1988, 84). It is therefore plausible to suppose that, even though some of the Karaites' comments indicate the typical codicological arrangement of *qere/ketiv*, the situation described above with this particular pair still rendered both readings authoritative.

7.0. CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to determine to what extent the phenomenon of *qere/ketiv* is reflected in the works of Saadya Gaon and the medieval Karaite exegetes. In order to accomplish this, I analysed 48 instances in which the exegetical effect of the *qere/ketiv* pair was very apparent. The works of both Saadya and the Karaites generally reflect the *qere*. Nevertheless, not all of the scholars shared the same conviction as the Karaite al-Qirqisānī, that the *qere* was to be preferred as exclusively authoritative. Almost every divergence from this tendency may be shown to be due to the desire to harmonise a particular reading with the immediate context or parallel verses. This suggests that consistency of exposition is what propelled exegetical decisions between the *qere* and the *ketiv*. The pair וֵ (Q)/סִ (K) appears to have constituted a special case, since there is evidence that both readings retained authority among the exegetes and so they felt particularly free to base their interpretation on the *ketiv* when the context allowed for it.

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