

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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THE TIBERIAN TRADITION IN COMMON BIBLES FROM THE CAIRO GENIZAH

Benjamin Outhwaite

1.0. INTRODUCTION

This study takes a close look at five fragments of ‘Common Bibles’ from the Cairo Genizah, a category of biblical text that encompasses probably the majority of Hebrew Bible fragments found there. The texts are analysed on a textual and linguistic basis to see what they reveal about the phonetics of the Tiberian reading tradition in the Classical Genizah Period (the end of the tenth to the mid-thirteenth centuries CE) and the fidelity with which they follow that tradition. Common Bibles, I argue, provide a further glimpse into the phonetics of Tiberian Hebrew in this period, as their producers did not always adhere to the strict letter of the written Tiberian tradition, either through choice or ignorance, and the results reveal more about how the users of the text were pronouncing their Hebrew than the correct application of Tiberian graphemes would ordinarily allow. For instance, the substitution of vocalic *shewa* by a different vowel sign will reveal how the *shewa* was being pronounced, something normally hidden behind the inscrutable two dots of the sign itself.

2.0. THE CORPUS

‘Common Bible’ is the term proposed by Colette Sirat in her *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages* (2002) as one category of a fourfold division of the extant Hebrew Bible manuscript codices from the Muslim lands of the Middle Ages (Sirat 2002, 42–50). The full list is as follows: (a) Great Bibles, fully vocalised and cantillated, with Masoretic notes; (b) Common Bibles, ‘more modest’, usually without *masora magna*, but “they always have the vowel and cantillation signs”; (c) Bibles with translations; (d) the Bible with Arabic translation and translator’s commentary (e.g., Sa’adya’s *Tafsīr* or, for Karaites, the commentary by Yefet ben ‘Eli). The recent book by David Stern, *The Jewish Bible: A Material History* (2017), talks about three “distinct generic types of Hebrew Bible” in the Middle Ages, “the Masoretic Bible, the liturgical Pentateuch, and the study Bible,” which categories overlap, but not in contradictory fashion, with Sirat’s (Stern 2017, 88–90). Of relevance too is an earlier study by Goshen-Gottstein (1962) of the range of extant Hebrew Bibles found in the United States, one of the first to attempt to classify the types of biblical manuscript in the Genizah. He distinguishes ‘study codices’ from ‘listener’s codices’ (Goshen-Gottstein 1962, 36–44). His former category is differentiated from Great (Masoretic) Codices by an absence of Masoretic notes, indicating they are “not meant for ‘professional’ usage or to serve as an exact model,” while his latter, the ‘listener’s codices’ (which he estimates form about a half of the Elkan Nathan Adler Collection at the Jewish Theological Seminary, on which he bases his analysis) were meant for “everyday use” and were “not written in order to

please future hunters of variant readings and do not represent in any way... any hidden stream of tradition” (Goshen-Gottstein 1962, 38–40). He chose the term ‘listener’s codex’, because these texts in his view supported the congregation in its listening, not its reading, and were “little more than ‘hearing aids’” (Goshen-Gottstein 1962, 40–41). Despite having been written more than half a century ago, Goshen-Gottstein’s assertive impressions are still some of the more insightful on the subject, and the whole article, despite its parochial-sounding title (‘Biblical Manuscripts in the United States’), is a useful one.

In his survey, Stern (2017, 88) asserts that “the surviving codices are only a fraction of the Hebrew Bibles that once existed, and we do not know how representative they truly are.” While this is arguably true when looking at the Jewish world at large and over time, such is the scale of the biblical manuscript inventory in the Genizah Collection (more than twenty-five thousand pieces in the Taylor-Schechter and Lewis-Gibson Collections in Cambridge alone) that we can be quite confident we have a sense of the biblical landscape at least as it relates to the Eastern Mediterranean in the High Middle Ages (equivalent to the Classical Genizah Period).

Given all this, particularly that we can see the extent of the inventory and how the different types of biblical manuscript sit in it, I see no harm in adapting these categories to suit the differing kinds of analysis that should be done on them. For my current purposes, I am most interested in fragments with Tiberian vowels that are prone to deviation from the standard orthography and vocalisation of the text. These are going to be found mostly

among Goshen-Gottstein's 'listener's codices', but can also sit among his 'study codices'. I think it most effective therefore to take Sirat's broad definition of Common Bibles, i.e., excluding those with translations, commentaries, etc., but further exclude all with Masoretic notes, since these are, by definition, going to be less fruitful in significant deviations from the written tradition (which is what the *masora* is there to guard against!). This gives us a clear and handily unambiguous distinction between what we can call Masoretic Bibles and a broad category of Common Bibles: those that have Masoretic notes and those that do not.¹ For current purposes, therefore, a Common Bible preserves some or all of the biblical text in an extended form (i.e., not including collections of biblical verses for liturgical or homiletical purposes, but including collections of *haftarot* readings); it should not have the *masora*, in the form of Masoretic notes (*masora parva* and *magna*), but may have varying amounts of the rest of the panoply of the Tiberian Masoretic apparatus: vocalisation, cantillation signs, *parasha* and *seder* markers, demarcated *parashiyyot*, and *qere/ketiv* notations. It happens that Bibles of this type are often

¹ It is a useful division because it is unambiguous, but it also helps to focus our examination on Bibles of a shared type. Small-format, single-column Bible codices would, for instance, fall into Sirat's 'Common Bible' category even if they have full Masoretic notes, whereas I feel that they would be better served by being treated as 'scholarly editions' and analysed alongside the Great Masoretic Bibles, from which they may have been copied and with which they undoubtedly have a closer relationship. The majority of Common Bibles probably do not have the same pedigrees.

of a smaller format, and may be written on parchment or on paper, but the current study is not concerned with the codicological categorisation of Common Bibles, only with their value in the analysis of the Tiberian tradition that they transmit.²

The Common Bible, under any form of categorisation, has not been the focus of much research. Palestinian and Babylonian-

² Format is not a reliable guide to the quality of a biblical text, if we define quality, as far as Tiberian text-types go, in terms of proximity to the Masoretic Text. Some large format Great Bibles are quite second-rate, with significant numbers of errors and a frequent disparity between their text and their own *masora*, whereas T-S Misc. 24.137.3, a small (15 cm × 22 cm) parchment bifolium containing the end of the book of Numbers has a colophon that reads ל[על]י מצחף אלתאג דבכנסת ירושלמין דבמצרים וב"ה. M. C. Davis (1978, 306) understands this as meaning “that this Pentateuch belonged to the ‘Jerusalemite’ congregation in Foṣṭaṭ,” but in fact it probably refers to how it was copied. Therefore the missing word is perhaps נקל ‘it was copied’ (Arabic *nuqila*; thanks to Geoffrey Khan for this suggestion), and it means that this small format Bible was copied from the greatest of the Ben Asher texts, the *Tāj*: ‘...copied from the codex of the *Tāj*, which is in the Synagogue of the Jerusalemites in Fustāṭ, and with the help of God’. The *Tāj*, the Aleppo Codex, was kept in the Synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustāṭ in the twelfth century, after its redemption from the Crusaders following the fall of Jerusalem. If the reading of the colophon is correct, then it is a witness to a part of the text that is now lost. With thanks to Estara Arant, over whose shoulder I spotted this fragment while she was collecting data for her PhD. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague in Cambridge, Kim Phillips, for his assiduous comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

vocalised manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah have been investigated at length, and those with Extended Tiberian too, though to a lesser extent.³ Those, on the other hand, with ‘ordinary’ Tiberian vocalisation have probably been viewed as insufficiently interesting to be worthy of close analysis: the Tiberian is either seen as poorly executed, and therefore too debased a form to be relevant to the study of the tradition itself (hence the appellation ‘vulgar’ sometimes applied to them), or the manuscripts are viewed as too far removed in time from the Masoretic era, from the core Ben Asher tradition. Israel Yeivin, in his *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (translated by E. J. Revell, 1980) discusses the Bibles of the Cairo Genizah and touches on these points: “Most are fragments of ‘vulgar’ texts, some without Masorah, without accents, with many extra vowel letters, and so on.... MSS written after 1100 contain, as a rule, little of interest to the study of the standard tradition and its development.... They do, however, contain much of value to the study of the development of the tradition up to the time of printing, and also for the study of the pronunciation of Hebrew in different periods and localities” (Yeivin 1980, 30–31). I agree wholeheartedly with his last point, that these manuscripts—though without limiting it to those writ-

³ Goshen-Gottstein (1962, 35) is forthright in his explanation of the history: “When the Cairo Genizah started to become the pet subject of scholars, they were naturally interested in material up to then unknown.... It was only the fragments with non-TBT [= non-Tiberian Bible Text] vocalization that aroused the curiosity of scholars. Working on biblical Geniza fragments meant: looking for non-TBT vocalization.”

ten after 1100—can be of great interest for the study of the pronunciation of Hebrew, and, in particular, of the pronunciation of the Tiberian tradition as practised by the disparate congregations who made up the Jewish community of Fuṣṭāṭ, or from further afield, whose discarded manuscripts ended up in the Genizah Collection. In support, I enlist a further assertion from Moshe Goshen-Gottstein (1962, 41) about his ‘listener’s codices’: “This freedom in copying out these texts is of vital importance for our understanding of Hebrew reading traditions and linguistic habits.”

3.0. SCOPE OF THE ANALYSIS

Classification of Tiberian Hebrew Bibles generally relies on a text’s degree of adherence to the standard Masoretic Text, as exemplified in Codex Leningrad (Russian National Library Ebp. I B19a) or the Aleppo Codex (Ben Zvi Institute). This is not a new idea, and indeed can be traced at least as far back as Maimonides, who belittled the copies of the Bible in circulation in his day, comparing them unfavourably to the *Tāj*, which he described as corrected by Ben Asher himself (*Mishne Tora, Hilkhhot Tefillin, Mezuza ve-Sefer Tora* 8.4). We now identify this manuscript with the Aleppo Codex, the production of which was “the great event in the history of the Tiberian Bible text” (Goshen-Gottstein 1963, 86). Such textual perfection is not, however, a useful yardstick to employ when examining the Common Bible on its own terms. While some may have been copied by practised hands from reliable precursor texts, many, as will be shown below, have no such aspirations of rigid adherence to Tiberian norms, let alone Ben-

Asherian perfection. Some were used to practise or learn the copying of the text, others to practise or learn Hebrew itself; some were used for recitation, or for learning the text of a *haftara* or festival reading; others perhaps served as ‘lap’ Bibles, books to be held to follow the readings in the service, either for utility alone or as signs of status.

There is more to be written about the production, ownership and use of Common Bibles, but this is not the focus of the current study. For the moment, I suggest just that as a category it encompasses both user-produced codices (i.e., owned and used by those who originally wrote them), which are probably the majority of the fragments, as well as those created by third parties—relatives, friends, professional or semi-professional scribes. As will be seen, some of these Common Bible fragments are of the highest quality in terms of their production, whereas others are definitely at the ‘barely good enough’ end of things.⁴

Given that Common Bibles are so numerous, their value should be self-evident: they form a large body of evidence for ordinary Jewish engagement with the text of the Hebrew Bible in the Middle Ages. But beyond their interest as a cultural artefact of popular religion, their textual value, too, is considerable. That is not to say that they have great importance for textual criticism

⁴ The great legal authority of the Genizah world, Maimonides, explains in his *Mishne Tora* (*Hilkhot Tefillin, Mezuza ve-Sefer Tora* 7.1), basing himself on Deut. 31.19, that it is a requirement for every Jewish man (כל איש ואיש מישראל) to write a Torah, or, if he is not capable of it, to get someone else to write it for him. The huge number of Common Bibles in the Genizah perhaps reflects this halakhic opinion in practice.

of the biblical text in its traditional sense. Their frequent departures from the consonantal Masoretic Text can usually be explained by error or analogy, and it is less likely that they somehow preserve ancient or alternate streams of textual transmission.⁵ They do, though, have a real and unique value for the history of the Hebrew language. Our sources for the pronunciation of Tiberian Biblical Hebrew in this period are few: Masoretic treatises (and the successor works of the medieval grammarians and the more linguistically conscious commentators) and the Karaite transcriptions of the Hebrew Bible into Arabic script. There are not many more sources than those that point to the linguistic reality of Tiberian Hebrew at the end of the first millennium. Among the huge variety of Common Bibles, however, particularly those at the more home-made, budget end of the scale, are those which do not follow the accepted norms of spelling and vocalisation. They provide rare glimpses of how Hebrew was pronounced in the home and synagogue of the High Middle Ages.

To demonstrate this value, and to present some of the range of Common Bibles preserved in the Genizah, I have selected five different manuscripts from the Additional Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection. No small selection from the huge Additional Series, which contains around fifteen thousand pieces of

⁵ It is instructive, and entertaining, to quote Goshen-Gottstein (1962, 40) again: “They were not written in order to please future hunters of variant readings and do not represent in any way—as far as our analysis indicates—any hidden stream of tradition which remained, so to speak, outside the domain of TBT [= Tiberian Bible Text]” (Goshen-Gottstein.

biblical manuscript, can be completely representative of the inventory at large, but the aim is to give a sense of the different types of Common Bible, as well as show their potential interest for the transmission of the Tiberian tradition. To that end, all the manuscripts selected have Tiberian vocalisation and some have cantillation too. Below, I analyse each from a textual and linguistic standpoint, focusing the analysis on the phonetics behind the orthography and vocalisation. There is no detailed palaeographic or codicological description. In general, the majority of manuscripts in the Taylor-Schechter Collection come from the High Middle Ages, and most were probably produced in Egypt for and by the congregation who used the Synagogue of the Palestinians in Fustāt. A substantial number of Genizah manuscripts fall outside those temporal and geographical limits, but I have not chosen any that are clearly late (fourteenth century onwards) or obviously ‘foreign’ (such as in Spanish or Yemeni hands, frequent interlopers in the Genizah). The manuscripts featured here are more likely to be from the period between the end of the tenth and the middle of the thirteenth centuries, and are likely to have been produced in Egypt, Syria-Palestine, or eastern North Africa.

The fragments under analysis are all from Cambridge University Library’s Taylor-Schechter Collection of Genizah fragments. All were catalogued (in very terse fashion) in Davis and Outhwaite’s (2003) catalogue of the Additional Series, but have otherwise not been published.

T-S AS 44.35, a bifolium of Lamentations

T-S AS 68.100, a leaf of Psalms

T-S AS 53.90, a leaf of Kings and Ezekiel

T-S AS 5.144, a leaf of Leviticus

T-S AS 59.215, a bifolium of Proverbs

4.0. CODEX OF LAMENTATIONS, T-S AS 44.35

4.1. Description

The Cairo Genizah manuscript Cambridge University Library T-S AS 44.35 is a small-format paper bifolium containing continuous text from Lam. 2.13–18; 3.51–4.2. As the gap between the content of the two folios suggests, it was probably from a copy of the whole book, rather than just an excerpt. Lamentations is read in the evening service of *Tish'a be'Av* 'the ninth of Av' (Elbogen 1993, 108), and individual copies of the book or of all the *Megillot* together can be found in the Genizah. T-S AS 44.35 is fully furnished with Tiberian vowels, but there are no cantillation signs, and no *masora*.⁶ The divine name, in the form of the Tetragrammaton, is written in full. Consonants and vowels are in the same ink and, most likely, the same hand.⁷ The text does not seem to

⁶ A space of approximately ten letters' width has been left after the end of Lam. 3.66 and before 4.1. This could be construed as a *parasha setuma* 'a closed paragraph', but in fact Codex Leningrad has a *petuḥa* 'an open paragraph' here. None of the many closed paragraphs that occur in this section of text in Codex Leningrad (e.g., Lam. 3.63 or 4.1) are reflected in the manuscript.

⁷ It is clear that vowels and consonants were written at the same time, because there is more space between some lines than others, depending on the number and type of vowel signs written. Further evidence is in

have been ruled, and the left-hand margin is quite ragged, though there are some line fillers and elongated letters. Perhaps these are more for effect than actual utility. The writing fills most of the page, with minimal space left for margins. The execution of certain letter shapes and vowel signs is unusual: most notably *qibbuṣ* is often reversed, with the three dots sloping up from left-to-right.

The system of Tiberian vocalisation used in T-S AS 44.35 is idiosyncratic, but appears to behave consistently within its own rules, as far as these can be discerned. The most obvious feature of the vocalisation is that silent *shewa* is usually not marked unless it falls under one of the *bgdkpt* consonants, where it probably serves to mark that the consonant has spirant, i.e., fricative, pronunciation. Vocalic *shewa* is frequently replaced by *pataḥ*. Full vowels occur in place of *ḥatefs*. *Dagesh (lene or forte)* is absent, as is *rafe*.⁸ No dot distinguishes the consonants *śin* and *shin*. *Sof pasuq* (:), as part of the consonantal text, occurs at the end of verses; *maqquf*, as part of the accentuation system, is not used.⁹ The vowel *u*, regardless of length, is usually marked with a di-graph וּ, וֹ, or ו.

Lam. 4.2, where the scribe corrected his spelling of הַיְקָרִים by writing a *yod* above the line, but in so doing forgot to vocalise the word itself.

⁸ *Rafe* may appear once in T-S AS 44.35, on *dalet* in קְדָמִים ‘ancient times’ (Lam. 2.17).

⁹ *Sof pasuq* is lacking at the end of Lam. 3.55.

4.2. Consonantal Text of T-S AS 44.35

T-S AS 44.35 does not slavishly follow the Masoretic Text, although there are sufficient defective forms to show some awareness of and fidelity to the basic consonantal form of the text. For instance, אֹיְבִי ‘my enemy’ (Lam. 3.52) is defective in the fragment and the MT.¹⁰ Where the form is *plene* in the MT, at Lam. 2.17, the fragment is too: אֹיֵב ‘enemy’. However, there are numerous differences, with the following *plene* spellings all defective in the MT:

עוֹבְרֵי (MT עוֹבְרֵי) ‘passers-by’ (Lam. 2.15); אֲמַרְתָּ (MT אֲמַרְתָּ) ‘you said’ (Lam. 3.57); גָּאֻלְתָּ (MT גָּאֻלְתָּ) ‘you have redeemed’ (Lam. 3.58); וַיִּנָּעוּ (MT וַיִּנָּעוּ) ‘and shake’ (Lam. 2.15);¹¹ יוֹפִי (MT יוֹפִי) ‘beauty’ (Lam. 2.15), etc.

The reverse occurs rarely in T-S AS 44.35; only the following defective forms are *plene* in the MT:

אֹיְבֵיךָ (MT אֹיְבֵיךָ) ‘your enemies’ (Lam. 2.16); אַכָּה (MT אַכָּה) ‘How?’ (Lam. 4.1)

There is obviously a greater tendency towards the use of *matres lectionis*, but not a complete departure from the consonantal tradition behind the MT.

¹⁰ Where comparison is made to the Masoretic Text (hereafter MT), unless otherwise specified, this refers to the Leningrad Codex (Russian National Library Bp. I B19a).

¹¹ However, in the Leningrad Codex וַיִּנָּעוּ (Lam. 2.15) shows an erasure indicating that it was originally written with *plene yod*.

The precedence of the oral tradition over the consonantal can be seen in the frequent ellipsis or replacement of quiescent *ʾalef*, where the text presents a more phonetic, rather than historical, spelling, e.g.,

יִרְפֶּה (MT יִרְפָּא) ‘he will heal’ (Lam. 2.13); רֹשָׁם (MT רֹאשָׁם) ‘their head’ (Lam. 2.15); וְלֹ (MT וְלֹא) ‘and not’ (Lam. 2.17); רוֹשִׁי (MT רֹאשִׁי) ‘my head’ (Lam. 3.54); קָרָאתִי (MT קָרֵאתִי) ‘I called’ (Lam. 3.55) with *ʾalef* added above the line; אֶל בְּרוֹשׁ (MT בְּרֹשׁ) ‘do not fear’ (Lam. 3.57); בְּרֹאשׁ (MT בְּרֹאשׁ) ‘at the head of’ (Lam. 4.1)

The spelling of the MT’s שֹׁן (Lam. 2.14) as שָׁב, corrected above the line with וּ and written correctly as שׁוּא on its second occurrence in the verse, also reflects the more phonetic impulses of the scribe, confusing the two homophonous consonants.¹² Similarly מַחְשׁוֹת (MT מַחְשׁוֹת) ‘their thoughts’ (Lam. 3.60), where the ב was inserted only as an afterthought, is probably symptomatic of the same confusion.

The substitution of the Tetragrammaton twice, in Lam. 2.18 and 3.58 (written the second time יְיָהוָה), where the MT on both occasions has אֲדֹנָי, similarly underlines the oral nature of this

¹² The confusion of ב and ו, pronounced identically as labio-dental [v] under most circumstances in Tiberian Hebrew, is pervasive in the texts of the Genizah. It can be found in a draft of a letter by the head of the Jerusalemite community in eleventh-century Fustāṭ, Efrayim ben Shemarya, נפלאותיו ‘his wonders’ (for נפלאותיו), T-S 12.273, as well as in a very young child’s (or very backward student’s) biblical writing exercise, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ ‘the LORD his God’ (for אֱלֹהֵינוּ), T-S NS 159.209.

transcription, suggesting that it was not copied from a written exemplar, but taken down from memory or from dictation.

Beyond the interchange of vowel letters, T-S AS 44.35 shows two minor consonantal differences from the MT:

כָּל הָאָרֶץ (MT לְכָל-הָאָרֶץ) ‘the whole earth’ (Lam. 2.15);
וּלְשׁוֹעָתִי (MT לְשׁוֹעָתִי) ‘from my cry’ (Lam. 3.56)

The text follows the MT *qere* with שְׁבוּתְךָ (MT שְׁבוּתְךָ) ‘your captivity’ (Lam. 2.14). There is an obvious dittography in הַטּוֹב הַטּוֹב ‘the best’ (Lam. 4.1), where the scribe recognised their error and did not vocalise the repeated word.

The evidence of the consonantal text of T-S AS 44.35 is that the scribe who produced it, though possessing familiarity with the general spelling conventions of the MT, certainly did not meticulously following a Masoretic *Vorlage*. The more phonetic elements, in particular the ellipsis of quiescent *alef*, show the pervasive influence of the reading tradition, that is, of the oral recitation, which tends often in the fragment to override the spelling conventions of standard Biblical Hebrew.

4.3. *Shewa* in T-S AS 44.35

Further evidence of the influence of the oral component in the text’s composition can be seen in its approach to marking the *shewa* sign, sparsely used in the text. Where *shewa* occurs on non-*bgdkpt* consonants and is silent in the MT, no sign is written, e.g.,

בָּלַעְנוּ (MT בָּלַעְנוּ) ‘we have swallowed’ (Lam. 2.16); נִגְזַרְתִּי
(pausal, MT נִגְזַרְתִּי) ‘I am cut off’ (Lam. 3.54); מַחֲשֵׁב(וֹתָם

(MT מַחְשְׁבֵהֶם) ‘their thoughts’, with *pataḥ* in place of the MT’s vocalic *shewa* (Lam. 3.60)

While no standard Masoretic codex of the Bible follows this practice, the occasional elision of silent *shewa* can be found even in the best manuscripts. The Aleppo Codex, for example, exhibits at least three words where the *naqdan*, possibly Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher himself, has forgotten to write silent *shewa*, for instance on בְּקֶרְבוֹ ‘inside him’ (Job 20.14; Yeivin 1968, 16). However inadvertent it was in that meticulously vocalised manuscript, the elision of silent *shewa* in T-S AS 44.35 can nevertheless be seen as the natural culmination of an understandable tendency to ignore or forget a \emptyset vowel.

In contrast, silent *shewa* is often marked in the fragment on vowelless *bgdkpt* consonants, where possibly its primary purpose was not to indicate the \emptyset vowel, but to mark the fricative pronunciation of the consonant, e.g.,

עוֹבְרֵי ‘passers-by’ (Lam. 2.15); לִנְפְשִׁי (MT לִנְפְשִׁי) ‘to my soul’ (Lam. 3.51) with *pataḥ* for vocalic *shewa*; רִבֵּתְךָ ‘you have pleaded’ (Lam. 3.58); שִׁפְטָהּ ‘judge!’ (Lam. 3.59); שִׁפְתָּי, ‘the lips of’ (Lam. 3.61)

This extended use of *shewa* is perhaps most evident when it occurs on the final consonant of a word:

הַזֹּאת (MT הַזֹּאת) ‘this’ (Lam. 2.15); כְּלִילָתָהּ (MT כְּלִילָתָהּ) ‘the perfection of’ (Lam. 2.15); מְשָׂאוֹתָהּ (MT מְשָׂאוֹתָהּ) ‘burdens’ (Lam. 2.14); הַטּוֹב (MT הַטּוֹב) ‘the best’ (Lam. 4.1)

Though contrary to standard Tiberian practice in the marking of the sign, this still accords with Tiberian pronunciation, where word-final *shewa* is usually silent (Khan 2013a, 100).¹³

There are a number of exceptions in the application of these apparent rules by the scribe of T-S AS 44.35. Silent *shewa* is not always marked on vowelless fricatives:

סָפְקוּ (MT סָפְקוּ) ‘they clap’ (Lam. 2.15); קָרַבְתָּ (MT קָרַבְתָּ) ‘you came near’ (Lam. 3.57); תִּשְׁתַּפֹּכְנָה (MT תִּשְׁתַּפֹּכְנָה) ‘they are poured out’ (Lam. 4.1); חוּצוֹת (MT חוּצוֹת) ‘streets’ (Lam. 4.1); לִנְבִּלִי (MT לִנְבִּלִי) ‘as jars’ (Lam. 4.2)

But given that this is an informal reworking of their system, we should not expect the same rigour as that exhibited by the Masoretes.

Shewa also occurs occasionally on vowelless non-*bgdkpt* consonants, for instance שָׁוְא ‘vain’ (Lam. 2.14), a rare case of complete fidelity to the historical MT spelling, but more unexpectedly on מְשׁוֹשׁ ‘the joy’ (Lam. 2.15),¹⁴ הַיּוֹם ‘the day’ (Lam. 2.16)

¹³ While ostensibly it resembles the use of *shewa* in the Extended Tiberian system, where final *waw* or the gutturals may take simple *shewa* (Heijmans 2013a, §2d, g), I do not think there is an organic link, as the purpose is quite different and no further characteristic features of Extended Tiberian vocalisation or phonology are present in this fragment.

¹⁴ There is damage under the *mem* of מְשׁוֹשׁ (MT מְשׁוֹשׁ) ‘the joy’ (Lam. 2.15), so this could possibly be read as a *pataḥ* rather than a *qameṣ*. If the former, then it is *pataḥ* in place of vocalic *shewa*, indicating that the writer has taken מְשׁוֹשׁ כֹּל הָאָרֶץ as a construct phrase (which would make sense, given the loss of the MT’s ל, i.e., מְשׁוֹשׁ לְכֹל הָאָרֶץ), perhaps under the influence of Ps. 48.3.

and מְבוֹר ‘from a pit’ (Lam. 3.55). These are all, as above, on a final vowelless consonant. Medially, the text shows variance in regard to *mem*, however, with אָמְרוּ ‘they said’ (Lam. 2.16), showing *shewa*, but צָמְחוּ ‘they have made an end’ (Lam. 3.53) and שְׁמֶךָ ‘your name’ (Lam. 3.55) both eschewing it.

Shewa on אֵל תִּתְעַלֵּם (MT אֵל־תִּתְעַלֵּם) ‘do not hide’ (Lam. 3.56) similarly marks what is a silent *shewa* in the MT. Given the text’s general approach to *shewa*, the use here probably serves to underline that the ‘ayin is vowelless [ʔal taʔle:m]. No *shewa* occurs on vowelless ‘ayin in שָׁמַעְתָּ (MT שָׁמַעְתָּ) ‘you have heard’ (Lam. 3.61), however.

4.4. *Pataḥ* for *Shewa* in T-S AS 44.35

T-S AS 44.35 usually puts *pataḥ* where we find a simple vocalic *shewa* in the MT. This is in accordance with the Tiberian pronunciation tradition’s rendering of vocalic *shewa* as a short [a], equivalent in quality to a *pataḥ* (Khan 2013a, 98). The scribe does not use *ḥatef pataḥ* for this purpose as no *ḥatefs* occur in the fragment at all:

יְרוּשָׁלַם (MT יְרוּשָׁלַם) ‘Jerusalem’ (Lam. 2.13) not pausal in the MT, the fragment has *qameṣ* for MT’s *pataḥ*; וְאַנְחֵמִיד (MT וְאַנְחֵמִיד) ‘that I may comfort you’ (Lam. 2.13); בְּתוּלָת (MT בְּתוּלָת) ‘virgin of’ (Lam. 2.13); נְבִיאֶיךָ (MT נְבִיאֶיךָ) ‘your prophets’ (Lam. 2.14); וְלֹ (MT וְלֹא) ‘and not’ (Lam. 2.14); שְׁבוּתְךָ (MT שְׁבוּתְךָ) ‘your captivity’ (Lam. 2.14); יְרוּשָׁלַם (MT יְרוּשָׁלַם) ‘Jerusalem’ (Lam. 2.15), showing *pataḥ* for the MT’s pausal *qameṣ*; כְּלִילָת (MT כְּלִילָת) ‘the perfection of’ (Lam. 2.15); וְלֹ (MT וְלֹא) ‘and not’ (Lam. 2.17); בְּנוֹת (MT בְּנוֹת) ‘the

daughters of' (Lam. 3.51); אָזְנֶךָ לְרוּחֹתַי (MT אָזְנֶךָ לְרוּחֹתַי) 'your ear for my relief' (Lam. 3.56); מַחְשַׁבְתָּם (MT מַחְשַׁבְתָּם) 'their thoughts' (Lam. 3.60); וְקִמָּתָם (MT וְקִמָּתָם) 'their rising up' (Lam. 3.63); יָדֵיהֶם (MT יָדֵיהֶם) 'their hands' (Lam. 3.64); בָּאֵף (MT בָּאֵף) 'in anger' (Lam. 3.66); שָׁמַי (MT שָׁמַי) 'the heavens of' (Lam. 3.66); בְּנֵי (MT בְּנֵי) 'children of' (Lam. 4.2); יָדֵי (MT יָדֵי) 'the hands of' (Lam. 4.2)

In every case in the fragment where the standard Tiberian pronunciation of *shewa* is equivalent to a short [a], the scribe uses a *pataḥ* rather than a *shewa*. In a text that is not emulating the MT to a great degree, it should not be a surprise, given that the chief distinction between *shewa* and *pataḥ* is morphophonological and not phonetic (*shewa* cannot, under most circumstances, form a syllable in Tiberian Hebrew). This distinction was evidently of little significance to the writer of this manuscript.

4.5. *Shewa* before *Yod* or *Guttural* in T-S AS 44.35

Where *shewa* occurs before *yod* in the MT, T-S AS 44.35 has a *hireq*: בְּיוֹם (MT בְּיוֹם) 'on the day' (Lam. 3.57), [bi'jo:m]. This reflects the standard Tiberian pronunciation of *shewa* before *yod* as a short [i] (Khan 2013a, 98). It is also a feature that is found, although with great inconsistency, in Palestinian-vocalised manuscripts (Revell 1970a, 90; Heijmans 2013a, §3f).

Before a guttural, *shewa* is pronounced with the quality of the vowel following the guttural (Khan 2013a, 98). This is reflected in the fragment in לְהָשִׁיב (MT לְהָשִׁיב) 'to turn away' (Lam. 2.14), which ignores the technicalities of syllable structure and prefers *qameṣ* to *shewa*, [lɔhɔ:'ʃi:v].

4.6. *Shewa* on the First of Two Identical Consonants in T-S AS 44.35

Unless adjacent to another *shewa* or under a geminated consonant, *shewa* in the middle of a word is usually silent in the standard Tiberian reading tradition (Yeivin 1980, 277; Khan 2013a, 99–100). Masoretic treatises, including Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher's *Diqduqe haṭ-Ṭe'amim*, present a number of exceptions to this rule, one of which is when the *shewa* occurs on the first of two identical consonants after a long vowel (Dotan 1967, I:115–16 [§5]; Yeivin 1980, 280–81). In many cases these are marked with *ḥaṭef pataḥ* in the Aleppo Codex and occasionally in Lenin-grad.¹⁵ In similar fashion T-S AS 44.35 reflects the vocalic nature of this *shewa*, but as we might expect by now, a full *pataḥ* is used in preference to a *ḥaṭef*, עוֹלֵלָה (MT עוֹלֵלָה) 'affects' (Lam. 3.51), [ʔo:la'lɔ:].

4.7. *Ḥaṭef* in T-S AS 44.35

There are no *ḥaṭef* signs in T-S AS 44.35. A full vowel is used in place of *ḥaṭef* wherever it occurs in the MT, e.g.,

וְאַנְחִמֶיךָ (MT וְאַנְחִמֶיךָ) 'that I may comfort you' (Lam. 2.13);

כַּמַּעֲשֶׂה (MT כַּמַּעֲשֶׂה) 'according to the work' (Lam. 3.64);

תִּאֲלָתֶיךָ (MT תִּאֲלָתֶיךָ) 'your curse' (Lam. 3.65)

4.8. Differences in Vowel Quality in T-S AS 44.35

In Lam. 2.14 וַיֵּחֲזִי (MT וַיֵּחֲזִי) 'and they have seen', the fragment replaces both the MT's *ḥaṭef segol* and *segol* with *ṣere*, apparently

¹⁵ See Phillips' contribution in the present volume, pp. 380–81, 384–87.

giving [vay(y)e:he:^lzu:]. This can be seen more widely throughout the text: it frequently replaces Tiberian *segol* with *šere*, particularly in the nominal הֹ- ending and especially in segolate forms, e.g.,

אֲדַמָּה (MT אֲדַמָּה) ‘I shall compare’ (Lam. 2.13); אֲשׁוּה (MT אֲשׁוּה) ‘I shall make equal’ (Lam. 2.13); דֶּרֶךְ (MT דֶּרֶךְ) ‘way’ (Lam. 2.15); הָאָרֶץ (MT הָאָרֶץ) ‘the land’ (Lam. 2.15); שְׁקוּיָנוּהוּ (MT שְׁקוּיָנוּהוּ) ‘that we hoped for’ (Lam. 2.16); אִמְרָתוֹ (MT אִמְרָתוֹ) ‘his word’ (Lam. 2.17); אֲשֶׁר (MT אֲשֶׁר) ‘which’ (Lam. 2.17); קֶדֶם (MT קֶדֶם) ‘old’ (Lam. 2.17); קֶרֶן (MT קֶרֶן) ‘horn’ (Lam. 2.17); אֶבֶן (MT אֶבֶן) ‘a stone’ (Lam. 3.53); אֶקְרָאָךְ (MT אֶקְרָאָךְ) ‘I call you’ (Lam. 3.57); חֲרַפְתָּם (MT חֲרַפְתָּם) ‘their reproach’ (Lam. 3.61); הַכֶּתֶם (MT הַכֶּתֶם) ‘fine gold’ (Lam. 4.1); נִחְשְׁבוּ (MT נִחְשְׁבוּ) ‘they are considered’ (Lam. 4.2); חֶרֶשׁ (MT חֶרֶשׁ) ‘earthen vessel’ (Lam. 4.2)

Segol is replaced by *šere* in both stressed and unstressed syllables. However, *segol* is not avoided altogether in T-S AS 44.35: פִּיהֶם ‘their mouth’ (Lam. 2.16) and זֶה ‘this’ (Lam. 2.16) both retain *segol*. Furthermore, it is found in place of the MT’s *šere* on two occasions: הָרִים (MT הָרִים) ‘he has raised’ (Lam. 2.17); and אַל תִּתְּעַלֵּם (MT אַל-תִּתְּעַלֵּם) ‘do not hide’ (Lam. 3.56). In both cases the vowel exchange is on a guttural (ה, ע) in a verbal form, once each on an unstressed and a stressed syllable. The construct noun מַעֲשֵׂה ‘the work of’ (Lam. 4.2) preserves the MT’s *šere*. In general, the frequent interchanges and evident confusion are suggestive of the influence of the Palestinian pronunciation of Hebrew, i.e., the Se-fardi-Palestinian reading tradition, where the two vowels *e* and *ε*

have merged (Henshke 2013b). If this is the case, then we should also expect to see evidence of a merging of the vowels *a* and *ɔ*.

Confusion between *a* and *ɔ* in T-S AS 44.35 is mostly found in pausal forms, where the text substitutes *pataḥ* for the MT's pausal *qameṣ*.¹⁶

יְרוּשָׁלַיִם (MT יְרוּשָׁלַם) 'Jerusalem' (Lam. 2.15); זָמַם (MT זָמַם) 'he devised' (Lam. 2.17); חָמַל (MT חָמַל) 'he pitied' (Lam. 2.17)

Rather than a general merging of the vowels, this may instead reflect a loss of distinct pausal forms in the recitation that sits behind this fragment, although we do find pausal *qameṣ* in accordance with the MT at Lam. 3.54 נִגְזַרְתִּי (MT נִגְזַרְתִּי) 'I am cut off'. This is a major, verse-final, pause, though, whereas the previous examples were all mid-verse (i.e., at *atnaḥ*) or minor pause (at *revia*), and perhaps therefore elided through lax recitation. The *qameṣ* in non-pausal יְרוּשָׁלַיִם 'Jerusalem' (Lam. 2.13), however, points at a greater degree of confusion in the scribe's pronunciation. Similarly, the *ō* vowel in [jaro:ʃɔˈlaːyim] might suggest some phonetic overlap between *u* and *o*, such as can also be found in Palestinian Aramaic pronunciation (Yahalom 1997, 18). However, the *ū* vowel is retained in all other cases, even in the same word when it occurs two verses later (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, Lam. 2.15),

¹⁶ וַיִּשְׂמַח 'and he was happy' (Lam. 2.17) for the MT's וַיִּשְׂמַח is probably a morphological exchange, the *qal* for the *pi'el*, rather than phonological. Though if the lack of the *dagesh* sign denotes a loss of gemination, a phonological exchange is a possibility: [vaysam'maḥ] > [vayis'ma:h].

and therefore a scribal lapse, due to the casual nature of the work, is more likely.

4.9. T-S AS 44.35 in Conclusion

Consonantly, the Lamentations manuscript deviates from the MT in its *plene* orthography and particularly in its frequent ellipsis of quiescent *ʾalef*. The substitution of the Tetragrammaton for the MT's אדני on two occasions suggests that it may not have been copied from a *Vorlage* at all, but produced from dictation. Its vocalisation diverges greatly from that of the MT, but in a consistent, logical manner. Indeed, for a fragment that looks very casual in its execution—the work of an individual for their own purposes—the text is very consistent in its vocalisation. The *shewa* is sparsely used and serves a secondary purpose of marking the fricative pronunciation of *bgdkpt* consonants. Vocalic *shewa* is replaced with *pataḥ* in most circumstances, with *hireq* when preceding *yod*, and with a full vowel before a guttural. The *ḥatef* is ignored entirely as an irrelevance. A more significant divergence from standard Tiberian is found in vowel quality, with a slight blurring of the distinction between, respectively, the *u* and *o*, *a* and *ɔ*, and, to a much greater degree, *e* and *ɛ* vowels. It could be ascribed to the influence of a background Palestinian reading tradition, an example of Palestino-Tiberian vocalisation, but is only consistently apparent in the *e/ɛ* vowels.

In other respects, the pronunciation reflected in the vocalisation accords with that of the standard Tiberian reading tradition. This includes even the more potentially problematic renderings, such as the correct pronunciation of the first of two identical

consonants after a long vowel. The absence of cantillation signs might suggest that either the correct cantillation was well known to the user of the book or else it was irrelevant to its intended use. The absence of *dagesh* calls for an explanation. The use of silent *shewa* apparently to mark the fricative pronunciation of the *bgdkpt* consonants means that *dagesh* would serve a purpose only of indicating consonantal length. That it is not used at all suggests that the length of consonants, like the length of vowels, was not of primary interest to the creator of this fragment and may not have been discernible in their reading of it.

5.0. CODEX OF PSALMS, T-S AS 68.100

Cambridge University Library T-S AS 68.100 is a fragment on parchment containing Ps. 119.72–92, with stichometric spacing of the text, *sof pasuq* at the end of verses, and the Tetragrammaton written in full. It is vocalised and cantillated, though the *silluq* accent is not marked. There is no evidence of additional Masoretic paratext. *Rafe* is used on the *bgdkpt* letters and there are some (musical) *ga'yot*. The vowels and accents are written in a different ink and with a different pen from those of the consonants. It has the appearance of a leaf from a good quality codex, the work of at least two hands, a scribe (responsible for consonants and *sof pasuq*) and a vocaliser (vowels and accents), though not a full Masoretic Bible.¹⁷

¹⁷ It is possible that we have hit just the one fragment of this manuscript where no *masora* is visible (neither marginal, nor Masoretic circles marking notes in the text) and that the parent manuscript did possess

Vocalisation aside, the most noticeable difference from the MT is in the use of accents: *silluq* is absent, and the prepositive disjunctive *deḥi* occurs regularly for *revia*‘ *mugrash* and once for conjunctive *merkha*. While the ellipsis of *silluq* is a feature shared by Extended Tiberian manuscripts, the swapping of *revia*‘ *mugrash* for *deḥi* is not (Díez-Macho 1963, 22–24). The lack of *silluq* may therefore be seen as a general feature of non-Masoretic manuscripts, a symptom of a tendency towards the loss of inessential elements (after all, *sof pasuq* is already present to mark the last word of the verse), rather than a specific pointer of this text’s affinity with the Extended Tiberian family of manuscripts.¹⁸

5.1. Consonantal Text of T-S AS 68.100

Consonantly, the text of T-S AS 68.100 is in accordance with the MT, e.g., it shares the defective forms יבאוני (MT יבִּאוּנִי) ‘let them come to me’ (Ps. 119.77) and יבשו (MT יִבְשׁוּ) ‘let them be ashamed’ (Ps. 119.78). The only exception is ישובו (MT יִשְׁבוּ) ‘may

some *masora*. For present purposes this does not matter, as the distinction I offer between those with and those without is purely descriptive, intended to assist in building a corpus to examine for signs of deviation from Standard Tiberian practice.

¹⁸ Revell (1977, 174) points out that since *silluq* is regularly preceded by *tifḥa*, and followed by *sof pasuq*, its writing is superfluous for knowledgeable readers, and consequently it is often not found in Tiberian and Palestinian manuscripts. Conversely, the Aleppo Codex’s tendency only rarely to write the two dots of *sof pasuq* (Yeivin 1980, 176–77) can be seen in the same light, since *silluq* already serves to mark the end of the verse.

they return' (Ps. 119.79), where both Aleppo and Leningrad have the *plene* spelling.

5.2. *Pataḥ* for *Shewa* in T-S AS 68.100

Like the Lamentations manuscript, T-S AS 68.100 does not use *ḥatef* vowels. It also prefers *pataḥ* to the MT's simple *shewa*, suggesting an uncoloured pronunciation of vocalic *shewa* as [a], e.g.,

חַסְדֶּךָ (MT חֶסֶדְךָ) 'your kindness' (Ps. 119.76); יִבְאֹנִי (MT עֲוֹתוֹנִי) 'let them come to me' (Ps. 119.77); עֲוֹתוֹנִי (MT עֲוֹתוֹנִי) 'they subverted me' (Ps. 119.78), without *dagesh forte*; בְּרִדְפֵי (MT בְּרִדְפֵי) 'against those who pursue me' (Ps. 119.84); וְאֶשְׁמְרָה (MT וְאֶשְׁמְרָה) 'and I will keep' (Ps. 119.88); דְּבָרְךָ (MT דְּבָרְךָ) 'your word' (Ps. 119.88)

As several of the examples above show, silent *shewa* is usually not represented in T-S AS 68.100, e.g.,

חַסְדֶּךָ (MT חֶסֶדְךָ) 'your kindness' (Ps. 119.76); לְתִשׁוּעָתְךָ (MT לְתִשׁוּעָתְךָ) 'for your deliverance' (Ps. 119.81); דְּבָרְךָ (MT דְּבָרְךָ) 'your word' (Ps. 119.88); וְאֶשְׁמְרָה (MT וְאֶשְׁמְרָה) 'and I will keep' (Ps. 119.88); בְּעָנִי (MT בְּעָנִי) 'in my affliction' (Ps. 119.92)

The *shewa* sign is used in T-S AS 68.100 for a vocalic *shewa* occasionally, e.g., under an initial consonant:

יִרְאֵיךָ (MT יִרְאֵיךָ) 'those who fear you' (Ps. 119.79); בְּחֻקֶּיךָ (MT בְּחֻקֶּיךָ) 'in your laws' (Ps. 119.80)

In לְנַחֲמֵנִי (MT לְנַחֲמֵנִי) ‘for my comfort’ (Ps. 119.76), רַחֲמֶיךָ (MT רַחֲמֶיךָ) ‘your mercies’ (Ps. 119.77), and תַּעֲשֶׂה (MT תַּעֲשֶׂה) ‘you will act’ (Ps. 119.84), its occurrence on the guttural could be ambiguous, since in the standard Tiberian system simple *shewa* under אהח"ע is silent, never vocalic (Levy 1936, 21* and כג ll. 12–14). Given, however, that the *shewa* sign is not used for silent *shewa* elsewhere in T-S AS 68.100, we should on balance consider it vocalic here too, marked in contravention or ignorance of the standard Tiberian practice. Compare וְאֶחְיֶה (MT וְאֶחְיֶה) ‘that I may live’ (Ps. 119.77), where the \emptyset vowel of *het* is not marked.

Given this, the *shewa* under *nun* in וַיַּבְנוּנִי (for MT וַיַּבְנוּנִי) ‘and they made me’ (Ps. 119.73) is probably intended to be vocalic. This is in keeping with the Tiberian rule that *shewa* under the first of two identical consonants following a long vowel is vocalic. The *shewa ga‘ya* under *waw*, for the MT’s *pataḥ ga‘ya*, is reflective of the interchangeability of the two *a* vowels, *shewa* and *pataḥ*, in this fragment (a further example is noted below). It represents only graphic divergence from the MT’s practice. The *pataḥ* under the *yod*, however, shows a clear difference from the MT, as it reflects a pronunciation of the MT’s silent *shewa* as vocalic here [va:yko:na'nu:ni:] > [va:yako:na'nu:ni:] (the *ga‘ya* is a minor *ga‘ya*, i.e., lengthening a closed syllable). This, in a complex multi-syllable word, however, is the only example in the fragment of a clear divergence in pronunciation from the standard Tiberian tradition.

5.3. *Ḥatef* in T-S AS 68.100

Where the MT would use *ḥatef pataḥ*, e.g., for vocalic *shewa* under gutturals, T-S AS 68.100 can use a *pataḥ*, e.g.,

אֶשֶׁר (MT אֶהְיֶינִי) ‘give me understanding’ (Ps. 119.73); אֲשֶׁר (MT אֲשֶׁר) ‘that’ (Ps. 119.85); וְאֲנִי (MT וְאֲנִי) ‘but I’ (Ps. 119.87); עַבְדֶּיךָ (MT עַבְדֶּיךָ) ‘your servants’ (Ps. 119.91)

Or the fragment uses a simple *shewa*, e.g.,

לְנַחֲמִי (MT לְנַחֲמִי) ‘for my comfort’ (Ps. 119.76); רַחֲמֶיךָ (MT רַחֲמֶיךָ) ‘your mercies’ (Ps. 119.77); תַּעֲשֶׂה (MT תַּעֲשֶׂה) ‘you will act’ (Ps. 119.84)

Further evidence for the vocalic pronunciation of the *shewa* sign in general in T-S AS 68.100 can be found in וַתֵּעַמַּד (MT וַתֵּעַמַּד) ‘and it stands’ (Ps. 119.90), where simple *shewa* not only stands for a vocalic *shewa* under the ‘ayin, but also substitutes, in the form of *shewa ga‘ya*, for the MT’s *pataḥ ga‘ya* under the conjunction—another minor *ga‘ya*.

5.4. *Shewa* before Guttural in T-S AS 68.100

Where vocalic *shewa* immediately precedes a אההע" consonant, T-S AS 68.100 substitutes a full vowel, e.g.,

כְּאַמְרָתְךָ (MT כְּאַמְרָתְךָ) ‘according to your promise’ (Ps. 119.76); יְהִי־לִבִּי (MT יְהִי־לִבִּי) ‘let my heart be’ (Ps. 119.80); וְאֶשְׁמְרָה (MT וְאֶשְׁמְרָה) ‘and I will keep’ (Ps. 119.88), with silent *shewa* unmarked and a *pataḥ* for MT vocalic *shewa*; בְּעָנִי (MT בְּעָנִי) ‘in my affliction’ (Ps. 119.92)

The pronunciation represented by this combination of vowels accords with the realisation of *shewa* before a guttural in the Tiberian tradition, which matches the quality of the vocalic *shewa* to that of the guttural following it, unless the *shewa* itself sits under a guttural (Yeivin 1980, 281–82; Khan 2013a, 98–99).

5.5. T-S AS 68.100 in Conclusion

Altogether a different kind of manuscript from the first example, the Psalms fragment has been carefully produced, probably by two different hands. Consonantally, it is very close to the MT of Leningrad and Aleppo, with only one minor divergence. In accents, it diverges slightly, with a greater use of *dehi* and the absence of *silluq*. Vocally, it preserves the standard Tiberian phonology, with only one minor syllabic difference in the word יִכְוֹנְנִי (Ps. 119.73). This is revealed particularly through the apparent free substitution of simple vocalic *shewa* with *pataḥ* as well as through the substitution of various contextually conditioned *shewa* vowels (e.g., before gutturals) with the corresponding full vowel sign. The *naqdan* of this fragment was wholly familiar with the Tiberian reading tradition.

6.0. HAFTARA LECTIONARY, T-S AS 53.90

Cambridge University Library T-S AS 53.90 preserves the text of 1 Kgs 3.25–28 and Ezek. 37.18–21. A torn paper manuscript, it shows no ruling, and the left-hand margin is kept only irregularly, with no elongation of letters or line-fillers. It is partially vocalised: on recto, 1 Kings has only a few words with Tiberian vowel signs; on verso, Ezekiel is almost completely vocalised.

There is no cantillation. The vocalisation is in the same ink as the consonantal text, most likely the work of the same hand. *Dagesh*, and the *šin* and *shin* dots are not marked, though there is an occasional *rafe*. *Sof pasuq* is used at the end of a verse. The Tetragrammaton is written in full.

The fragment contains two *haftarot* according to the annual reading cycle of the Torah, for the *parashot* *Miq-qeṣ* (מקץ, no. 10, Gen. 41.1–44.17), with its *haftara* from 1 Kgs 3.15–4.1, and *Way-yiggaš* (ויגש, no. 11, Gen. 44.18–47.27), with its reading from Ezek. 37.15–28. On recto there is a partially preserved rubric before the start of the *haftara*: קאל[ביחז...] מפטיר [ויגש] ‘[“And he approached] him” one concludes [with the reading in Eze]kiel’. The rubric confirms that the fragment is a lectionary of prophetic readings, although its original extent—whether it covered just a small number of texts, or was part of a more comprehensive work—cannot now be determined. The casual nature of its construction suggests the former.

6.1. Consonantal Text of T-S AS 53.90

There are a few corrections in the fragment. The whole top line on recto (1 Kgs 3.25 from ואת החצי to 3.26 אל המלך כי) appears to be an addition, perhaps in a different hand, and נבמרו ‘they yearned’ (1 Kgs 3.26) is represented only by נב in the right-hand margin. On verso, the scribe spotted the error לך and crossed it through before writing the correct form אליך ‘to you’ (Ezek. 37.18).

The text exhibits a tendency towards more *matres lectionis* than are found in the MT:

אֲדֹנָי (MT אֲדֹנִי) 'my lord' (1 Kgs 3.26); וַעֲשִׂיתֶם (MT וַעֲשִׂיתִם) 'and make them' (Ezek. 37.19)—both are defective in the Aleppo and Leningrad codices

But some MT defective forms are retained, e.g., תִּכְתֹּב (MT תִּכְתָּב) 'you will write' (Ezek. 37.20). The interrogative הֲלֹא 'will you not?' (Ezek. 37.18) is defective in the fragment, but *plene* in the MT (הֲלוֹא).

חֲבֵרָיו 'his fellows' (Ezek. 37.19) follows the MT's *qere*. At 1 Kgs 3.27 the fragment has אַל תִּמְיֹתֵהוּ 'do not kill him' for the MT's לֹא תִמְיֹתֵהוּ. This reading is probably influenced by the phrase earlier in 1 Kgs 3.26.¹⁹

6.2. Vocalisation of T-S AS 53.90

Most of 1 Kings is unvocalised, perhaps because it was a familiar text that posed little difficulty in its reading. The addition of a *qibbuṣ* to אַל תִּמְיֹתֵהוּ (MT אַל תִּמְיֹתֵהוּ) 'do not kill him' (1 Kgs 3.26) is understandable, since the 2mpl verb is written defectively, as in the MT. But the vowels on מִפְּנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ 'in front of the king' (1 Kgs 3.28) appear superfluous, given the commonplace nature of the words. From this point on, however, the text is mostly vocalised.

No *dagesh*, *forte* or *lene*, is written, even in the fully vocalised portion of the text, e.g.,

עַמְּךָ (MT עַמְּךָ) 'your people' (Ezek. 37.18); דִּבֶּר (MT דִּבֶּר) 'speak' (Ezek. 37.19)

¹⁹ And this fragment is not alone: the critical apparatus in BHS also notes 'mlt Mss אַל' for the reading at 1 Kgs 3.27.

Rafe, however, is occasionally used to mark the spirant pronunciation of *bgdkpt* consonants, e.g.,

לַעֲשׂוֹת (MT לַעֲשׂוֹת) ‘to do’ (1 Kgs 3.28)

6.3. *Ḥatef* in T-S AS 53.90

The fragment eschews *ḥatef* signs completely, preferring *pataḥ* in every case where we would expect *ḥatef-pataḥ*:

הֲלוֹא (MT הֲלוֹא) ‘is it not?’ (Ezek. 37.18); אֲנִי (MT אֲנִי) ‘I’ (Ezek. 37.19); אֲשֶׁר (MT אֲשֶׁר) ‘which’ (Ezek. 37.19); וַעֲשִׂיתֶם (MT וַעֲשִׂיתֶם) ‘and make them’ (Ezek. 37.19); עֲלֵיהֶם (MT עֲלֵיהֶם) ‘on them’ (Ezek. 37.20)

6.4. *Shewa* before *Yod* in T-S AS 53.90

Although *shewa*, both vocalic and silent, is used in the fragment, e.g., וְשִׁבְטֵי ‘and the tribes of’ (Ezek. 37.19), on the three occasions in the text that it directly precedes *yod*, a more phonetic transcription with *hireq* occurs:

בְּיָד (MT בְּיָד) ‘in the hand of’ (Ezek. 37.19); בְּיָדִי (MT בְּיָדִי) ‘in my hand’ (Ezek. 37.19); בְּיָדְךָ (MT בְּיָדְךָ) ‘in your hand’ (Ezek. 37.20)

This pronunciation of *shewa* before *yod* as an *i* vowel is reflective of Tiberian pronunciation (Khan 2013a, 98), if not the practice of standard Tiberian vocalisers. It is quite frequent in non-Masoretic Bible texts from the Genizah, as can be seen from its use in T-S AS 44.35 above. Manuscripts with Palestinian vowel signs, too, can place a Palestinian *i* vowel before *yod*, where

standard Tiberian would have a *shewa*, though inconsistently (Revell 1970a, 90; Heijmans 2013a, §3f).

6.5. Differences in Vowel Quality in T-S AS 53.90

The vocalisation exhibits a small number of qualitative differences from standard Tiberian pronunciation, with *pataḥ* occasionally replacing *segol* in the environment of the gutturals:

אֶפְרַיִם (MT אֶפְרַיִם) ‘Ephraim’ (Ezek. 37.19); אֶחָד (MT אֶחָד) ‘one’ (Ezek. 37.19)

However, אֶת עֵץ ‘the wood’ (Ezek. 37.19) shows that a distinction between *segol* and *ṣere* is maintained. הִנֵּה (MT הִנֵּה) ‘behold’ (Ezek. 37.19) has *e* in place of *i* in a closed, unstressed syllable, a pronunciation found in the Palestinian vocalisation tradition (Heijmans 2013a, §3d), but possibly also reflecting the common realisation of closed, unstressed /i/ as a central vowel [e] in various Sefardi reading traditions, such as Baghdad, under the influence of the Arabic vernacular (Ya‘aqov 2013; Shatil 2013).

6.6. T-S AS 53.90 in Conclusion

The fragment is a small paper *haftara* lectionary, only partially vocalised and with no cantillation, a more casual piece of work than the preceding examples. *Dagesh* is entirely ignored, perhaps indicating a disinterest in consonantal length, but the use of *rafe* shows the fricative versus plosive distinction is probably maintained. *Ḥatef* vowels are generally avoided, and *hireq* is used for *shewa* before *yod*. The interchange of some vowels could be in-

dicative of a different background pronunciation from the Tiberian, but they mostly reflect the lowering of the ε vowel in the guttural environment.

7.0. WRITING EXERCISE, T-S AS 5.144

Cambridge University Library T-S AS 5.144 contains the text of Lev. 18.11–23 and 18.25–19.3, written on both sides of a parchment leaf. There is no evidence of ruling. The text includes Tiberian vowels and cantillation signs, and verse endings are marked with *sof pasuq*. There are no further Masoretic signs. The Tetragrammaton is abbreviated. Given the divine abbreviation, the lack of *masora* and the fact that the text of Leviticus is the most frequently used book of the Bible for learning to write Hebrew (Olszowy-Schlanger 2003, 65), the fragment is probably a writing exercise.

Dagesh is not used, either *forte* or *lene*, nor does *mappiq* occur where it is expected (which is frequently in this part of Leviticus), e.g.,

אִמִּי (MT אִמִּי) ‘your mother’ (Lev. 18.13); אִשְׁתּוֹ (MT אִשְׁתּוֹ) ‘his wife’ (Lev. 18.14); עֶרְוַתָּהּ (MT עֶרְוַתָּהּ) ‘her nakedness’ (Lev. 18.15); בְּתוּלָהּ (MT בְּתוּלָהּ) ‘her daughter’ (Lev. 18.17)

An erroneous *mappiq* appears in אִשָּׁהּ (MT אִשָּׁהּ) ‘a woman’ (Lev. 18.19).

7.1. Consonantal Text of T-S AS 5.144

There are only a small number of differences from the MT in the consonantal text of the fragment, two *plene* forms for the MT’s defective, and one defective for the MT’s *plene*:

אחותה (MT אחותה) 'her sister' (Lev. 18.18); בחייה (MT בְּחַיֶּיהָ) 'in her life' (Lev. 18.18); עִמָּתְךָ (MT עִמָּתְךָ) 'your neighbour' (Lev. 18.20)

Elsewhere the text remains close to the MT in the use of *matres lectionis*, e.g., התועבת (MT הַתְּוַעֲבֹת) 'abominations' (Lev. 18.20).

There is one uncorrected error, an ellipsis of אלהיכם in Lev. 18.30 after the divine name. The construct אש is corrected to אשה in Lev. 18.17.

The text of Leviticus included in the fragment contains a number of *parashiyyot*, i.e., paragraph breaks, of which only one is marked in the fragment: there is a space after the end of Lev. 18.30, which is a *parasha petuḥa* in the MT (Leningrad) and in Maimonides' list in the *Mishne Tora* (*Tefillin, Mezuza ve-Sefer Tora* 8). Although the fragment is torn, causing the loss of the rest of the line, an open paragraph should start on the next line. The next line, however, begins with the final word of Lev. 19.1. Therefore the fragment does not follow the usual method of noting an open paragraph, and either treats it as a closed paragraph (*parasha setuma*), which would leave a space within a line, or just leaves an indeterminate amount of space without strict adherence to the usual medieval format of the open paragraph. No space is left for the closed paragraphs (*setumot*) at Lev. 18.15, 16, and 17. Similarity to the layout of the MT is therefore more superficial than rigorous.

7.2. *Ḥatef* and *Shewa* in T-S AS 5.144

The text of Leviticus in T-S AS 5.144 uses only full vowels and *shewa*, with no *ḥatefs*. *Pataḥ* and *segol* always substitute for their *ḥatef* equivalents, e.g.,

אָחוּתָהּ (MT אָחוּתָהּ) ‘her sister’ (Lev. 18.18); עִמִּיתֶךָ (MT עִמִּיתֶךָ) ‘your neighbour’ (Lev. 18.20); אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי (MT אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי) ‘your God I am’ (Lev. 18.21); [ו]תַּעֲשֶׂוּ (MT תַּעֲשֶׂוּ) ‘you will do’ (Lev. 18.26); אֲשֶׁר (MT אֲשֶׁר) ‘who’ (Lev. 18.27)

Full vowels also sometimes occur in place of simple (vocalic) *shewa*:

בְּנִדָּת (MT בְּנִדָּת) ‘in impurity of’ (Lev. 18.19); וְנִכְרְתוּ (MT וְנִכְרְתוּ) ‘and they will be cut off’ (Lev. 18.29)

This includes the use of a *pataḥ* for vocalic *shewa* under the first of two identical letters following a long vowel:

בְּתוֹכְכֶם (MT בְּתוֹכְכֶם) ‘in your midst’ (Lev 18.26)

Conversely, *shewa* twice occurs in place of *pataḥ*, again demonstrating the pronunciation of *shewa* as an *a* vowel:

בְּטַמְּאֲכֶם (MT בְּטַמְּאֲכֶם) ‘when you defile’ (Lev. 18.27); דְּבַר (MT דְּבַר) ‘speak’ (Lev. 19.2)

Unexpectedly, *shewa* and *hireq* interchange in אָחִיךָ (for MT אָחִיךָ) ‘your brother’ (Lev. 18.16), though the repetition of the same form later in the verse preserves a *hireq*, אָחִיךָ.

7.3. Differences in Vowel Quality in T-S AS 5.144

T-S AS 5.144 exhibits some variation from the MT in the interchange of ε and a vowels. Forms of עֶרְוָה 'nakedness' regularly have *pataḥ* in place of *segol* under the 'ayin, e.g.,

עֶרְוָה (MT עֶרְוָה) 'nakedness' (Lev. 18.15); עֶרְוָתָהּ (MT עֶרְוָתָהּ) 'her nakedness' (Lev. 18.15)

Pataḥ occurs similarly under 'alef in הָאֲזִיכָהּ (MT הָאֲזִיכָהּ) 'the native' (Lev. 18.26). All of these presumably reflect the lowering of ε under אה"ח"ע. An oddity, perhaps reflecting an uncertainty over ε and a , is found in תִּגְלֶה (MT תִּגְלֶה) 'you will reveal' (Lev. 18.14). Occurrences of similar forms show *pataḥ* in each case, however: תִּגְלֶה (Lev. 18.13); תִּגְלֶה (Lev. 18.15). In הִגְלֶה (Lev. 18.15), damage obscures the vowel under the preformative, so it is unclear whether this is a morphological variant, תִּגְלֶה, or whether the *shewa* substitutes for *pataḥ* in a closed syllable. A further case of ε for a in a non-guttural environment occurs in בְּנִדָּת (for MT בְּנִדָּת) 'in impurity of' (Lev. 18.19).

There is variation in the vocalisation of conjunctive *waw* before the labial ב"ף consonants:

וּבִתָּהּ (MT וּבִתָּהּ) 'and her daughter' (Lev. 18.17); but וּמִזְרַעְךָ (MT וּמִזְרַעְךָ) 'and from among your offspring' (Lev. 18.21)

Conjunctive *waw* before *shewa* has no vowel:

וּשְׁמִרְתֶּם (MT וּשְׁמִרְתֶּם) 'and you shall keep' (Lev. 18.30)

Perhaps the student was flummoxed at this point.

7.4. T-S AS 5.144 in Conclusion

We can question the competence behind the production of this fragment: it is probably a writing exercise, rather than a Bible proper. There are indeed a number of errors. But it does display also, to varying degrees, some of the trends found in the other fragments described above: the redundancy of *dagesh*, the replacement of *ḥaṭef* with the equivalent full vowel, and *pataḥ* in place of simple *shewa*. Where it differs from the others is in a more frequent interchange of *ε* and *a* vowels, mostly in the environment of gutturals. This may be best ascribed to the writer's status as a language learner and is possibly influenced by their Arabic vernacular, with the *imāla*, i.e., the raising of *a* to *ε*, attested in vocalised Judaeo-Arabic texts from the Genizah (Wagner 2010, 63), being a possible culprit.

8.0. STUDY BIBLE, T-S AS 59.215

T-S AS 59.215 is a paper bifolium containing Prov. 27.27–28.21 and 30.7–24 from a small-format codex. It is fully vocalised, with cantillation and (phonetic) *ga'ya*, and it contains a number of paratextual Masoretic features, including a *sefer* sign and spaces marking the *parashiyyot*. The script is square, the paper was ruled, and there are line fillers consisting of the first letter, or letters, of the following word. The vocalisation and cantillation are in the same ink as the consonantal text, however, suggesting that one hand produced the whole work. It can be classified as a good-quality small-format Bible, intended for private study or as a 'lap Bible'.

The margin contains a decorated *seder* marker (at Prov. 28.16) as well as four *qere* readings (some of which are in different ink and perhaps in different hands). They are marked with the masoretic circle in the body of the text and by ק in the margin. They fall at Prov. 28.10 (בשחותו), 30.10 (אדניו), 30.15 (וארבע), and 30.18 (וארבעה for עה). The instances of *qere* at Prov. 28.10 and 30.15 are not noted in Codex Leningrad or the Aleppo Codex, and וארבע at 30.15 reflects a consonantal difference from the text of both of these codices (which have ארבע). There is perhaps sufficient variation in the script and ink to suggest that these two instances of *qere* might be the work of a subsequent corrector of the fragment, who used the device to correct the text, rather than to record *ketiv* and *qere* in the standard sense.

The *parashiyyot petuhot* at Prov. 28.16, 30.9, 30.14, 30.17, and 30.20 are all marked in accordance with the MT, leaving a large space and starting the following verse on a new line. Only at Prov. 28.4 does it appear that no extra space was left at the end of the verse (the manuscript is damaged at this point, but not so much that we cannot be reasonably sure), where both the Aleppo Codex and Codex Leningrad have a *petuḥa* section.

Despite the apparent quality of the work, the copyist erred in omitting a whole verse, Prov. 30.11, probably through haplography on the initial word דור. A further error in the divine name in Prov. 30.10 was fixed by the scribe in the course of writing: a Tetragrammaton was deleted with supralinear dots and the correct form, אדני (with the *qere* אדני given in the margin), written immediately after it. Yet another error missed out a quiescent

’alef, but was again immediately corrected by deletion and re-writing: וַיֵּכְלוּ וַיֹּאכְלוּ ‘and they will eat it’ (Prov. 30.17).

Dagesh and *rafe* (including *rafe* on final *mater lectionis* ה-) are used throughout, though with some variance from the MT. We find *b* for an expected *b* in:

וְאֶבְיוֹנִים (MT וְאֶבְיוֹנִים) ‘and the needy’ (Prov. 30.14); בְּנֵי (MT-
Leningrad בְּנֵי) ‘children of’ (Prov. 30.17); בְּלִב־יָם (MT-Len-
ingrad בְּלִב־יָם) ‘in the middle of the sea’ (Prov. 30.19)

And *b* for *b* in:

אֶשְׂבֵּעַ (MT אֶשְׂבֵּעַ) ‘I will be full’ (Prov. 30.9)

Dagesh forte is frequently omitted, e.g.,

מְכַסֶּה (MT מְכַסֶּה) ‘he who covers up’ (Prov. 28.13); שְׁנֵי ‘his
teeth’ (Prov. 30.14); הֵנָּה ‘they’ (Prov. 30.15); לְקַהֵּת (MT
לְקַהֵּת) ‘to obey’ (Prov. 30.17); יִקְרוֹהֶּ (MT יִקְרוֹהֶּ) ‘he will pick
it out’ (Prov. 30.17)

In contrast, *dagesh lene* is more consistently applied. Not only is *mappiq* omitted in Prov. 30.23 גְּבִרְתָּהּ (MT גְּבִרְתָּהּ) ‘her mistress’, but the final *he* is given *rafe*, as if a *mater lectionis*.

8.1. Consonantal Text of T-S AS 59.215

The consonantal text of the fragment differs from the MT when it comes to the representation of the *o* vowel, without showing a strong tendency towards *plene* or defective forms overall:

בְּעִלּוֹן (MT בְּעִלּוֹן) ‘when rejoicing’ (Prov. 28.12); שְׁלֹשׁ (MT
שְׁלֹשׁ) ‘three’ (Prov. 30.15); עֹרְבֵי (MT עֹרְבֵי) ‘ravens of’
(Prov. 30.17); שְׁלֹשׁ (MT שְׁלֹשׁ) ‘three’ (Prov. 30.21)

The *u* vowel is written *plene* in the fragment:

יְרוּחָם; (MT יְחַפֵּשׁ) ‘will be searched for’ (Prov. 28.12);
 (MT יִרְחָם; ‘they will have mercy’ (Prov. 28.13);
 עֲשׂוּק (MT עֲשָׂק ‘oppressed’ (Prov. 28.17);
 רוּחָץ; (MT רָחַץ; ‘not washed’
 (Prov. 30.12)

The text has *plene e* in contradiction to the MT in יִיקָם (MT לִיקָהָת) ‘vanities’ (Prov. 28.19) and a defective *i* in לְקִהָתָה (MT לְקִהָתָה) ‘to obey’ (Prov. 30.17). Furthermore, *yod* has been added above the line a number of times, probably by the original hand, where it is present in the MT:

עֲשִׂיר; (MT עֲשִׂיר; ‘rich’ (Prov. 28.6);
 בְּעֵינָיו (MT בְּעֵינָיו) ‘in
 his eyes’ (Prov. 30.12); including גִּי (MT גִּי) ‘poverty’
 (Prov. 30.8), where the quiescent *alef* is replaced by *yod*

Further corrections are evident, e.g., מַעֲשֵׂק (MT מַעֲשֵׂק) ‘oppressor’ (Prov. 28.16). The sheer number shows the care taken to produce an accurate consonantal text, but one uncorrected difference remains at וּבְמָקוֹם ‘and in the place of’ (Prov. 28.12), where the MT reads וּבְקוֹם ‘when they rise’. The fragment’s reading is possibly under the influence of the earlier phrase at Prov. 25.6 (וּבְמָקוֹם גְּדִלִים).

8.2. *Ḥaṭef* and *Shewa* in T-S AS 59.215

Ink transfer and staining leave some of the vocalisation signs in the fragment ambiguous or unreadable. There is evidence, however, of some systematic editing of the vocalisation, correcting

the more phonetic elements towards a standard Tiberian rendering. For instance, *pataḥ* has been erased (faint traces remain) and replaced with *shewa* in:

מְכַסֶּה (originally מְכַסֶּה; MT מְכַסֶּה) ‘he covers’ (Prov. 28.13);
בְּדָם (originally בְּדָם; MT בְּדָם) ‘to the blood of’ (Prov. 28.17)

Other variations in vocalisation from the standard MT, mostly involving *shewa* and *ḥatef*, remain uncorrected, however. In Prov. 30.14 מִתְלַעֲתִיו (MT מִתְלַעֲתִיו) ‘his teeth’, an apparent *ḥatef pataḥ* *ga‘ya* stands in place of the MT’s *shewa* *ga‘ya*. This is a graphic difference only, as the two are pronounced identically, and reflects the more phonetically transparent approach attributed to the school of Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher, which tends to extend the use of *ḥatef pataḥ* across the full consonantal range of Hebrew (Yeivin 1968, 24–25). There are ink spots, bleeding of ink, and mirrored text down this side of the page, however, so whether this is a correction from an original מִתְ- or מִתְ-, or was always so, is unclear.

Pataḥ is found in place of *ḥatef pataḥ* in עֲנִיִּים (MT עֲנִיִּים) ‘the poor’ (Prov. 30.14), with omission of *dagesh* too. *Pataḥ* is similarly preferred to vocalic *shewa* in אֶל־יָתְּמָוֹבָּ (MT אֶל־יָתְּמָוֹבָּ) ‘let no one hold him back’ (Prov. 28.17), which, unlike מְכַסֶּה and בְּדָם, noted above, was not subsequently corrected to *shewa*.

8.3. Differences in Vowel Quality in T-S AS 59.215

T-S AS 59.215 exhibits a small number of variations in vowel quality. *Segol* substitutes for *pataḥ* under ‘*ayin* in:

בִּפְשָׁע (MT בִּפְשָׁע) ‘in the transgression of’ (Prov. 28.1); בִּצְעָ (MT בִּצְעָ) ‘unjust gain’ (Prov. 28.16)

The use of two *segols* in segolates with a *het* or ‘*ayin* as the third radical is characteristic of the Palestinian vocalisation system (Yahalom 1997, 25). Although the spelling of the divine name יְהוָה (MT יְהוָה, [ʔado:ʕə:y]) ‘the LORD’ (Prov. 30.9) has a shift of $a > \varepsilon$ unconditioned by gutturals. There is a shift of $\bar{e} > \bar{a}$ under a *he* in:

אַרִּי נָהָם (MT אַרִּי נָהָם) ‘a growling lion’ (Prov. 28.13)

Two other changes in vowel quality from the MT can be noted:

$\bar{u} > \bar{o}$, וְתִבְזֶה (MT וְתִבְזֶה) ‘and that despises’ (Prov. 30.17); $\varepsilon > e$, בְּלִבֵּי־יָם (MT בְּלִבֵּי־יָם, marked with *rafe* in MT-Leningrad, בְּלִבֵּי) ‘in the middle of the sea’ (Prov. 30.19)

The interchange of ε and e is typical of the Sefardi reading tradition (Henshke 2013b). Similarly, $\bar{u} > \bar{o}$ in a closed stressed syllable is also characteristic of the Palestinian vocalisation tradition (Yahalom 1997, 17–18; Heijmans 2013a, §3c). However, the attendant Palestinian shift of $\bar{o} > \bar{u}$ in an open syllable is not attested in אַרִּי נָהָם (Prov. 28.13).

8.4. T-S AS 59.215 in Conclusion

This is the best quality Bible manuscript of the fragments assembled here. In most respects it is similar to the MT; it is fully vocalised and cantillated, and it employs almost the full range of paratextual features, such as the marking of *qere* and the graphic

representation of the *parashiyyot*. It also appears to have undergone some later correction towards the MT, in both the consonantal and vocalic layer; it may have passed through the hands of more than one owner, as a valued object.

Where it does deviate from the MT, it does so in similar fashion to the other texts assembled here, though to a lesser extent. There is a tendency for *pataḥ* to replace *ḥaṭef* and *shewa*, but, unlike most of the other texts, also for *ḥaṭef* to replace *shewa*. None of these reflect phonetic changes from the standard Tiberian pronunciation. The variations in vowel quality that do occur, though comparatively isolated, might reflect the influence of Palestinian pronunciation. The prominent and decorated *seder* marker at Prov. 28.16 suggests that the triennial pericope was particularly meaningful to the intended user of this text. Probably this was a Bible manuscript produced for a member of the Palestinian congregation of Fuṣṭāṭ and perhaps therefore we might expect artefacts of the Palestinian pronunciation to turn up in its vocalisation.

9.0. CONCLUSIONS

The fragments under inspection here are a mixed bunch, which is deliberate, as they have been chosen to display something of the range of Common Bibles found in the Cairo Genizah, with a necessary emphasis on those with Tiberian vocalisation. Despite sharing commonalities of form, in function they might have been quite different: to prepare for liturgical reading, for writing practice, as a study Bible, or as a lap Bible. The principal feature that they all share, however, is a lack of *masora* proper, and, for the

purposes of classification, this provides a clear point of demarcation between ‘Common’ and ‘Masoretic’ Bibles.

The Genizah is undoubtedly an important source of Masoretic Bibles too. Leaves from dozens of Great Bibles are scattered through the different Genizah collections, reflecting the vitality of the Jewish communities who were able to produce such weighty and expensive codices. Recent research has revealed the presence in the Cairo Genizah of leaves from Masoretic Bibles produced by some of the greatest scribes of their day, such as Samuel ben Jacob, who also copied the Leningrad Codex (Phillips 2016). The documentary evidence they left behind reveals how much the Egyptian Jewish elite were prepared to pay for such prestige works of biblical art and how specific they were in the details of their commissions, regarding the consonantal text, the vocalisation, the *masora*, and other features (Outhwaite 2018, 330–33). The ownership, commissioning, and production of Bibles was at the heart of Jewish culture in the Genizah world, with a highly skilled scribal community and knowledgeable consumers.

From the same world come the thousands of leaves of Common Bibles that saturate the Genizah Collection. The appetite for Bible ownership extended beyond the topmost level of society, but the capacity for commissioning expert scribes to fill this need did not; hence the widescale production of Common Bibles, penned by less-expert hands. Many words have been used to describe them—‘popular’, ‘vulgar’, ‘sub-standard’—but ‘common’ suits them best, if only because they are indeed the most common form of the Bible among all the manuscript fragments found in

the Genizah Collection. As a medium that, in many cases, may never have left the ownership of its original producer, they can be quite unregulated, perhaps the closest we might come to witnessing the reading of the Bible by the Jewish community of the Middle Ages. It is this unofficial nature, this potential lack of mediation, that makes them such a valuable group of manuscripts.

Of course, no two Common Bibles are alike. Those that most closely mimic the MT are liable to give us the least evidence of the realia of the reading tradition of the medieval congregations. They do, however, point at the expertise available in the community generally, which was able to produce small-format, relatively cheap Bibles to this quality. The Proverbs fragment, T-S AS 59.215, is a case in point. It was carefully produced, and it has even undergone later correction towards the MT to remove some of its idiosyncrasies. Even so, it has preserved a number of examples that allow us a glimpse into how the creator of this manuscript pronounced their Hebrew, in this case that the *shewa* was pronounced as an *a* vowel, in line with Tiberian phonology. Entirely at the other end of the scale are the more rustic manuscripts, of which T-S AS 44.53 is a good example. Here, the scribe has reimplemented the Tiberian graphemic system according to rules of their own devising, and has used unorthodox spellings such as שׁב (for שׁוּא) and רוּשׁם (for רִאשׁם). As a consequence, we can see exactly which elements of the reading tradition were of more importance to the owner of the manuscript, and the phonetics of much of it are revealed.

Given these two extremes, and the wealth of material that sits between them, it is hard to generalise about the Common

Bible in the Cairo Genizah, especially given the potential geographical and temporal spread of the manuscripts that found their way into the collection. However, drawing on the analysis above, we can point to a number of features that can be found across different manuscripts, and draw some broad conclusions concerning the reading traditions associated with them.

9.1. The Consonantal Text

We ought to begin with the question of the consonantal text. I have already said that I do not believe these manuscripts are particularly useful for textual criticism in the traditional sense of establishing the reading of the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible. Goshen-Gottstein shares this view, though he states it more baldly: “There is perhaps one chance in a thousand that any ‘deviation’ might turn out to be something else than either the outcome of non-TBT [= non-Tiberian Bible Text] reading habits (‘Sefardi’, ‘Yemenite’, *etc.*) or simple bowdlerization because of lack of care or ignorance” (Goshen-Gottstein 1963, 40). What facts can we derive from the analysis of the five Common Bibles here that back up his and my assertions? There are only a few consonantal differences that reflect different readings (other than some obvious errors of omission). Two minor differences occur in the text that departs most frequently from the MT, and gives the impression of not having been copied from a *Vorlage* at all, T-S AS 44.35, and can probably be ignored as errors. Two more occur in ‘better’ texts, at 1 Kgs 3.27 in the *haftara* lection T-S AS 53.90 and at Prov. 28.12 in the study Bible T-S AS 59.215. In both cases, we can find similar readings elsewhere (1 Kgs 3.26 and Prov.

25.6) that probably influenced these, and they too should therefore be regarded as simple errors. The former, however, is a reading shared by a number of other manuscripts, so, if an error, it is one frequently made, and this in itself is worth noting. The latter is in a high-quality manuscript, though not one without errors (it has missed out, for example, the whole of Prov. 30.11), and its careful presentation of the *parashiyyot* and *qere* readings deserves attention (and, indeed, should dispel calumnies of ‘ignorance’). In particular, it preserves several instances of *qere* that are not found in the MT (Aleppo and Leningrad), one of which also has a minor consonantal difference, *וארבע* at Prov. 30.15 instead of *ארבע*. Its orthography is interesting too, as it frequently does not match the MT’s, in both *plene* and defective forms, yet it shows signs of careful correction. As a copy of the Bible, even without a *masora* to safeguard it, it appears to conform to some kind of textual tradition, just one not identical to the mainstream MT.

Across all the fragments, there is not a prevalence of *matres lectionis*, as perhaps might be expected, or a plethora of respellings. There are exceptions: T-S AS 44.35 has more the character of a text produced by dictation, or from memory, than by copying. But the other fragments have a mix of *plene* and defective forms that show a general adherence to the norms of MT spelling. We do not know how these texts were produced, and it is likely that they have a variety of different origins: copied from codices preserved as public property in the synagogues (which numbered in the dozens, according to the booklists), copied from other Common Bibles begged or borrowed off friends or family, pro-

duced by dictation or, perhaps even, by prodigious feats of recollection. It is fair, then, to slightly moderate the earlier assertions, and suggest that while most will not provide useful evidence for textual criticism (beyond assisting us with further knowledge of the kinds of errors that Bible copyists are capable of), that is not to say that none of them will. The careful text and paratext of T-S AS 59.215 give all appearance of having been copied from, or at least collated with, a reliable *Vorlage*, and should therefore be given due consideration for their textual value.²⁰

Beyond the variable value of the consonantal text, the phonetic value of the manuscripts is unquestionable, as I hope I have displayed above. Far from the mixed results of the consonantal survey, the analysis of these Bibles' vocalisation clusters around a number of interesting features, speaking to the vitality of the Tiberian pronunciation tradition in the post-Masoretic period, and the conservatism of the Genizah world's Bible reading.

9.2. Lack of the *Ḥatef* Vowel

The commonest feature, found in four out of the five Common Bibles analysed here (only T-S AS 59.215, the finest of the bunch differs), is a reluctance to use the *ḥatef* sign. Three of the fragments have no occurrences of it (T-S AS 44.35; T-S AS 53.90; T-S AS 5.144), and even the closest manuscript to the MT, T-S AS 53.215, occasionally replaces *ḥatef* with *pataḥ*. Of morphophono-

²⁰ And indeed, as the colophon of T-S Misc. 24.137.3 shows (see footnote 2 above), some of these modest-looking Bibles may well have had very illustrious predecessors.

logical significance in the Tiberian system, the sign is phonetically superfluous if the intended user of the text is familiar enough with the pronunciation tradition. One of the hallmarks of Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher's approach to marking vowels was a preference for *ḥatef* signs, providing greater clarity to the presence and timbre of the vocalic *shewa* (Yeivin 1968, 24–25). It was a sign intended to remove doubt and ambiguity. In our fragments we find a similar dislike of ambiguity, of simple *shewa* in particular, but the solution is different. These fragments tend to employ a full vowel, usually *pataḥ*, in place of the missing *ḥatef*. We can only speculate whether the full vowel is deliberate, a consequence of their education, or a lapse; it may well be different for the various fragments, as might be guessed from their varying qualities.

In some cases, there is a different approach: *ḥatef* is replaced with simple *shewa*, e.g., as a vocalic *shewa* under gutturals, against standard Tiberian practice. T-S AS 68.100 does this on a number of occasions. There is no resulting ambiguity, however, because a vowelless guttural, where the MT would have a simple (silent) *shewa*, in that fragment is unmarked. Thus, the simple *shewa* sign is always vocalic in that fragment, and *ḥatef* is not required to avoid ambiguity.

9.3. *Pataḥ* for Vocalic *Shewa*

A related feature to the avoidance of *ḥatef*, common to four out of the five fragments, is the use of *pataḥ* for *shewa* in some or all cases when it is to be pronounced vocally. This accords with

the standard Tiberian pronunciation of *shewa* as [a] when unconditioned by a following guttural or *yod* (Khan 2013b), a feature preserved also in the Yemeni reading tradition of Biblical Hebrew (Ya‘aqov 2013). This contrasts with the Sefardi pronunciation tradition, such as the reading traditions of Tunisia, Aleppo, and Baghdad, where unconditioned *shewa* is pronounced as an [e] of varying lengths (Henshke 2013b).²¹ This realisation of *shewa* as a front vowel ultimately derives from the Palestinian pronunciation tradition (Khan 2013b), where *e* vowels commonly occur in place of Tiberian *shewa* (Heijmans 2013a).²² All the fragments discussed here retain the original Tiberian realisation of *shewa*, even T-S AS 53.219, which appears closer to the Palestinian reading tradition in other ways. Israel Yeivin’s analysis of Tiberian vocalised *piyyuṭ* manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah reveals that they similarly often use *pataḥ* in place of *shewa*, e.g., בְּנִי ‘son’ (Cambridge University Library Add.3367.8). He reaches the same conclusion, that the [a] pronunciation of unconditioned *shewa* is pervasive (Yeivin 1990, 176–77). The reading traditions evidenced in all these sources point to the retention of the Tiberian

²¹ With rare exceptions, where problematic cases in the Tiberian tradition, such as the *shewa* under forms of אכל, retain the Tiberian pronunciation as an *a* vowel, e.g., in the tradition of Djerba (Henshke 2013, §6). This was most likely due to the use of *ḥaṭef pataḥ* signs (instead of simple *shewa*) in those particular cases, which consequently caused the retention of the original Tiberian quality.

²² However, *a* vowels also occur for Tiberian *shewa*, suggesting a mid-central realisation (Heijmans 2013a, §3e), or a shift in its realisation from a short low vowel [a] to a short central vowel [e] (Yahalom 2016, 164).

pronunciation of *shewa*, and show very little evidence for the influence of the Sefardi-Palestinian reading tradition on the vocalisation.

The use of a *pataḥ* sign for the *shewa* vowel avoids the ambiguity inherent in the *shewa* sign itself. In some of the texts *pataḥ* only substitutes in particular circumstances, such as when *shewa* occurs under the first of two identical consonants following a long vowel. This was a problematic linguistic circumstance discussed widely in the medieval literature, e.g., by Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher in his *Diqduqe haṭ-Ṭe'amim* and by Abū al-Faraj Hārūn in his treatise, *Hidāyat al-Qārī* (Heijmans 2018, 98–100). It must have been a pronunciation considered prone to error. Such cases put a great reliance on either the reader's expert knowledge of the Tiberian system or the presence of additional linguistic signage, such as the secondary *ga'ya* accent. Neither of these is a given with the fragments here: *ga'ya* rarely occurs in any but the highest-quality Common Bibles, since it is an advanced component of the cantillation system, and, indeed, its occurrence varies greatly even in Masoretic Bibles. Nor were the users of these fragments necessarily likely to have been masters of the Masoretic arts. Uncertainty is avoided, therefore, through the use of *pataḥ*. The outlier in its approach is again the Lamentations fragment, T-S AS 44.35, which is not content just to replace *shewa* in difficult circumstances, but, showing no fidelity to the accepted system, replaces vocalic *shewa* universally with a *pataḥ* sign: אָזְנְךָ לְרוּחִי 'your ear for my relief' (Lam. 3.56).

9.4. Other Vowel Signs for Vocalic *Shewa*

It is less frequently that we find a vowel other than *pataḥ* substituting for *shewa*. Two out of the five fragments show examples, where MT *shewa* occurs before a guttural or *yod*. In each of the cases, the alternation is phonetically in accord with Tiberian pronunciation, replicating the vowel under the guttural or, when before *yod*, giving *hireq*. Sporadic occurrences of such vocalisations can be found across the Common Bible corpus of the Genizah—a few other examples:

בְּחִירֵי (MT בְּחִירֵי) ‘my chosen ones’ (Isa. 65.22, T-S AS 48.187); רָאִיתֶם (MT רָאִיתֶם) ‘you saw’ (Deut. 4.15, T-S AS 49.125); הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי (MT הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִי) ‘the Israelite’ (Lev. 24.10, T-S AS 53.45); שָׁאֵת (MT שָׁאֵת) ‘a swelling’ (Lev. 13.28, T-S AS 57.167); בְּיָדוֹ (MT בְּיָדוֹ) ‘in his hand’ (Isa. 53.10, T-S AS 65.47); וְהִיָּתָם (MT וְהִיָּתָם) ‘and be’ (Lev. 11.44, T-S AS 48.141)

Similar vocalisations can be found among liturgical poetry manuscripts from the Genizah, with *hireq* in place of *shewa* before a guttural (itself with *hireq*) or before *yod* relatively common (Yeivin 1990, 161, 166, 168–69, 177), e.g., בְּיָד ‘into the hand of’ (Cambridge University Library Add.3367.8). Other vowels though are less frequently found, and Yeivin believes that the levelling of these conditioned *shewas* to that of the uncoloured vocalic *shewa* [a] is ongoing in this period (i.e., the tenth–twelfth centuries CE, the assumed period of the *piyyuṭ* manuscripts’ production). This levelling is complete in Sefardi-Palestinian pronunciations (e.g., בְּחִירֵי [viḥi:ʿrɔ:y] > [veḥi:ʿra:y]), such as the

reading traditions of North Africa (Henshke 2013a, §6). The evidence of these Common Bible fragments strongly differs and shows that the traditional Tiberian pronunciation of *shewa* was followed in most linguistic circumstances. We do not see the same levelling to the uncoloured pronunciation of *shewa* at all. That this is also different from the evidence of roughly contemporary *piyyuṭ* manuscripts is not a contradiction. The biblical reading traditions generally display a more conservative pronunciation than those of the non-biblical—the Mishna, prayers, and liturgical poetry.

9.5. Variation in Vowel Quality

Among the five Common Bible fragments there are few divergences from standard Tiberian vowel quality. Most occur in the Lamentations manuscript, T-S AS 44.35, the most transparently phonetic in its vocalisation. It shows evidence of an almost complete shift of $\epsilon > e$, suggesting the influence of Palestinian pronunciation, as happened in the Sefardi pronunciation, with its neutralisation of *segol*/*şere* and *pataḥ*/*qameṣ* (Henshke 2013b). The concomitant shift of $\text{ɔ} > a$ also occasionally occurs in T-S AS 44.35, but is not consistent and may in fact be a morphological variant (loss of pausal forms).

Slightly more frequent in the fragments is variation between *a* and ϵ . T-S AS 59.215 shows segolate nouns such as בָּצַע with two *segols* ['bɛ:ʂɛɪ], suggestive of Palestinian pronunciation. Whereas the *haftara* lectionary T-S AS 53.90 and the writing exercise T-S AS 5.144, both at the more basic end of the Common Bible scale, show a shift of $\epsilon > a$ around the guttural consonants.

A few other interchanges ($i > e$, $a > \varepsilon$, $e > a$, $u > o$) occur in such small numbers, that they can probably only be considered the sort of isolated occurrences that are liable to occur in any manuscript. What is probably most significant therefore is the extent to which, T-S AS 44.35 aside (and even that not wholly), the fragments tend to reproduce the original quality of Tiberian vowels without much variation. Certainly, there is not the evidence of a wholesale neutralisation of e/ε and o/a as in the Se-fardi pronunciation.

9.6. Variation in Consonantal Quality

The only fragment to show more than minor variation in the pronunciation of the consonants is T-S AS 59.215, which has ב [b] for the MT's ב [v] three times and [v] for [b] once. This is surprising given the otherwise polished nature of this fragment, yet it does show considerable difference from the MT in regard to orthography as well. Perhaps this shows a lack of distinction in pronunciation between the plosive and fricative allophones, such as is found in some Yemeni pronunciations (Ya'aqov 2013), or perhaps a free variation, such as is found in the pronunciation of Baghdad's Jews (Shatil 2013, §2). However, sufficient regard is shown to maintaining the distinction graphically across most of the fragments presented here, suggesting, on balance, that this is not likely. Even T-S AS 44.35, which uses neither *dagesh* nor *rafe* signs, still maintains the fricative pronunciation of *bet*, [v], as shown by its spelling of שוא as שב at Lam. 2.14 as well as its singular use of *shewa* as an apparent marker of the fricative pronunciation, e.g., הַטֵּב [ha'to:v] 'the best' (Lam. 4.1). In the other

fragments the *rafe* sign occurs to mark fricatives (with the exception of the writing exercise, T-S AS 5.144).

9.7. The Absence of *Dagesh*

The use of *rafe* or, in T-S AS 44.35's case, *shewa*, shows that the plosive versus fricative pronunciation of the *bgdkpt* consonants is still operative. *Dagesh*, however, occurs quite infrequently in these fragments; this contrasts with its greatly increased presence in the Extended Tiberian system. On the contrary, the Common Bible fragments given here largely manage without *dagesh* even to distinguish the allophones of the *bgdkpt*. The further lack of *dagesh forte* to mark the gemination of consonants is striking. The two most complete fragments in their vocalisation, T-S AS 68.100 and T-S AS 59.215, both mark *dagesh forte*, but the other three fragments do not. This suggests that consonantal length may not have been a significant feature in their pronunciation of the text, at least in the informal environment in which these texts figured, or that it was sufficiently familiar not to require explicit marking.²³ In formal reading of the Bible, the pronunciation traditions of Tunisia (Henshke 2013a, §4), Aleppo (Henshke 2013b), and Baghdad (Shatil 2013, §3) all retain the gemination of most consonants, as does the Yemeni pronunciation (Ya'aqov 2013). While the absence of *dagesh* in these Common Bibles should not be taken alone as evidence for the absence of gemination, we can perhaps conclude that gemination was of less importance to the reading tradition in the eyes of these fragments' users than the

²³ The vocalised autograph fragments of the tenth-century poet Joseph ibn Abitur tend not to mark *dagesh* either (Yeivin 1990, 161).

correct pronunciation of the plosive and fricative allophones of the *bgdkpt* consonants, since these are marked far more frequently (mainly through the presence or absence of *rafe*) than the geminated consonants.

9.8. Overall Conclusion

This analysis has looked at only five fragments from the Taylor-Schechter Additional Series. This is but a drop in the Common Bible ocean, and generalisation should therefore be avoided. Indeed, there a number of significant differences between the fragments—from their presentation of the biblical text and its paratext to their quite varied approaches towards the marking of vowels. The degree of casualness and of competence can be wholly different between any two Common Bible manuscripts. But, overall, and allowing for both lapses in competence and more casual approaches to reproducing the text, we should note the clear knowledge of the Tiberian reading tradition displayed by all the fragments. A couple do suggest some influence of the Sefardi-Palestinian pronunciation in aspects only of their reading; others show occasional laxity, but nevertheless aspire to the prestige Tiberian pronunciation. There is a tendency to drop signs that are of less immediate importance to the readers, either because they have no effect on phonetic quality, since their role is performed by other signs, or because they facilitate aspects of the reading tradition that may not have been significant or even discernible to these average users: all *ḥaṭef* vowels, *shewa* when it denotes \emptyset vowel, *dagesh*, some or all cantillation signs and particularly *ga'ya*. It was *ḥaṭef* (for Ben Asher), *ga'ya* (for the difference

between Ben Naftali and Ben Asher), and *dagesh* (for the innovation of Extended Tiberian) that so occupied the Masoretic experts, but it is evident from these texts that the level of phonological detail these signs provided was irrelevant to most users. To this we could also add the *parashiyyot*, which were such a marker of quality in Maimonides' eyes, but which are rarely represented in Common Bibles. It does not necessarily imply ignorance or lack of competence in the reading tradition, only a lack of interest or necessity. Although some of the peculiarities of the vocalisation tradition (e.g., that a simple *shewa* under a guttural should always be \emptyset) might have been less than perfectly understood.

One feature is phonetically in accordance with the Tiberian reading tradition again and again in the fragments: the pronunciation of *shewa*—its quality under normal circumstances, before guttural consonants, before *yod*, and on the first of two identical letters. No matter what other phonetic changes they display and despite the idiosyncrasies of marking the vocalisation, they all assiduously maintain this aspect of the Tiberian reading tradition. This testifies to the conservatism of the biblical reading tradition and the continued and pervasive influence of the prestige reading tradition, the Tiberian reading tradition, in the Genizah world of the High Middle Ages.

10.0. REFERENCES

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