The Historical Depth of the Tiberian Reading Tradition of Biblical Hebrew

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Cover image: T-S AS 8.129. A leaf from a Cairo Geniza biblical codex containing Gen. 30.17–20 and showcasing Moshe Moḥe's non-standard Tiberian pointing of the standard Tiberian pronunciation of *Issachar* (see within, ch. 4), courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

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9. THE 2/3FPL ENDINGS

Ancient Hebrew sources exhibit diversity in 2/3FPL morphology, specifically in the endings of 2/3FPL prefix conjugation forms and of FPL imperatives.¹

1.0. The Combined Tiberian Biblical Tradition

In the majority of cases of 2/3FPL prefix conjugation (way)yiqtol forms and of FPL imperatival forms, the written and reading components of the Tiberian biblical tradition agree on a vowel-final ending written and vocalised -. In far fewer cases, they agree on consonant-final endings, such as p- or p-. In the remaining cases, the orthography and vocalisation diverge, resulting in the graphic representation p- (Andersen and Forbes 1986, 180; Barr 1989b, 127–31). See Table 1.

¹ Excluded from this discussion are forms of the infinitive construct with 2/3FPL afformatives. While these vary between vowel- and consonant-final endings, there are no cases of dissonance between the written and reading components of the Tiberian biblical tradition: יְּ-: Gen. 30.38; 2 Sam. 20.3; Ezek. 1.9, 12, 17; 42.12; בְּּוֹה : Jer. 8.7; Job 39.2; Ruth 1.19, 19.

² For a succinct discussion of the relevant ancient Hebrew FPL endings in a broader Semitic context, as well as bibliography, see Blau (2010, 203–4, §4.3.3.1.2n).

Table 1: 2/3FPL endings according to the written and reading components of the Tiberian biblical tradition (see §5.1 for references)

	-נֶּה	ু-/ঃ	-ارْ
prefix conjugation	295	1	37
imperative	17	2	3

In terms of the prefix conjugation, written-reading divergence resulting in the graphic representation ;]- occurs in 37 of 333 cases. When it comes to the imperative, ;]- occurs in 3 of 22 cases.

The incidence of mismatch between the written and reading components of the Tiberian biblical tradition is not evenly distributed throughout the biblical text. For the 2/3FPL prefix conjugation, see Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of 2/3FPL prefix conjugation forms in Tiberian BH

	-נָה	় -	-1-		-נָה	ৃ ্-	<u>-</u>]-
Genesis	15	1	12	Obadiah	1	0	0
Exodus	7	0	11	Jonah	0	0	0
Leviticus	10	0	0	Micah	4	0	0
Numbers	11	0	1	Zechariah	9	0	1
Deuteronomy	1	0	2	Malachi	1	0	0
Joshua	3	0	0	Psalms	20	0	0
Judges	5	0	0	Job	12	0	0
Samuel	15	0	3	Proverbs	10	0	0
Kings	8	0	0	Ruth	16	0	0
Isaiah	37	0	0	Song of Songs	1	0	0
Jeremiah	29	0	0	Lamentations	3	0	0
Ezekiel	58	0	7	Esther	2	0	0
Hosea	4	0	0	Daniel	4	0	0
Joel	1	0	0	Nehemiah	1	0	0
Amos	3	0	0	Chronicles	4	0	0
				TOTALS	295	1	37

As can be seen in the table, instances of Tiberian written and reading dissonance reflected in the consonant-vowel combination <code>j-</code> congregate appreciably in the Pentateuch, where, indeed, they account for more than a third of the cases (especially in Genesis and Exodus). In Samuel, one-sixth of the 18 cases show <code>j-</code>, while Ezekiel, with far more 2/3FPL prefix conjugation forms than any other book, has an incidence of just over one in ten.

Turning to FPL imperatival forms, consult Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of FPL imperatival forms in Tiberian BH

	-נָה	্া\-	-1-
Genesis	1	1	0
Exodus	0	1	0
Samuel	1	0	0
Isaiah	3	0	0

	-נָה	্-্া-্	-٦.
Jeremiah	6	0	0
Ruth	4	0	3
Song of Songs	2	0	0
TOTALS	17	2	3

Though a dearth of data precludes certainty, a few tentative observations may be ventured. First, the variety of forms in Genesis and Exodus is consistent with what was seen above in conjunction with the prefix conjugation. The lack of any consonant-vowel mismatch may be due to the rarity of the forms. Second, the dominance of vowel-final orthography and realisation throughout the rest of the Bible also tallies with the distribution of the prefix conjugation. The outlier is Ruth, where, similar to the case of Ezekiel noted above with regard to the prefix conjugation, a relatively high concentration is characterised by a degree of diversity.

Focusing on the Torah, the variation does not appear to be a function of putative source. On the basis of the division into sources found in Friedman (1997, 246–55), the principal reconstructed documents, i.e., J, E, and P, are all characterised by the use of both 7- and 7-. Indeed, in four places in the Tiberian tradition, twice in the Pentateuch, a verse contains at least one in-

stance of each alternant: Gen. 30.38; 37.7; 1 Sam. 18.7; Ezek. 16.55. Also, no phonological or prosodic factor governing the preference for one or the other alternants is apparent.

Andersen and Forbes (1986, 180-81) and Barr (1989, 130-31) agree that the difference between גה and י- is not to be regarded as merely orthographic, but as reflecting diverse pronunciations, the one vowel-final and the other consonant-final. If so, then the consonant-vowel combination]- represents mismatch in the combined written-reading tradition. Since orthographic -נה cases and $-n\tilde{a}$ realisations are the norm, it is reasonable to consider the apparent dissonance in cases of 7- a result of the secondary extension of the majority realisation that resulted in the levelling of several non-conforming cases, though their orthography was left unchanged. Admittedly, this is not the only logical explanation. It may simply be that the written and reading components differed in this regard from a very early date, each with a slightly different constellation of forms. The choice between these two approaches is informed via examination of non-biblical and non-Tiberian material.

2.0. Beyond the Tiberian Biblical Tradition

2.1. Non-Tiberian Biblical Material

In non-Tiberian biblical material, dedicated FPL morphology is common. Vowel-final endings dominate to the near exclusion of consonant-final forms, which are, however, occasionally attested.

The Samaritan tradition exhibits its own internal diversity. First, parallel to the 26 cases of Tiberian 2/3FPL prefix conjugation forms ending in j-, and against the one case with pg- (Gen.

49.26), the SP generally has ינה. Two of the exceptions, along with seven other forms, end in ה-.3 Thus, according to the Samaritan written tradition, vowel-final forms outnumber consonant-final forms by a margin of 64 to nine (see §5.2.1 for citations; this compares to the ratio of 44 to 27 in the Tiberian written tradition). Vowel-final forms are even more dominant in the Samaritan reading tradition, where the endings are either *-na* or, more commonly, *-inna* (see §5.2.2 for citations).⁴

Samaritan FPL imperatives present written and oral forms consistent with those found in the Tiberian written tradition— se $\bar{e}^{\dagger}m\bar{a}n$ and קראן $\bar{d}z\bar{n}na$ (Gen. 4.23); קראן $q\bar{e}^{\dagger}r\bar{n}n$ (Exod. 2.20)—i.e., with no mismatch between the two components of the Samaritan tradition (see §§5.1–2).

Turning to material from the Judaean Desert, and focusing on the 2/3FPL prefix conjugation, BDSS material preserves forms ending in both הוה and ה, with the former far more common than the latter. Indeed, of the 73 BDSS cases of prefix conjugation forms with a dedicated 2/3FPL ending, just two have p, one of which parallels p in the MT. Overall, where the BDSS preserve forms parallel to those in the MT, agreement between the two on the 2/3FPL ending is the norm; see Table 4.

³ SP Exod. 1.10 has תקראנו *tiqrānnu* against Tiberian תְּקָרֵאנָה.

⁴ On SH -inna Ben-Ḥayyim (2000, 105) explains as follows:

Since the 2nd and 3rd fem. pl. were generally expressed in post-BH by means of 2nd and 3rd masc. pl. forms, the feminine endings may have become somewhat obscure, the doubling of the *nun* resulted in this case from analogy to forms with object suffixes.

	-נָה MT	-ر MT	MT Other
-נה BDSS	66	3	2
ار BDSS	1	1	
BDSS Other	2		

Table 4: 2/3FPL prefix conjugation endings in the BDSS and the MT (see $\S 5.3.1$ for citations)

The BDSS preserve just five FPL imperatival forms, all orthographic matches for the בָּה forms in the relevant Tiberian parallels.

Jerome's Latin transcriptions of BH include a single case of a 3FPL wayyiqtol form. The Tiberian יֵהַמְנָה 'and they mated' (MT 30.38) is transcribed *iaamena* (Kantor 2020, 118–19).⁵

2.2. Extra-biblical Hebrew Material

In the nature of things, no relevant 2/3FPL forms appear in the fragmentary corpus of Iron Age epigraphy. Later extra-biblical material is characterised by replacement of dedicated verbal 2/3FPL morphology with 2/3CPL < 2/3MPL morphology (Qimron 2018, 159–60). Thus, for example, the Hebrew of BS lacks any dedicated 2/3FPL morphology.⁶ Where the relevant dedicated verbal 2/3FPL morphology is preserved in late extra-biblical Hebrew material, often in citation of the Bible or allusion thereto, it nearly always has vowel-final morphology.

⁵ See Kantor (2020, 118–22) on the omission of any representation of the *waw* at the beginning of the transcription of this *wayyiqtol*.

 $^{^6}$ See, by way of example, עיני אל יראו (the eyes of God will see his deeds' (SirA 6r.29 [Sir. 15.19]); יויכנוהו ברבבה ($^{\circ}$ "ויכנוהו $^{\circ}$ "ויכנוהו $^{\circ}$ "ויכנוהו אל (?; SirB 16v.11 [Sir. 47.6]).

When it comes to non-biblical material from the Judaean Desert (including that categorised as rewritten Bible), FPL andominates to the total exclusion of 7-. This is true of both the 2/3FPL prefix conjugation and the FPL imperative (see §5.3.2 for citations).

Given the shift in RH from dedicated 2/3FPL morphology to 2/3CPL morphology, the Mishna (as represented by Codex Kaufmann) exhibits very few relevant cases. Of the mere nine, eight come in biblical citations, all with יָם in both sources (see §5.4 for citations). In another case, the (unvocalised) phrase עיניי 'before his eyes darken' (m. Pe'a 8.9) is part of an interlinear addition. The three FPL forms that end in יָ in m. Ketubbot 4.11 are in Aramaic. The Mishna also includes five FPL imperative forms, all ending with יַ, four of which are direct biblical quotations, with the fifth (m. Nedarim 9.10a) an explicit allusion (see §5.4 for citations).

2.3. Aramaic Material

Though it is of questionable relevance, FPL prefix conjugation morphology in BA, DSSA, TA, and Syriac is consistently consonant-final. The FPL imperative is unattested in BA and DSSA, is consonant-final in Syriac, and varies in TA, e.g., שמעא 'listen!' (Gen 4.23); קרין 'call!' (Exod. 2.20); איזילנא תובנא 'go, return!' (Ruth 1.8).

3.0. Diachronic Considerations

Based on the non-Tiberian and extra-biblical data surveyed above, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the diversity seen in ancient Hebrew sources, especially in the orthography of the Tiberian written tradition in the Pentateuch, is representative of early diversity, whereby FPL morphology in both the prefix conjugation and the imperative was alternatively vowel- or consonant-final. Even the Tiberian reading tradition preserves a degree of diversity in the form of rare consonant-final FPL imperatives, which are, again, limited to the Pentateuch. Be that as it may, it is difficult to ignore the fact that, by and large, the Tiberian pronunciation tradition patterns like Second Temple Hebrew sources when it comes to FPL verbal morphology, standardising the vowel-final alternant reflected in the majority al- spelling, even where the orthography most likely reflects an original consonant-final ending.

Whether differentiation between Hebrew and Aramaic FPL morphology played any role in the late standardisation of vowel-final FPL verbal morphology is unclear.

While the Tiberian reading tradition both diverges from the apparently early diversity preserved in the written tradition and shows close affinity to Second Temple sources in its levelling of FPL verbal morphology, it is worth emphasising that the specific form that became the standard is not itself an exclusively late feature, but is already common, if not dominant, in the earliest Hebrew evidence. This scenario is in line with the view that the recitation component of the Tiberian biblical tradition crystallised in the Second Temple Period, extending certain late conventions, but at the same time preserves minority Iron Age features.

4.0. Conclusion

The reading component of the Tiberian biblical tradition shows not infrequent dissonance in comparison to the corresponding written component in the case of 2/3FPL verbal endings. In accord with the supposition that the reading component's development was largely complete by the Second Temple Period, it should come as no surprise that it exhibits both affinity with the corresponding written component, via use of a feature well attested therein, and simultaneously diverges therefrom in agreement with Second Temple material in the standardisation of vowel-final 2/3FPL verbal morphology.

5.0. Citations

5.1. Tiberian Biblical Tradition

Prefix conjugation—ה: Gen. 3.7; 24.61, 61; 30.38; 31.14; 37.7; 41.2, 3, 4, 7, 18, 20, 21, 53, 54; Exod. 1.10; 2.16, 16, 16, 18; 8.5, 7; Lev. 4.2, 13, 22, 27; 5.17; 7.30; 10.19; 23.15, 17, 17; Num. 27.1, 2; 35.11, 13, 14, 15; 36.3, 4, 6, 6, 11; Deut. 1.44; Josh 17.4; 21.42; 24.7; Judg. 5.26, 29; 7.11; 11.40; 15.14; 1 Sam 3.11; 4.20; 6.12; 7.14; 9.3, 12, 12; 10.7; 14.27; 18.6, 7; 2 Sam. 1.20, 20; 2.7; 20.3; 1 Kgs 3.16, 16, 22; 10.7; 2 Kgs 2.24, 24; 21.12; 22.20; Isa. 3.16, 16, 16; 5.15; 11.7; 13.7, 16, 18; 16.2; 17.2, 7; 27.11; 28.3; 29.18; 30.21; 32.3, 3, 10; 33.17, 17, 20; 35.5, 5; 41.22; 42.9; 44.7, 26; 47.9; 48.3; 49.15, 22; 54.10; 60.4, 8; 65.17, 17; 66.14; Jer. 4.7; 9.16, 16, 17, 17, 17; 14.17, 17; 18.21; 19.3; 24.2, 3, 8; 29.6, 17; 31.29, 30; 32.4; 33.13; 34.3; 44.6, 25, 25, 25; 48.6, 9; 49.2, 13; 50.20; Ezek. 1.24, 25; 6.6, 6; 7.17, 17, 27; 12.20; 13.11, 18, 18, 19, 19, 19, 23, 23; 16.50, 50, 52, 55; 17.23; 18.2, 24; 21.12; 22.14; 23.3, 4, 4, 40, 48, 49; 26.6, 10; 30.7, 17, 18, 25; 31.5, 5, 12; 32.16, 16; 33.13, 16; 34.5, 5, 5, 8, 14, 14, 19, 19, 22; 35.9, 10; 36.10, 38; 37.3; Hos. 4.13, 13, 14, 14; Joel 4.18; Amos 4.3; 8.13; 9.13; Obad. 1.13; Mic. 2.12; 6.1; 7.10, 16; Zech. 1.17; 4.9; 5.9; 6.7; 8.9, 13; 11.9; 14.2, 12; Mal. 1.5; Ps. 17.2; 31.19; 35.10; 37.15, 17; 45.16, 16; 48.12; 51.10; 65.13; 66.7; 69.24; 71.23; 75.11; 78.64; 81.7; 92.12; 97.8; 119.171; 130.2; Job 5.12, 18; 11.20; 17.5, 16; 20.10; 27.4, 15; 39.2, 3, 3, 3; Prov. 5.3; 6.27, 28; 10.27; 23.16, 26; 24.2; 27.20, 20; 30.15; Ruth 1.7, 9, 9, 10, 11, 13, 13, 14, 14, 19, 19, 20, 21; 4.14, 17, 17; Song 4.11; Lam 2.20; 4.1, 17; Est. 1.18; 4.4; Dan. 8.8, 22, 22; 12.7; Neh. 12.40; 1 Chron. 7.15; 2 Chron. 9.6, 21; 34.28. pc.: Gen. 49.26. p.: Gen. 19.33, 35, 36; 26.35; 27.1; 30.38, 39; 33.6, 6; 37.7; 41.24, 36; Exod. 1.17, 18, 18, 19; 2.19; 15.20; 25.27; 26.3; 27.2; 28.21, 21; Num. 25.2; Deut. 21.15; 31.21; 1 Sam. 18.7; 25.43; 2 Sam. 13.18; Ezek. 3.20; 7.4, 9; 16.55, 55; 29.12; 34.10; Zech. 13.7. Imperative—pp.: Gen. 4.23; 2 Sam. 1.24; Isa. 32.9, 9, 9; Jer. 9.19, 19; 49.3, 3, 3, 3; Ruth 1.8, 8, 11, 12; Song 3.11, 11. pc.: Gen. 4.23; pc.: Exod. 2.20. pc. Ruth 1.9, 12, 20.

5.2. Samaritan Tradition

5.2.1. Samaritan Written Tradition

Prefix conjugation—י: Gen. 3.7; 19.33, 35, 36; 24.61, 61; 26.35; 27.1; 30.38, 39*, 39; 31.14; 33.6; 37.7, 7; 41.2, 3, 4, 7, 18, 20, 24, 36, 53, 54; 49.26; Exod. 1.17, 17, 18, 19; 2.16, 16, 16, 18, 19; 8.5, 7; 15.20; 25.27; 26.3, 3*; 27.2; 28.21, 21; Lev. 7.30; 10.19; 23.15, 17, 17; Num. 14.45; 25.2; 27.1, 2; 35.11, 13, 14, 15; 36.3, 4, 6, 6, 11; Deut. 21.15; 31.21. יהי: Gen. 30.38; 33.6; 41.21; Lev. 4.2, 13, 22, 27; 5.17; Deut. 1.44. Imperative—;: Gen. 4.23; Exod. 2.20; יובי: Gen. 4.23.

5.2.2. Samaritan Reading Tradition

Prefix conjugation— -*na*: Gen. 3.7; Num. 25.2; Deut. 31.21. -*inna*: Gen. 19.33, 35, 36; 24.61, 61; 26.35; 27.1; 30.38, 38, 39*, 39; 31.14; 33.6, 6; 37.7, 7; 41.2, 3, 4, 7, 18, 20, 21, 24, 36, 53, 54; 49.26; Exod. 1.17, 17, 18, 19; 2.16, 16, 16, 18, 19; 8.5, 7; 15.20; 25.27; 26.3, 3*; 27.2; 28.21, 21; Lev 4.2, 13, 22, 27; 5.17; 7.30; 10.19; 23.15, 17, 17; Num. 14.45; 27.1, 2; 35.11, 13, 14, 15; 36.3, 4, 6, 6, 11; Deut. 1.44; 21.15. **Imperative**— -*ān*: Gen. 4.23; -*na*: Gen. 4.23; -*īn*: Exod. 2.20

5.3. Dead Sea Scrolls

5.3.1. Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

 33.17b; 1QIsa^a 27.23 || MT Isa. 33.20; 1QIsa^a 28.21 || MT Isa. 35.5; 1QIsa^a 28.22 | MT Isa. 35.5; 1QIsa^a 35.19 | MT Isa. 42.9; 1QIsa^a 37.13 | MT Isa. 44.7; 1QIsa^a 38.4 || MT Isa. 44.26; 1QIsa^a 39.28 || MT Isa. 47.9; 1QIsa^a 40.9 || MT Isa. 48.3; 1QIsa^a 41.15 || MT Isa. 49.15; 1QIsa^a 41.23 || MT Isa. 49.22; 1QIsa^a 45.8 | MT Isa. 54.10; 1QIsa^a 49.8 | MT Isa. 60.4; 1QIsa^a 49.11 | MT Isa. 60.8; 10Isa^a 52.27 (2x) | MT Isa, 65.17 (2x); 10Isa^a 54.1 | MT Isa, 66.14; 108 5b.9 | MT Isa. 13.7; 1Q8 6c-d.9 | MT Isa. 16.2; 1Q8 14.2 | MT Isa. 35.5; 1Q8 19.8 60.4; 1Q8 26.12 || MT Isa. 60.8; 1Q8 28.1 || MT Isa. 65.17; 1Q8 28.24 || MT Isa. 66.14; 4Q3 f1ii.8 | MT Gen. 41.2; 4Q3 f1ii.10 | MT Gen. 41.4; 4Q5 f4i-5.10 | MT Gen. 41.3; 4Q25 f2.5 | MT Lev. 4.2; 4Q51 9e-i.7 | MT 1 Sam. 10.7; 4Q55 f8.7 || Isa. 13.7; 4Q57 f6.4 || MT Isa. 11.7; 4Q57 f44-47.1 || MT Isa. 54.10; 4Q58 3.2 | MT Isa. 47.9; 4Q58 4.24 | MT Isa. 49.15; 4Q70 f29.8 | MT Jer. 18.21; 4Q78 f18-20.12 | MT Joel 4.18; 4Q94 f5-6.3 | MT Ps. 97.8; 11Q5 14.1 | MT Ps. 119.171; 4Q104 f1.12 | MT Ruth 1.9; 4Q107 f2ii.13 | MT Song 4.11; Mur88 8.3 | MT Amos 8.13; Mur 88 8.32 | MT Amos 9.13; Mur88 9.21 | MT Obad. 13; Mur88 12.32 | MT Mic. 2.12; Mur88 15.29 | MT Mic. 7.10; Mur88 15.38 || MT Mic. 7.16. DSS יבה || MT -: 4Q13 f2.5 || MT Exod. 1.19; 4Q14 6.43 || MT Exod. 15.20; 4Q22 28.6 || MT Exod. 25.27. DSS |- || MT |-: 4Q13 f2.3 || MT Exod. 1.17. DSS :- || MT בנה || 4Q3 f1ii.13 || ינה MT Gen 41.7. **DSS יַבּל || MT Other:** תשפלנה 1QIsa^a 2.19 || שֶׁפֶּל MT Isa. 2.11; תנשינה 1QIsa^a 53.28 || תנשאו MT Isa. 66.12. **DSS Other || MT תוויון :-נה** 1QIsa^a 27.19a || תחוינה MT Isa. 33.17a; תקראון 1QIsa^a 34.28 | תקרינה MT Isa. 41.22. Imperative— DSS -נה - || MT ינה - 1QIsa^a 26.19 (3x) || MT Isa. 32.9 (3x); 4Q104 f1.10 (2x) || MT Ruth 1.8 (2x).

5.3.2. Non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls

Prefix conjugation: CD 19.8; 1QM 8.1; 1QH^a 15.14; 4Q171 f1–2ii.16 || MT Ps. 37.15; 4Q176 f8–11.12 || MT Isa. 54.10; 4Q268 f1.1; 4Q364 f8ii.2 || MT Gen. 37.8; 4Q365 f6b.6 || MT Exod. 15.21; 4Q378 f3ii + 4.11; 4Q433a f2.4, 4; 4Q437 f2i.3 || MT Ps. 37.15; 4Q481 f2.2; 11Q19 21.13. **Imperative:** 1QM 12.13, 15, 15; 19.5, 7, 7, 7; 4Q365 f6aii + 6c.6; 4Q492 f1.7, 7.

5.4. Mishna

Prefix conjugation: Nedarim 3.11 (2x) || MT 1 Sam. 1.20 (2x); Soṭa 1.6 || MT Ezek. 23.48; Soṭa 9.9 (2x) || MT Hos. 4.14 (2x); 'Arayot 1.22 (2x) || MT Num. 35.14 (2x); Makkot 2.4 || MT Num. 35.13. **Imperative:** Ta'anit 4.8 (2x) || MT Song 3.11 (2x); Mo'ed Qaṭan 3.9 || MT Jer. 9.19; Nedarim 9.10 (2x) || 2 Sam. 1.24.