

Appendix

Vocalization Signs in the Cairo Genizah Manuscripts of the Damascus Covenant

YOSEPH OFER

The Hebrew vocalization signs have numerous fixed functions: Most significantly, they indicate the vowels of a word, the doubling of a consonant, and the pronunciation of the letters בגדכפת. Two main vocalization systems survive, and each is represented in the CD manuscripts; these are the Tiberian and Babylonian vocalization systems. Each of these systems has its own set of signs and unique linguistic characteristics.

Two CD manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza fragments (MSS A and B) preserve vocalization signs. These signs are not added to every word, but rather only to isolated words which the scribe feared might be misinterpreted by the reader. Several of these words have been emended; the redactor added vocalization signs to ensure that the words would be read in accordance with the emendations.

Manuscript A of eight pages contains approximately forty words with vocalization signs; most of these appear in the first three pages. These signs are of two types: about 16 words are vocalized in the Babylonian system; the rest are in the Tiberian system. For example: וְלֹא לְתוֹרָה (MS A 2.16) have the Babylonian signs, but אֶל אֶל (MS A 1.10) bear the Tiberian signs. Several words appear with mixed Tiberian-Babylonian signs; note the following examples: בְּמִתְלוֹת (MS A 1.18), which has three Tiberian *pataḥ* signs and one Babylonian *ḥōlem*; עֲשִׂיהֶם (MS A 3.8), which has the Babylonian *ḥōlem* and *šērê*, with the Tiberian diacritical point over the letter ש.

The Babylonian symbols also influenced the use of Tiberian signs. For example, when the letter *Yōdh* follows a letter vocalized with *hireq* or *šērê*, the Tiberian vowel sign generally appears under the letter denoting the consonant, while the corresponding Babylonian symbol appears over the *Yōdh*. In Manuscript A the Tiberian signs for *hireq* or *šērê* usually appear under the *Yōdh*, apparently as a result of the influence of the Babylonian system (1.9: אֲשִׁימִים; 2.11: הִתִּיר; 3.1: נִכְרַתִּים; 11.3: בְּגִדִים; yet 1.9: וְכִימִגְשִׁים; 1.21: וְיִסְיִסוּ).

The concentration of vocalization signs, of both types, in the first pages only, as well as their mixed usage, creates the impres-

sion that all were inserted by a single redactor making use of both the Babylonian and Tiberian systems. This scribe made no differentiation. Such usage is not unusual in ancient manuscripts. In this regard the Tiberian Torah manuscript, Jerusalem Heb. 24° 5702 (previously Sassoon 507) is an example worthy of mention. In the Masoretic notes appearing in this manuscript there are numerous signs of Babylonian vocalization alongside the Tiberian system. Even in the Aleppo Codex, a typically Tiberian manuscript, there are signs of Babylonian vocalization.

Manuscript B of two pages contains approximately 35 words with vocalization signs. The vocalization system used in this manuscript is Babylonian (only a single word has the Tiberian signs, and two Tiberian signs appear in words otherwise using Babylonian signs). However, while Manuscript A represents the *simple* Babylonian system, Manuscript B represents the *complex* Babylonian system. This system includes more signs, and makes more distinctions; e. g.: in addition to the regular *hireq* (as in MS B 20.2: תְּמִים), the complex Babylonian system includes a special sign denoting a *hireq* which appears in a syllable closed by a *šewā quiescens* (MS B 19.34: וְיִבְגְדוּ), and another sign denoting a *hireq* appears in a syllable closed by a *dāgēs forte* (MS B 19.15: דָּבַר).

Words in which Babylonian vocalization definitely reflects typically Babylonian linguistic features are extremely rare. For example, in the word הִסְגִּיר (MS B 19.13) the ה is vocalized with a *šāreq*, whereas Biblical *hop'al* forms according to the Tiberian system are generally vocalized with a *qāmeš ḥātūp*. One should note that in Manuscript A the *hatepim* are missing in the words vocalized according to the Tiberian system, and that the ה in the word בְּמִתְלוֹת (MS A 1.18) is vocalized with a *pataḥ*. In contrast, a *qāmeš ḥātūp* appears under the ג in the word גְּבִיחִים (MS A 2.19), with the vowel reflecting Tiberian pronunciation. For a description of the vocalization of the manuscripts see also I. Yeivin, *The Hebrew Linguistic Tradition Reflected in Babylonian Vocalization* (Jerusalem, 1985 [5745]) p. 236 (MSS 6r, 7r [in Hebrew]).

¹ The vowel names listed here are those of the Tiberian vocalization signs. Only a few of the names of the Babylonian vowels are known: the sign corresponding to the *pataḥ* is called "*mīpataḥ puma*," that corresponding to the *qāmeš* "*mīq-*

paš puma," and the sign corresponding to the vocal *šewā* – "*ḥitpa*" (Yeivin, 1984, p. 54).

² The vowel sign ך in the Babylonian system corresponds to Tiberian *pataḥ* or *šegōl*. The letter ט in the word כְּטָרֶךְ has the

Table: A Summary of Vocalization Signs

Tiberian Vocalization		Simple Babylonian Vocalization	
<i>Vowels</i> ¹			
<i>pataḥ</i>	עם	MS A 5.16	ויבגדו MS B 19.34
<i>sēgōl</i>	אל	MS A 1.10	כסך MS B 19.2 ²
<i>šērē</i>	אל	MS A 1.10	שלם MS A 1.10
<i>qāmeṣ</i>	גבהם	MS A 2.19 ³	שלם MS A 1.10
<i>hōlem</i>	---		חוק MS A 1.20
<i>šūreq</i>	ויגודו	MS A 1.20	ישלח MS B 20.3
<i>hireq</i>	התיר	MS A 2.11	תמים MS B 20.2
vocal <i>šwā</i>	וכימגששים	MS A 1.9	ישבו MS B 19.35 ⁵
<i>Other Signs</i>			
<i>dāgēš</i>	ויגודו	MS A 1.20	---
<i>rapeh</i>	וכימגששים	MS A 1.9	---
<i>šin</i>	ותישם	MS A 5.21	---
<i>šin</i>	עשיהם	MS A 3.8	---

Complex Babylonian Vocalization

hātēp (כאשר = כָּאֶשֶׁר – MS B 19.15) or *pataḥ* (= *sēgōl*) in a syllable closed with a *šwā* (הקדש = הַקִּדָּשׁ – MS B 20.2)

hireq in a syllable closed with a *šwā* – ויבגדו (MS B 19.34)

hireq in a syllable closed with *dāgēš* – דָּבַר (MS B 19.15)

*Additional Signs**The sign אל*

The letters א and ל are occasionally written with a single graphical sign א. This feature is rarer in Manuscript A (appearing twice: 5.3: אעזר; 5:20: ישר – both appear at the end of the line, in order to save space) and more common in Manuscript B (five occurrences: 19.2: לא; 19.8, 19.22, 19.30, 19.32: א).

sign of the *pataḥ* (here corresponding to the Tiberian *sēgōl*). The letter ר has the sign of the *pataḥ* in a syllable closed with a *šwā* (corresponding here to the Tiberian *sēgōl*, as well).

³ The first *qāmeṣ* is a *qāmeṣ hātūp* (originating in a u-vowel).

⁴ The redactor preferred to use the Babylonian sign to mark the *hōlem*, even when the rest of the word uses Tiberian signs

The writing of the letters א and ל as a single symbol is common in Hebrew manuscripts. I. Yeivin, who studied this phenomenon (I. Yeivin, "The spelling of the noun אלהים in Hebrew manuscripts," *Alei Sefer* 11 [1984 = 5744] 37–56 [in Hebrew]), reached the conclusion that this feature originated in Palestine. This spelling was first used in sacred names, and only later did it come to be used in other names containing consecutive *‘Aleph-Lāmedh*. In ancient Babylonian manuscripts this feature is not found, and only later does it appear in all name types, sacred and others.

Signs of Erasure

There are a numerous places where words erroneously written were subsequently erased. A number of words or letters were erased by means of two dots placed within each letter or above it (MS A 1.9: אנשים; MS A 5.3: נפחת; MS A 5.8: אחיהם – the final letter was erased and replaced by a ו). Other words were erased by means of a line or by an ink-smear. In this way emendations were made in Manuscript A beginning with page 9 and throughout Manuscript B.

Other Signs

There is one case (MS B 19.2) of a horizontal line appearing over two words in a verse quoted from the Pentateuch: לאהב ולשמרי מצותי לאף דור. The lines may indicate the emendation required here (מצותי ולשמרי מצותיו) – Deut 7:9; the original writer was apparently influenced by Deut 5:9, but on the very same page similar lines appear in yet another verse (MS B 19.8: ועל גבר עמיתי נאם א).

A heavy dot appears between two words on two separate occasions (MS A 12.1: קודש הוא; MS B 19.2: מצותי לאף). Their significance is unclear, and it is possible that these dots are merely blots, with no significance whatever.

(MS A 1.18). There also appears a Tiberian *šūreq* with the rest of the word using Babylonian signs (MS A 1.20: ויפירו; MS B 19.18: ושנא).

⁵ MS A contains no Babylonian sign for *šwā*; MS B marks only vocal *šwā*.