THE THREE SCROLLS OF THE LAW THAT WERE FOUND IN THE TEMPLE COURT

SHEMARYAHU TALMON

Many discussions in rabbinic literature indicate that Bible MSS current in the period of the Second Temple differed from each other textually in varying degrees. Undoubtedly some of these variations originated in scribal routine, but others preserved ancient textual traditions which had taken root in Israel at a very early time. Apparently not much thought was given to these variants during the first half of the period, in so far as they constituted mere stylistic variations, or even when they suggested some difference in views and opinions. This may explain the survival of textual variants in parallel sections of Former Prophets and Chronicles which the transmitters of the Bible did not bother to standardize.¹ In the second half of this period, however, there are to be found indications of an ever-increasing effort to consolidate a single textual tradition of the Bible in the Jewish community. But even at this stage parallel readings were viewed with relative equanimity. The exclusion of a reading from the official text did not disqualify it from being used in rabbinic discussions in the academies. This accounts for the appearance in rabbinic literature of biblical quotations that diverge from the traditional text.² These parallel readings persisted in the academy discussions without disparaging those who quoted them.

The preservation even in rabbinic literature of readings which differ from the textus receptus has prompted S. Lieberman to classify the MSS extant during the Temple period into three categories:³ (1) authoritative books kept in the Temple (ἡμεροβεβελέα); (2) authoritative popular books used by the general public (ξανθά); (3) inferior texts, which survived in small communities in Palestine (φανερά). Only books of the first category were considered suitable for the public reading in the synagogue. The second group, representatives of which are the Torah Scroll of Rabbi Meir, the Torah

1. Cf. Geiger, Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel (Breslau, 1857) pp. 97–100; 231 ff.; see also Rashi on 1 Chronicles viii, 29.
2. V. Aptowitzer, Das Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur (1906–1915).
Scroll of the Synagogue of Severus in Rome\(^4\) and other books that emanated from Jerusalem (\textit{P.T. Megillah}, I,9; 71d), were used for study. The rabbis strove, however, to keep the books of the third category from being used even for study purposes: “Five things did R. Akiba charge R. Shimeon b. Yochai... and when you teach your son, teach him from a corrected scroll. What is that? Said Rava—others state, R. Mesharshaya—: a new one, for once an error has entered, it remains.” (\textit{Pesahim} 112a; Soncino translation, ed. Epstein, p. 119). But some of these inferior MSS nevertheless found their way into the academies. This we may deduce from the dictum: “A book that is not corrected—R. Ami said: Until thirty days one is allowed to keep it, from then and further on, it is forbidden to keep it, because it is said: ‘Let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents’ [Job xi,14].” (\textit{Ketubbot} 19b; Sonc. ed. p. 106.)

According to Lieberman the popular scrolls of the Bible (\textit{soorad} or \textit{vulgata}) were not simply corrupt MSS. They represented a variant text which lacked some of the “emendations of the Soferim and corrections of the sages” that were inserted in the normative books. This definition is marked by over-simplification, which apparently derives from Lieberman’s tendency to align the modes of Bible transmission with the method that prevailed in the Hellenistic world. Surely it may be assumed that those popular texts did not reflect a single version, common to them all, but rather differed from one another in various details. They were not distinguished by a common textual tradition, but by deviating, individually and as a group, from the authoritative version which progressively crystallized in the model codices. Moreover, we should not draw a sharp line of distinction in this respect between the “popular” books and the “authoritative” books; for even the latter were not uniform throughout. For this reason the sages were occasionally called upon to decide between parallel readings which presented themselves even in the model codices that were kept in the Temple.

II

The process of selection and the criteria for the authorization of one MS and for the rejection of another are illustrated by the report on the three Scrolls of the Law found in the Temple Court, which differed from each other in several respects. The account is preserved in four sources, which differ somewhat

\(^4\) \text{P.T. Ta'anith i, 1 (64a); Bereshith Rabba} ch. 9,5 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 70), also the end of ch. 20 and ch. 94, 9; \textit{Pesikta d'Rab Kahana} (ed. S. Buber) 68, 1; \textit{Bereshith Rabbathi}, ed. Albeck (1940), p. 209 ff.
from each other. Our first task, therefore, is to determine the assumingly correct reading.

1. *P.T. Ta'anith IV, 2:68a:*

Three Scrolls of the Law were found in the Temple Court: the *mē’ōnā* scroll, the *za’āṭūtē* scroll and the *hi’* scroll. In one of them they found written מָשָׁן אָלָלָה קָדָם (Deut. xxxiii, 27) and in the other two they found written מָשָׁן; they adopted the reading of the two and discarded the reading of the one. In one they found written יָרֵשָׁהּ אֲחָא צְרֵאִים (Ex. xxiv, 5) and in the other two they found written יָרֵשָׁהּ אֲחָא צְרֵאִים; they adopted the two and discarded the one. In one they found אָדָה written nine times, and in the other two they found it written eleven times; they adopted the two and discarded the one.


Three Scrolls of the Law were found in the Temple Court: the *mē’ōnā* scroll, the *za’āṭūtē* scroll and the *hi’* scroll. The *mē’ōnā* scroll: in one was written מָשָׁן אָלָלָה קָדָם, and in one was written מָשָׁן אָלָלָה קָדָם; they discarded the one and adopted the two. (Rab Yose said: This was the scroll that was found in Beth Ma’on.) The *za’āṭūtē* scroll: in one was written יָרֵשָׁהּ אֲחָא צְרֵאִים and in the other two was written יָרֵשָׁהּ אֲחָא צְרֵאִים. They discarded the one and adopted the two. The *hi’* scroll: wherever was written אָדָה, they read (it) אֲדָה. Some say: אֲדָה is written with *yod* in eleven places in the Torah. They discarded the one and adopted the two.

3. *Sifre II, 356* (ed. Finkelstein, p. 423; ed. Friedmann, p. 148b): Three Scrolls of the Law were found in the Temple Court, one [distinguished by readings] of *mē’ōn*(*im*), one of *hi’* *hi’*, and one called “the *za’āṭūt* *im* scroll”. In one was written מָשָׁן קָדָם, and in the second was written מָשָׁן אָלָלָה קָדָם. The sages discarded the one and adopted the two.
THE THREE SCROLLS OF THE LAW


R. Shimeon b. Lakish said: three Scrolls of the Law were found in the Temple Court—the me'Ona scroll, the za'Atufe scroll and the hi’ scroll. In one they found written 'משכן', and in the other two was written 'ממענה אליהם קדרים'; they adopted the two and discarded the one. In one they found written 'ירושלם איני אוסר ביה' and in the two was written 'ירושלם על נטיר ביה' and they adopted the two and discarded the one. In one it was written eleven times, and in two it was written eleven times; they adopted the two and discarded the one.

The subject-matter of this account evidently are three Scrolls of the Law that had been deposited in the Temple Court, owing to their sanctity and importance.6 Even if we accept the thesis of Blau, Lauterbach and Klein, which is rejected by others,7 that we must discern in this account between two strata, the original discussion and an exposition of it—even then we cannot accept the opinion of Klein and Lauterbach that the discussion here centers on records of family genealogies rather than Torah scrolls.8 It is true that the text in the Palestinian Talmud is followed by references to genealogy records that were found in Jerusalem. This juxtaposition led Rashi to discuss such records together with the three scrolls that were found in the Temple Court.

6. On this point, see Josephus, Ant. V, i, 17.
7. The concatenation of conjectures proffered by Lauterbach to substantiate his explanation only shows that it has no proper foundation, "The Three Books Found in the Temple at Jerusalem", JQR 8, (1917-8), 385-423. On the arguments of Klein, Segal's critique (in the appendix to op. cit., p. 254). The opinion of L. Blau (Studien zum althebräischen Buchwesen (1902), pp. 102ff.) that the me'Ona codex came from Beth Ma'on near Tiberias (cf. Aboth d'Rabbi Nathan), that the hi' codex was an especially small book and that the za'Atufe codex was named after its supposed owners—and that all three came into the hands of Jews in the third century after having been carried off from Jerusalem at the time of the destruction of the Temple—has already been refuted by Lauterbach, op. cit., p. 288 ff.
in his commentary on 1 Chronicles viii 29. But adjacency in a Talmudic treatise is not necessarily an indication of related subject matter. Furthermore, in one section Jerusalem is referred to, and in the other, the Court of the Temple.

The account is composed of four distinct parts—an introduction and three statements; the latter we shall designate A, B, and C. Each statement treats of a particular textual discrepancy, which in each instance distinguishes one scroll from the other two with which it was compared. The Introduction, which makes the three statements into a unit of subject matter, appears in all four versions, though it would seem that in none of them it has survived in its original form.

We assume that originally the three discarded codices were mentioned in it: סファー מסרא, סファー תDeviceInfo, סファー א. Against these the sages upheld in each case the readings of the codices that constituted the majority. The latter were declared authoritative: נמרי בּר נָרַיא (Deut. xxxiii, 27), נמרי בּר נָרַיא (Ex. xxiv, 5), and the spelling נָרַיא for the third pers. sing. פּ.m. in eleven instances in the Pent. instead of the prevalent spelling נָרַיא.8

In contrast to the relative textual uniformity of the Introduction, the statements appear in the several sources in different wordings. The version of Aboth d’Rabbi Nathan is distinguished by the inclusion of a comment in statement А which is not included in the other sources. This comment ascribes to R. Yose the explanation of the designation “מְוןָא codex” as due to its having turned up at a place called Ma’on. There are three indications of the secondary nature of this comment: (1) According to the Introduction, the codex was found in the Temple Court and nowhere else. (2) The MS is called erroneously “מְוןָא codex” in the Introduction, whereas the comment correctly presupposes the name “מְוןָא codex” (3) In the case of this codex alone an explanation of its name is offered, and this explanation bears no relationship to the Bible text, which is the sole object of the entire discussion.

The Sifre version is the shortest. This fact led Friedmann to assume that a section of the once fuller account had been omitted by copyists. But in fact, the author of this midrash cited only the part of the argument required for his purpose, viz. statement A, which treats of the variant readings of the phrase נְמרָי אֲלָהְיָהּ קָדְם (Deut. xxxiii, 27). We conclude that of the four versions, only that of Sifre fulfils a direct functional purpose. This indicates its priority over the other versions.

By analogy we may say that also the variant נְמרָי נָטָםī was first adduced in some midrashic or proto-massoretic treatise in connection with the verse, “And he sent the young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings...”

8. We here concur with the opinion of J. Muller, Masecheth Saferim, 1878, p. 90.
(Ex. xxiv, 5). Similarly, the variant יִהְיֶה = יִיהְיֶה first came up for consideration in the discussion of one of the eleven instances in the Pentateuch where the Masoretic Text has the exceptional spelling יֵיהָ for the third person fem. pronoun, rather than the prevalent Kethib spelling יֵיהָ (some 200 times) accompanied by the Qere יֵיהָ.

It follows that the Introduction in the version of Sifre cannot be considered original. The juxtaposition of the מַדְּנָנ-מַדְּנָנָד argument and the discussion of other variant readings which are essentially unrelated to it reflects a late process of development, possibly due to a recurrent influence of the opening formula which appears in the parallel texts.

In the Palestinian Talmud, and especially in Aboth d’R. Nathan, the account of ‘The Three Books’ is adjacent to discussions of other subjects also arrayed in groups of three or four, such as “Upon three things the world rests...” (P.T.) There are three books of prophets, three books of Hagiographa, four (types) of wise men, three (types) of students (AdRN). In Soferim, the argument appears in a series of lists dealing with scribal peculiarities to be observed in the transcription of the Bible text. These lists, unrelated in their subject-matter, are couched in the form of numerical sayings, such as “There are ten dotted words in the Torah...” (vi, 3) and “Three times the word אֶל is written lamed aleph but is read lamed waw” (vi, 5).

It may be deduced that also the combination of the discussions concerning the ‘three codices’ resulted from a custom of the scribes to assemble guiding rules for the accurate transcription of Torah scrolls in accordance with a text accepted by them as standard. The juxtaposition of the three statements should therefore be considered as due to scribal techniques and does not indicate any essential relationship between them. Once the three statements were combined they became a literary unit which warranted the addition of some introductory remark. We are confronted here with a very early case of massoretic-type or proto-massoretic notation, the kind which constitutes the core of classical massoretic works.

A close examination of the textual variations between the different versions tends to confirm this hypothesis. Those in the Introduction and in the first

9. This viewpoint contradicts the opinions of Lauterbach (op. cit.) and Blau (op. cit.), who maintain that the original substance of the account is to be found in the opening passage and that all that follows, from “in one they found” onwards, is a late exposition. S. Klein (op. cit.) takes up a similar position, but he considers the recurrent phrase “They adopted two and discarded one” to be part of the original discussion.

10. Thus it is possible that there is an element of historical truth in the attribution of the argument, in its complete version, to שִׁימוֹן (Rabbi Shimeon ben) Lakish, an Amora of the 3rd century. V. Aptowitzter (מרץ 2 (1908), 103) suggests the reading, כְּאַדְמַאי ר מְשַׁלי, assigning the dictum to a Tanna and disciple of R. Akiba.
two statements are of no importance and can be readily explained as ensuing from scribal and copyist routine. In this respect as well, the version of Sifre stands apart; in its introduction the enumeration of the codices follows a different order. Even its wording diverges from the almost uniform phrasing of the other three sources.

1. The variation of active and passive, “they found three codices” or “three codices were found”, does not at all affect the subject matter. We find similar variants in parallel texts of the Bible (2 Sam. v, 17 מָשָׁה and 1 Chron. xiv, 8 מַמֵּשָׁה; 2 Kings xvii, 6לְכוּ and ibid. xviii, 10לְכוּ; and in divergencies between MT and extra-Massoretic texts (Ex. xxv, 28–MT מַשָּה, Sam., 26 and xiv, 3–MT מַשָּה יַקְרָא and 1QIsו, יַקְרָא.11

2. The same applies to the practically synonymous expressions “was written” and “was found written” (cf. Deut. xi, 24, מִלָּה יָדַע and Josh. i, 3, מִלָּה נְתַתָּ֔).12

3. The wording in Soferim, rather than תִּפְקָד מִצְרַיִם instead of תִּפְקָד מִצְרַיִם, in the other two sources, may have been influenced by the wording of Ex. xxiv, 11 רָאָה לְאֵלֶּיהָ בָּנָי שָׁאוֹרָא, which appears in the same context as v.5: רָאָה נֵעַר בָּנָי שָׁאוֹרָא.

4. In the designation of the codices, we find two rows of three parallel forms which undoubtedly resulted from a process of assimilation. כּוּבָּי (P.T.) was apparently formed by analogy with כּוּבָּי (ibid.), unless we explain the form כּוּבָּי as an abbreviation of כּוּבָּי מֹעֶדְתָּ (AdRN) is imitative of כּוּבָּי מֹעֶדְתָּ (ibid.). The form כּוּבָּי מֹעֶדְתָּ (Sifre), however, is probably to be explained as an allusion to the two-fold mention of מָעָה = מִצְרַיִם in the Pent. (Deut. xxvi, 15; xxxiii, 27). Analogous with it the form כּוּבָּי מֹעֶדְתָּ originated in Sifre.

III

The variant readings in the formulations of the third statement are of greater consequence. As we have pointed out, this statement does not appear at all in the Sifre version, and in AdRN it has survived in a distorted form. This is clear from the replacement of the formula “In one was written... in two was written” by the wording, “The hi’ codex—wherever אָדָם was written, they read אָדָם”. Now this reading is meaningless. Apparently the early expositors already sought to interpret it by adding “in eleven places in the Torah אד is written with a yod”. The intent of this expression will be clarified by a scrutiny of the other two formulations of the statement.

Let us first examine the version of P.T. According to it, the codex that was

discarded in favour of the other two whose reading was accepted, employed in
the Pent. only nine times, as against eleven in the other two, the spelling אֹהִי
instead of the predominant spelling אֹהִי. Thus the difference between the
majority and minority readings was only quantitative, not qualitative, and
evidences the uncontrolled, unsystematic, and unequal penetration of a new
phonetic spelling of the third person fem. pronoun into MSS of the Pentateuch.
The penetration of this new spelling was undoubtedly gradual, reaching
completion only in the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, in which the
early spelling אֹהִי does not appear. This novel spelling also gained ascendancy
in the Massoretic Text of the Prophets and Hagiographa, to the extent that the
form אֹהִי has survived only three times (Ps. lxxiii, 16; Job xxxi, 11; Eccl.
8, 3), while the MT of the Pent. was stabilized at a time when the spelling
וה אֹהִי had become established in only eleven instances, namely: Gen. xiv, 2;
xx, 5; xxxviii, 25; Lev. xi, 39; xiii, 10; xiii, 21; xvi, 31; xx, 17; xxi, 9; Num. v,
13; 14. These were counted and confirmed in the Massorah. This list marks
the final stage in the process of consolidation and unification of traditions in
this particular matter. The Torah Scroll of the Synagogue of Severus, for
example, had וה אֹהִי also in Ex. xxxi, 13, where MT has the spelling וה אֹהִי.12
And while recension A of AdRN notes that “eleven times וה אֹהִי is written in the Torah
with a yod” and recension B speaks of “eleven yod’s in the Torah”, the lists
in the two recensions still differ in their order and even in the actual instances
adduced. Version A derives only one instance, וה אֹהִי, from Gen. xxxviii, 25, while
Version B registers two, וה אֹהִי וּלְשׁוֹן יְהוָה אָדָם יְהִי from the same verse. Version
A does not list וה אֹהִי לְשׁוֹן וּלְשׁוֹן יְהוָה (Lev. xvi, 31) as does B, making up the number
by counting both mentions of וה אֹהִי in Num. v, 13: וה אֹהִי וּלְשׁוֹן יְהוָה אָדָם יְהִי לְשׁוֹן וּלְשׁוֹן יְהוָה, while B counts only the second. This means that, although both recensions
deal with the general rule of the “eleven וה אֹהִי” in the Pentateuch which are
spelled with yod, their lists coincide in only nine of the cases. This seems to
point to a stage of development in which the traditionists had as yet authorized
a nucleus of only nine cases of the novel spelling וה אֹהִי. This assumption offers an
explanation for the wording of our account as it appears in the Palestinian
Talmud. The codex that was discarded, the one in which “they found וה
written nine times” represents that intermediate stage in the penetration of the
spelling וה אֹהִי into the text of the Pentateuch. On the other hand, the two codices
which recorded “וה אֹהִי written eleven times” are representative of the tradition
which the rabbis ultimately accepted and which took root in the majority of texts.

ter Pent. Commentar u. seine Varianten”, MGWJ 34 (1885), 337-71; A. Neubauer,
“Der Pent. der sogenannten Severus Synagoge” MGWJ 36 (1897), 508-509. And see
A.M. Habermann’s analysis of this matter (Sinai 32 (1953), 161-167).
Soferim deals with a more basic divergence between the discarded codex and the two whose reading was adopted. The statement, “In one was written eleven times סָ֑דָּה, and in two they found written eleven times סָ֑דָּה”, indicates that the codex that was banished had not absorbed at all the new spelling סָדָּה but maintained throughout the Pentateuch the older spelling סָדָּה; in other words, it stood in direct contrast to the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, which reads סָדָּה in every instance. It is thus clear that this codex was basically different from the minority codex treated in the P.T. It did not vary from the others in the degree to which it had absorbed the novel mode of spelling, but in that it represented a textual tradition totally unaffected by the processes of textual development that had affected to some measure the codices accepted by the rabbis. The divergence in Soferim consequently precedes chronologically that of P.T. We may deduce from this that during the Second Commonwealth there were apparently current in Israel Torah scrolls that were completely free of the new spelling סָדָּה as a designation of the third person fem. At the same time this spelling had penetrated into other MSS without any system and in varying measure, while in yet other codices this process came to its logical and consistent conclusion, the spelling סָדָּה being accepted in every case, as in the Samaritan tradition.

IV

It is conceivable that the variant reading מְצִיץ מְצִיתוֹ - סָ֑דָּה מְצִיתוֹ - סָ֑דָּה מְצִיתוֹ without discriminating; similarly with מְצִיתוֹ מְצִיתוֹ - סָ֑דָּה מְצִיתוֹ - סָ֑דָּה מְצִיתוֹ. Vestiges of that transitory stage survive in the Massoretic text: לְמִרְבָּה (Is. ix. 6) and מַמְרָז הֲמָרָז (Neh. ii. 13). More such readings were preserved, for example, in the Torah Scroll of the Synagogue of Seveus, as recorded in Ber. Rabbathi.4

1. Gen. xxxvi, 10 MT:
   אֶלִימָה בַּגְּדֹת
MS. Paris:
   אֶלִימָה בַּגְּדֹת
Num. xxxvi, 1 MT:
   לְמִשְׁפָּהוֹת בָּנָי יָטִיק
MSS Paris, Damascus:
   רָאָשׁ בַּגְּדֹת בֵּית יָטִיק הַכֹּהֵן
2. Gen. xxxvii, 2 MT:
   יָסְפַּט יָסְפַּט... וְיוֹדֵה שִׁמְעָה אָנָה שִׁמְעָה וְיַחֲדָו מְכָל דְּשָׁמֵךְ
MSS P. and D.:
   רוּדָד מְסָרֵי
Gen. xliii, 15 MT:
   רוּדָד מְסָרֵי
MS Prague:
   רוּדָד מְסָרֵי

13. N.H. Torczyner (Tur-Sinai), ”Leshonenu 10 (1939), 98–118.”
Gen. xlvii, 7 MT: שכם חלב
MSS Paris, Damascus: שכם חלב
Lev. iv, 34 MT: רַקִּיתָה הַכֹּהֶן מֶרְכָּז
MSS Paris, Damascus: מֶרְכָּז כֹּהֶן
Deut. i, 26 MT: אֵלַּה אָבִיתֶם
MSS Paris, Damascus: אֵלַּה אָבִיתֶם
Deut. iii, 8 MT: וְרַחֵשׁ נִמְּלָכָה אֲלֵה אָמְרִית
MSS Paris, Damascus: וְרַחֵשׁ נִמְּלָכָה

Another explanation for the variance between the “māʿon codex” and the “mēʿōnā codex” was given by Bamberger14, who erroneously thought that the suffix נ – which distinguishes the text that was accepted [משת] from the one that was rejected [משמ], here indicates the locative.15 As a result he drew an analogy to the matter under discussion from P.T. Yeboamoth i,6 (3a): “Rabbi Shimeon b. Elazar taught, I told the Cuthite (Samaritan)scribes: who caused you to err? (The fact) that you do not follow the principle of R. Nehemiah: in the name of R. Nehemiah it was taught that every word which should have a prefixed (locative) lamed and does not have it, receives the suffix he". In other words, Bamberger maintains that the “māʿon codex” was a Samaritan text in which the directional suffix was (erroneously) omitted without substituting for it a prefixed lamed. This opinion is untenable, since the Samaritan Version has the reading מְלָכָה אֲלֵה אָמְרִית exactly as the Masoretic Text. Furthermore, the omission of the suffixed נ is not one of the distinctive features of the Samaritan Version, which even adds this suffix in some instances where it does not appear in MT.16

As a matter of fact, the “mēʿōnā codex” diverged from the “māʿon codex” not in the inclusion or omission of the directional suffix, but in the use of an alternative form of the same word: one text has a "masculine" formation while the other employs the "feminine" formation. Actually we are dealing with two synonymous forms which may have been developed from the defective spelling: הַלְּכָה–לְכָה, analogous to הַלְּכָה–לְכָה (Prov. xxxi, 18). This phenomenon is quite common in diverse sets of parallel biblical texts.18

15. Segal (_Render_ מְלָכָה _ibid._) accepts this hypothesis, but does not accept the conclusions Bamberger draws from it.
17. Gen. xxiv, 16; Deut. xxii, 15; 1 Kings v, 4 etc.
18. See Sperber, _op. cit._, pp. 94-5; Also A. Sperber, “Biblical Exegesis—Prolegomena to a Commentary and Dictionary to the Bible”, JBL 64 (1945), pp. 48-51.
A. MT — Samaritanus

1. Gen. xxvii, 3 MT: הָלִיל הַיָּמִים S: הָלִיל הַיָּמִים
xxxiv, 12 MT: מִסְתַּנְח בָּטֹלモデルך קָנָה
xlvi, 10 MT: בָּטֹל בָּטֹל מִסְתַּנְח בָּטֹל מִסְתַּנְח בָּטֹל

Lev. iv, 32 MT: נָבָע נָבָע נָבָע נָבָע נָבָע נָבָע

2. Gen. viii, 3 MT: הָלִיל הַיָּמִים קָנָה קָנָה קָנָה קָנָה קָנָה קָנָה
x, 4 MT: לַעֲלֹאֵת לַעֲלֹאֵת לַעֲלֹאֵת לַעֲלֹאֵת לַעֲלֹאֵת לַעֲלֹאֵת

Lev. x, 27 MT: הָלִיל הַיָּמִים הָלִיל הַיָּמִים

B. MT — 1QIs

1. Is. v, 11 MT: נַעֲלֹאֵת 1QIs: נַעֲלֹאֵת
v, 1 MT: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת
xxxii, 12 MT: שֶׁנִּמאֵת שֶׁנִּמאֵת
xxix, 7 MT: נִרְגְּשָה נִרְגְּשָה

2. Is. viii, 3 MT: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

xv, 22 MT: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

C. MT — 1Qs

1. Is. xxvi, 1 MT: שֶׁנִּמאֵת [1QIs: שֶׁנִּמאֵת]
liii, 3 MT: נִרְגְּשָה נִרְגְּשָה
lxiii, 1 MT: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

D. Parallel readings in the MT

1. 2 Sam. v, 9: נַעֲלֹאֵת Ps. xviii, 21: נַעֲלֹאֵת
xxiv, 21: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

v, 8: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

Ki. vii, 26: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת
ix, 10: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

Ps. xl, 18: נַעֲלֹאֵת Ps. lxx, 6: נַעֲלֹאֵת

E. Kethib–Qere

1. Gen. xxvii, 3 Kethib: נַעֲלֹאֵת Qere: נַעֲלֹאֵת
Jer. xxxix, 39: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת
Job xxxi, 7: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

Prov. xxvii, 10: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת
xxvi, 18: נַעֲלֹאֵת נַעֲלֹאֵת

19. Also in Deut. xiv. 28. Cf. further: 1 Kings iv, 10 — יְנַעֲלֹאֵת; 2 Chron. viii, 1 — יְנַעֲלֹאֵת; Is. ii, 7, MT — יְנַעֲלֹאֵת and 1QIs — יְנַעֲלֹאֵת.

20. Perhaps he changed it intentionally because the subject is “the Greeks”.

21. Which is correct according to the context. It accords with the Massora which records— יְנַעֲלֹאֵת.

22. Cf. 1QIs vii, 11 — יְנַעֲלֹאֵת. Barthélemy tends to interpret the fem. plural form as a kind of distinctive designation of the sects’ basic ordinances (QI, p. 113).

23. See supra, Is. lxiii, 1, MT— 1QIs.


25. Cf. supra Is. xv. 1, MS— 1QIs.
The same holds true for מַעַן. Both forms are found concurrently in biblical literature. To be sure, they cannot be derived with certainty from one root.26 מַעַן is employed only once in the Pentateuch, in the verse discussed here (Deut. xxxiii, 27), and similarly מַעַן, in the phrase מַעַן בְּנִית קִדְשָׁו (Deut. xxvi, 15). The Scroll from the Temple Court which the rabbis discarded had in both verses the reading מַעַן.

V

We may assume that the variants cited in our sources were not the only readings which set the minority MSS apart from the majority MSS whose text was sanctioned. But it was these variants that were used conveniently to designate those codices, until ultimately they were named after them. From this we may deduce that these variants were not mere random textual deviations, but rather were considered distinguishing signs for types of texts that the rabbis sought to remove from circulation. This we can deduce from other discussions which deal with books that deviated from the authoritative text of the Pentateuch.

Rabbinic tradition reports that “they wrote for him (King Ptolemy), יִרְשָׁלֵם אֲחַי וַעֲנֵי בְּנֵי שְׂרָיאֵל (Ex. xxv, 5), ואֶלָּא עָנַט יִשְׂרָיֵל אֵל שָׁלֹה אֵת דָּוִד (xxiv, 11)”.27 This information is recorded in a list of corrections of the Soferim which were entered in the Hebrew original, as it were, from which the Greek (LXX) translation of the Pentateuch was prepared for King Ptolemy. The great majority of corrections enumerated there are not to be found in any extant biblical texts.28 This applies also to the reading מַעַן for מַעַן; but the account of the “three Scrolls of the Law” gives evidence to the fact that this variant was actually current in a MS of considerable importance that was preserved in the Temple.

In fact, the report about the scroll that was prepared for King Ptolemy does

26. Cf. the dictionaries of Ben-Yehuda, Gesenius and Köhler. מַעַן: Jer, xxx, 30; Ps. lxvii, 8; Neh. ii, 12; 2 Chron. xxvi, 5. מַעַן: Jer. xxi, 13; Ps. lxxvi, 3; Amos iii, 4. LXX distinguish between the two words. In Deut. xxvi, 15, it is rendered ὀίων; ib. xxiii, 27 — σκόπασις. Note further the synonymous usage of the two words in the Dead Sea Scrolls: 1QH xii, 7 — נַכְנָא הַמְּסֵפֶר אֲלֵי מְשִׁיס; 1QS, x, 1 מַעַן הַמְּסֵפֶר אֲלֵי מְשִׁיס לְנַכְנָא הַמְּסֵפֶר. נַכְנָא הַמְּסֵפֶר לְנַכְנָא הַמְּסֵפֶר.

27. Megillah i, 1; Soferim i, 8.

28. Exceptions to this are the following: Gen. ii, 1 וַיְכַלָּה בְּיָמָיו אֶל מַעַן (LXX; SAM.; P); Num. vii, 15 לֹא מִיִּלָּו בַּיָּמִים תֵּעָמָה (LXX: ἐπιδήμησις); Ex. xii, 40 לֵאמִּי עַם לֹא תֵּעָמָה (LXX: ἐπιδήμησις). This reading resembles those of LXX and SAM; Ex. iv, 20, יָמִים לֹא תֵּעָמָה (LXX); Lev. xi, 6—Deut. xiv, 7 יָמִים הָּלוֹא תֵּעָמָה (LXX). Cf. Segal, המְּסֵפֶר, IV, pp. 928-9.
not really deal with corrections of the Soferim that were embedded in that text by the initiative and with the approval of the rabbis, but rather with variant readings which circulated amongst Jews\textsuperscript{29}, especially among groups which did not submit to the authority of the leaders of normative Jewry. The formulation, “they wrote for him”, only represents an effort to camouflage the failure of the rabbis to ban these divergent readings and to remove them from circulation.\textsuperscript{30} The representation of conditions and situations that were actually outside the sphere of the rabbis’ influence as determined by them or legally authorized by them throws some light on their efforts to maintain a single central control and to attenuate the shocks of social schism which harassed Jewry in the generations between the times of Alexander and the destruction of the Second Temple.

We are unable to define precisely the nature of those dissident groups owing to the paucity of historical and manuscript evidence that has been preserved for us from that time. But by reason of the foregoing discussion we may conjecture that אנה ב is a type of manuscript accepted by extreme conservative groups, who were singularly punctilious about the text of the Bible and strove to maintain it throughout in an ancient form which resisted the intrusion of spelling novelties such as אנה ב. The אנה ב, on the other hand, is a representative of those textual traditions which were open to Aramaic influences, owing to linguistic usages common in the time of the copyists. Examples of these are the complete scroll of Isaiah from the Judaean desert and the Pent. text from which the Greek translation, commonly called “the Septuagint”, was made.\textsuperscript{31}

At the outset we should expect that the reading אנה ב would have been rejected on linguistic grounds. Whether the word is to be derived from the Zend language as suggested by Perles\textsuperscript{32}, from the Greek, as proposed by Geiger\textsuperscript{33}, or whether it be an Aramaic word, which seems most likely\textsuperscript{34}, it is

\textsuperscript{29} For this reason, also in rabbinc literature these readings are not associated with the book prepared for King Ptolemy. Thus, in Sifre 148 (ed. Friedmann 104a): אנה ב הוות של yanovoth is not extant in MT of Deut. 17:3; it is one of the changes made for King Ptolemy. Cf. further Mekhilta on Ex. xii, 40, and Bereshith Rabba 63, 1. Aptowitzer’s opinion that this constitutes evidence for a re-translation from Greek to Hebrew (םכמ. II, p. 19) is unacceptable.

\textsuperscript{30} We should interpret in similar fashion the dictum, “...they selected for Israel the Assyrian (square) script and the Holy (Hebrew) language, leaving the (old) Hebrew characters and the Aramaic language for the yanovoth. Who are meant by the ‘yanovoth’?—Rab Hisda answers: The Cutheans (Samaritans),” (B.T. Sanhedrin 21b). Cf. the comments of N.H. Tur-Sinai, ה yanovoth, in פָּסַכְו (1945), pp. 102-42.

\textsuperscript{31} Cf. A. Berliner, Targum Onkelos II (1884), S. 77. Anm. 2.

\textsuperscript{32} F. Perles, Beiträge zur Rabbinischen Sprach- und Sagenkunde, S.5.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 156: ἔρυθος. The same root is often used in apocryphal literature with the meaning, “seek out God” or “seek out wisdom”.
an alien, late and secondary reading, inferior to the pure Hebrew reading נוער בַּי הַמָּלָא. But its rejection on text-critical grounds, because of its being late and secondary, would necessitate the application of the same criteria for deciding between other divergent texts, such as אֲמָרָה סִ חָדִּים and אֲמָרָה סִ חָדִּים. It would have been logical to prefer, from this viewpoint, אֲמָרָה סִ חָדִּים, because it preserved an ancient spelling.\(^{35}\) However, a decision in favour of this reading was plainly impossible. The argument under analysis transmits a report, not about the creation of a textus receptus, but about the confirmation and authorization of a reading which had already been accepted by the rabbis, for unspecified reasons, and of the rejection and banishment of alternative readings which probably were current among the adherents of dissident groups. For this reason the rabbis did not attempt to correct the codex of the Temple Court whose reading was rejected, but discarded it instead. In other words, they banished it from use in their own society and abandoned it, much against their will, to those circles that were not subject to their legislation.

This sifting of readings was not an aim in itself, but rather served the normative community as a measure of self-defence against various groups of dissidents. It was intended, first and foremost, to create a stable textual tradition in those parts of the O.T. which were used as proof-texts in the religious-social controversies of the time.

The authorization of a reading on the strength of a fortuitous majority of two codices against one out of three found in the Temple Court was a mere formality, a sort of expedient peg on which to hang a legal decision, which accorded official recognition to a factual situation which obtained independently of this act of recognition.

34. Cf. E. Ben-Yehuda, *Thesaurus* s.v. ושע[וי]. In the end Aptowitzer also accepted this opinion. See פִּיפָם, III, p. 17, footnote; J. Müller, *Masecheth Soferim*, p. 92.
35. Against Gerelman, *op. cit.*, p. 4 We are not discussing the question of the relative priority of the vowel i in relation to u from a phonetic viewpoint, but the introduction of the distinctive forms אֲמָרָה—אֲמָרָה in the Bible text. On the u-i transition see E. Nestle, ZAW 33 (1913); W. Gesenius — E. Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar* p. 73, § 32; M. Gottstein, *משנים* 14 (1945), 32.