HOMONYMOUS HAPAX DOUBLETS IN THE MASORA*

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1. Introduction

Efforts to preserve systematically a holy text are encountered in many religious communities (e.g. Syrians\(^1\) and Muslims\(^2\)); however, the method and practical devices developed by the Hebrew masoretes are unique. While one may argue in favour of masoretic activity in other communities, and even suggest a foreign (e.g. Syriac) origin for some masoretic technical terms,\(^3\) it is impossible to point to a similar system of text preservation or to a similar approach to the text. Within this originality of the Masora, the numerical treatment of the biblical text units is one of the peculiarities specific to the Hebrew text tradition. This numerical approach to the text remained unprecedented and unequalled by any other textual approach practiced in other cultural spheres and applied to other holy or prestigious texts. Although the approach of the masoretes was mainly numerical, counting and summing up and contrasting numbers, other aspects of treatment are also found in their work. As is well known, many grammatical observations pertaining to vocalization or to morphology are scattered in the Masora. Other

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\(^1\)See, e.g., L’abbé Martin, "Tradition karkaphienne ou la Massore chez les Syriens", JA (1869) 245-379.

\(^2\)See, e.g., Th. Nöldeke, Geschichte des Qorans (Göttingen 1860) 234 ff.

\(^3\)See, e.g., on the possible Syriac origin of the *hitpa* sign, P. Kahle in: H. Bauer - P. Leander, Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes (Halle 1922) 108, 125.
observations are connected with accentuation, stress, word structure and the like, while yet others concern the semantics and the exegesis of the text.

It is our intention to deal here with the semantic aspect intrinsic to the Masora. The most frequent types of masoretic notes concerned with semantics are two:

1) ל ו ו (unique as a name of a person), as e.g. for ל ו (Gen. 22:24), which is found only here as a proper name, but occurs three more times elsewhere as a substantive 'slaughter'.

2) ק ו ו (two of two meanings), as e.g. for ק ו occurring only twice: once (Lev. 24:11) as a verb derived from the media geminated root ק ו, to mean 'and he cursed', and once (2 Kgs. 12:10) as a verb derived from the primae nun root ק ו, to mean 'and he pierced'.

The more interesting of these types is the second one, which we shall call henceforth: homonymous hapax doublets.

2. The Okla we-Okla List

2.1. The masoretes took special interest in this type, and its numerous masoretic marginal notes are also gathered in special lists. We will deal here only with lists, not with the isolated marginal masoretic notes scattered in the marginal Masora.

One such list was incorporated in Okla we-Okla (=OwO). There the list of homonymous hapax doublets comes under the heading א ו מ ב כ ו ו ו ו ו ו ו 'an alphabetical list of words occurring twice, each one of them in a different meaning'.

It is interesting to observe the variety of doublets which the masoretes collected under this heading: on the one hand the degree of semantic variation and on the other hand the degree of orthographic/phonological similarity.

2.2.1 Examples of semantic variation:

א ו (Deut. 32:27) — verb: 'I shall fear'

א ו (Prov. 30:1) — proper name: 'Agur the son of Jakeh'

4 Published twice: S. Frensdorff, Das Buch Ocllah W'ocllah (massora) (Hannover 1864) (=OwO Frens.); F. Diaz Esteban, Sefor 'Okllah we-'Oklah (Madrid 1975) (=OwO DiEs.).

5 OwO Frens. §59; OwO DiEs §60.
(Isa. 17:6) — substantive: 'uppermost bough, tree-top'
(Hos. 4:7) — verb: 'I shall change'

(Prov. 14:30) — plural substantive: 'flesh'

(Prov. 19:10) — plural substantive with prefixed preposition: 'over princes'

(Gen. 46:21) — proper name: 'and Rosh' (a son of Benjamin)
(Lam. 3:19) — substantive with prefixes copulative waw: 'and gall, and poison'.

2.2.2 In all these cases and in many similar ones the semantic variation is evident and clear-cut. Most of these are homonyms in the true sense of the word. However, as we go through the entire list we may encounter hapax pairs which cannot be clearly defined as homonyms, because they constitute varying meanings derived from the same basic meaning.

For example:

'you (pl.) ploughed' occurs twice: once when Samson answered the people of Timnah (Jud. 14:18) לַלֶּא רַמָּתָם בְּעַלְיוֹנָא אָל מֶעָמָא תְּדוֹדוֹי (if ye had not plowed with my heifer ye had not found my riddle — [A.V.]) where רַמָּתָם carries the figurative meaning of 'making use, using'. In the other occurrence the prophet Hosea accuses Israel (Hos. 10:13) רַמָּתָם קָשׁ לִעֲלוֹת כִּרְבָּתָם (ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity — [A.V.]), where again רַמָּתָם carries the figurative meaning of 'doing'. Are these idiomatic usages homonyms? Modern linguistics would term them polysemous words. They are identical in pronunciation and spelling and different in meaning, but are of identical origin, whereas genuine homonyms are of different origin as well.


7According to the translation of the Authorized Version [=A.V.].
Another polysemous pair, namely, words of the same origin, would be 'the wheels', serving as 'potter's wheel' (Jer. 18:3) מִלְאָכָהּ עִלָּאתָ נַחֲזָהּ לְעָשָׂה (then I went down to the potter's house and behold he wrought a work on the wheels — [A.V.]). By idiomatic extension serves also as 'midwife's stool', where the human being is moulded, in (Ex. 1:16) רַאֲתָה עִלָּאתָ נַחֲזָה (and see them upon the stools — [A.V.]).

2.2.3 They had a wide semantic approach and regarded even such polysemous pairs as homonyms. Moreover, even words that to us would seem semantically equal were regarded as hapax doublets when they occurred in different contexts.

For example: קִנָּת 'fresh (fem.)' occurs twice: once when Samson found a fresh jaw of an ass with which he killed the Philistines (Jud. 15:15) וְמִּכָּפַר רוֹאָשׁ אֶת בֵּית הֵבָדָל עַל בֵּית הֵבָדָל (and he found a new jawbone of an ass — [A.V.]), and once when Isaiah speaks of Israel's sins (Isa. 1:6) מַרְאָהָה מְכוֹנֶה מִעֲצָמָהּ כְּלֵי רָאָשׁ אֶת בֵּית הֵבָדָל (from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores — [A.V.]), 'putrifying sores' is an extended explanation instead of the literal translation which should be 'fresh wound'.

וִרָבָּה — 'and he exceeded, increased', occurs twice: once in the story of war between David and Absalom (2 Sam. 18:8) וְיָרָב הַיָּד לַכֵּל בֵּין מָאָשָׂר אֲכָלָה הָובר (and the wood devoured more people... than the sword devoured — [A.V.]), and again in the destruction of the temple (Lam. 2:5) וְיָרָב בַּבּוֹת הַיָּד תַּאֲמָה אֲנָה (and [he] hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation — [A.V.]). In both cases וִרָבָּה is apocopated consecutive imperfect of וִרָב instead of יָרָב (he exceeded, increased). Although the two words carry basically the same meaning, the fact that they occur in different contexts was enough for the author of our list to bring them among the other hapax doublets. It is a matter of personal judgement. We would not regard these as hapax doublets. The author did.

2.2.4 Such differences of approach existed among the masoretes themselves as well. Moreover, even between the authors of different lists which found their way into the very same collection of Okla we-Okla do we find different semantic approaches, as demonstrated by what follows.

Another list in this collection is an alphabetical list of words occurring only twice in the Bible, carrying in both cases the same meaning. The heading is בְּנֵא...
an alphabetical list of words occurring twice, in one meaning'.

The item מ' which we discussed above and which served us as an example of polysemy, occurs in this list as well, namely, its two occurrences are regarded as of one and the same meaning.

This is not the only example. Not less than six items recur in both lists. Apparently contradictions, but only apparently. It may be due to a different semantic conception of these words, and this may be evidence for a different authorship of the original lists, or even for different schools regarding the interpretation of these words. According to one they were homonyms, according to the other they were basically of the same meaning.

2.3 In what concerns the orthographic/phonological similarity of the words of each pair some observations should be made.

Masoretic hapax doublets are not only of the homonymic type. Some are just homophones, namely, words equal in pronunciation but different not only in meaning but also in spelling, as e.g., עֶשֶׁנָה (Deut. 6:16) 'in Massah' (place name), as against עַשֶּנֶה (1 Chr. 15:22) 'for song' [A.V.].

2.3.1 Is this the case also in minutiae of spelling, namely in matters of defective and plene orthography? In the list there are pairs like רֶה (Num. 27:7) '(they) speak (fem.)' as against רֵד (1 Ki. 5:23) 'floats' (rafts); בֵּנֵי (Ex. 15:11) 'among the gods' — בֵּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (Isa. 57:5) 'with idols'. Are these differences in spelling to be regarded as orthographic variants and therefore homophones?

2.3.2 And again: how should pairs of words primate לֹא קָהָמָה (tenues) be regarded when they are not equally pronounced, because one of the pair starts not with a plosive but with a spirant tenues due to a preceding vowel? For instance: בֵּי (1 Ki. 6:38) 'Bul' (name of a month) — יִבְּלָה (Job 40:20) 'food' (יִבְּלָה) — surely the mountains bring him forth food — [A.V.]; נִכְּבָה (Deut. 33:3) '(they) sat down' — [A.V.], as against נָכֹּב (Isa. 1:5) 'ye be stricken' — [A.V.]. Since these pairs are not

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8OwO Frens. §70; OwO DiEs. §13.
absolutely equal in pronunciation, should they be classified as homophones and not as homonyms?

Surely the masoretes' approach must be adopted in these matters. The very inclusion of such seemingly unequal pairs in our list proves that they considered them as completely equal, regarding the dagesh/raphé variation at the beginning of a word (because of a preceding vowel) as negligible as far as the Masora is concerned. Indeed, we find this attitude towards dagesh/raphé variation also in the word-counts of the Masora notes, where such variation is neglected. Consequently, following the masoretes, we may well consider such pairs as genuine homonyms.

2.3.3 This is the case with most plene/defective variations as well. Although the masoretes did not underestimate these matters and used to consecrate special notes counting items of plene/defective orthography, they quite often disregarded these minutiae and approached forms of varying spelling as if they were completely equal. As far as semantics was concerned, these variations carried no weight in their eyes. Consequently, we, too, may disregard plene/defective variations and treat such pairs as genuine homonyms.

This is the case in ancient masoretic sources, not in later ones such as, e.g., Jacob ben Hayyim Ibn Adonijah's Masora in the Second Rabbinic Bible (Venice 1525) where a different approach may be encountered. But this will remain outside the scope of this discussion.

However, even in ancient sources the differentiation between homonyms and homophones is not always clear-cut. While cases of sin/samekh variation may be regarded as homophonetic, this may not be the case in pairs where the variation in matres lectionis may have a semantic characteristic. Following are pairs in OwO regarding which the question remains open:

- דָּקָה (Gen. 2:6) 'and a mist'
- דָּקָה (Job 18:12) 'and destruction'
- הלָּנָה 1 Chr. 5:26) 'and Hara' (place name)
- הָנָה (Ps. 7:15) 'and he hath conceived' [A.V.]
- רָה (Ez. 2:10) 'and woe'
- אָוָה (Ez. 23:43) 'and she'
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(2 Ki. 12:21) 'Silla' (place name)
(Lam. 1:15) 'he hath trodden' [A.V.]

Perhaps we should add here also:
(Ps. 10:10) 'the unholy'
(Prov. 27:3) 'the sand'
(Deut. 1:1) 'over against' [A.V.]
(Jos. 5:2) 'circumcise' (imperative)

In these cases it is hard to make a decision. They certainly are all homophones, according to the strict sense of the word. However, is there justification to regard them as genuine homonyms according to the masoretes? For our purpose, it is not crucial to find out.

2.3.4 We meet a similar problem in another group of pairs, in which a variation in vowel is involved. There are three such pairs in OvwO:

(Gen. 41:40) 'he will kiss' used metaphorically (according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled [A.V.]),
(Prov. 24:26) 'he will kiss' (pausal form).

(Ps. 119:120) 'trembleth' (verb) [A.V.],
(Jer. 51:27) 'rough' (adj.) [A.V.], and some interpret it as a pausal verb.

(Ps. 78:72) 'according to integrity' (לַבְּנֵי כַּפָּרָה — according to the integrity of his heart [A.V.]),
(2 Sam. 18:5) 'when... perfect' (כַּפָּרָהִים — when the bud is perfect [A.V.]).

Since these pairs are different in pronunciation in the Tiberian tradition, and since they differ in meaning, at least polysemically, they, to all appearances, ought to be regarded as homographs.

But only apparently so. Basically this vowel alteration, too, is conditioned: the variation patah/qames is conditioned by the pause, and the variation holam/qames depends on the stress. Indeed, it is easier to accept this attitude regarding the pause.⁹ However, regarding the stress — when the word is

⁹The Masora abounds with notes counting together contextual and pausal forms, as, for instance, הָּרָא/רָאָא — הָּרָא (18), occurring altogether eighteen times. Cf. A. Dotan, Thesaurus
unstressed, namely with maqqef (םִּשֵּׁפִּים), it carries *games*, when stressed it has *holam* (הֵלָם). It appears the masoretes regarded this *games* as a variant vowel to *holam* (or, as we would term it, an allophone), not generating a different form. Thus, for instance, when counting the word בֵּן the masoretes did not generally distinguish between בֵּן and בֵּל, just as they did not distinguish between בֵּן and בֵּל and the like. Although these are not homophonous in Tiberian tradition, since the alteration was conditioned, namely allophonic, and did not involve the basic word, the lexeme, they could indeed be regarded, as far as the matter of hapax doublets was concerned, as homonymic, and were regarded as such as a matter of fact.

3. A New List

Having thus analyzed the *OwO* list, we come to the main question: is this an exhaustive list of biblical hapax doublets or are there more such doublets which did not find their way into this list? (again, we do not deal here with isolated masoretic notes but only with entire lists).

3.1 In the introduction to *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* I discussed some other treatises attributed to Aaron Ben Asher. After examining the evidence, I came to the

of the Tiberian Masora, A Comprehensive Alphabetical Collection of Masoretic Notes to the Tiberian Bible Text of the Aaron Ben Asher School, Sample Volume: The Masora to the Book of Genesis in the Leningrad Codex (Tel-Aviv 1977) [=Thes.] 48, or the sole occurrence of בֵּן (Num. 31:22) counted together with the remaining three contextual forms (Thes. 34).

10See, e.g., the Masora magna בֵּן (Gen. 26:15), where among the five occurrences two are with *holam* בֵּן (cf. Thes. 104); and many similar lists cf. C.D. Ginsburg, The Massorah Compiled from Manuscripts, Vol. II (London 1883) 35-36, §200 A-D.

11See, e.g., the Masora magna בֵּן (Gen. 41:52), covering also two occurrences with segol - בֵּן (Thes. 31), whereas the Masora magna בֵּן (Gen. 37:2), covers also two cases with sere - בֵּן (cf., Thes. 33), and more examples cf. Ginsburg, op. cit., Vol. I (London 1880) 118 ff. §§ 1239 ff.

conclusion that the great masorete left behind some more grammatico-masoretic works, one of which must have been a list of hapax doublets. We hear about this for the first time from the twelfth century Karaite author Judah Hadassi in his 'Eshkol Ha-Kofer:

"And there are words of equal pronunciation and of different meaning arranged in joined pairs (doublets) counting more than the grasshoppers (Jer. 46:23), as I studied and wrote down more than a book of doublets in addition to the eighty pairs by Ben Asher, may the spirit of the Lord grant him rest, the meticulous student (or: the grammarian) of the Masoras of thy Scripture."

There is another quotation in 'Eshkol Ha-Kofer corroborating this information. Nothing came down to us from Hadassi's 'Eshkol Ha-Kofer, but we learn from him that Ben-Asher composed a list of eighty hapax doublets. Such a list must have been before Hadassi when he wrote his 'Eshkol Ha-Kofer in the middle of the twelfth century, namely, about two hundred years after Ben-Asher.

Hadassi's testimony increases in significance against the background of the OwO list. Here we have an early list, going back at least to the ninth century, a list not only anonymous but undelimited. The number fluctuates in the various versions of the OwO list around one hundred items. In contrast to this list Hadassi's testimony speaks of a list of a definite number of items — eighty, and of a definite author — Ben-Asher, and consequently also of a determined date — the beginning of the tenth century.

It is therefore certain that these are two completely different lists. Ben-Asher's list was then later than OwO's. We can surmise that he composed his list with the intention of complementing OwO's list. It seems that Ben-Asher refrained from meddling with the ancient list which had already found its way into the Masora and into an important masoretic treatise — OwO. However, since

13Diq. 17.
15Ibid., 70 col. a (letter א of 173rd alphabet).
16The proof for this date will be substantiated elsewhere.
quite a number of hapax doublets known to him did not appear in the only list
then known, he must have initiated a new one, open to all the doublets omitted
from the ancient list. This new list reached, according to Hadassi, the number of
eighty pairs.

3.2 We are in the position of stating today that such a list has been discovered.
We have found it in not less than four manuscripts, from four different origins, and
in three of these manuscripts the list is indeed attributed to Ben-Asher.

3.2.1 The manuscripts are:

1) Codex Leningrad B19a, dated 1009 C.E., where the list, fully vocalized, is
found towards the end of the manuscript among other masoretic rubrics
(henceforth: L).

2) A Yemenite Masora manuscript belonging to Rabbi Joseph Qâfaḥ of
Jerusalem. The owner suggested a dating from the end of the thirteenth or the
beginning of the fourteenth century. I described this manuscript and pointed at its
hapax list in Diqduqé Haṭṭé’anim17 (henceforth: Q).

3) The Farhi Codex (Sassoon Collection 368),18 of Provençal provenance from
the second half of the fourteenth century (begun in 1366), has such a list
(henceforth: S).

4) A hitherto unknown Geniza fragment from Cambridge (T-S D. 1.20) of orien-
tal provenance holds only the beginning of the new list (henceforth: C).

We will not discuss here a fifth manuscript of a slightly different type, which,
although very fragmentary, has its own significance.

3.2.2 Three of the four — QSC — make a group by themselves. They are very
close to each other: the opening text of the list and the order of the items are al-
most the same. L stands alone and is different: the list is much shorter — only 25

17 Diq. 91.

18 D. S. Sassoon, יָבֳא יָפָר Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Man-
uscripts in the Sassoon Library (London 1932) 6-14.
items, their order is not the same, the masoretic formula repeated with each item is in Hebrew (not Aramaic) and most important — it is the only list not carrying Ben-Asher’s name.

From among the group of the three, S has the largest number of items — 83. The opening text of S mentions the number of 84 items. Q is a complete list consisting of 57 items only, while C is not complete, containing 18 items. By relative calculation one may assume an original number of about 79 items in the complete list of C, of which about 22% remained.

Although SQC are quite different from each other, their order of items is almost exactly the same.

3.2.3 The opening text in the three (SQC) runs as follows (according to the better readings of Q):

"Words in the Bible of two meanings, that are not found in the Masora magna nor in the Masora parva nor in the Babylonian Masora nor in the Palestinian Masora nor in the sayings of Scribes, and they are wonderful and beautiful, charming more than silver (or: beloved with longing [for them]), learned from the mouth of Ben Asher."

S has an additional epilogue not found in the other sources:

"Completed are the words written from the mouth of Ben Asher.
I, the present writer, am astonished, for here we find in the Bible such and such many more words, and why did he see appropriate to join together only these? However, it

19 For the specific meaning of "Masora magna" intended here see below.
20 This phrase should not be understood literally. The general intention is that Ben-Asher composed the list.
21 This Hebrew phrase is a merger of two biblical expressions: 2 Sam. 12:8 and Job 23:14.
22 Erroneously - א marché, by anticipatory influence of the next ב.
seems that those which he joined together were not found within the other Masora magna treatises until Ben Asher came and wrote them between (=in the margins of) the books."

If we remember that הַנְוַיָד is one of the ancient names for OwO,\(^{23}\) we can fully agree with the writer’s interpretation — this is indeed an additional list composed by Ben-Asher to complement the OwO list.

3.2.4 This new list is not arranged alphabetically, nor by any other conceivable order. To demonstrate it we bring here the first three items in all three manuscripts SQC:

- יֶהוֹבֶּז (Gen. 16:1) — ‘and Sarai’ (proper name);
- (Jud. 5:15) — ‘and the princes’ [A.V.]
- יִלְוֹנָה (Gen. 49:12) — ‘and the white of’;
- (Job 35:8) — ‘and to the son of’
- ישׁבֵּית (Gen. 28:21) — ‘and I shall return’;
- (Ps. 23:6) — ‘and I shall sit (=dwell)’.

So far as to SQC. As against their list, L’s list is quite different. It has a shorter opening text, without the sentence about Ben-Asher’s authorship, it has much less items — only 25, and most important — it has a completely different order of items. However, all the items of L are also found in SQC.

What can be said about the difference between L on the one hand and SQC on the other? Is L a fragment or an extract or an abridgement of SQC, or, on the contrary, is SQC an enlargement of L?

\(^{23}\) This is how it is named at the beginning of the Paris manuscript of OwO published by Frensдорфф (Bibliotheca Masorética (with the aid of the dweller of height I will write the “Masora magna”) (OwO Fren., 1). This is also how Solomon Ben Isaac (Rashi) mentions it in his commentary to Ps. 42:9, and again, with a slight variation מָמֶה מַחְיָה, in his commentary to Isa. 14:11. His grandson, Jacob Ben Meir (Rabbenu Tam), discussed this book under this (latter) name in his מֶהֶרֶשֶׁל (Menahem Ben Saraq and Dunash Ben Labraṭ (H. Filipowski, Masorah חַד יְרוּשָׁלַע בָּנָא לְבֵיתָו מִשְׁרַבָּת, London 1855) 11). Among the early scholars in the east the Karaite David Ben Abraham al-Fāsī uses the Arabic equivalent לאֶמַוָּד to refer to OwO.
We will not discuss here the relationship between the two versions, because their orders of items are completely different, but we may regard the number of items as a characteristic of the contents, namely, the number of items will serve as a representative factor of each version. Since all items of L occur also in SQC, and there is nothing in L that is not found in SQC, it is only natural to conclude that they are both based on one and the same origin. However, L's order is much better, being arranged closely to the biblical order, while SQC is much more chaotic. It stands to reason, therefore, that L is earlier, preserving the original almost undisturbed order. SQC is relatively later. Many additional items have been accumulated in it, not in the right places, producing an arrangement un-concordant with the former order and not setting a frame for a new order.

Even within the SQC group we may detect this tendency towards the gradual enlargement of the list. There is ample ground for the assumption that the list has been growing gradually — Q with its 57 items being the earliest phase in the group and closer to the original, S has been augmented up to 83 and is therefore the latest, while the full (calculated) text of C stands between the two. Although the dates of manuscripts should not serve prima facie as indication for the dating of their contents, in this case the known dates of the manuscripts confirm our conclusion arrived at from different data.

3.2.5 It is clear than that, unlike the Owo list which remained relatively constant in the course of its transmission, we have here a list that kept expanding. In this process of transmission we can mark five landmarks:

- 25 items — L — written in Egypt in 1009 C.E.
- 57 items — Q — written in Yemen, exact date unknown
- 79(?) items — C — Sephardic-Oriental(?) script, exact date unknown
- 80 items — Hadassi — written in Constantinople after 1148
- 83-84 items — S — written in Provence after 1366.

Practically we may regard these as three phases in the development of our list:

1) L, 2) Q, 3) C, Hadassi, S.

24 The detailed discussion of the order will be given elsewhere.
The number of items as attributed here to the original complete C is based on relative calculation, with a likely deviation of one item either way. Hence C and Hadassi are indeed equal. Practically, S may be joined to them. The third phase is then based on three sources showing nearly the same picture — about 80 items.

This number of items in the list was reached before the year 1148, while it contained 25 items before 1009. Somewhere in between these dates the list contained 57 items — Q. The suggested dating of this manuscript (end of thirteenth — beginning of fourteenth century), even if it is correct, does not exclude this assumption, since any manuscript, late as it may be, may always hold a much older version.

3.2.6. Ben-Asher’s name joins the list only in the second phase. List L, although it appears in a manuscript from the beginning of the eleventh century, draws undoubtedly from an early source, probably earlier than Aaron Ben-Asher.

In this respect the list is not different from the other masoretic chapters (Quntresé Ha-Masora) found in the same manuscript (L) — they are all drawing from ancient sources prior to the editing of Diqduqé Haṭṭe’amim by Ben-Asher.

Version L of the list represents the list as it started to crystallize at a relatively early date. At a certain point of its transmission, the list underwent emendation and editing and perhaps also enlargement by Ben-Asher. From here onwards the list carried his name. We do not know the exact number of items in the list prepared by Ben-Asher. According to our present evidence it held not less than 57 items, as in Q.

3.3. We may draw a perfect parallel between our list and the process of transmission of the Quntresé Ha-Masora. Those are certainly ancient texts, basically anonymous, being handed down and copied from generation to generation until Ben-Asher collected some of them and arranged them as a definite treatise carrying his name. Our list, too, is of ancient origin, basically

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25 הנומרי is the Hebrew name I used in Diq. for the anonymous masoretic chapters known prior to the compilation of Diqduqé Haṭṭe’amim, or not included in it. See Diq. 13.

26 See Diq. 6ff.
anonymous, handed down from generation to generation until Ben-Asher arranged it as a definite list carrying his name.

So far the parallelism is complete, and in this respect the list should be considered as one of the Qunṭresé Ha-Masora. This Qunṭres was not included in Diqduqé Haṭṭé’amim, but has been determined by Ben-Asher as a separate unit.

At this point the similarity ceases. While the pluralism of versions that spread naturally with the Qunṭresim in the course of their transmission, ceased almost completely in what regards those included by Ben-Asher in Diqduqé Haṭṭé’amim, the list of hapax doublets did not freeze after having been edited by Ben-Asher, but on the contrary kept increasing and growing. Scribes and copyists permitted themselves to augment the list with additional items which they encountered among the marginal masoretic notes in biblical codices. The fact that the list, as prepared by Ben-Asher, did not have a heading delimiting the number of items in it may have contributed to this process. Until such delimitation was introduced at a relatively late stage (S and Hadasst), the copyists felt themselves at liberty to add items freely. We will not be able to know the number of items as fixed by Ben-Asher until we find an autograph of his or a reliable copy thereof.

The resemblance between the texts is striking and is instructive for the understanding of the general process of transmission of some masoretic texts. The outlines we suggested for such a process with regard to Qunṭresé Ha-Masora and Diqduqé Haṭṭé’amim find here an unexpected and amazing confirmation.

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27 See Diq. 6ff.