A Sheet of Parchment from a 10th or 11th Century Torah Scroll: Determining its Type among Four Traditions (Oriental, Sefardi, Ashkenazi, Yemenite)

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Description

One sheet from a Torah scroll on fine parchment (slightly damaged; upper and lower empty margins missing), containing Exod 10:10 (end) - 16:15 (beginning), including the Song of the Sea. This sheet was bought by a private collector at Christie’s London July 9, 2001 auction.¹

The sheet measures 590 x 600 mm. It holds 5 columns, with 71 lines per column, except the fourth column that has 72 lines. The text is divided into open and closed sections. The Song of the Sea is written in stichic form (see below). The fourth column is slightly damaged, and the first column is partially missing in the uppermost right side.

¹ See Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts [Auction Catalogue] (Christie’s London, Monday 9 July 2001) lot 7, pp. 20-25, with photographs. I examined the Torah scroll sheet before it was sold in 2001 and thank the previous owners for that opportunity. Most of the Bible codices, as well as the Torah scroll MS Vatican 2, discussed below were examined in microfilm at the Institute of Microfilms of Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (=JNUL). MS Wroclaw, Pablikowski 141 was examined in the microfilm belonging to Prof. S. Talmon, to whom I express my thanks. The Soncino 1488 printed Bible was examined in microfilm at the Institute for the History of Jewish Biblical Research at Bar-Ilan University, and the Torah scroll of Rhodes in the original at the JNUL. R. Nissim’s Torah scroll was first examined in microfilm, and then in the original at the JNUL. A number of codices were examined in their facsimile editions: the Aleppo Codex (Jerusalem, 1976); the Leningrad Codex B19a (3 vols.; Jerusalem, 1971; 1 vol.; Grand Rapids, 1998); MS Sassoon 507 (The Damascus Pentateuch [2 vols.; Copenhagen, 1982]); MS JTS Lutzki 44a (The Hillel Codex [2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1974]); MS British Library Or. 2626 (The Lisbon Bible 1482 [Tel Aviv, 1988]).
The scroll is written in an "Oriental" (= Middle Eastern) hand, of the 10th or 11th century (on the date, see below). It will be designated here by the siglum TSC (=Torah Scroll Christie's).

This is the oldest surviving Torah scroll containing this portion of Exodus, including the Song of the Sea.

A dedication, in Russian and in Hebrew, on the reverse side of the sheet\(^2\) states that this sheet was presented in Tishrei 5624/September 1863 by Shlomo Beim (1817-1867; the Karaite hazzan [a position similar to Rabbi] of Chufut-Kale, in the Crimea)\(^3\) to the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolayevitch (1827-1892; brother of Tsar Alexander II) and his "exalted" daughter Alexandra Yosifovna, on the occasion of their visit to Chufut-Kale. One may suggest that this sheet was brought to Chufut-Kale by the well-known Karaite, A. Firkovich, who had acquired it during his travels.

The Hebrew dedication reads:

\[
\text{mist ah zev naim sluha vim, l'chovr vosea noroh kumamotim nikhalavim u'me}
\]

\[
\text{b'iton (1) h'mah/al'emsederi imisoton, b'koreh u'rey kumonit mehir}
\]

\[
\text{maharich veechat he l'uhalon im (=zeh halon).}
\]

The following are some prominent features:

(1) There is no attempt to justify the end of lines on the left side of the columns (they are considerably more irregular than e.g., on the leather sheet of the [10th or 11th century Oriental Torah scroll sold at Christie's in 1999]).\(^4\)

The exception is the Song of the Sea, together with the 5 lines of text before the Song and the 5 lines after it. The Song and these lines were clearly copied from a Vorlage in which they were justified on the left side.

\(^2\) See the photo, as well as a translation of the Russian dedication, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, 22.

\(^3\) Concerning Beim, see *EncJud* 4:401.

(2) The non-justification on the left side caused that there are no dilated letters used for the purpose of closing the line.

(3) There are several corrections in the text which result in dilated letters (see below).

(4) There are no tagim (tittles) on the seven letters ששתות ג נ (they are also absent in the above mentioned 11th century Torah scroll).5

(5) The letters hang from the dry-ruled lines.

(6) At the left-most column can be seen the prick marks (to enable dry-ruling).

(7) The holes that resulted from the sewing of the sheet to the neighboring sheets can be seen at the left, as well as at the right margin of the sheet.

(8) The columns do not begin with the letter רו ה (פ).  

(9) The last column begins with מ of הבאה א (ירמיהו), one of the letters of which 6 columns in a Torah scroll are to begin.6

In order to properly ascertain the place of our scroll among the different traditions of Torah scrolls and masoretic codices, a comparison between TSC and four different traditions in Exod 10:10–16:15 will be presented below. This comparison will focus on three components: text; sections; the Song of the Sea. TSC will be compared with the Aleppo Codex (≡A; see below, tradition 1) with respect to each of these components, and then four traditions will be compared with A. A summary of the comparison of the

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6 On these letters, see J. S. Penkower, Jacob ben Haggim and the Rise of the Rabbinic Bible (Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1982) vol. 2, appendix 21, p. 428 (Heb.).
three components will show that our scroll belongs to the first group of traditions.7

[A] The Text

TSC Compared to the Aleppo Codex8

The text of Exod 10:10-16:15 in TSC originally differed in 9+1 places from the text of A, the standard of accuracy for MT.9 TSC was then corrected in 8 or 9 places. The result was that TSC now differs from A in 1 or 2 places (which had not been corrected). The following is a list of the variants and the corrections:

7 We note briefly that with respect to the Hebrew text, the four traditions discussed below all belong to the same text-type; they differ only in minor points (mostly plene-defective readings). However, these minor variants assist in defining these "sub-types". Of the textual variants brought below, only one reflects a difference in exegesis, Exod 10:12: Aleppo Codex — יבכלי ואל חשב תורני אי אל אשורי השאר: ססן 507 (second hand), Cairo 3 (first hand), several Ashkenazi traditions — הכן כן כל אשורי השאר:edar. The former reading יבכלי defines the last clause as parallel to the previous clause (יחכלי), whereas the latter reading הכן defines the last clause as an addition to the previous clause. Somewhat similar to the latter reading is the text in the SP and the LXX: הכנ הוא כי חשב תורני (based upon Exod 10:15).

8 Though the Pentateuch is missing today in the Aleppo Codex (with the exception of the last few chapters of Deuteronomy), Penkower has found a witness to the text, sections, and layout of the Songs in the Pentateuch text of A. See in detail, J. S. Penkower, New Evidence for the Pentateuch Text in the Aleppo Codex (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992) (Heb.). This enables us to conduct the comparisons with A in this study. For practical purposes, one may use M. Breuer’s edition of the Bible (3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1993), where the Pentateuch text, sections and layout of the Songs are based upon the Yemenite tradition and reflect A, with few exceptions (see Penkower, New Evidence, 62-72; 72-73). It should be noted that Breuer’s later Bible edition (Jerusalem: Horev, 1997), does not reflect the layout of the Song of Moses in A (however, concerning the sections in the Prophets and Hagiographa it reflects A more accurately than the earlier edition).

9 See Penkower, New Evidence, especially ch. 4.
(1) 10:13 [יאב] [משה] תארת ב: this correction is written above the line, between the two words.
(2) 11:1 [אמרי נ] [mem] תרחא: the original mem was erased and replaced by the nun. In the original variant, perhaps the text was misconstrued as one word: נוחיר.
(3) 12:3 [לא כל נרה ישראל לאמר דבר] or [לא כל נרה ישראל לאמר דבר] תשר: this phrase is written on top of an erased passage. Perhaps דער פה or נער ו=plt was omitted by the first-hand, or possibly כנראה was written and ensuingly corrected.
(4) 12:3 [אות] אב [A].
(5) 12:15b [דומא] וותשנוה: waw and nun were erased, and nun was written over the erasure.
(6) 13:6 [נַעֲרָת] תער: the right leg of tav was erased and the roof was extended from its left leg to the waw, resulting in a dilated tav.
(7) 13:6 [בְּנָו] וותם: waw was erased and the roof and base of bet were extended past the waw, resulting in a dilated letter.
(8) 14:3 [לְיִד] יד: yod was added on top, to the right of he.
(9) 14:22 [יָד] יד: a barely visible waw was possibly added above the line. Another waw was possibly added, not in its place, above the he.
(10) 15:4 [שִׁלֵּךְ] שך: yod was erased and the roof of lamed was extended, resulting in a dilated letter.

Four Traditions Compared to the Aleppo Codex

(1) The Accurate Oriental Masoretic Codices with Tiberian Masorah (10th–11th Centuries)

Foremost among these codices is the Aleppo Codex, of the 10th century. A’s text has been shown to be the most accurate representative of the Hebrew Bible text. Its text, section divisions and the special writing of the Songs in

the Pentateuch were given halakhic status by Maimonides. Similar to A, with respect to the text (with only some variants), are a group of Oriental manuscripts of the 10th–11th centuries. Among these are MS Sassoon 507 (=S; so formerly, now MS Jerusalem 24’5702); MS British Library Or. 4445 (=B); MS Cairo 3, after the corrections (=C3; no. 18 in Gottheil’s list); MS Leningrad B19a (=L).

The results of a comparison of the text of Exodus 10:10–16:15 in SBC3L with A are as follows:

In S there were originally two variants, and both were corrected, based on masorah parva notes. Perhaps there were two or three more variants, which were also corrected; with one possibly corrected twice. With all the corrections, there remain no variants.

12:10 התנור - התנור (A); waw was erased, tav extended, resulting in a dilated tav.

13:11 חכם - חכם,יל יוסי; yod was erased, bet extended, resulting in a dilated bet.

(10:12? אַתָּ תֵא שֶר לְפָרָא - בֵּית מַדִּים אֵלֶּה אֵלֶּה ? unclear: a waw above aleph and to its right appears to have been erased! Its form differs from that of other waw in the ms.) Cf. C3 below.

(10:17? עָרָא אֶת אָרָא - apparently written on an erasure; first hand perhaps omitted כָּל רָא)

(13:8? בִּכְמָתְוִּי - apparently written on an erasure; first hand possibly wrote בִּכְמָתְוִּי).

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12 See Breuer, The Aleppo Codex, 68–86, 97–141; Penkower, New Evidence, ch. 4.

In B there were originally four variants (one in common with TSC; 13:6). Three were corrected, mostly based on masorah parva notes, with one variant remaining.

12:14 (A).
12:28 את ממש אוחזים – את ממש (אוחזים) אוחזים.
14:7:7 י.שֶׁלֶשׁ – י.שֶׁלֶשׁ (ח), י. 득ס: erased yod, but mem not dilated.

C3 contained originally 10 variants. All were corrected, 7 on the basis of a masorah parva note.

10:12 (א) אָהֵל כָּל אָשֶׁר
10:26 מָקוֹנָנָן
11:5 מָכָּכָא כָּכָא, ב. מָלָל כָּמ.
12:4 (ח) תָּוָא with thicker roof.
12:10 תָּוָא (ח), י. 득ס: dilated tav.
12:18 (ו) ב. אריאש (ח), י. 득ס: erased waw, with empty space not filled in.
12:18 (ח) מָכָּכָא כָּק.
(12:27 written on erasure)
13:9 (ח) תָּוָא (ח), י. 득ס: dilated resh.
15:7 (ח) נָוָא (ח), י. 득ס: dilated resh.
16:2 (ח) יָלֵי (ח) יָלֵי, ולֵי, כ. "לוי נ": bottom half of waw erased.

In L there were originally 9 variants (two of which, 12:15b, 14:22, are in common with TSC). However, only 3 (or 4) were corrected in L, usually on the basis of a masorah parva note; thus there remain (5 or) 6 variants.

10:25 (א).
12:4 (א) מָכָּכָא כָּכָא.
12:13 (ו) ב. אריאש (ח), י. 득ס: "lamed was dilated.
12:15b ב. אריאש (ח), י. 득ס: erased waw, but empty space not filled in.
14:13 (ח) תָּוָא (ח), י. 득ס: dilated resh.
14:14 (ח) תָּוָא (ח), י. 득ס: dilated resh.
14:22; the defective spelling contradicts the masorah magna brought in L on the next page.
15:19; lamed was dilated.
16:7; in L the letter after the lamed looks like a yod; however, the masoretic comment treats it as if it were a waw, and adds: read as a yod.

In sum, among the accurate Oriental MSS there is a small spread of variants in comparison with A (2-9). These are mostly corrected (several on the basis of masorah parva notes), so there remains an even smaller spread of variants (most have only one; one ms has 5 or 6).

TSC is similar in these two features: a small spread of variants in comparison with A (9+1; a few in common with other MSS), which becomes even smaller after corrections (1 or 2).

(2) Sefardi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th-14th Centuries)

We will compare the text of A with the two earliest surviving Sefardi Torah scrolls: one written by the well-known Spanish halakhist R. Nissim Gerondi (Barcelona; written no later than 1336, when it was dedicated), and the other that had been in Rhodes (Sefardi; 14th or 15th century), both now at JNUL, MSS HU 4²/5935; HU 4²/7404. Also to be compared are the earliest dated Sefardi masoretic Pentateuch codex, MS JTS 44a (1241 C.E.), which was corrected according to the “Hilleli”, as well as two Sefardi masoretic codices from the end of the 14th century: MSS Sassoon 16 (1383), Sassoon 368 (1366-1383).

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15 The colophon reads: ידיקותם-mouth הנקרא הלל.
MS JTS 44a
No variants.

MS Sassoon 16
Of four original variants (12:3 in common with TSC; 12:18 in common with C3), two are corrected (one on the basis of a masoretic note). Another variant seems to be corrected by a masoretic note only (12:18), and one variant is left uncorrected. Thus, there remain one or two variants.
12:3 אבב (A); dilated tav.
12:13 בעב(ך)ת, ב ר ח א ת מ ה מ ל
12:18 מנה – מצינ, י’ ח ת ב י ר
15:9 אדר(ך) – אדר(ך), ג’ ח ת מ ה מ ל

MS Sassoon 368
There are 12 variants, almost all with Ashkenazi precedents (see below; and see also similarly concerning the sections and the Song); see especially 11:1, 8; 15:17. Of these, 10 are corrected, four with masoretic notes, one with the accentuation. There remains only one variant (16:12).
11:1 אדך כ – אדך כ (A); but the naqdan added a maqaf separating into two words.
11:4 חצ(ך)ת – חצ(ך)ת, ל’ ח ק(ך): lamed dilated, possible erasure.
11:8 ואר(ך)ך – ואר(ך)ך, י’ ו ח ק(ך): naqdan apparently added a maqaf separating into two words.
12:13 ע(ך)ם – ע(ך)ם, ל’ ח ק(ך): lamed dilated, possible erasure.
12:15 ו(ך)ש(ך)ו – ו(ך)ש(ך)ו, י’ ו ח ק(ך): leg of yod apparently erased (head still visible).
14:14 ח(ך)ש(ך)ו – ח(ך)ש(ך)ו, י’ ח ק(ך): so it appears.
15:10 י pá(ך)ת – י pá(ך)ת, י’ י ק(ך)
15:11 בל(ך)מ – בל(ך)מ, ב’ י ק(ך): dilated mem (sort of attached yod to mem).
15:16 נ(ך)ל(ך) – נ(ך)ל(ך)ל, י’ נ ק(ך): dilated daled.
15:17 הו(ך)ס – הו(ך)ס, י’ הו(ך)ס: he drew a line above it and wrote אדר(ך) to its right.
15:19 ע(ך)ם – ע(ך)ם, י’ ע(ך)ם: dilated he.
16:12 י(ך)ת – י(ך)ת, ל’ י(ך)ת.
Torah Scroll of R. Nissim Gerondi (Spain, before 1336) HU 4°5935 (microfilm reel B522; 50 lines to a column)

No variants.16

This scroll, as well as MS JTS 44a, follows the accurate Spanish tradition, post R. Meir Abulafia (who wrote his Masoret Seyag LaTorah in 1227; d. 1244),17 which agrees with A throughout the Pentateuch (except in about 9 places – none of them in our text).18

Torah Scroll of Rhodes HU 4°7404 (44 lines to a column)

There was originally one variant (in common with MSS Sassoon 16; C3) which was corrected. There remain no variants.

12:18 מַגֵּר תִּרְנָה (A).

(10:29 רָאָת = רָאָת מַגֵּר early, clumsy reinking; maybe error).

In sum, among the Spanish MSS of the 13th–14th centuries there are those that exhibit a very accurate text, e.g. Gerondi’s Torah scroll; MS JTS 44a (no variants); and similarly the Rhodes Torah scroll (one variant, which was corrected). There are others that still exhibit a small spread of variants, e.g. MS Sassoon 16 (four variants), which were then mostly corrected, some on the basis of masoretic notes (one or two variants remain). Still others exhibit a slightly wider spread of variants (apparently influenced by Ashkenazi

16 A number of unclear readings were clarified by checking the original scroll:

12:2 רָאָת just slightly faded.

12:30 יֹדְדֵר יֹדְדֵר is small; dilated daled.

12:36 Apparently regular het, then dilated to help end line.

13:6 very cramped as last word of the line; goes past the margin. There is a yod but it is small.

15: 15 can be seen.

16:2 cannot be seen, rubbed out.

16:7 can see vav, unclear if part is missing due to fading.

17 On the date and colophon of Masoret Seyag LaTorah, see the references in Penkower, New Evidence, 85 n. 239.

18 See Breuer, The Aleppo Codex, 87.
traditions), e.g. MS Sassoon 368 (12 variants), but these too were corrected, leaving only one variant.

Thus, one may say at present, that one expects to find a very accurate text in Sefardi torah scrolls of the 14th century. However, in masoretic codices there may remain a small spread of variants (often later corrected).

TSC differs slightly from the two Sefardi torah scrolls under review in the number of variants in the first hand (9+1 versus none or one), and even less in the number of variants after correction (one or two versus none).

(3) Ashkenazi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th–14th Centuries)

We will compare the text of A with a 14th century Ashkenazi Torah scroll, MS Vatican 2; as well as with 4 Ashkenazi masoretic codices: MS British Library, Add. 9403 (end 12th/beginning 13th century); Paris, heb. 1-3 (1286 C.E.); Berlin, Or. fol. 1–4 (14th century); Wroclaw, Pablikowski 141 (end of 13th century, France?).19 and also with the first printed Bible, Soncino 1488, which was based on Ashkenazi MSS.20 As will be seen immediately below, the striking characteristic among the majority of these witnesses is the large quantity of variants. As a result only a summary description will be brought below. (Simple scribal errors are not included).

Torah scroll, MS Vatican 2 (58 lines to a column)

There are 82 or 83 variants in Exod 10:10–16:15 as compared with A. Of these, 45 or 46 were corrected. In addition, there were 7 more corrections, but these distanced the scroll from A. There remain 37 variants (in addition, 2 errors were left uncorrected).

19 On MS Wroclaw, Pablikowski 141, see S. Talmon, “Fish and Mermaids in the Book of Jonah,” ‘Et HaDa’at 3 (2000) 8–20 (Heb.).

**MS British Library, Add. 9403**
35 variants (13 in common with MS Vatican 2); 16 were corrected. 19 variants remain.

**MS Paris, heb. 1–3**
50 variants; of these, 21 were corrected. In addition, 4 places were corrected which resulted in a distancing away from A. 33 variants remain.

**MS Berlin, Or. fol. 1–4**
65 variants; of these 42 were corrected. 23 variants remain.

**MS Wroclaw, Pablikowski 141**
11 variants (8 in common with MS Berlin, Or. fol. 1); of these, 8 or 9 were corrected. 2 or 3 variants remain.

**Soncino 1488, printed Bible**
90 variants. 60 of these can be found in the above Ashkenazi sources.

In sum, the striking characteristic of the Ashkenazi tradition is the quantity of variants found not only in several masoretic codices, but also in the above Torah scroll as well (one should note that a Torah scroll is considered unfit for ritual use if there is even one plene or defective variant; not to mention tens [and hundreds] of variants).\(^{21}\) This quantity of variants is also reflected in the first printed edition of the Bible. Even after the corrections in the masoretic codices and the Torah scroll there remain a sizable quantity of variants.

There are, however, some Ashkenazi sources that do not reflect this alternate text tradition in its full form, e.g. MS Pablikowski 141 (only 11 variants; and 8 or 9 corrected; however, 8 of these variants are in the Ashkenazi MS Berlin, Or. fol. 1).

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The result concerning the large quantity of variants in Ashkenazi sources, based on the above selection of sources, can further be shown to be characteristic of the Ashkenazi tradition by comparing all the variants from the above sources to the apparatus in Kennicott’s Bible (Oxford, 1776–1780). This comparison shows that the 25 MSS with the highest coincidence of the same variants are the Ashkenazi MSS (and a few Italian ones too), and among them there is a large amount of overlap in the very same variants. Furthermore, among the seven MSS with this highest coincidence of variants (in Exodus) are five of the very same MSS that in another study were among the first seven with the highest coincidence of variants in Deuteronomy found in C3-first hand: MSS Kennicott 69, 108 (Italian), 9, 132, 109. In other words, there is an alternate tradition in the Ashkenazi MSS that goes back to earlier sources. This tradition can be partially traced, for example, to sources like C3-first hand (10th century; Eretz Israel).

It is obvious that TSC is far removed from this Ashkenazi text tradition.

(4) Yemenite Manuscripts: Masoretic Codices (15th–16th Centuries)

Penkower has shown that the Yemenite text tradition in the Torah is identical with the Aleppo Codex (there are five minor variants concerning breaking up one word into two). This was a result of their following Maimonides, who wrote a Torah scroll based upon A. Thus, there are no variants between the Yemenites and A in our material (Exod 10:10–16:15).

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22 On the degree of similarity between the Ashkenazi and Italian Pentateuch text traditions, see Penkower, “A Tenth-Century Pentateuch Manuscript,” 65–66 and n. 65 end.


[B] The Sections

TSC Compared to the Aleppo Codex

In the Aleppo Codex there are 23 sections in Exod 10:10-16:15. Similarly, there are 23 sections in TSC. However, of these, there were originally one or two sectional differences between TSC and A. One of these differences was changed; thus, TSC now differs from A apparently in one section. The following are the differences:

10:12 TSC – Open section (apparently); A – Closed section.
The following is the reconstructed beginning of column one:

Thus, there appears to have been a small space at the beginning of line 4 (in addition to the space at the end of line 3). This was possibly defined as a Closed section (agreeing with A). However, it is more probable that such a small space was not considered sufficient to change the Open section into a Closed one. See the next case, where even after the correction from a Closed into an Open section, a small space was left at the beginning of the line.

13:11 TSC – Closed section; A – Open section.

TSC’s Closed section was later changed into an Open section. Thus we find:

Original layout:

Concerning the Pentateuch section divisions in the Aleppo Codex, see above n. 8. On Maimonides’ definitions of Open and Closed sections, see Hilkhot Sefer Torah 8:1,2; and Penkower, “Maimonides,” 44-45.
Corrected layout:

This correction was accomplished by erasing the original מִסְפָּר יויי, and then rewriting those words in a smaller font and a cramped style (leaving more empty space at the end of the line). Then on the next line was erased, and rewritten by dilating the hes, thereby extending the word to the right. The result was an Open section. Note the small space at the beginning of the second line, even after the correction. [See photo 1].

Four Traditions Compared to the Aleppo Codex

(1) The Accurate Oriental Masoretic Codices with Tiberian Masorah (10th–11th Centuries)

There is no unified tradition among these MSS concerning the sections, though there clearly was a common basis. In other words, though the text of these MSS is close, there is a wider spread of variants among them concerning the sections.²⁶

In S there are two section variants, and these were not corrected.
10:12 no section; A – Closed; 12:29 Open; A – Closed.

In B there are seven or eight section variants, and these were not corrected.
11:4 Open section; A – Closed; 11:9 Open (only 2 or 3 letter space at end of line); A – Closed; (12:25 Closed; A – None); 12:29 Open; A – Closed; 12:37 Closed; A – Open; 12:43 Closed; A – Open; 12:51 no section (in a late [16th century] hand: מִסְפָּר יויי; A – Closed; 14:15 Closed (two-three letter space in the middle of the line); A – Open.

²⁶ See Penkower, “A Tenth-Century Pentateuch Manuscript,” 73, summarizing the section variants in C3 and B.
C3 has nine variants, all of the same type (Open where A has Closed). None of these were corrected.

L has four variants in the sections, two of which are in common with the first hand of TSC. None of these were corrected in L.
10:12 Open (= TSC); A - Closed.
12:1 Open; A - Closed.
13:11 Closed (=TSC, first hand); A - Open.
16:6 Closed; A - no section.

In short, TSC, with two variants in the first hand, is similar in quantity to S (two variants) and somewhat similar to L (four variants, two of which are in common with TSC). TSC has fewer variants than B (seven or eight) and C3 (nine). In the second hand, TSC, with one variant, is a bit closer to the Aleppo Codex than is L (still with four variants). In these masoretic codices the sectional variants were not corrected (though a much later hand in B noted in the margin that one should change one of the sectional divisions: 12:51 should have a division), whereas TSC has one such correction.

(2) *Sefardi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th–14th Centuries)*

Sefardi Scrolls, and several of the codices, follow Maimonides' sectional division (as explicitly laid out in his Code: *Hilkhot Sefer Torah* 8:4), which was based on the Aleppo Codex. Therefore, they have no variants. However, here too, *MS Sassoon* 368 differs, with 7 variants—almost all with Ashkenazi precedents.

27 This later hand in B can be identified as stemming from a sixteenth century scribe with a knowledge of the Persian language; see Penkower, "Maimonides," 66-67 n. 44 (further sectional division corrections in Exodus are also noted there).

28 See Penkower, "Maimonides"; idem, *New Evidence*, ch. 3.
Photo 2. Oriental Torah scroll, part of surviving col. 5 (Exod 14:28–15:27), reduced size. Note: (1) the layout of the Song of the Sea (especially the last two lines), as well as the five lines before the Song (the first line beginning the column with the letter ב of מִצְרַיִם), and the five lines after the Song; and (2) the non-justification on the left side of the column of the lines following the five lines after the Song.
MSS JTS 44a; Sassoon 16
No variants.

MS Sassoon 368
7 sectional variants:
11:1 Closed; A - Open; 11:4 Open; A - Closed; 12:21, 12:37, 13:11 Closed;
A - Open. 16:6 Closed; A - none; 16:11 Closed; A - Open. All (except
11:4) have Ashkenazi precedents (see below).

Torah Scroll of R. Nissim Gerondi
No variants.
R. Nissim begins all Open sections after a space at the end of the previous
line (and never after a completely empty line; this was considered a Closed
section by R. Asher b. Yehiel, Hilkhot Sefer Torah, 13). He also begins all
Closed sections after a space in the middle of the line (and never after a
space at the beginning of line; this was considered an Open section by R.
Asher b. Yehiel). In this way, R. Nissim’s section layout agrees both with
Maimonides’ and R. Asher b. Yehiel’s definitions of Open and Closed
sections.29 (This “solution” was later advocated in the sixteenth century by
R. Joseph Karo, Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De’ah 275:2; but R. Moses Isserlis, in
his notes thereon, says that if this is too difficult for the scribe, he should
follow Maimonides).

29 E. B. Halivni, “The Forms of the Open and Closed Sections—The Disagreement
between Maimonides and the Rosh [=R. Asher b. Yehiel] in light of the Aleppo
Codex and the Leningrad Codex,” Nevi’im 8 (2001) 73–82 (Heb.), has shown that
only Maimonides’ definitions of Open and Closed sections agree with the different
layouts of the same sections found in the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex
B19a. Halivni identified eight cases at the end of Deuteronomy in A and L (see pp.
80–82) where the MSS differ in the section layout, yet both layouts are defined as
open (or closed) by Maimonides (whereas, according to R. Asher’s definitions these
different layouts would be considered different types of sections). This result leads
to a preference for Maimonides’ definitions. See also p. 75, n. 5, where it is noted
that, in fact, the suggestion to write a layout in agreement with both of the opinions
is not always helpful because certain sections in A will always be defined differently
by Maimonides and R. Asher.
Torah Scroll of Rhodes
No variants. The scribe follows exactly the layout of the Open and Closed sections as found in R. Nissim’s Scroll (as described above).
Sometimes the scribe wrote past the justification of the left margin (this was ritually permissible). In one case, Exod 14:3, the word לֶאָרֶץ, at the end of the line, originally extended past the margin. A later hand erased it and rewrote it in a cramped style, in order to fit it within the margin line.

(3) Ashkenazi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th–14th Centuries)
As with the text variants, so, too, with the section variants, the Ashkenazi manuscripts, including the Vatican Torah scroll (as well as the first printed Bible), are characterized by the quantity of variants. Here they range between 8–9 and 16–19. As many of these sources have common section variants, it is clear that here, too, we are dealing with an alternate tradition.

Torah scroll, MS Vatican 2
11 variants; and possibly 20 cases of parsha sedura (a verse beginning after an empty space, which is smaller, however, than the space required before a sectional division).  

30 See Maimonides, Hilkhos Sefer Torah 7:5–6.
31 On the definition of parsha sedura, see Penkower, “Maimonides,” 89–90 and n. 84. On further reflection, it seems preferable to describe this group of small spaces at the end of several verses in MS Vatican 2 as an incomplete realization of the custom of leaving a small space at the end of every verse in the Pentateuch, as found in various medieval Ashkenazi Torah scrolls. This custom was noted in the halakhic literature; e.g., Responsa of R. Isaac b. Sheshet (14th century) (ed. D. Metzger; 2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1993) 1:375–376, §216—permits it; R. Moses Isserlis (16th century), Notes on R. Joseph Karo, Shulhan ‘Arukh, Yoreh De’ah 264:7—also permits it. It was also discussed in connection with writing the scriptural sections contained in phylacteries: Isserlis on Shulhan ‘Arukh, ‘Orah Hagim 32:32—requires it; and earlier in his Darkhei Moshe, on Tur, ‘Orah Hagim 32:32, citing this requirement both in the name of Rokeah (R. Eliezer of Worms; ca. 1160–1230)—as brought in Barukh She’amur (by R. Shimshon b. Eliezer; second half of 14th century), as well as in the name of the
MS British Library, Add. 9403: 9 variants; MS Wroclaw, Pablikowski 141: 8 variants; MS Paris, heb. 1-3: 13 variants; MS Berlin, Or. fol. 1-4: 19 variants; Soncino 1488, printed Bible: 16 variants.

The following is a summary of the common variants (the Sefardi MS Sassoon 368 is also noted here):

10:21 A - Open; V Add Ber Son - Closed;
11:1 A - Open; V Add Ber Son Pab <368> - Closed;
12:21 A - Open; V Add Par Ber Pab <368> - Closed;
12:37 A - Open; V Add Par Ber Son <368> - Closed;
12:43 A - Open; Par Ber Son - Closed;
13:1 A - Open; Ber Son Pab - Closed;
13:5 A - Open; V Par Ber Son - Closed; (Add Pab - Open);
13:11 A - Open; V Par Ber Son Pab <368> - Closed;
13:17 A - Closed; Par Ber Son Pab - Open (apparently);
14:1 A - Open; Par Ber Son Pab - Closed;
14:15 A - Open; Par Ber Son - Closed;
14:26 A - Open; Par Ber Son - Closed;
15:20 A - Open; Par Ber Son - Closed;
16:6 A - Open; V Ber Son <368> - Closed;
16:11 A - Open; V Add Par Ber Son <368> - Closed.

It will be seen that most of these 15 common variants are cases of switching an Open section for a Closed one (11); twice no section is switched with a Closed section; and once a Closed section is switched for an Open section. It should be recalled that any one of these variants renders a Torah scroll unfit

author of the work that R. Shimshon was glossing (Tiqun Tefillin, by R. Abraham of Zonsheim, a student of R. Meir of Rothenburg [d. 1293]); both of the latter works in: Qoets Sifrei Stam (ed. M. M. Meshi-Zahav; Jerusalem, 1970) 142. We add that the widespread custom today is not to write Torah scrolls or phylacteries with spaces at the end of every verse (this reflects an early tradition; indeed, earlier than the alternative custom).
for ritual use. In fact, because of the many section variants that he encountered, Maimonides wrote an explicit list in his code, based on the Aleppo Codex.

(4) Yemenite Manuscripts: Masoretic Codices (15th-16th Centuries)

Penkower has shown that the Yemenite sectional division in the Torah is identical with the Aleppo Codex (except in two cases in Leviticus, due to an ambiguity in Maimonides’ list). This was a result of their following Maimonides’ Code, where he included a section list based upon A. Thus, there are no variants between the Yemenite MSS and A in our material (Exod 10:10–16:15).

[C] The Layout of the Song of the Sea and the Lines before and after the Song

B. Meg. 16b already noted that the songs in the Bible are to be written in a special layout (different than the narrative). Some songs, like the Song of the Sea, are to be written אָרַיִת לְעָבְרֵי לָטַבָּד, where each line consists of text and spaces, and where the spaces of each line are aligned with the text of the previous line, and similarly the text of each line is aligned with the spaces of the previous line. (Other songs [and some repetitive texts] are to be written אָרַיִת לְעָבְרֵי אָרַיִת, where the text of each line is written under the text of the previous line, and similarly concerning the spaces; or in short: these songs are to be written in two columns, with a space separating them). These layouts are ritually binding: a song written as prose, and vice-versa, disqualifies a scroll for ritual use.

32 See b. Shab. 103b; Maimonides, Hilkhot Sefer Torah 7:11, 8:3; R. Joseph Karo, Shulhan ‘Arukh, Yoreh De‘ah 275:1.

33 Penkower, New Evidence, ch. 5, pp. 64–66.

34 For several examples of the different types of song layouts, see Breuer, The Aleppo Codex, 149–189.

35 See b. Shab. 103b; Maimonides, Hilkhot Sefer Torah 7:11; R. Joseph Karo, Shulhan
The layout of the lines before and after the Song of the Sea (5 lines before and 5 after) were noted by Maimonides, but these were not considered by him to be ritually binding. Indeed, we find varying layouts of these lines. However, it was common practice to begin the first line of the column which contained the Song of the Sea with הָעַלָּם (Exod 14:28), one of the letters of נִצְבָּן שֵׁנִי, with which 6 columns in a Torah scroll are to begin. These practices were often emulated by the scribes of the codices (even though there was no issue there of being ritually qualified). They often had to resort to various subterfuges in the column preceding the column of the Song of the Sea (e.g. dilating letters, or on the contrary, compressing them) in order to begin the column of the Song with נַעֲשָׂה.

Four Traditions Compared to the Aleppo Codex

(1) The Accurate Oriental Masoretic Codices with Tiberian Masorah (10th–11th Centuries)

The layout of the Song of the Sea in 30 lines, the first written as prose, the rest written alternately in lines of three parts (with two spaces) and lines of two parts (with one space), and the last line written in two parts (instead of an expected three) is common to almost all Oriental masoretic codices; thus, A and BC3L. S is similar, except for the last two lines (v. 19) which are written there as prose (with no spaces). This common layout (with the exception of S) should be emphasized (and it is found in other such MSS, e.g., L1L3L9). In contrast, these MSS disagree concerning the details of the layout of another Pentateuchal song, the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32)."
The layout of the lines before and after the Song of the Sea as found in A are sometimes preserved in these MSS. Thus e.g., one finds them in B (so too L1L3).\(^{40}\) C3L, however, do not preserve the layout of the 5 lines after the Song. S did not preserve the layout of all 5 lines before the Song, because it began the column with the third of the 5 lines.

TSC fits exactly into the tradition of these manuscripts. The layout of the final two lines of the Song (in two parts and two parts) should be especially emphasized.

The desire to begin the Song column with the ר of הבהי caused the scribe to add one more line at the bottom of the previous column—even though it changed the alignment of the bottom lines of the columns. Thus, the fourth column of our sheet has 72 lines, whereas every other column has 71 lines. Note also that the Song column is wider than the other columns—it is determined by the width of the Song layout. This layout as well as the lines before and after the Song were clearly copied from a prepared Vorlage. This explains why these lines are justified even on the left side, whereas the rest of the lines on the sheet have no such justification on the left (not even the remaining lines of the column after the 5 lines after the Song). [See photo 2].

(2) Sefardi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th–14th Centuries)

The standard Sefardi layout of the Song is identical to A except in one detail: the final two lines of the Song are written here in two parts and three parts (and not two and two). Thus, these lines are now in symmetry with the layout of the rest of the Song: the last line begins and ends here with one word: hayam. (The first Spanish scholar to discuss this explicitly was R. Meir b. Todros HaLevi Abulafia in his letter to the Sages of Burgos).\(^{41}\) For a slightly different solution, see below the Torah scroll from Rhodes. An

\(^{40}\) See Penkower, New Evidence, 33. There is a minor variant in BL3: the last words of the 5th line after the Song are מפי קרә, in A מפי קרә, in A מפי קרә.

\(^{41}\) See Penkower, New Evidence, ch. 3, pp. 41–43.
exception to this rule is MS Sassoon 368, whose scribe wrote the last 2 lines as prose. In this detail, he was influenced by the Ashkenazi tradition (see below), as he was in the section divisions (see above; see also above concerning his text variants).

The standard Sefardi layout of the lines before and after the Song, as found e.g., in MSS JTS 44a and Sassoon 16 (so, too, in several other Sefardi MSS), agrees with A. However, sometimes the layout was modified (as it was not ritually binding). Thus, R. Nissim in his Torah scroll began the 4th and 5th lines after the Song in a slightly different layout.

MSS JTS 44a; Sassoon 16
These MSS reflect the standard Sefardi layout of the Song. The final hayam of the final line is placed at the end of the line, followed by a blank line. The 5 lines before and after the Song are identical with A. For example, the 5th line before the Song ends at the end of the line, followed by a blank line.

MS Sassoon 368
The Song is laid out in lines of three parts and two parts, but in a completely different manner than the regular layout, as the scribe wrote a very long first line—until פִּים יַרְכָּב (5 words longer than usual). Therefore his second line begins יִשָּׁר הַנִּאָר, his third line begins יִלַּשְׁכֶנְו...אֲלִילָתָו, etc. He wrote v. 19 as prose (following the Ashkenazi tradition), but begins those lines with רֵעָב (v. 18), and in his final line there are 3 words בְּכָחוֹת נָרָא מִסְפָּר.

Torah Scroll of R. Nissim Gerondi
R. Nissim widened the column of Song of the Sea (as compared to the other columns) in order to write the layout of the Song exactly in the format of space below text, and text below space.

At the end of the Song of the Sea, R. Nissim wrote וְהָבֵא as the last word, separately, but not at the end of the line. Rather he indented the word a bit to the right, thereby leaving an empty space at the end of the line. This was

42 See Penkower, New Evidence, 37.
done because he wanted the Open section that followed (Exod 15:20) not simply to have an empty line before it (=Open section according to Maimonides, but a Closed section according to R. Asher b. Yehiel), but rather also to have an empty space at the end of the line previous to the empty line (=Open section according to both opinions).

The layout of the 5 lines before the Song was preserved: הָעֹלָם, בְּכֵשָׁה, and, by spreading out the spaces between letters and words in the first four lines (as noted above, R. Nissim had widened the Song column). He finished the last of these 5 lines not at the end of the line, but rather in the middle of the line. This was done because of the same reasoning as noted above: he wanted the next Open section (Exod 15:1) to be preceded by an open space at the end of the line and an empty line; and not simply an empty line (=Closed section according to R. Asher b. Yehiel).

However, R. Nissim did not fully preserve the “traditional” five lines after the Song. Thus, after the Song his first five lines begin: וְהֶקְחָה, אָהֳרָה, כָּמֶל, (and not: וְהֶקְחָה, אָהֳרָה, כָּמֶל, רֶבֶץ, מַכָּה, מְשָׁה, מִלָּה). In short, the space in the third line is larger than usual and the Closed section that begins subsequently on that line (Exod 15:22) starts with one word only at the end of the line (יִשְׂרָאֵל). This unnatural layout seems to be the result of his planning the next Closed section (seven lines later, Exod 15:27) to begin after a space in the middle of the line only. Thus, it appears that he changed the last two of the five “traditional” lines after the Song in order to accommodate the layout of the Closed sections as he preferred to lay them out.

Similar are his changes at the end of the lines before the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), where he ends mid-line, and then has an empty line; and at the end of that Song, he indents the last words towards the right, thereby creating an empty space at the end of the line. The result: preceding the next Open section (Deut 32:1; 32:34) is not only an empty line (=Closed section, according to R. Asher b. Yehiel), but also an empty space at the end of the line previous to the empty line (=Open section according to both Maimonides and R. Asher).
Thus, in both Songs, R. Nissim slightly distorts the form of the last line (indenting the concluding word[s] to the right), in order to be able to follow the opinions of both Maimonides and R. Asher b. Yehiel. However, this is a new form vis-à-vis the last line of the Song, advocated by neither authority.

**Torah Scroll of Rhodes**

The scribe preserved a layout of the Song in three parts and two parts. Furthermore, as he followed a practice similar to R. Nissim’s concerning the layout of the Open and Closed sections (see above), he also followed R. Nissim’s practice concerning the ending of the Song, i.e. indenting the concluding word towards the right. However, he did not leave an additional empty line (as did R. Nissim); rather he began the next Open section (Exod 15:20) on the line immediately following the Song.

Furthermore, the scribe changed the layout of the last verse (19). Instead of the standard Sefardi layout of two lines, two parts and three parts, he laid it out in three lines: two parts (line 29 as in A), three parts (beginning ד, end ח), two parts. This layout seems to be an ad hoc solution of the scribe (for symmetry) when faced with a layout like A (he laid out anew line 30 of A into lines 30 and 31, in three parts and two parts):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>א</th>
<th>ד</th>
<th>ב</th>
<th>ח</th>
<th>ד</th>
<th>ב</th>
<th>ח</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>רישו ופלותמ</td>
<td>הא</td>
<td>י</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dilated ד)</td>
<td>הא</td>
<td>י</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dilated ד)</td>
<td>הא</td>
<td>י</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scribe, similarly to R. Nissim, followed a similar indenting of the concluding words at the end of the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), though he writes the Song in 67 lines, and not in 70 lines as R. Nissim. Furthermore, he does not leave an extra empty line after the Song. 43

Thus, in both Songs, the scribe (similarly to R. Nissim) slightly distorts the form of the last line (indenting the concluding word[s] to the right), in order to be able to follow the opinions of both Maimonides and R. Asher b. Yehiel.

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43 See the photo of ms HU 4'7404 in Zucker, "Descriptions," 15.
However, as noted above, this is a new form vis-à-vis the last line of the Song, advocated by neither authority.

(3) Ashkenazi Manuscripts: Torah Scrolls and Masoretic Codices (13th–14th Centuries)

Penkower has shown that Ashkenazi codices have several different layouts of the Song of the Sea; however they all have one thing in common: the layout of v. 19 as prose.44 This is not a new Ashkenazi layout, but rather a preservation of an alternate tradition—as noted above, it is already found in S. This prose layout of v. 19 is found not only in masoretic codices, but in Torah scrolls as well, e.g. MS Vatican 2. Similarly, it is also found in the first printed Bible, Soncino 1488, reflecting its Ashkenazi sources. This layout, as differing from the Sefardi layout, reflects the opinion that v. 19 is not part of the Song.45 The one exception is MS Pablikowski 141 (French?) which lays out v. 19 in three lines instead of two—and not as prose: two parts, three parts, two parts (see above the Sefardi Torah scroll of Rhodes; however, their internal layout differs).

Penkower has also shown that there is no particular layout in the Ashkenazi codices for the lines after the Song.46 Nor do these codices pay particular attention to the layout of the lines before the Song.47 However, in the Torah scroll MS Vatican 2, the first five lines after the Song are almost identical with A (except the beginning of the third line). As to the lines before the Song, though they begin with וַיָּאָבְדֻ, the rest differ completely from A (in fact, the lines before the Song are divided there into six, and not five like A).

44 Penkower, New Evidence, ch. 3, p. 38.
46 Ibid., 38.
47 Ibid.
(4) Yemenite Manuscripts: Masoretic Codices (15th–16th Centuries)

Penkower has shown that the majority of accurate Yemenite codices agree with A concerning the layout of the Song, as well as the layout of the lines before and after the Song.48

Thus we see that concerning the Song of the Sea, there are three basic layouts concerning v. 19 of Exodus 15: (1) A = the Oriental accurate MSS = Maimonides = the Yemenite MSS: two lines in two parts and two parts; (2) Sefardi MSS: two lines in two parts and three parts (begin and end with hayam; this seems to be a development of the first type, trying to achieve total symmetry in the Song); and (3) Ashkenazi MSS: (two or three lines) as prose.

TSC clearly fits in with the first type concerning the layout of v. 19, as well as the layout of the whole Song and the lines before and after the Song.

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We conclude by summarizing TSC’s features in all three categories (text, sections, Song) as compared with these categories in the four different traditions (Oriental, Sefardi, Ashkenazi, Yemenite).

TSC is similar to the Oriental tradition in all three categories. [1] Text—the first hand has a small spread of variants as compared to A (9+1); this number was diminished considerably by the second hand’s corrections (there remain one or two variants). [2] Sections—the first hand has a small number of variants (two) as compared to A. This was slightly diminished by the second hand (one variant possibly remains). In this latter correction, our scroll is unlike the Oriental masoretic codices, for they do not correct Section divisions. [3] The Song of the Sea; five lines before and five lines after the Song—the layout is identical to the Oriental codices, including the layout of v. 19 in two lines: two parts and two parts.

These features stand out when compared to the other traditions. The Sefardi tradition differs from A in the layout of v. 19 of the Song of the Sea:

48 Ibid., ch. 5, p. 66 and n. 176.
two lines in two parts and three parts (and some Sefardi Torah scrolls differ slightly in the layout of the lines after the Song). Some Sefardi Torah scrolls also differ concerning the placement of the last word of the Song (and similarly the placement of the last word before the Song)—as a result of their desire to lay out the sections in agreement with both Maimonides’ and R. Asher’s definition of the Open and Closed sections.

The Ashkenazi tradition differs from A in all three categories. [1] Text—several of the manuscripts are characterized by a large quantity of variants, with several in common to one another. Many of the variants are corrected by the second hand, often (in the masoretic codices) based on masoretic notes; but there still remain a sizable amount of variants. [2] Sections—here, too, there are several variants in the manuscripts, with several in common to one another. [3] The Song of the Sea—in the codices there are a variety of ways of writing the Song; but they all agree that v. 19 is written as prose. Such is the layout in Torah scrolls as well, and in the first printed Bible edition. In the codices no special attention is paid to the layout of the lines before and after the Song. In the Torah scroll MS Vatican 2, the lines before the Song begin with כ of אַבֵּאָס, but the layout of the rest of these lines differs from A. In fact, the lines before the Song are divided there into six (and not five, like A). The lines after the Song are almost identical with A (except the third line begins פֶּסֶת הָרְכֵּב, instead of פֶּסֶת הָרְכֱּב). The Yemenite tradition chose to follow Maimonides; therefore, they reflect A in the text, as well as in the sections and the Song. For the latter two they relied on Maimonides’ Code (because of certain ambiguities there, this resulted in two variants in the sections in Leviticus and one minor variant in the Song of Moses).

In light of all the above, TSC should be placed typologically—with respect to the text, the sections and the Song—with the Oriental manuscripts. It is, of course, no coincidence that it is written in an Oriental hand. It seems likely that, like those manuscripts, it too was the product of the 10th or 11th

49 See above, n. 24.

century. This would explain the small spread of text variants and their correction; the small amount of section variants; and the identity with A concerning the layout of the Song, including v. 19, as well as the layout of the lines before and after the Song.

TSC is thus to be added to the fragments of nine early Torah scrolls that have been identified to date. These include two fragmentary scrolls from the Cambridge Geniza collection identified by Sirat.\textsuperscript{51} The first (T-S NS 4.3 and 3.21) she dates to the beginning of the 8th century, the second (T-S NS 4.8 + 18 fragments) to the 9th or 10th century. Six fragmentary scrolls from the Florence, Medicea-Laurenziana Library (all preserved in MS Pluto 74, 17), identified by Sirat and dated by her to before the 11th century.\textsuperscript{52} (These eight fragments do not contain complete sheets, but rather fragments from various columns. The fragments in Florence are no longer in their original condition, but rather have been cut up and reused to write a Greek text over the Hebrew one). One Torah scroll sheet from Exodus, originally dated by Birnbaum to the 8th century,\textsuperscript{53} but recently re-dated by Sirat to the 10th or 11th century.\textsuperscript{54} This sheet and TSC are the only known surviving complete Torah scroll sheets from the eleventh century or earlier.

Finally, we point out that in most of the early scrolls identified to date there is a tendency to write numerous lines per column. Thus, Sirat has

\textsuperscript{51} Sirat et al., "Rouleaux," 861–864.

\textsuperscript{52} Sirat et al., "Rouleaux," 864–887, with photos on pp. 870–881, passim, and with transcription by A. Yardeni; C. Sirat and A. Yardeni, "A Notice concerning the Discovery of Six Torah Scrolls prior to 1000 C.E.," \textit{Asupot Qiryat Sefer}, supplement to \textit{Qiryat Sefer} 68 (1998) 105–110 (Heb.). The 1998 article is a summary of Sirat et al., "Rouleaux," without the material concerning the Cambridge scrolls and without the photographs. On p. 107 there is a printing error: the description of the contents of scroll 2 in the Laurenziana should read: Exod 20:5–26:5 instead of Exod 2:5–26:5 (an error of Hebrew bet for kaf). The correct description is found in the original 1994 article, p. 872. Scroll 2 does not contain the Song of the Sea, and, in fact, has no material in common with TSC.

\textsuperscript{53} See Birnbaum, "A Sheet"; photo in \textit{Fine Printed Books} (1999), 163.

\textsuperscript{54} Sirat et al., "Rouleaux," 861 n. 3.
reported the following reconstructed number of lines in the above scrolls—Cambridge scroll 2: 49 or 50 lines; Cambridge scroll 1: 54 or 55; Laurenziana scroll 3: ±61; Laurenziana scroll 6: ±70; Laurenziana scroll 1: ±82; Laurenziana scroll 4: ±97; Laurenziana scroll 2: ±100; Laurenziana scroll 5: ±100. Our scroll with 71 or 72 lines fits this pattern. Our earliest written source on the number of lines in a Torah scroll, Massekhet Soferim 2:11 (c. 8th century, Eretz Israel), notes the options of 42, 60, 72, or 98 lines per column.56 These options (or similar ones) are reflected in several of the scrolls noted above. This includes TSC with 71 lines per column (and once 72 lines).

Maimonides suggested (end of the 12th century) between 48 and 60 lines per column for Torah scrolls (Hilkhot Sefer Torah 7:10). This was echoed in the sixteenth century by R. Moses Isserlis in his note on Shulhan ‘Arukh, Yoreh Dei‘ah 275:6 (though noting an alternative of 42 lines). Maimonides noted that he wrote his own Torah scroll with 51 lines per column (Hilkhot Sefer Torah 9:10). The Yemenites followed this latter practice in their scrolls. Today it is common in most communities to write 42 lines per column. This, too, was an early custom. Thus, the scroll discussed by Birnbaum has 42 lines. Furthermore 42 lines per column was already mentioned by several Babylonian geonim57 and was also mentioned as an option by Massekhet Soferim 2:11.

57 See Higger, Massekhet Soferim, 41–42.