A MASORETIC LIST OF BABYLONIAN ORIGIN OF DOTTED WORDS IN THE PENTATEUCH

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1. Lists of Dotted Words

Many halakhic and masoretic literary sources list fifteen dotted words in the Bible, ten in the Pentateuch, four in the Prophets and a single word in the Hagiographa. These words appear in a Scroll of the Law with dots over some or all their letters. Midrashic literature drew various halakhic or aggadic conclusions from these dots. Scholars generally hold that the dots were added in order to note doubts or disagreements in the Biblical text. This opinion is already implied in Rabbinic sources.¹

The subject of this paper is an ancient masoretic list in which some forty Pentateuchal verses appear, containing dotted words or let-

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The ten dotted words in the common list do not appear in this list, which appears - with minor differences - in two sources. The one is a Tiberian manuscript of the Pentateuch (ms. Leningrad, Firkovich B10, henceforth: L3), the list appearing in the masoretic notations at the end of the manuscript. The second source is a two-page Geniza fragment containing various masoretic notations (henceforth: 105ABB). Before discussing the list, we must note that it was published some thirty years ago by F. Diaz-Esteban, but he overlooked several basic points we shall discuss here.

Here is the full text of the list in both sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ms. 105ABB (page 1, recto)</th>
<th>Ms. L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>אלֶין מַלְיָיָה בֵּאֵרָוִית בֵּיתָיָבּ לִבָּבָן מַזְנֶר</td>
<td>דְּמַרְדָּא צַוְּרָאֵמָה בֵּיתָיָבּ לִבְנָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מַנַּקְדֵּדְתָךְ רַמְזָא לְמַחְרוֹתָא נַפִּירָא</td>
<td>שַׁמַּרֲדָא לְתַרְגָּמָה נַפִּירָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>דַּאָרַשְּתָא</td>
<td>בֶּרָשָּׁתָא</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>גנֵנִי בֵּיָה</td>
<td>גנֵנִי בֵּיָה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רַשָּׁבַתָא שְׁבִּיט</td>
<td>שְׁבִּיט</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רַשָּׁבַתָא</td>
<td>שְׁבִּיט</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רַשָּׁבַתָא</td>
<td>שְׁבִּיט</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Ms. Heb. d 62,7 of the Bodleian Library of Oxford. The fragment is numbered 105ABB by: I. Yeivin, The Hebrew Language Tradition as reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization [Heb.], Jerusalem 1985, p. 206. Other manuscripts mentioned in this article and marked as described by are described in this manuscript.
5. Bold letters indicate the changes between the two sources. Underlined letters are dotted in the manuscript.
sentence that the list of dotted words is one of disagreements between Palestinian and Babylonian Jews. Yet, there seems to us to be a difficulty in this explanation - for a number of reasons: first of all, the list has been defined at length in its title - and what reason can there be for additional explanation at the end? Secondly, there would seem to be some opposition, or even a contradiction, between the opening and the conclusion. The opening speaks generally of dots and disagreement, whereas the conclusion talks of easterners and westerners. Thirdly, the wording of the conclusion appears in only one of the two sources of the lists (in 103b), but is missing in the other source (L3). In 103b there appears a certain graphic sign, something like two circles joined by an arc, between the list and its conclusion. This symbol would seem to be one denoting separation, showing that the masorah is at this point going on to something new. This is its meaning when it appears a few times on the second page of the fragment. This second page of the Geniza fragment was discovered by Yeivin, who joined it to the first page published earlier by Díaz-Esteban.

All these considerations lead to the conclusion that there is no connection between the last line on the page and the list we are considering here. We shall yet try to demonstrate the validity of this conclusion by a consideration of the material itself.

3. Disagreements marked by the dots

What are the disagreements marked by the dots? Out of a comparison with other masoretic sources - especially those of the Babylonian masorah - it is possible to assume with full certainty just what the disagreement implied is. In the appendix I have listed the various kinds of disagreement, and I have adduced evidence in support of my assumption wherever such evidence was available to me.

All the dots denote disagreements in the Biblical text, not in the way the text is to be read. This is why the linguistic differences between the Tiberian and Babylonian language traditions are not reflected in them, for almost all of these differences are connected with the way the words are to be read, rather than the way they are to be written.
Some of the dots denote disagreements in the way the text is to be divided up, a field almost completely overlooked by the Tiberian masorah. Many of these disagreements are to be found in the list of disagreements of the scholars of Nehardea - in Geniza manuscripts 5100.

Other topics of disagreement include writing as one word or as two, a case of qere and kethiv, the use of waw conjunctiva and plene or defective spellings. The number of cases in every topic is given in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sort of disagreement</th>
<th>number of cases</th>
<th>evidence of disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. open and closed portions</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. writing as one word or as two</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. qere and kethiv</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. plene or defective spellings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. waw conjunctiva</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. doubtful cases and others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The Babylonian origin of the list

The summarizing table shows that twenty of the forty disagreements are clearly supported in Babylonian masorah sources. Almost everywhere it can be seen that the disagreement is an internal one, within the Babylonian masorah, and not a disagreement between Babylon and Tiberias. In fact, our claim is a two-fold one: the disagreements indicated by the dots are internal Babylonian disagreements, and furthermore, the very tradition of denoting doubt by means of dots in various places is of Babylonian origin. Let us sum up the evidence as follows:

Firstly, we have seen that in half the cases there is clear evidence of an internal Babylonian disagreement. 6

Secondly, we have already seen that one topic of disagreement is the way certain open or closed Pentateuch paragraphs are to be written. The very consideration of these open or closed paragraphs is an integral part of the Babylonian masorah, and the only paragraph lists known to us are of Babylonian origin. On the other hand, the Tiberian masorah does not deal at all with open and closed paragraphs, and the tradition of writing these paragraphs in manuscripts was not uniform. It is thus difficult to assume that this masorah includes a way of marking places of disagreement on this topic.

The third piece of evidence relates to the tradition of using dots to mark these places. In Tiberian manuscripts and in other places in the Babylonian masorah there is no sign of dotted words other than the fifteen known examples. In contrast, the Babylonian masorah indicates a number of dotted words, including two within our list (טמסי and נ衢נא).

If this is so, then an important question arises: the list we are discussing appears in two manuscripts, one Tiberian (L3) and the other semi-Tiberian (106פפ). 8 If the origin of the list is Babylonian, how did it come to appear in Tiberian manuscripts? In my opinion, there is

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6. In some cases, we also find evidence of a disagreement between Palestine and Babylon, but it must be remarked that every internal Babylonian disagreement can also be seen as a disagreement between Palestine and Babylon. Let us assume that there existed a disagreement between two Babylonian schools of thought, such as between Sura and Nehardea, while in Palestine only one of these opinions had

7. Both words are mentioned in the Babylonian masorah to Gen 16,5 (Ms. ייון דומינרע התיוורוד ודה יולה פולזר... והתשא ירוי תכש חודה לאך קדם: 106פפ) and Gen 46,20 (Ms. ייון דומינרע ת SHRAYSH). The dotted word מוזר (Gen 46,20) is also mentioned in the masorah parva of Ms. ייון there (See: M. Breuer, *The Masorah Magna to the Pentateuch by Shemuel ben Ya'aqov* [Ms. ייון], New York 1992, p. 5). The dotted word מוזר (Num 32,7) is also mentioned in the Babylonian masorah there (Ms. 113פפ; Ginsburg, *The Massorah*, III, p. 238).

8. The manuscript has Babylonian vocalization symbols and Tiberian symbols as well. See: Yeivin (above, note 3).
nothing unusual about such a phenomenon. In my doctoral dissertation, I have pointed out the existence of a broad process whereby the Babylonian masorah influenced its Tiberian counterpart. It is difficult to find an ancient Tiberian manuscript free of such influence: even the most clearly Tiberian manuscript - the Aleppo Codex - shows signs of Babylonian influence in a number of places. The Tiberian masorah tended naturally to absorb external material, for it had no fixed order, each masorete creating his own masoretic collection which he would then record in the margins of his page.

5. An acrostichonic signature in Geniza fragment אábא

Let us now consider an interesting feature further along in Geniza fragment אábא: on the obverse side of the page, there appear many masoretic lists written in smaller letters, most of which are of the accumulative masorah type. In one of these lists there appears a clearly acrostichonic signature: סעיד בך כּדּוּרי חַתּן

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lam 1,1</td>
<td>עת</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lam 3,59</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jer 50,24</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut 9,24</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esth 5,8</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 139,15</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen 50,5</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps 142,7</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kgs 2,21</td>
<td>בּוּרי</td>
<td>חַתּן</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list addsuce hapax legomena ending in בּוּרי. It can be seen that when the masorete reached the letter daleth for the second time, he found no suitable hapax legomenon, and so he adduced a word appearing only once in its stress pattern (a penultimate or ultimate stressed syllable).

To denote the letter samekh in the name רֶעֶב a biblical word beginning in a sin is addeducced שֶׁלֶב. Such a custom can be found in poetic acrostichons (like סֵפֶר בֵּית הַצְּדָקָם in the poem לְגַלְגָל הַצְּדָקָם recited in the morning prayer on Shabbat [Saturday]), as well as in scores of alphabetic lists in the Ochlah W'Ochlah collection. The name רֶעֶב is unknown in any other source. The name רֶעֶב became very common after the Arab conquest, but the name כּדּוּרי is unique and is not known from any other source. In the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma 60b) the name כּדּוּרי is mentioned and is interpreted negatively. The root meaning in Arabic is also linked with ugliness and sadness. The suffix of the name כּדּוּרי is unusual, and seems to denote to some degree the time and place of the owner of the name. The suffix -oy is of Persian origin, and names ending in this suffix were common in the eighth and ninth centuries, especially in Babylon. Amongst the geonim we find in Sura such names as Bilboi (served in 775) and Qimol (824), while in Pumpedita there appear such names as Natroi (752), Shinoi (781), Paltoi (842) and Qimoli (897). Parqoi ben Baboi is the disciple of Rav Yehudai Gaon. The scribe of the yeshiva of Rav Zemah bar Paltoi was named Mishoi. Additional names of this type are Isqoi (= ישוק), Bradoi and Bakhtoi.


10. It is possible that the masorah refers to Ps 116, 6, which is the single time in the Bible that the word יִעַלֶת is stressed on its last syllable.

11. E.g. Ochlah W'Ochlah (above, note 1), lists 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13.

It is interesting to note that the name which arises from our acrostichon is very similar to a name mentioned in a biblical manuscript of the Pentateuch (17, Chufut Kale 36, Leningrad Firkovitch B17). This Ms. was written by Shelomo Halevi bar Boya'a, who wrote also the Aleppo Codex. He sigen his name: Shelomo Halevi bar Boya'a, the son of Boya'a, a pupil of Said ben Pargoi known as Balq [or Alq].13 This name apparently appears in a fragmented colophon published by Aloni.14

Was this acrostichon written by the scribe of ms. 1068? Or perhaps he copied it from another masorah page? We shall try to answer this question on the basis of the nature of the other masorah lists appearing in the manuscript.

The second page of 1068 - identified by Yeivin - is very significant. The masoretic material in this page (on both sides) is far more plentiful than that which was inscribed at the end of the first page, thus enabling us better to appreciate its substance. There appear masoretic notes, most of which are comments of an accumulative masorah made up of *hapax legomena*. The words in each list have the same initial or final letters.

As far as these masoretic comments are concerned, they would seem to be organized in the same order as the Biblical text. The first word in each list (and rarely another word in the list) match this order. On the two pages there appear 31 masoretic lists, and only two of these are unlike the Biblical order.

In light of this data, I should like to make a proposal, concerning the way this collection of masoretic comments came about in this manuscript: some masorete collected up notes from the masorah magna of some Tiberian masorah manuscript. The masorete generally selected notes of an accumulative masorah, and it may well be that he was looking specifically for a masorah written in a special ornamental fashion, as was customary with accumulative masorah. In this way we can also explain the distribution of the notes - one or two notes per chapter, with entire chapters overlooked.

The acrostichonic list appears within these masoretic lists without any special mark, and it would seem that the person who collected up the masoretic lists is not the one who composed the acrostichonic signature. This would seem to have the creation of the masorete who processed the biblical page from which a scribe copied over the manuscript. The latter copied over the note without noticing its special character.

This is the second time an acrostichonic signature has come up in lists of accumulative masorah, and it joins the signature of the masorete appearing three times in the British Museum manuscript Or. 4445: נなし בן דניאל הקדש והגאל (Nisi son of Daniel the kohen, may God guard him). Lyons and Dotan identified this signature separately.15 However, whereas in that case there is no doubt that the masorete of the manuscript is the same one who formulated the note and introduced his name into it, in our case it would seem that the manuscript copyist had no idea at all that there was an acrostichonic signature in the material he was copying over.


Appendix: Sorting of the Dotted Words according to kinds of disagreements

A. open and closed portions
2. ביכורים (Gen 2,13)
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion.

4. יִרְיָה (Gen 4,3)
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion.

21. לא תחיה משכרה - Ex 23,26
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion; ב' (no portion); The accepted text. [Henceforth: T]: closed portion: Ms. Leningrad B19a [Henceforth: L]: no portion.

22. והימים טובים - Ex 40,22
23. ויהי זכרה ונוטא - Lev 5,14
24. נַחֲלוּ - Lev 14,21
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion.

A list of portions from the Geniza (Westminster College, Misc. 4,65-66):
ת: ביכורים; ב' לא תחיה משכרה; ל: נַחֲלוּ.
See: Yeivin, Alepp Codex, p. 82.

26. אַתָּנָא דֶּבֶר - Lev 26,18
T: no portion; סמי: The verse is not included in the list of closed portions; Two lists of portions from the Geniza (Cambridge T-S D1,87, Westminster College, Misc. 4, 65-66) and L: closed portion.

35. בְּנֵי גִּדְרֵד - Deut 2,8
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion.

39. נַחֲלוּ - Deut 22,20
41. וַיִּקְרָבָה - Deut 31,9
5:10 The verse is included in a list of closed portions on which the scribes of Neharde'a have another opinion (The order of the verses there proves that the verse under discussion is verse 9 and not verse 22).

B. writing as one word or as two words
5. לָא אָבֵד - Gen 4,22
6. אֶרֶץ נָבֵל - Gen 4,22
masorah magna of Migra'ot Gedolot (Venice 1524), Gen 46,20-21

See also Ms Vienna 13 and Ginsburg Bible, to Gen 46,20; C.D. Ginsburg, Introduction, p. 200.

11. לפֹּרְשָׁה בִּי - Gen 37,36
12. יְרוּשָׁם מִשְׁפָּר - Gen 39,1
14. תֵּבְנָה - Gen 41,457, 507; 46,20?
Ms יִדְּמִיתֶּרֶבֶּר (Gen 16, 5; 46,20) (= Gen 46,20).
Ms יִדְּמִיתֶּרֶבֶּר (Gen 46,20) masorah parva (Breuer, p. 5):
Liqquate Qadmoniyot (ed. Pinsker, Wien 1860, p. ל, on Gen 41, 45): הז מַהָרלְבוּ בְּבִית מִשְׁפָּר אֱלֹהֵי מָן מִלְדָּה. רָאִית בְּבִית מִשְׁפָּר בּוּדֵר:

The first two sources indicate Gen 46,20 as the dotted word, while according to the third source the disagreement is about Gen 41,45.

20. עַל פִּי יִבְּרָה מָלַמָּה - Ex 17,16
Ms יִדְּמִיתֶּרֶבֶּר (Gen 17,16) - סְמִי.
Ms יִדְּמִיתֶּרֶבֶּר (Gen 17,16) - לָא תַהֲלָּךְ.
Ms יִדְּמִיתֶּרֶבֶּר (Gen 17,16) - מַהָרלְבַּה בּוּדֵר.
See: Yeivin, Aleppo Codex, p. 82.

31. מַשְׁמוֹאָל - Num 24,73
Ms מַשְׁמוֹאָל (Gen 39,3) - מַשְׁמוֹאָל מְלַגֵּר בֵּית מִשְׁפָּר אֱלֹהֵי מָן.
See: Yeivin, Aleppo Codex, p. 82.

?16. שָׁלוֹחֵנִי - Ex 6,25
C. Qere and Kethiv
7. אֶרֶץ אֲדֻנָּה - Gen 8,17
Ms אֶרֶץ אֲדֻנָּה (Gen 8,17) - מַשְׁמוֹאָל.

10. גִּרְנֵד - Gen 27,3

13. אַשְׁרֵי קַרְיָה - Gen 39,20
D. Plene or Defectiva spellings

1. קד נָתָן - Gen 1,16
MS Gen 1,16: נָתָן קד
The masora magna of נָתָן (Ms. Sasoon 507; now: Jerusalem Heb. 24° 5702) and the masora magna of קד (Ms. Sasoon 1053) to Deut 34,12 say that there is a disagreement between the masoretes of Neharde'a (who write נָתָן) and those of Sura (who write קד).

2.}:${

3.₪:י - Gen 2,13

E. Waw conjunctiva

MS Ex 32,34: This verse is included in a list of four verses which are written in corrected books ("כתבם" כותב). In all three verses a man can read by mistake instead of והם.

F. Doubtful cases and others

15. עִלַּיִל מֶקֶר בִּית - Gen 46,13
16. הָאָדָם יִשָּׂרְאֵל - Num 29,26
17. בֱּיָדָם יִשָּׂרְאֵל - Deut 31,7
18. Compare Num 29,35 ("לָיוֹם הָשָׁמִיר") without waw. It is also possible that the disagreement is about closed or open portion.

19. The disagreement is probably about waw conjunctiva in the word יֵרְבָּא. See the parallel list in 1 Chron 7,1: "יוֹלוֹם יֵרְבָּא חַלְּלֵךְ אָטוֹר וּסְרֵפָה אֲרֻבּוּתֵי".

16. The word 'תֵּבַע (instead of 'תֵּבַע) may hint that according to some opinion there is a case of Qere and Kethiv here.

17. Read probably מַסְרָה. The masora refers to Ochlah W'Ochlah (ed. Frensdorff, list 136).