Studies in Semitic Vocalisation and Reading Traditions

Edited by Aaron D. Hornkohl and Geoffrey Khan

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies

https://www.openbookpublishers.com

Cover image: Detail from a bilingual Latin-Punic inscription at the theatre at Lepcis Magna, IRT 321 (accessed from https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Inscription_Theatre_Leptis_Magna_Libya.JPG). Leaf of a Syriac prayer book with Western vocalisation signs (source: Wikimedia Commons). Leaf of an Abbasid-era Qurʾān (vv. 64.11–12) with red, yellow, and green vocalisation dots (source: Wikimedia Commons). Genizah fragment of the Hebrew Bible (Gen. 11–12, Cambridge University Library T-S A1.56; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Genizah fragment of a Karaite transcription of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic script (Num. 14.22–24, 40–42, Cambridge University Library T-S Ar. 52.242; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Greek transcription of the Hebrew for Ps. 22.2a in Matt. 27.46 as found in Codex Bezae (fol. 99v; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

Cover design: Anna Gatti

DISCORD BETWEEN THE TIBERIAN WRITTEN AND READING TRADITIONS: TWO CASE STUDIES

Aaron D. Hornkohl

―――――――――――――――――――――――――――――――

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Like preceding *Biblia Hebraica* editions, the forthcoming *Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition* (formerly provisionally entitled *The Oxford Hebrew Bible*) will have as its base text the Firkovich B19 A Leningrad Codex (= L). Defending this approach, chief editor Ronald Hendel (2016, 31–32) explains:

> The copy-text will be L, our oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. Since the accidentals of vocalization and accentuation in L are the product of medieval scribes, our critical text is open to the complaint of anachronism. This complaint is technically correct…. [B]iblical scholars already know that the consonantal text is older than the medieval vocalization system…. [However,] …the phonology of the Tiberian vocalization system is not wholly or even mostly anachronistic…. Scholars have demonstrated that most of the phonetic features of this system accurately represent a reading tradition from the Second Temple period, and many of its features stem from the First Temple period.

In biblical and Hebrew language studies, one encounters seemingly incongruous views on the historical status of the Tiberian reading tradition, i.e., the specific oral realisation of the biblical text as prescribed by the Masoretic vocalisation (and accentuation). On the one hand, in the case of a small minority of certain well-known features, the vocalisation diverges from the phonetic realisations implied by the consonantal text. In most such cases the reading tradition is correctly characterised as reflecting comparatively late, secondary phonology.[1] On the other hand, as Hendel notes, many authorities past and present have emphasised the antiquity of the testimony embodied in the medieval vocalisation.[2]

This article plumbs the historical depths of the Tiberian reading tradition. The 'depth' analogy usefully comprehends two aspects of the tradition: first, its antiquity (how far back it

---

[1] One of the best-known and oft-described examples is the shift from *qal* internal passive to alternative forms via reanalysis as *puʿʿal* or *hofʿal* or revocalisation as *nifʿal*; for a recent discussion and up-to-date bibliography see Reymond (2016, 1135, nn. 5–8). Hughes (1994) collects a number of further phenomena, as do the studies listed below, n. 2. Incidentally, while the issue is not treated here, it bears mentioning that the so-called consonantal text is not, in fact, purely consonantal. While it is legitimate to suppose that the earlier portions of the Hebrew Bible were composed in a more purely consonantal orthography, it seems that they were later subjected to a revision involving the insertion of *matres lectionis* in line with the Second Temple orthographical conventions employed in the composition of LBH texts.

[2] Examples of nuanced presentations include those found of Barr (1968, 188–222; 1981, 27, 35–36; 1984, esp. 31); Morag (1974); Khan (2013a, 46–51); Joosten (2015). See also Tov (2012, 46–47).

reaches); second, its composite nature (its various constituent layers). Rarely are the two perspectives given the balanced and nuanced consideration that each deserves in exegetical, textual, literary, and even linguistic studies. All too often the Tiberian tradition's admittedly complex textual and linguistic testimony goes undervalued and oversimplified. This frequently leads to extremes that mar studies of various types. In linguistic research, for example, the combined consonantal-vocalic text is sometimes approached uncritically, as an organic unity, its degree of linguistic heterogeneity underrepresented or entirely unacknowledged. At the other extreme are scholars who wholly discount the historical testimony of the pronunciation tradition embodied in the vocalisation, despite furnishing little to no justification for their scepticism.

In focus here are two features in the Tiberian reading tradition whose vocalisation differs from that implied in the written tradition: (a) the *qal* construct infinitive and (b) the 3ms suffix that attaches to plural nouns and some prepositions. It is here argued that the Tiberian phonetic realisation, i.e., vocalisation, in the two cases both differs from that presupposed by the consonantal framework and is secondary thereto. However, far from being artificial and post-biblical, evidence is marshalled below to demonstrate that the realisations of the pronunciation tradition in both cases are organic and relatively ancient, products not of Byzantine or medieval times, but of the Second Temple Period, if not earlier.

2.0.   THE *QAL* CONSTRUCT INFINITIVE

The ancient Hebrew construct infinitive evolved from Biblical Hebrew (BH) to Rabbinic Hebrew (RH) and within BH itself. Developments involved phonology, morphology, and syntax. The changes are especially perceptible in certain *qal* forms.

2.1.   Differential Treatment of *Qal* II-*bgdkpt* Construct Infinitives with Prefixed ־ל

In the Tiberian tradition, the phonetic realization of the *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitive varies depending on whether or not the form is preceded by a prefixed preposition and on the identity of the preposition. Blau (2010, 213–14) provides as clear an explanation as any:

> The construct infinitive is frequently governed by prepositions, especially by ל. Originally this ל had a fully prepositional meaning, as, e.g., 'in order to' (e.g., וַיֵּרֶד יְהֹוָה לִרְאֹת אֶת־הָעִיר 'and the Lord came down to see the town' Gen 11:5); later the ל became a part of the infinitive, as happened also in French and English. This is reflected both by the form and by the syntactic usage of the preposition. Formally, the ל became integrated into the infinitive. In some forms of the *qal* infinitive, the ל appears to be in close internal juncture: the *šwa* that begins the infinitive behaves as a genuine quiescent *šwa*, and subsequent ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ת letters are vocalized as stops, e.g., לִנְפֹּל 'to fall', as opposed to simple נְפֹל and כִּנְפֹל/בִּנְפֹל 'when falling'. In Rabbinic Hebrew the univerbalization of the infinitive with ל is even more progressed: the ל is always attached to the infinitive, even after other prepositions, and the infinitive is totally

remodelled after the prefix-tense (as in מִלְתֵּן 'from giving', formed after יִתֵּן, in contrast to biblical מִתֵּת). The special vocalization of the construct infinitive in Biblical Hebrew after ל, corresponding to the vocalization of the prefix-tense (לִזְכֹּר 'to remember', matching יִזְכֹּר) is undoubtedly in the line of Rabbinic Hebrew (and may even reflect the impact of Rabbinic Hebrew on the Masoretes). At any rate, the quiescent *šwa* after ל is certainly a late feature, as demonstrated by the very fact that in לִנְפֹּל the *n* is not assimilated to the following consonant, because, when this assimilation operated, the *šwa* was not yet quiescent…. Alternatively, we could regard the vocalization of the infinitive לִנְפֹּל as a late Mishnaic feature superimposed by the Masoretes on the biblical text, because the biblical text contained *n,* which had to be preserved because of the sanctity of the text.[3]

---

[3] See also Blau (2010, 115):

> The *qal* infinitives construct present a complex picture, since after the *lə* followed by *bgdkpt* the form has a quiescent *šwa.* Such forms as לִשְׁבֹּר 'in order to break' are due to morphological reshuffling on analogy to the prefix-tense (יִשְׁבֹּר 'he will break') rather than to a genuine sound shift. The late date of this feature is indicated by forms like לִנְפֹּל 'that I fall' Ps 118:13; the *n* immediately preceding another consonant was not assimilated to it because at the time of the action of this shift the *n* was still followed by a mobile *šwa.* (Alternatively, one could suggest that this shift was still active, but that at the time of the vocalization of the biblical text its letters had already become hallowed and therefore the נ of לנפל could not be omitted…).

Recapitulating: the realisation of the second radical *p* is as the fricative allophone *f* in the bare infinitive נְפֹּל [naˈfoːl] 'to fall' and when preceded by the prepositions -בּ or -כּ, e.g., בִּנְפֹּל [binˈfoːl] 'when falling' and כִּנְפֹּל [kinˈfoːl] 'upon falling'. All these forms show the expected post-vocalic spirantisation of the *bgdkpt* consonant—this despite the fact that the preceding *shewa* in forms with clitic prepositions, at one time vocalic, had completely syncopated to zero in the Tiberian tradition, as reflected in the most reliable medieval codices, such as L and Aleppo (= A).[4] Conversely, in the case of the infinitive with prefixed -ל, the second-radical *bgdkpt* consonant usually has plosive realisation, e.g., לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl] 'to fall'. The distinction illustrated here with נְפֹּל [naˈfoːl] is the norm in Tiberian BH for *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives, with very few exceptions.[5]

Since *bgdkpt* fricativisation is itself a secondary development in ancient Hebrew, it might be asked whether לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl]

---

[4] On the Tiberian realisation of *shewa* see Khan (2013b, 546; 2013c, 775; 2020, 305–20).

[5] Exceptions with -ל and spirant II-*bgdkpt* are לִצְבֹא 'to serve' (Num. 4.23 [L]; 8.24 [L]); לִסְבֹב 'to go around' (Num. 21.4 [L]); לִפְגֹּע 'to harm' (1 Sam. 22.17 [L/A]); לִרְדָפֶךָ 'to pursue you' (1 Sam. 25.29 [L/A]); לִנְתוֹשׁ וְלִנְתוֹץ 'to uproot and demolish' (Jer. 1.10 [L/A]; 18.7 [L/A]; 31.28 [L/A missing]); לִשְׁדוֹד 'to devastate' (Jer. 47.4 [L/A]); לִטְבוֹחַ 'to slaughter' (Jer. 11.19 [L/A]; 25.34 [L/A]; 51.40 [L/A]; Ps. 37.14 [L/A]); לִשְׁגוֹת 'to stray' (Prov. 19.27 [L/A]). Exceptions with -בּ or -כּ and plosive II-*bgdkpt* are rarer: בִּשְׁכֹּן 'while dwelling' (Gen. 35.22 [L/A missing]); כִּזְכֹּר 'upon remembering' (Jer. 17.2 [L/A]); בִּשְׁפֹּךְ 'by piling up' (Ezek. 17.17 [L/A]). GKC (§45g) and Mishor (1993, 385–86) present slightly different lists.

simply preserves the original plosive *bgdkpt* consonant that spi-
rantised in נְפֹל [naˈfoːl], בִּנְפֹּל [binˈfoːl], and כִּנְפֹּל [kinˈfoːl]. But this
explanation is problematic, because syllable-final *nun* normally
assimilates in BH, especially in I-*n* forms.[6] The expected form
would thus be לִפֹּל* [lipˈpoːl], which, though absent from BH, does
occur in RH. Blau's explanation is rather that the plosive *bgdkpt*
realisation is due to analogy to the prefix-conjugation *yiqtol* form,
whereby the prefix -ל of the *qal* infinitive construct came to be
treated like the *yiqtol* preformatives -א, -ת, -י, and -נ. However,
whereas infinitival *liqtol* descends from a form with a vowel fol-
lowing the first radical, perhaps *lV-quṭul*,[7] *yiqtol* represents one
that never had such a vowel, i.e., *yaqṭul-u/-a/-∅*. Significantly,
the patterning of infinitives on analogy to the *yiqtol* pattern, in-
cluding the infinitive's integration of prefixed -ל, is indeed typical
of RH, especially in the case of weak verbs, though important
exceptions to this tendency—notably III-*y* verbs, on the one

---

[6] On the two major exceptional categories to this tendency, namely *n*
preceding a guttural and forms of verbs III-*n*, see Blau (2010, 77).

[7] Thus Fox (2003, 205). This form is not to be confused with the pre-
sumed antecedent of the *qal* absolute infinitive, **qatāl*. JM (§49a) posits
underlying *qṭul* with initial cluster, on which assumption a secondary
epenthetic vowel is responsible for the fricativisation of the following
bgdkpt radical.

hand,[8] and historically stative and II/III-guttural, on the other[9]—
serve as important counterexamples. See Table 1.

---

[8] For example, the *bgdkpt* consonant in the second position of לִגְבּוֹת
[liɣˈboːθ] 'to collect (payment)' may be plosive on analogy to *yiqtol* יִגְבֶּה
[jiɣˈbɛː], but the ־וֹת [-oːθ] ending was retained.

[9] While the characteristic RH morphological similarity between prefix
conjugation and construct infinitive must be considered a secondary re-
patterning in the case of most weak verb classes, the situation is more
complicated when it comes to historically stative and II/III-guttural
verbs. It is widely held that in an early stage of Hebrew, i.e., pre-Rab-
binic and pre-Tiberian, the *a* theme-vowel of stative and II/III-guttural
prefix-conjugation forms also characterised the corresponding infinitive
construct, i.e., *(li)qVṭal* || *yiqṭal*. Due to the pressure of analogical lev-
eling, *(li)qVṭal* infinitival forms came to have an *o* theme-vowel, leaving
only a few Tiberian BH remnants in שְׁכַב [ʃaˈxaːv] 'lie down' (Gen. 34.7
+ 10x), גְּוַע [gaˈvaːʕ] 'die' (Num. 20.3; but cf. pausal לִגְוֺעַ [ligˈvoːaʕ;
Num. 17.28]), and שְׁפַל [ʃaˈfaːl] 'be low' (Prov. 16.19; Qoh. 12.4) (see
Barth 1891, 106–7; Fox 2003, 216; JM, §49c). RH's marked proclivity
for *liqṭal* might be interpreted as a case of conservatism vis-à-vis Tibe-
rian BH. However, it is instructive that the *o* theme-vowel is not at all
uncommon in RH stative and II/III-guttural infinitives. Indeed, in the
case of II/III-guttural verbs, the dominant orthography in RH is with
mater waw, even if the corresponding prefix-conjugation form has *a* as
theme-vowel. Given this situation, it would seem either that analogy to
the RH prefix conjugation pattern led to a RH shift of *liqṭol* to *liqṭal*,
which *coincidentally recreated* an ancient but obsolete dichotomy, or that
this ancient moribund dichotomy was *sporadically preserved* thanks to
casual identity with the results of the analogical repatterning described
above. Cf. Kutscher's (1982, 38–39) notion of 'mirage forms'. See fur-
ther n. 14.

Verb Class (*gizra*)	*qaṭal* form	BH infinitive construct	*yiqṭol* form	RH infinitive[10]
I-ʾ	אָכַל 'eat'	(לְ)אָכְלָה/לֶאֱכֹל/*אֱכֹל	יֹאכַל	לֹא(ו)כַל
	אָמַר 'say'	לֵאמֹר/אֱמֹר	יֹאמַר	לוֹמַר
I-y *et sim.*	יָדַע 'know'	לָדַעַת/דֵּעַת	יֵדַע	לֵידַע
	יָרַד 'descend'	לָרֶדֶת/רֶדֶת	יֵרֵד	לֵירֵד
	יָשַׁב 'sit, dwell'	לָשֶׁבֶת/שֶׁבֶת	יֵשֵׁב	לֵישֵׁב
	הָלַךְ 'go, walk'	לָלֶכֶת/לֶכֶת	יֵלֵךְ	לֵילֵךְ
I-n *et sim.*	נָגַע 'touch, strike'	לָגַעַת/גַּעַת/לִנְגֹּע/נְגֹּע	יִגַּע	לִיגַּע
	נָטַע 'plant'	לָטַעַת/לִנְטֹע	יִטַּע	לִיטַּע
	נָשָׂא 'bear, take'	לָשֵׂאת/שְׂאֵת/נְשֹׂא	יִשָּׂא	לִישָּׂא
	לָקַח 'take'	לָקַחַת/קַחַת	יִקַּח	לִיקַּח
	נָטַל 'take, pour'	—	יִטֹּל	לִיטוֹל
	נָשַׁךְ 'bite'	—	יִשֹּׁךְ/יִשָּׁךְ	לִישׁוֹךְ
	נָגַף 'strike'	לִנְגֹּף	יִגֹּף	לִיגוֹף
Stative & II/III-guttural	יָשַׁן 'sleep'	לִישׁוֹן	יִישַׁן	לִישָׁן
	לָבַשׁ 'wear'	לִלְבֹּשׁ	יִלְבַּשׁ	לִלְבָּשׁ
	טָהֵר 'be pure'	*לְטָהֳרָה	יִטְהַר	לִיטְהַר
	זָרַע 'sow'	לִזְרֹעַ	יִזְרַע	לִזְרַע
	נָגַע 'touch, strike'	לָגַעַת/גַּעַת/לִנְגֹּע/נְגֹּע	יִגַּע	לִיגַּע
	נָטַע 'plant'	לָטַעַת/לִנְטֹע	יִטַּע	לִיטַּע

Table 1: BH vs RH Construct Infinitives of Weak Verbs

Most of Blau's account is indisputable. At least one claim, however, is open to question: namely, that in Tiberian BH the secondary plosive realisation of the middle radical in *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives with prefixed -לְ might be due to RH influence on the Masoretes and does not reflect an authentic sound shift rooted in an earlier stage of Hebrew, specifically some stage of pre-rabbinic-era BH. Before adducing evidence in favour of a

---

[10] The RH forms are from Codex Kaufmann (=K) of the Mishnah.

more nuanced view, it is worth pointing out that any approach that takes BH as an undifferentiated whole and cites RH as the sole corpus for comparison is likely to exclude useful evidence of diversity within Tiberian BH, non-Tiberian BH, and extrabiblical material, along with information on historical development that they might provide.

Even so, it is important to acknowledge the reality of the divergence between the Tiberian reading tradition and the phonological realisation that may be supposed to have accompanied the more ancient components of the consonantal text.[11] Clearly, according to diverging reflexes preserved in the reading tradition, the form לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl] deviates from the expected standard preserved in such forms as נָפֹל [naˈfoːl], בִּנְפֹּל [binˈpoːl], and כִּנְפֹּל [kinˈpoːl]. For though in Tiberian Hebrew the *shewa* of לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl], בִּנְפֹּל [binˈpoːl], and כִּנְפֹּל [kinˈpoːl] was zero, its realisation in נָפֹל [naˈfoːl], the spirant allophone in the following *bgdkpt* consonant in בִּנְפֹּל [binˈpoːl] and כִּנְפֹּל [kinˈpoːl], and the preservation of *nun* in לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl] are all telltale signs of its erstwhile vocal status. This implies at least some degree of phonological mismatch between the pre-Tiberian reading tradition reflected in the consonantal tradition and the comparatively more developed Tiberian reading tradition. For the former, one would expect development to Tiberian לִנְפֹל* [linˈfoːl]; for the latter, development to Tiberian לִפֹּל* [lipˈpoːl]. The actual resulting לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl] is either a hybrid form (as Blau seems to think) or transitional.

---

[11] It is assumed here that the consonantal text always had an accompanying reading tradition (or traditions). See Barr (1981, 35) and Tov (2012, 40–41).

Against the claim that the plosive *bgdkpt* realisation in *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives prefixed with -ל is necessarily due to the imposition of post-biblical phonology/morphology on the BH consonantal text, the following discussion shows that integration of -ל within the Hebrew infinitive construct was likely well underway by the Persian Period, demonstrating the historical depth of the processes that resulted organically in the plosive realisation of the second radical in II-*bgdkpt liqtol* forms. Forms like לִנְפֹּל [lin'poːl] are, to be sure, out of step with *some* stage of pre-rabbinic- and pre-Tiberian-era BH as represented by the consonantal text, but are not to be explained as late post-biblical deviations under the influence of RH, much less as artificial creations of innovative medieval tradents. Rather, it is entirely plausible that this feature of the Tiberian reading tradition reveals an intermediate, perhaps vernacular, realisation linking the classical phonology and morphology expected of the BH consonantal text and RH's more extreme phonological and morphological repatterning of construct infinitives on analogy to the prefix conjugation.

2.2.   Transitional Forms in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Since Blau's explanation might be interpreted to suggest single-step evolution between BH and RH infinitives, it is instructive to consider forms that may represent an intermediate stage, such as occasionally appear in the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). As noted above, Tiberian BH לִנְפֹּל [lin'poːl] and similar (rather than RH לִפֹּל *lippol* and similar) suggest a vocalised first radical, i.e., one vocalism sufficient for the preservation of *nun*, which

would otherwise presumably have assimilated. But consider the

form לׄ^נגוע *lingoaʿ* in 4QSamᶜ (4Q53) f2–5i.5 || לָגַ֣עַת [lɔˈɣaːʕaθ] in

MT 2 Sam. 14.10:

(1)   לׄ^נגוע בכה [עוד   ויאמר המל֯[ך   והבאתיהו אלי ולׄוׄא/יוסיף   (4Q53 f2–5i.4–5)

        וַיֹּ֙אמֶר הַמֶּ֜לֶךְ   וַהֲבֵאת֣וֹ אֵלַ֗י וְלֹֽא־יֹסִ֥יף   ע֖וֹד לָגַ֥עַת בָּֽךְ:   (2 Sam. 14.10)

        'and the king said, "Whoever speaks to you, you should bring him

        to me, and he will not touch you anymore"'

The scroll's scribe first wrote לגוע, presumably **liggoaʿ*, and only

afterwards 'corrected' the form by means of a supralinear *nun*. Of

most obvious relevance for the present discussion is that the pre-

sumed pre-correction realisation **liggoaʿ* is phonologically and

morphologically intermediate between the respective forms ex-

pected in BH and RH, i.e., Tiberian BH [linˈgoːaᶜ] < pre-Tiberian

linᵓgoaʿ versus RH *liggaʿ*. Phonologically, the assimilation of *nun*

is evidence that the vowel of the first radical had quiesced, as in

RH and the Tiberian reading tradition. Yet, morphologically, the

plene spelling with as *mater waw* shows that formation of the con-

struct infinitive was not as in RH, according to analogy to *yiqṭol*

יִגַּע *yiggaʿ* which has an *a,* rather than *o,* theme-vowel (cf. RH לִיגַּע

liggaʿ [M. Tohorot 5.2; 7.2–4 in K]).[12]

---

[12] Alternatively, perhaps the nunation here results from dissimilation or
prenasalisation (*ng* < *gg*) under Aramaic influence. While Ancient He-
brew exhibits sporadic examples of *l*C < CC and *r*C < CC (Blau 2010,
57–58), *n*C < CC is particularly characteristic of late Imperial Aramaic,
including Qumran Aramaic (Garr 2007). My thanks to Steven Fassberg
for alerting me to this line of argumentation.

Consider also the case of לשול, presumably *liššol, 'to clear away', from the War Scroll:[13]

(2)　　　　אתה בקרבנו אל גדול ונורא לשול את כול / אויבינו לפֿ[נֿ]יֿ[נֿ]וֿ

'you are in our midst, a great and awesome God, to remove all our enemies bef[ore u]s' (1QM 10.1–2)

The expected BH form is *לִנְשֹׁל (Tiberian *[linˈʃoːl] < pre-Tiberian *linᵊšol). In view of the stative-type Tiberian BH imperative שַׁל [ʃaːl] (MT Exod. 3.5; MT Josh. 5.15) and *yiqtol* יִשַּׁל [jiʃˈʃaːl] (MT Deut. 28.40), one might expect RH-style *לִישַּׁל *liššal* in the War Scroll. Again, though, the DSS form exhibits traits characteristic of two distinct linguistic strata—the assimilation of *nun* typical of RH and the *o*-vowel typical of Tiberian BH—evidently reflecting an intermediate transitional form.[14]

---

[13] This is an allusion to 'when Yhwh, your God, brings you into the land to which you are coming to possess, he will remove (וְנָשַׁל) many nations before you…' (MT Deut. 7.1; see also v. 22), where the verb is clearly נָשַׁל. Alternatively, DSS לשול is a geminate biform *laššol related to שׁל־ תָּשֹׁלּוּ 'remove (from the sheaves)' (MT Ruth 2.16), though *שָׁלַל in the relevant sense is a BH *hapax*.

[14] In light of the discussion above in n. 9, לֿגֿוע and לשול likely represent relatively early orthographical evidence of secondary remodeling of the earlier *(li)qVṭal* pattern according to the dominant *liqṭol* alternative. That the secondary *liqṭal > liqṭol* shift is characteristic of both Qumran and the Tiberian reading tradition indicates the antiquity of the phenomenon. That the Hebrew of the DSS seems farther along in the process testifies to the conservative nature of the Tiberian tradition; cf. the spelling ולשכוב *veliškov* in 4Q51 f89–92.15 (|| MT וְלִשְׁכַּב [valiʃˈkaːv] 2 Sam. 11.11); see also 4Q160 f7.4; 4Q223–224 f2v.3.

I-*n qal* infinitives in Qumran Hebrew normally behave like their BH counterparts, i.e., the *nun* is typically preserved or an allomorph is used, e.g., לגעת *lagaʿat*. Rare though the foregoing examples are, they come as evidence that the phonological process of elision of the first radical's vowel could take place independently of the full morphological repatterning on the model of *yiqṭol*. One may further postulate that it was only after quiescence of the *shewa* of the first radical in *li-qaṭol* forms had produced *liqṭol*, thereby resulting in phonological similarity between *yiqṭol* and *liqṭol*, that the infinitive was more fully susceptible to recasting in the mould of *yiqṭol*, which eventually resulted in RH-style infinitives. We will revisit this possibility below.

An attractive explanation for the aforementioned DSS forms with assimilated *nun* is that they represent realisations of the infinitive associated with the vernacular and/or fluent reading, in which language users pronounced no vowel following the first radical and, eventually, assimilated the *nun*. The inserted *nun* in לִנְגוֹעַ *lingoaʿ* in 4QSamᶜ (4Q53) f2–5i.5 might then be attributed to a conscious attempt at careful reading appropriate for Scripture. The typologically later RH forms, in this case לִיגַּע *liggaʿ*, are developmentally more advanced in the direction of the vernacular, being completely under the analogical influence of *yiqṭol*.

Syllable-final *nun* regularly assimilates when not word-final, but there are exceptions, even beyond II-guttural *yiqṭol* forms.[15] It may well be that some time after quiescence of the

---

[15] See GKC (§66f).

vowel of the *nun* in BH לִנְפֹּל [linˈpoːl] and DSS לﬞיגוע *lingoaʿ*, but before wholesale RH-like repatterning on the basis of *yiqṭol*, language users alternated between a pronunciation preserving the syllable-final *nun* and one in which the *nun* was assimilated, perhaps reserving the realisation with *nun* for high-register Hebrew. Without suggesting absolute linearity between BH, the Hebrew of the DSS, and RH, the following course of development, using נֶגַע as an example (because its BH and RH forms also differ with respect to theme vowel), might be proposed:

<div align="center">

Tiberian לִנְגַּע

</div>

Pre-Tiberian		[linˈgoːaʿ]		QH לגוע*		RH לִגַּע
lV-nVgaʿ	>	DSSBH[16] לנגוע	>	*liggoaʿ*	>	*liggaʿ*
		lingoaʿ				

A crucial component of this developmental scheme is that—whatever its explanation—the Tiberian form known from the authoritative medieval corpora is typologically more primitive than the QH form preserved in scrolls from the Hellenistic Period.

---

[16] While the dichotomy between biblical and non-biblical in material from the Judaean Desert is problematic and anachronistic, there are palpable linguistic differences between the so-called biblical scrolls and non-biblical scrolls, in that the Hebrew of the former (DSSBH) is more conservative than that of the latter (QH = Qumran Hebrew). See below, n. 23.

2.3.   Further Differential Treatment of BH Construct Infinitives with Prefixed -ל

The distinction between infinitives prefixed with -ל and those prefixed with other prepositions is not limited to *qal* II-*bgdkpt* forms. In Tiberian BH both *qal* I-*y* and II-*w/y* infinitives with prefixed -ל also differ from the respective forms with other prefixed prepositions. In both types, the prepositions -ב and -כ are realised with *shewa*, whereas -ל is vocalised with *qameṣ*: for I-*y*, consider וְיִצְחָק בֶּן־שִׁשִּׁים שָׁנָה בְּלֶדֶת אֹתָם [baˈlɛːðɛθ] in בְּלֶדֶת 'and Isaac was sixty years old when (she) bore them' (MT Gen. 25.26) versus לָלֶדֶת [lɔːˈlɛːðɛθ] in וַתֹּסֶף לָלֶדֶת אֶת־אָחִיו 'and she again bore, his brother' (MT Gen. 4.2);[17] for II-*w/y* consider בְּבוֹא in בְּבוֹא־אֵלָיו נָתָן הַנָּבִיא 'when Nathan the prophet came to him' (MT Ps. 5122) and כְּבוֹא in וַיָּבוֹא אֵלֶיהָ כְּבוֹא אֶל־אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה 'he came to her like coming to a prostitute' (MT Ezek. 23.44) versus לָבוֹא in וְלֹא־יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָבוֹא אֶל־ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד 'and Moses could not enter into the tent of meeting' (MT Exod. 40.35). The phonological distinction reflects the degree to

---

[17] By way of comparison, in other instances, the preposition -ל prefixed to *qal* I-*y* infinitives was evidently still perceived as a true preposition not integral to the form and retaining semantic force, as in the case of so-called 'temporal -ל', e.g., מִקֵּץ עֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים לְשֶׁבֶת אַבְרָם 'after Abram had lived ten years in the land' (MT Gen. 16.3) and בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי־ יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם 'in the third month from the time the children of Israel had left Egypt' (MT Exod. 19.1), in which no pretonic lengthening took place. However, the preposition -ל is regularly vocalised with *qameṣ* even where it retains the semantic force of 'in order to', e.g., וְהָאִישׁ מִשְׁתָּאֵה לָהּ מַחֲרִישׁ לָדַעַת הַהִצְלִיחַ יְהוָה דַּרְכּוֹ אִם־לֹא 'And the man gazed at her, keeping silent in order to know whether Yhwh had prospered his journey or not' (MT Gen. 24.21).

which the respective preposition was integrated into the infinitive. According to the norms of pretonic vowel development, a preposition's originally short vowel normally shortens to *shewa*, as with -בְּ and -כְּ.[18] The exceptional pretonic lengthening of the vowel following -לְ was evidently due to the perception that it no longer served as a preposition as such—it was perhaps felt to be devoid of semantic content—but had become morphologically integral to the infinitive.

The Tiberian tradition is not alone in differential treatment of -לְ vis-à-vis other prefixed prepositions when it comes to construct infinitives. The Babylonian BH tradition likewise reserves differential treatment for *qal* II-*bgdkpt*, I-*y*, and II-*w/y* infinitives with prefixed -לְ.[19]

In the Samaritan reading tradition (as transcribed in Ben-Ḥayyim 1977), no phonological distinction marking prepositions preceding *qal* I-*y* and II-*w/y* infinitives, nor does the realisation of the second radical in *qal* II-*bgdkpt* infinitives depend on the presence and identity of the preceding preposition. However, the dominant *qal* infinitive construct pattern in strong verbs with prefixed -לְ is *liqṭål*,[20] whereas bare infinitives and those following -בְּ or -כְּ consistently bear a vowel following the first radical, e.g., לשמע *lišma* versus ביום שמע *abyom šāma*, בשמע *afšāma*, and כשמע *kåšāma*.

---

[18] Blau (2010, 131).

[19] Yeivin (1985, I, 487, 607, 641).

[20] Exceptional forms include those with guttural root letters. Some MT *qal* construct infinitives are analysed in the Samaritan tradition as nouns, finite verbs, or infinitives in another *binyan*.

For its part, the pronunciation tradition represented in the Second Column of Origen's Hexapla, as preserved in Ambrosiano O 39 sup., has the forms λαμσω || לִמְצֹא [limˈsˤoː] 'to find' (MT Ps. 36.3), λαβλωμ || לִבְלֹם [livˈloːm] 'to curb' (MT Ps. 32.9), and λφνωθ (*sic*: probably to be read λαφνωθ) || לִפְנוֹת [lifˈnoːθ] 'at the turn of (cstr)' (MT Ps. 46.6) as against the bare καρωβ* (corrected from καρωθ) || קְרֹב [qaˈʀoːv] 'drawing near' (MT Ps. 32.9). Unfortunately, no forms with the prepositions בְּ- or כְּ- have been preserved.[21]

Thus, evidence across multiple biblical reading traditions demonstrates that *qal* construct infinitives with prefixed לְ- were singled out phonologically among other forms of the *qal* construct infinitive. The simplest explanation for this affinity is that it resulted from a shared phonological heritage pre-dating the medieval or later manuscript evidence and extending back to the Second Temple period, before the traditions split.

Yet, what of Blau's contention that the Tiberian biblical realisation of *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives with plosive *bgdkpt* allophones may be due to anachronistic reanalysis of BH on the basis of RH? Since RH is itself preserved in medieval manuscripts that reflect traditions rooted in the Second Temple period, the mere fact of demonstrating the pre-medieval character of the rel-

---

[21] The forms are collected and discussed in Brønno (1943, 56–58); Yuditsky (2017, 131); Kantor (2017, 339, 352). I am indebted to my friend and colleague Ben Kantor for his help in comprehending the significance of the data.

evant Tiberian phonological feature does not eliminate the possibility of anachronistic superimposing of RH pronunciation on the BH infinitive.

Two further points are in order. First, while there is no doubt that the Tiberian reading tradition and orthography exhibit non-trivial affinities with Second Temple Hebrew trends that are out of line with presumed pre-exilic phonology, it must be stressed that, overall, in respect of numerous linguistic details, the Tiberian biblical tradition presents a less advanced historical stage of Hebrew than do acknowledged post-exilic sources, e.g., the DSS, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and Rabbinic literature. The possibility of RH influence on BH or of conflation between their respective reading traditions should not be prematurely excluded, but it is clear according to the best manuscript evidence that the tradents responsible for the transmission of Tiberian BH managed with remarkable consistency to distinguish between BH and more contemporary versions of Hebrew with which they were familiar, such as RH. And this should not be thought to apply only to the consonantal tradition. High degrees of linguistic conservatism are evident in the reading tradition as well.[22]

---

[22] To illustrate by means of a phenomenon already cited, while *liqṭol* forms of *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives resemble RH *yiqṭol* forms, the forms of other biblical infinitives consonantally amenable to RH-style vocalisation—such as statives and III-guttural forms—largely preserve BH phonology, e.g., stative BH לִלְבֹּשׁ [lilˈboːʃ] 'to wear' versus RH לִלְבָּשׁ *lilbaš* and III-ʿ BH לִזְרֹעַ [lizˈroːaʕ] 'to sow' versus RH לִזְרֹעַ *lizraʿ*. Note that in the case of stative BH לִישֹׁן [liˈʃoːn] 'to sleep' (MT Qoh. 5.11) versus RH לִישָׁן *lišan* the full spelling of the Tiberian consonantal text also bears witness to the phonological distinction between BH and RH. The *qameṣ*

Though both the Tiberian consonantal and reading traditions ex-
hibit hallmarks of the Second Temple period in which they coa-
lesced, since so much of their linguistic testimony points to an
earlier time, neither presents a form of Hebrew that can be com-
fortably situated in the Second Temple period.[23] The Tiberian
reading tradition *crystallised* in the Second Temple Period. How-
ever, except where it records the pronunciation of material actu-
ally composed in the Persian Period or later, it did not *originate*
in the Second Temple period.

Second, it is worth discussing in the present context an ob-
servation made by Ben-Ḥayyim regarding the Samaritan tradi-
tion. Though Samaritan *lišmår* resembles the respective prefix
tense *yišmår*, Ben-Ḥayyim (2000, 208) opines, on the basis of
forms like למעל *alˈmāl* 'to trespass' (SP Num. 5.6) as opposed to
yiqṭol תמעל *tēˈmāl*, that the prefix vowel of *lišmår* reflects the

---

theme vowel in the RH forms לְלְבָּשׁ and לִישֵׁן is interpreted here as
reflecting an *a*-vowel similar to that represented by *pataḥ* in standard
Tiberian vocalisation; K's vocalisation tradition does not consistently
differentiate between *qameṣ* and *pataḥ*. See also n. 16, above.

[23] This is especially conspicuous when one contrasts Tiberian BH with
material actually composed (as against that merely copied) in the late
Second Temple period, especially that which is more representative of
the vernacular, e.g., some material from the Judaean Desert and from
rabbinic literature. It is worth noting that alternative biblical traditions,
such as those represented by the Samaritan Pentateuch and biblical DSS
material, also present a form of Hebrew somewhat out of line with au-
thentic, especially colloquial, Second Temple Hebrew usage, in that
they, too, regularly preserve usages no longer typical of contemporary
Hebrew. Significantly, however, in comparison to Tiberian BH, both
show greater incidence of linguistic contemporisation.

shewa of the preposition rather than the vowel of the *yiqṭol* prefix. By contrast, Ben-Ḥayyim accepts the standard view that the *i*-vowel of the Tiberian infinitive developed via analogy to *yiqṭol*.

Yet, as intimated above, there seems no reason to exclude the possibility that a realisation like Tiberian לִשְׁבֹּר [lišˈboːʀ] developed independently of the *yiqṭol* form יִשְׁבֹּר [jišˈboːʀ]—via syncope of the first radical's vowel, resolution of the preposition's vowel to *i*, and maintenance of plosivisation of the following *bgdkpt* consonant—and that it was partially on account of the resulting similarity to *yiqṭol* that other construct infinitival forms, especially those of the weak verbs cited above in Table 1, were patterned after *yiqṭol* forms in RH. In other words, the process whereby RH weak-verb infinitives were remodelled on the basis of *yiqṭol* was likely organic. As such, the partial RH-like development of BH infinitives need not be considered an artificial, abrupt, top-down phenomenon orchestrated by vocalisers unduly influenced by RH according to which *yiqṭol* phonology was sweepingly and anachronistically applied to infinitives with prefixed -לְ, but rather a natural, gradual, bottom-up process, according to which, first, *li-qəṭol* simplified to *liqṭol*—which, in the case of *qal* II-*bgdkpt* forms, required plosive realisation of the second radical—and only subsequently, due to *liqṭol*'s similarity to *yiqṭol*, contributed to the repatterning of other *qal* infinitives, as in RH. Obviously, this would be mere speculation in the absence of further evidence. Thankfully, though, such evidence is available in consonantal material from the MT and other sources.

2.4.   Consonantal Evidence for the Integration of ־לְ in the BH Infinitive Construct[24]

In the evolution of the BH construct infinitive to its RH form there is a further noteworthy morphological and syntactic development: that the preposition ־לְ, originally only an optional component of the BH construct infinitive, became an integral to the RH infinitive. This is most readily seen in cases in which the infinitive is preceded by a preposition other than ־לְ. In RH, constructions of the type מִלִּקְטוֹל, i.e., in which the infinitive with prefixed ־לְ is also preceded by another preposition, whether prefixed or written separately, are not just common, but the norm. Conversely, forms preceded by prepositions and no intervening ־לְ are rare in RH, limited chiefly to biblical citations. This shows that for RH users, the formerly prepositional ־לְ had become an essential part of the infinitive. In other words, the bare infinitive is a viable option in BH, whereas the ־לְ is virtually inseparable from the RH infinitive.

However, the dichotomy between BH and RH as just described is potentially misleading. First, though the bare infinitive construct is especially characteristic of BH when compared to RH, it must be stressed that throughout the entire biblical corpus forms with prefixed ־לְ are far more common than forms without. According to the Groves-Wheeler Morphological database, in L there are 6587 infinitives construct, of which 5977 (90.7%) follow some preposition: 4506 (68.4% of total; 75.4% of those with

---

[24] The present section is a revised abridgement of Hornkohl (2018, 72–79).

preposition) follow ל‑; only 610 (9.3%) consist of bare infinitives. Thus RH's extreme preference for infinitives with prefixed ל‑ represents no more than relative advancement in a trend in favour of the integration of ל‑ within the construct infinitive already well underway in BH.[25]

Yet even this formulation is too general. Certain strata of BH more closely resemble RH than others. RH's regular retention of prefixed ל‑ following another preposition has already been mentioned. Such structures are rare in BH, where a decisive majority of the occurrences—ten of thirteen—occur in LBH (see examples 3 and 5, each contrasted with more classical parallels in examples 4 and 6, respectively).[26]

(3)   ‏...הֲלֹא בַּעֲבוּר לַחְקֹר וְלַהֲפֹךְ וּלְרַגֵּל הָאָרֶץ בָּאוּ עֲבָדָיו אֵלֶיךָ:

'…is it not to reconnoitre and spy out the land that his servants have come to you?' (MT 1 Chron. 19.3)

---

[25] Conditioning factors extend beyond the purely morphological. For example, the absence of certain forms from RH, such as temporal clauses employing *biqṭol* and *kiqṭol*, is at least partially conditioned by genre and by the availability of alternative syntagms, e.g., those employing the gerundive verbal nouns known as *šemot peʿula*. As such, the undifferentiated nature of the foregoing statistics must be acknowledged. Further study of conditioning factors remains a desideratum.

[26] See also MT 1 Kgs 18.29; 2 Kgs 23.10; Hab. 3.14; Ezra 10.14; 1 Chron. 5.9; 28.20; 2 Chron. 24.10; 26.8, 16; 29.28; 31.1. Most of the relevant cases involve examples of the expression עַד לִקְטֹל, on the characteristic lateness of which see Hurvitz (2014, 196–98).

Cf. the more classically formulated near-parallel without ־ל after
בַּעֲבוּר in

(4)   הֲלוֹא בַּעֲבוּר חֲקוֹר אֶת־הָעִיר וּלְרַגְּלָהּ וּלְהָפְכָהּ שָׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת־עֲבָדָיו אֵלֶיךָ:
        '…is it not to reconnoitre the city and to spy it out and to
        overthrow it that David has sent his servants to you?' (MT
        2 Sam. 10.3)

(5)   בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ עַד־לָמוּת...
        'in those days Hezekiah became ill to the point of death…'
        (MT 2 Chron. 32.24)

Cf. the more classically formulated near-parallel without עַד be-
fore the infinitive construct in

(6)   בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה חִזְקִיָּהוּ לָמוּת...
        'in those days Hezekiah became ill to the point of death…'
        (MT 2 Kgs 20.1 || MT Isa. 38.1)

        The late character of such structures is further confirmed
by the fact that in DSS biblical material ־ל is sometimes inserted
between another preposition and the infinitive when ־ל is lacking
in the parallel Masoretic version (examples 7–8).[27]

(7)   (4Q67 f1.4) וכבתה מעֹשֹ[וֹ]ת דֹרכיך מלˉיˉצˉ]ˉ◦[
        (Isa. 58.13) וְכִבַּדְתּוֹ מֵעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמְּצוֹא חֶפְצְךָ
        'and you honour it [by refraining] from going your own
        ways and from finding your own pleasure'

(8)   (4Q166 2.9) והצלתי צמרי ופישתי מלכסות אֶת [עֶרוֹתֹהֹ]
        (Hos. 2.11) וְהִצַּלְתִּי צַמְרִי וּפִשְׁתִּי לְכַסּוֹת אֶת־עֶרְוָתָהּ

---

[27] See also 4Q109 f1ii + 3–6i.18–19 || MT Qoh. 7.5.

'and I will take away my wool and my linen from cover-
ing/to cover your nakedness'

Similarly, in non-biblical DSS material -ל can intervene be-
tween a preposition and an infinitive (examples 9–10):

(9)   [--] ‏וֹעד לכלה ועד למעול

'to the point of extinction, to the point of rebellion'
(4Q378 f3i.7)

(10)   ‏[וֹ]מהתערב בדברים האלה ומלבוא עֹ[מהֹם]לֹגֹב אלֹה

'and] from being party to these matters or going along
w[ith them] in these things' (4Q397 f14–21.8)

Finally, the inscriptional and biblical distribution of con-
struct infinitives in the function of verbal complements is instruc-
tive. Pre-exilic epigraphy and biblical material know in this func-
tion both the bare infinitive and the infinitive prefixed with -ל. A
conveniently apposite illustration of mixed usage is the is the
two-line sequence from the Lachish Letters in which the two al-
ternatives appear in consecutive lines (examples 11–12).

(11)   ‏וכי אמר·אדֹנֹי·לא·ידעתה·/קֹרא·סֹפֹר

'And because my lord said, "You don't know how / to read
a letter!"' (Lachish 3.8–9)

(12)   ‏חיהוה·אמ·נסה·א·/יש·לקרא לי ספר לנצח

'As Yhwh lives, I swear, no one has ever tried to read me a
letter!' (Lachish 3.9–10)[28]

---

[28] On the formulation of negative oaths see JM §165, especially subsec-
tions d, f and g.

For the situation in Masoretic BH consider Table 2. Forms with -ל are dominant throughout the Hebrew Bible, except in some poetic material (e.g., Isaiah and Job). Significantly, however, in the core LBH books and Qohelet, the bare infinitive construct as verbal complement has fallen into disuse. See Table 2 for the biblical distribution (according to L) of construct infinitives with and without -ל.

Table 2: MT distribution of verbal complement infinitive construct[29]								
Book	**bare**	**-ל**	**Book**	**bare**	**-ל**	**Book**	**bare**	**-ל**
Gen.	8	41	Ezek.	1	6	Prov.	2	5
Exod.	8	31	Hos.	1	4	Ruth	0	4
Lev.	0	3	Amos	4	2	Song	0	8
Num.	9	13	Jon.	0	2	Qoh.	0	8
Deut.	12	31	Nah.	0	1	Lam.	1	3
Josh.	1	12	Hab.	1	0	Est.	0	8
Judg.	2	34	Zeph.	0	1	Dan.	0	1
Sam.	4	57	Zech.	0	3	Ezra	0	2
Kgs	2	24	Pss	10	15	Neh.	0	6
Isa.	21	14	Job	7	2	Chron.	0	26
Jer.	10	23	**Pentateuch**				37	119
			Prophets				47	183
			(Former Prophets				9	127)
			(Latter Prophets				38	19)
			Writings				20	88
			(Writings excluding LBH/Qoh.				20	37)
			(LBH/Qoh.				0	51)
			TOTAL				104	390

[29] These statistics reflect the approach of Malessa (2006, 150–66), with slight modifications, as detailed in Hornkohl (2018, 73–74, n. 24). See also JM (§124l, n. 9).

Table 3 compares the Tiberian biblical text to the Second Temple corpora of Biblical Aramaic, Ben Sira, the biblical and non-biblical DSS, and RH.

Table 3: MT, cognate, extrabiblical, and non-Masoretic distribution of infinitive construct as verbal complement with and without -ל according to corpus							
MT				**Late cognate, non-Masoretic, and extrabiblical corpora[30]**			
Corpus	**bare**	**-ל**	**% -ל**	**Corpus**	**bare**	**-ל**	**% -ל**
Pentateuch	37	119	76%	BA[31]	0	21	100%
Fmr. Prophets	9	127	93%	Ben Sira	0	16	100%
Lat. Prophets	38	56	60%	Mishna	0	269	100%
Writings (not LBH/Qoh.)	20	37	65%	NBDSS	4	43	92%
LBH/Qoh.	0	51	100%	BDSS	29	72	71%
BH TOTAL	104	390	79%				

All material assuredly composed in the post-exilic period shows a striking preference for *liqṭol* over *qəṭol* as verbal complement. Only the biblical DSS exhibit proportions comparable to those known from Classical Biblical Hebrew (CBH) sources, which is hardly surprising given the nature of the material. But even this similarity is somewhat deceptive. Substantiating the late replacement of bare infinitive verbal complements with forms bearing

[30] For lists of occurrences see Hornkohl (2018, 75–76, nn. 25–28).

[31] While the strong BA penchant for verbal complement infinitives with prefixed -ל tallies with Second Temple Hebrew practice, it should be noted that infinitives with prefixed prepositions, especially -ל, are the rule throughout all historical phases of Aramaic; see Fassberg (2007).

prefixed ‎-ל, there are some eleven cases in which a Tiberian example without prefixed ‎-ל is paralleled by a DSS case with ‎-ל (examples 13–16) and no cases of the contrary:[32]

(13) ויחל עוד שבעת ימים א[חרי]ם [ויוסף לשלחה (4Q252 1.15–16)

(Gen. 8.10) וַיָּ֣חֶל ע֔וֹד שִׁבְעַ֥ת יָמִ֖ים אֲחֵרִ֑ים וַיֹּ֛סֶף שַׁלַּ֥ח...

'and he waited another seven days and he again sent…'

(14) שלח א[ת ה]יונה ולוא[יספה לשוב עוד (4Q252 1.18–19)

(Gen. 8.12) וַיְשַׁלַּ֥ח אֶת־הַיּוֹנָ֑ה וְלֹֽא־יָסְפָ֥ה שֽׁוּב־אֵלָ֖יו עֽוֹד

'…(and) he sent forth the dove, but it did not return (to him) again'

(15) לוֹא ת[וֹכ]ל לכלותמה (4Q40 f5.6)

(Deut. 7.22) לֹ֥א תוּכַ֖ל כַּלֹּתָ֑ם

'you will not be able to finish them off'

(16) לוֹא תוֹכ[ל לשתו (1Q4 f12.2)

(Deut. 14.24) לֹא תוּכַל֮ שְׂאֵתוֹ֒

'you cannot carry it'

It is difficult to interpret the consistency of this direction of change as casual or insignificant. From the perspective of the relevant MT material, the biblical DSS copyists regularly succeeded

---

[32] See also 1QIsaᵃ 1.14–15 || MT Isa. 1.12; 1QIsaᵃ 1.15 || MT Isa. 1.13; 1QIsaᵃ 7.22–23 || MT Isa. 8.4; 1QIsaᵃ 22.13–14 || MT Isa. 28.12; 1QIsaᵃ 24.16 || MT Isa. 30.9; 1QIsaᵃ 39.31 || MT Isa. 47.11; 4Q111 3.6 || MT Lam. 1.14. On apparent exceptions see Hornkohl (2018, 78–79). Also worthy of consideration are MT absolute infinitives functioning as verbal complements that are paralleled in the DSS by construct infinitives with ‎-ל: 1QIsaᵃ 36.7 || MT Isa. 42.24; 1QIsaᵃ 47.20 || MT Isa. 57.20.

in reproducing classical diction, but occasionally fell under the sway of contemporary language practises that, in respect of the phenomenon under investigation, led them to use *liqṭol* rather than bare *qəṭol*.

2.5.   Summary of Case on *Qal* Construct Infinitive

Against the claim that the Tiberian phonological realisation of BH *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives is a rabbinic or later anachronism alien to older BH phonology, we have adduced phonological, morphological, and syntactic evidence to demonstrate the heretofore under-appreciated historical depth of the phonological distinction between infinitive construct forms prefixed with ־ל, on the one hand, and bare infinitives and those prefixed with other prepositions, on the other. The multiplicity of traditions exhibiting similar instances of differentiation or apparent reflexes thereof (Babylonian, Samaritan, Secunda) points to a genuine Second Temple phenomenon inherited by each. Consonantal evidence from Second Temple and presumably earlier sources confirms both the diachronic character of the relevant difference between BH and RH as well as intermediate stages as witnessed in LBH and the DSS, including infinitival formations that combine BH and RH features, increased usage of infinitives prefixed with ־ל following another preposition, and decreased employment of the bare infinitive as verbal complement. Of no less importance, the relative frequency of construct infinitives with ־ל and the comparative rarity of bare infinitives throughout the biblical text, even in those works considered most representative of pre-exilic

Hebrew, come as compelling evidence of the probable early an-
nexation of ‫-ל‬ to the construct infinitive. Far from being a chron-
ologically foreign intrusion into BH morphology, the integration
of prefixed ‫-ל‬ within the infinitive is very much in line with mor-
phological and syntactic trends evident in the classical stage of
BH as witnessed in consonantal material. On the basis of the ex-
tant evidence, establishing a *terminus a quo* for syncope of the
vowel of the first radical would seem to be out of the question.
Even so, in the light of DSS infinitival forms that reflect syncope
of the first radical's vowel without full remodelling on the basis
of *yiqṭol* as seen in RH, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the
vocalic elision that permitted plosive realisation of the second
radical in *qal* II-*bgdkpt* construct infinitives in the Tiberian tradi-
tion is not a result of reanalysis under the influence of RH, but
an organic feature firmly rooted in earlier Hebrew. It is likely to
have occurred first in the vernacular. Given the regularity of in-
finitives with prefixed ‫-ל‬ throughout BH (relative to the number
of bare infinitives and those with other prefixed prepositions),
the morphological and phonological shifts in question may well
have occurred long before Second Temple Hebrew, with the ex-
pected assimilation of *nun* being avoided in literary registers,
such as that preserved in the Hebrew Bible.

     Though it is impossible to determine the full extent of the
historical depth of phonological realisations like Tiberian ‫לִנְפֹּל‬
[linˈpoːl] and ‫לִשְׁבֹּר‬, [liʃˈboːʀ] there is ample evidence to show that
they are phonological reflexes of a relatively early morphological
development with attendant syntactic ramifications. Given that
both the Samaritan and Jewish reading traditions bear witness to

the phenomenon and/or to reflexes thereof, and that scholarly consensus places that schism no later than the second century BCE, such a date serves as a logical *terminus ante quem* for the integration of ל- into the *qal* infinitive construct, though some scholars would place this earlier. Clearly, the feature was sufficiently established in pre-schism scriptural reading practices as to be inherited by both the Jewish and Samaritan traditions before they diverged. In light of the dominant use of infinitives with ל- throughout the biblical text (excepting archaic poetry), supported by epigraphic evidence, it is reasonable to propose a *terminus post quem* as far back as the heyday of CBH, i.e., the monarchic/First Temple period, though with the disuse of bare infinitives construct as verbal complements, it is perhaps most reasonable to place the univerbalisation of *liqṭol* in the Persian period. This corroborates the conclusions of previous studies that emphasize the antiquity of the Tiberian reading tradition and its reliability as a linguistic witness of early Second and even First Temple Hebrew.

3.0.   THE 3MS SUFFIX FOR PLURALS AND SIMILAR

Once we entertain the possibility of disparity between the written and reading traditions, it opens up the possibility of alternatives to certain conventional, but dissatisfying explanations.

       One of the more counterintuitive orthographic conventions that beginning students face when learning to read Hebrew is the 3ms possessive suffix added to plural nouns and to some prepositions. Written י-, as in סוסיו, the ending was evidently realised very early on as a diphthong along the lines of *-aw*, which, in

turn, developed to, inter alia, Tiberian יָ־ [-ɔːv] and Modern Is-
raeli Hebrew [-av]. Though learners quickly equate the phonetic
realisation with the spelling in question, the correspondence is
decidedly anomalous from the perspective of Hebrew orthogra-
phy, where, though vowel sounds are regularly left underspeci-
fied or entirely unmarked, consonants—such as the *yod* in יָ־—
are usually pronounced.

The exceptions to this norm are the *matres lectionis*, namely
medial and final *waw* and *yod* and final *heh* (and *ʾalef*), each of
which came to be used to signal specific vowel sounds. The *mater
yod* is associated with *i*- and *e*-class vowels. Its appearance with
the *a*-class vowel that developed to Tiberian [ɔ] (*qameṣ*) calls for
an explanation.

3.1. Competing Accounts: Grammatical versus Pho-
netic *Yod*

Generally speaking, scholarly literature offers two competing ex-
planations for the unexpected representation of *-aw* with יָ־. Ac-
cording to one, the *yod* in יָ־ did not originally have phonetic
value, but served as a *mater lectionis* of purely grammatical sig-
nificance, introduced at some point for purposes of visually dis-
tinguishing the plural form of a possessed noun from its singular
counterpart. On this view, only later, due to association with the
realisation *-aw* in the 3ms suffix, did language users extend use
of the spelling יָ־ to other words with a similar final diphthong or
reflex thereof.[33]

---

[33] It seems clear that יָ־ was indeed eventually taken as representative
of the diphthong *-aw* (and its reflexes), since, beyond the 3ms suffix in

Andersen and Forbes (1986, 325) argue for a purely graphic genesis to the spelling ‫י‬-:

> In the old orthography it was not possible to distinguish 'his son' from 'her son', both spelled ‫בנה‬, unless aided by context. The new convention wrote ‫בנו‬ and ‫בנה‬ respectively. But this created a new problem. In the old orthography ‫בנו‬ was the regular spelling of *bānāw*, 'his sons', but now this could be read as *bānô*. Other forms of plural nouns had the *plene* spelling of the long vowel in *bānīm* or of the stem-terminal diphthongs in the suffixed forms, such as ‫בניהם‬, 'their sons'. The remedy again was obvious. Spell all plural nouns (masculine or of masculine type) with ‫י‬ whether it was pronounced or not. Hence the artificial ‫בניו‬, *bānāw*, 'his sons', in which the ‫י‬ is purely graphic.[34]

---

question, several words ending in *-aw* are spelled with final ‫י‬- in ancient sources, e.g., Tiberian BH ‫יַחְדָּיו‬ [jaħˈdɔːv] 'together' (thrice in the MT *ketiv*, against 94 times ‫יַחְדָּו‬; frequently in the DSS); ‫עכשיו‬ *ʿaxšav* 'now' (consistently in K; ‫עכשו‬ in 4Q225 f2ii.7); Tiberian BH ‫סְתָיו‬ [saˈθɔːv] 'winter/autumn, rainy season' (MT Song 2.11 *qere*; cf. *ketiv* ‫סתו‬); Tiberian BH ‫עָנָיו‬ [ʕɔːˈnɔːv] 'humble' (MT *qere*; *ketiv* ‫ענו‬; non-biblical Dead Sea Scrolls); DSS ‫עש(י)יו‬ 'Esau' (cf. Tiberian BH ‫עֵשָׂו‬ [ʕeːˈsɔːv]) and ‫תיו‬ 'hook' (cf. Tiberian BH ‫תָּו‬ [tɔːv]). In Modern Israeli Hebrew, the correlation of the spelling ‫י‬- and the pronunciation *-av* has led to, among other things, the convention of writing the letter names of *waw* and *tav* as ‫וי"ו‬ and ‫תי"ו‬, respectively (orthographically differentiated from the homophonous lexemes ‫וו‬ *vav* 'hook and ‫תו‬ *tav* 'musical note, mark', respectively).

[34] See also Orlinsky (1942–43, 288–89); Zevit (1980, 29–30); Pardee (1988, 279–80); Knauf (1990, 20); Freedman (1992, 9–10, no. 6); Golinets (forthcoming, 1–6).

According to an alternative hypothesis, the *yod* in question was phonetic. Some seek to reconcile יו- with -*aw*,[35] while others object that the two must reflect distinct pronunciation traditions. It is this latter possibility, that יו- and -*aw* reflect diverse phonetic realisations, that is examined below. If this is the case, then this is one more in a series of cases in which the dominant written form and its oral realisation in the Tiberian (and other) traditions are out of sync, i.e., represent a merger of discordant reading and written traditions.[36]

There is equivocal evidence for the argument that the *yod* in the 3ms suffix יו- began as a purely graphic morphological marker of plurality. First, a few other Hebrew suffixes appear—at least synchronically—to have a non-phonetic *yod* with the purely grammatical function of marking plurality, namely, the 1cpl ending in Tiberian סוּסֵינוּ [suːˈseːnuː] 'our horses' versus the phonetically-identical 1cpl ending in Tiberian סוּסֵנוּ [suːˈseːnuː] 'our horse' and the 2ms ending in Tiberian סוּסֶיךָ [suːˈsɛːχɔː] 'your (ms) horses' versus the homophonous Tiberian pausal סוּסֶךָ [suːˈsɛːχɔː] 'your (ms) horse'.

Of course, seen from a diachronic perspective, this is a non-argument. Paradigmatically, in the relevant 3ms suffix one expects a *y* glide, or reflex thereof in the form of a vowel produced via diphthong contraction. Thus, 1cs סוּסַי *swsy* Tiberian [suːˈsaːy] 'my horses' and 2fs סוּסַיִךְ Tiberian [suːˈsaːyiχ] 'your horses' both

---

[35] Blau (2010, 172); Zevit (1980, 29–30).

[36] GKC (§91i and n. 1); Cross and Freedman (1952, 47, 54–55, 68–9); Sarfatti (1982, 65); Gogel (1998, 159–161, nn. 187–189); Barkay (2004, 53–54); JM (§94d and n. 7); Khan (2013a, 48).

preserve consonantal *yod* in a diphthong, while the *e/ɛ* vowels in the remaining forms are all attributable to contraction of the same *ay* diphthong. Leaving aside the 3ms suffix under discussion, then, a strong case can be made for an originally phonetic role for the *yod* in all suffixes for plurals and the relevant prepositions.

Second, the difference between pre-exilic epigraphic orthography and biblical orthography (as represented to varying degrees in all biblical manuscript traditions) indicates that the earliest biblical compositions must have undergone a spelling revision according to which *matres lectionis* were frequently, but somewhat inconsistently, inserted word-medially in line with post-exilic conventions in order to facilitate reading. On the assumption that ◌יו- is secondary to ◌ו-, the revision in question would provide a historical scenario in which a grammatical *mater yod* could have been inserted. The notion of the regular insertion of a morphological *mater* would, however, be exceptional against the backdrop of the broader goal of phonetic transparency as well as the inconsistent use of phonetic *matres*.

While the situation of orthographic revision arguably furnishes a convenient historical context in which the purely graphic change 3ms ◌ו- -*aw* > ◌יו- could take place, recognition of numerous categories involving phonetic dissonance between the Tiberian written (consonantal) and reading (vocalic) traditions demonstrates the potential reality of diverse phonetic realities behind 3ms ◌ו- and ◌יו-. Consistent mismatch between the written and reading components of the Tiberian Masoretic tradition is an acknowledged phenomenon in the case of a number of features,

most famously the 2ms *qatal* verbal ending ת- and the 2ms pro-
nominal suffix ךְ- versus their respective Tiberian realisations תָּ-
[-tɔː] and ךָ- [-χɔː]. Though common in the MT, these are decid-
edly exceptional from the perspective of Tiberian (and other He-
brew) orthographical conventions, where final vowels are other-
wise generally represented by a *mater*. For instance, in the vast
majority of categories in which a word-final *a*-class vowel ap-
pears in manuscripts of the Masoretic tradition, it is accompanied
by a *mater heh*. The lack of this *heh* in 2ms forms is glaringly
exceptional. Variation in the realisation of the 2ms ת- and ךְ- end-
ings is apparent in certain Tiberian pausal forms, e.g., לָךְ [lɔːχ]
for contextual לְךָ [laˈχɔː]. This is found also in other traditions of
Hebrew and Semitic languages more generally, where one finds
both consonant-final realisations of these pronominal suffixes
(Iron Age inscriptions, MT *ketiv*, DSS, RH, Aramaic/Syriac,
Secunda) and also vowel-final realisations (Iron Age inscriptions
[verbal ending only], MT *qere*, DSS).[37] Given the reality of mis-
match between the Tiberian written and reading traditions, as

---

[37] For inclusion of the variant 3ms endings among written-reading mis-
matches, see Khan (2013a, 48). Just a few of the many other notable
dissonances involve the 2/3fpl verbal ending ן- [-nɔː]; the standard Ti-
berian spelling ירושלם versus the accepted realisation יְרוּשָׁלִַם
[jaʀuːʃɔːˈlaːjim], the latter of which is better matched by the minority
spelling with *yod* to mark the triphthong -*ayi*- ירושלים (only five occur-
rences in the MT: Jer. 26.18; Est. 2.6; 1 Chron. 3.5; 2 Chron. 25.1; 32.9),
which also occurs in the DSS, RH, and Second Temple epigraphic and
numismatic sources; the *qal* internal passive, forms of which are regu-
larly understood/vocalised as *puʿʿal*, *hofʿal*, or *nifʿal* when possible; and

well as the more general variety within ancient Hebrew pronunciation traditions, one should at least consider the possibility that the majority consonantal orthography י־ actually reflects a phonetic realisation other than that which eventually developed to Tiberian [-ɔːv].[38]

Of greater probative value is epigraphic evidence. Crucially, both spellings are known from sources assigned to the Iron Age. In the pre-exilic inscriptional material from the Judahite city of Lachish (early sixth century BCE) there occurs the form אנשו 'his men' (Lachish 3.18). Further evidence is found in the prepositional אלו 'to him' from the Meṣad Ḥašavyahu (Yavne Yam line 13) plea (late seventh century BCE). One might also consider the suffix of the apparently dual ירחו 'its two months' (Gezer 1.1 [2x], 2, 6; late tenth/early ninth century BCE). The surest occurrence of י־ in Iron Age epigraphy is in the form פניו 'his face' in one of the renditions of the Priestly Blessing from Num. 6.24–26 preserved in the Ketef Ḥinnom amulets (2.9; mid-seventh century BCE).[39] Other potentially relevant evidence includes the apparent polyphthong terminating ומצריה 'and from his enemies' (Khirbet

perhaps cases of apparent suppletion, e.g., forms of the verb נָגַשׁ 'approach' which are *nifʿal* in the *qatal* and participle, but pattern as *qal* in the *yiqtol*, imperative, and infinitive.

[38] For useful discussion see Gogel (1998, 159–61 and nn. 187–89) and Barkay et al. (2004, 53–54).

[39] The dating is according to Barkay et al. (2004, 41–55). The spelling י־ is an important element in arguments for later datation of the inscription; see, e.g., Berlejung (2008, 208–12); Golinets (forthcoming); but see below.

el-Qom 3.3; 750–700 BCE—this is the consensus reading, but it is uncertain; cf. Tiberian מְצָרָיו [misˤ-sˤɔːˈʀɔːv] [Deut. 33.7; Jer. 46.10; Ps. 105.24]),[40] and, possibly, אחיו 'my brothers (?)' (Moussaieff 2.7–8, though this may well represent the singular 'my brother').[41]

Turning to later documentary data, the spelling ו- for expected יו- is not uncommon in Dead Sea biblical material and is even more widespread in the non-biblical scrolls. This likely indicates the persistence of various phonetic realisations, though there are alternative interpretations of the data.[42]

Finally, perhaps most significant as evidence for a graphic, grammatical, non-phonetic explanation for the development of יו- as *-aw* is the fact that no pronunciation other than a diphthong or reflex thereof is preserved in any known Hebrew reading tradition. As already noted, the suffix came to be realised as [-ɔːv] in Tiberian Hebrew. Similarly, it is represented by *-aυ* (eleven

---

[40] Lemaire (1977, 599, 601); Zevit (1984, 43); Hadley (1987, 54–55); Gogel (1998, 159–60, n. 188).

[41] The authenticity of this inscription has been called into question; see Rollston (2003; 2006).

[42] See Reymond (2014, 144–47, 159) on the relative frequency of spelling variation in the DSS, though it is to be noted that he considers the *yod* of יו- to be a grammatical *mater* and assumes that the 3ms ending on plurals and relevant prepositions was realised as *-ō* < *-aw* whether spelled יו- or ו-; see Qimron (1986, 33–34, 59; 2018, 270).

times) in the Greek transcription in the Secunda of Origen's Hexapla[43] and it contracted to [-o] in Samaritan Hebrew.[44]

While no extant Hebrew reading tradition evinces a pronunciation of 3ms יו- with a phonetic *yod*—conceivably, some sort of triphthong along the lines of *-ayu* or *-eyu*—the traditions may preserve indirect evidence indicative of such a realisation, as we shall see in what follows.

3.2.   Positive Arguments for Phonetic *Yod* in 3ms יו-

The remainder of this article will consider affirmative arguments for an originally phonetic *yod* in the 3ms suffix יו-, in which case the relevant realisation—likely something akin to *-ayu* or *-eyu*—differed from pre-Tiberian *-aw*. First, we return to the apparent Iron Age epigraphic evidence. It should be stressed that arguments against the pre-exilic dating of Ketef Ḥinnom's 3ms יו- in פניו 'his face' (2.9) based on the supposed lateness of the orthography must be considered circular. If the inscription is reasonably dated on other grounds to the 7th century BCE, then the spelling יו- must be accorded as much weight as spellings without *yod* from other Iron Age epigraphs. Further, since, as a rule, medial characters in Iron Age inscriptions serve as either consonants or vowel letters, but not grammatical *matres*, it is likely that יו- here has a realisation other than *-aw*. Of course, no certainty can be had on the exact nature of the sound in question. Crucially, though, this applies to the alternative epigraphic spelling 3ms ו-,

---

[43] Brønno (1943, 200–1); Yuditsky (2017, 107).

[44] Ben-Ḥayyim (2000, 229).

as well; while it *may* coincide with pre-Tiberian -*aw*, it may just as well reflect a different realisation.

Potentially illuminating in respect of the phonetic reality behind 3ms יו- is the rarer alternative יהו‍ֵ- -*ēhū*, e.g., Tiberian גִּבֹּרֵיהוּ [gibboːˈʀeːhuː] 'his warriors' (Nah. 2.4), יָדֵיהוּ [jɔːˈðeːhuː] 'his hands' (Hab. 3.10). It is commonly thought that this suffix, regularly employed only for singular III-*y* forms, preserves an early form of the ending that developed from *-*ayhu*. From יהו- *-*ayhu* development to יו- is relatively straightforward, the presumed realisation of the latter being -*ew* > Tiberian [-eːv]:

$$\text{*-}\bar{e}v < \text{*-}\bar{e}w < \text{*-}\bar{e}\bar{u} < \text{-}\bar{e}h\bar{u} < \text{*-}ayh\bar{u}.$$

This involves the routine phonetic developments of contraction of the diphthong -*ay*- to -*e*-, elision of intervocalic *h*, and resolution of the falling diphthong -*eu*- via -*ew*- to -*ev*. Cf. Tiberian גֵּו [geːv] 'middle, back', כִּסְלֵו [kisˈleːv] 'Kislev', שָׁלֵו [ʃɔːˈleːv] 'at peace'.

Significantly, the process above accounts for the rare spelling-pronunciation combination יהו‍ֵ- -*ēhū* [-eːhuː], the minority spelling ו- -*w* as reflecting *-*ēw* < *-*ēū* (e.g., Lachish, Meṣad Hashavyahu [Yavne Yam], Gezer, and in the MT), and the dominant spelling יו-:

$$\text{*-}\bar{e}w < \text{*-}\bar{e}yw < \text{*-}\bar{e}y\bar{u} < \text{*-}\bar{e}\bar{u} < \text{-}\bar{e}h\bar{u} < \text{*-}ayh\bar{u},$$

In the spelling יו- the *yod* would, according to this reconstruction, have originally represented the glide of the diphthong **ay* and subsequently, after the contraction of the diphthong, become a *mater* for *ē*. Indeed, if, for the sake of economy, it is assumed that epigraphic יו- and ו- should have represented the same realisation,

from a purely phonetic perspective, it is more likely to have been
-ew < *-eyu* than *-aw*. It is difficult to conceive of any single pho-
netic realisation underlying epigraphic י-, epigraphic ו-, and pre-
Tiberian *-aw*.

But as the dominant realisation in all extant reading tradi-
tions, *-aw* demands an explanation. The problem is, while it is
possible to get from **-ayhū* to *-aw,* along the developmental path,
there is no realisation in extant reading traditions for which the
spelling י- can reasonably be considered to be a phonetic repre-
sentation.

The simplest way to account for *-aw* is to posit the develop-
ment

$$-\bar{a}w < *\text{-}\bar{a}\bar{u} < *\text{-}\bar{a}h\bar{u} < *\text{-}ayh\bar{u}.$$

Significantly, the first step involves contraction of *ay* to *ā*, at
which point a written *yod* became otiose, as in אָן [ʔɔːn] < אַיִן
[ˈʔajin] 'where'. The next steps are routine phonetic processes:
intervocalic elision of *heh*, and, in Tiberian Hebrew, the shift [ɔː]
< *ā*. Crucially, since contraction of *-ay-* evidently preceded eli-
sion of *h*, it is difficult on this view to account satisfactorily for
the dominant Masoretic spelling י-.[45]

---

[45] This account is based on Florentin (2016, 74). Cross and Freedman
(1952, 47) note that "[o]nly in a dialect in which the diphthong *ay* was
preserved, would a form *-āw* < **-ayhū* result." Given Samarian ין *yn*
'wine', presumably realised [yeːn] (cf. Tiberian [ˈyaːyin]), *-ēhu* < **-ayhu*
in the north. However, with קצ *qṣ* 'summer fruit', presumably realised
[qeːsˤ] (cf. Tiberian קִיץ [ˈqaːjisˤ]), at Gezer, a mere six miles (9.6 km)
north and 20.5 miles (33 km) west of Jerusalem, it seems that diph-
thong contraction was not limited to the dialect of the far north.

A further conjectural process may be mentioned. The evolution

$$\text{*-}\bar{a}w \; < \; \text{*-}ayw \; < \; \text{*-}ayh\bar{u}$$

has been proposed, ostensibly furnishing a rather straightforward account of both the יו- orthography and the Tiberian [-ɔːv] realisation.[46] It must be said, though, that this developmental sequence involves the assumption of two rather arbitrary steps— elision of *heh* after a consonant (diphthong) and contraction of the triphthong *-ayw* to *-āw*. With neither standard in ancient Hebrew, it seems improbable that both would take place.[47] An

---

[46] Blau (2010, 172); Zevit (1980, 29–30).

[47] In agreement with Florentin (2017, 73–74). Florentin has proposed a motivation for development of the *-āw* realisation. He assumes a base form *-ayhū* leading to the rarely preserved יהו- [-eːhuː]. He then notes that the respective singular and plural forms of III-*y* substantives with the 3ms suffix are phonetically identical: מַעֲשֵׂהוּ 'his deed' and מַעֲשֵׂיהוּ 'his deeds' both [maːʕaˈseːhuː]. By means of the standard contraction of the diphthong *ay* and elision of *heh* *-ēyū* < *-ayhū*. But since *-ēyū* was too similar to the 3ms suffix for singulars, *-ēhū*, language users intentionally opted for a discernible alternative, namely *-āw* < *-āhū* < *-ayhū*, thereby rendering the distinction between singulars and plurals transparent. From the sizeable minority of III-*y* forms the *-āw* suffix spread to others, becoming dominant. This approach satisfies on several levels. First, it gives due weight to much of the evidence, seeking to explain both the יהו- [-eːhuː] and *-aw* spellings and realisations and linking both of them back to *-ayhū*. Second, it posits motivation for what must be seen as non-standard developments in the development of *-aw*. However, concerned mainly with explaining the phonetic forms in the Tiberian tradition, it is unfortunate that Florentin does not discuss the potential for phonetic variety in the inscriptional sources, the

alternative solution involving more likely processes is preferable. Without such a solution, it is very difficult to explain both the spelling יו- and phonetic realisations reflecting *-aw* as results of one and the same process.[48] The combined weight of the evidence arguably points to the plausibility of a phonetic realisation be- hind יו- different from pre-Tiberian *-aw* and its later reflexes.

One final perspective to consider is the explanatory value of the approach, especially with regard to the distribution of the various spellings in Second Temple sources and in the MT itself. In what may have more significance than is sometimes thought, biblical and non-biblical manuscripts from late antiquity show various mixtures of forms. In the non-biblical DSS, the ו- ending occurs without *yod* in nearly 12 percent of the relevant cases of nouns (56 of 473),[49] in the biblical DSS the proportion is just over

DSS, or in the MT itself, nor make explicit his view of the strange rela- tionship between orthographical יו- and phonetic [-ɔːv].

[48] Barkay et al. (2004, 54). Also worthy of consideration as an explana- tion for the orthography יו-, but not the spelling ו- or for phonetic realisations deriving from *-aw*, is the entirely conjectural possibility that triphthongal *-ayyū* < *-ayhū*, postulating assimilation of *heh* to the preceding *yod* (cf., e.g., גְּמָלַ֫תּוּ Tiberian [gamɔːˈlattuː] < *gamalathu* [1 Sam. 1.24]).

[49] CD 10.9; 1QS 3.7–8; 6.17; 11.3; 1QSa 1.18, 22; 1QpHab 3.7; 5.5; 9.1; 1QHa 4.37; 4Q163 f4–7i.8; 4Q200 f6.3; 4Q216 5.3, 9; 4Q221 f1.2; f3.5; f5.2; 4Q228 f1i.4; 4Q255 f2.2, 6; 4Q261 f1a–b.3; 4Q262 fB.1–2; 4Q266 f2i.4; f2ii.2, 4; f5ii.2, 4; f6iii.8; 4Q270 f6iv.14, 19; 4Q299 f3c.6; 4Q365 f12biii.5; f26a–b.8; 4Q374 f2ii.8; 4Q381 f31.3; 4Q387 f2iii.1; 4Q392 f1.4–5, 9; 4Q398 f14–17ii.4, 7; 4Q403 f1i.43; 4Q404 f5.6; 4Q405 f15ii– 16.4; f20ii–22.7; f23i.13; 4Q417 f29i.7; 4Q418 f16.4; 4Q434 f1i.7; 4Q468b f1.2; 4Q472 f1.4; 4Q481d f3.2; 11Q17 7.6; 10.5.

7 percent (25 of 347).[50] In the MT there are some 125 instances involving nouns,[51] coming to about 5 percent of the potential 2500 cases. While various explanations could be offered for these minority spellings,[52] it is here argued that the possibility that at least some reflect actual phonological variation in the realisation of the suffix should not be dismissed out of hand. It may well be that in some of these instances in the MT, many of which are marked as *ketiv-qere* mismatches, the disparity reflects *morphological*, rather than *phonological,* disagreement between the consonantal and pronunciation traditions. Thus, for instance, in וַיִּשָּׂא אַהֲרֹן אֶת־יָדָיו [כתיב: ידו] אֶל־הָעָם וַיְבָרְכֵם (MT Lev. 9.22), the *ketiv* form ידו is ambiguous—it may represent a form parallel to Tiberian dual [jɔːˈðɔːv] 'his hands', but may just as well reflect a singular

---

[50] 1QIsaᵃ 1.28; 11.29; 23.2; 27.23; 2Q16 f5ii–6i.1; 4Q32 f2ii + 3i + 4.19; 4Q56 f3ii.15; 4Q86 2.13; 4Q93 1.9; 4Q98f f1–2.1; 4Q114 1.3; 4Q128 f1.21, 29; 4Q138 f1.2, 9, 11; 4Q140 f1.26; 11Q1 fK–Li.7; 11Q5 4.15; Mur88 8.16.

[51] Exod. 27.11; 28.28; 32.19; 37.8; 39.4, 33; Lev. 9.22; 16.21; Deut. 2.33; 7.9; 8.2; 33.9; Josh. 16.3; 1 Sam. 3.2; 8.3; 10.21; 23.5; 26.7, 11, 16; 30.6; 2 Sam. 1.11; 12.9, 20; 13.34; 18.17, 18; 19.19; 22.23; 24.14, 22; 1 Kgs 5.17; 6.38; 16.19; 18.42; 2 Kgs 4.34; 5.9; 11.18; 14.12; Jer. 17.10, 11; 22.4; 32.4; Ezek. 17.21; 18.21, 24; 31.5; 33.13, 16; 37.16, 19; 40.6, 9, 21 (3x), 22 (4x), 24 (2x), 25, 26 (3x), 29 (4x), 31 (2x), 33 (4x), 34 (3x), 36 (3x), 37 (3x); 43.11, 26; 44.5; 47.11; Amos 9.6; Obad. 1.11; Hab. 3.14; Ps. 10.5; 58.8; 105.18, 28 (?); 106.45; 147.19; 148.2; Job 5.18; 14.5; 20.11; 21.20; 26.14; 27.15; 31.20; 37.12; 38.41; 39.26, 30; 40.17; Prov. 16.27; 21.29; 22.25; 26.24; 30.10; Ruth 3.14; Qoh. 4.8; 5.17; Lam. 3.32, 39; Dan. 9.12; 11.10; Ezra 4.7.

[52] See, by way of illustration, the useful examples in Golinets (forthcoming, 1–6).

parallel to Tiberian [jɔːˈðoː] 'his hand'; if the latter, the *qere* contradicts the *ketiv* semantically. Further, in nearly every case it is possible that the *yod* of the majority spelling was simply omitted in error, so that, for example, the *ketiv* ידו in וְסָמַ֨ךְ אַהֲרֹ֜ן אֶת־שְׁתֵּ֣י יָדָ֗יו [כתיב: ידו] עַ֤ל רֹ֨אשׁ הַשָּׂעִיר֙ הַחַ֔י (MT Lev. 16.21) does not necessarily serve as orthographic evidence of a diphthongal rather than triphthongal realisation. These considerations apply to the aforementioned DSS evidence as well.

Be that as it may, it seems unlikely that morphological ambiguity and simple spelling inconsistency are sufficient to account for the totality of cases in which the 3ms suffix spelling ‏ו‎- occurs instead of the more customary ‏יו‎-. In MT Ezekiel ‏ו‎- appears instead of ‏יו‎- in 46 of 176 cases (26 percent of the time) and in chapter 40 alone ‏ו‎- comes without *yod* 34 times. Job also exhibits use of the suffix nearly 10 percent of the time (12 of 122 cases). When we bear in mind other discrepancies between the Tiberian written and reading traditions, e.g., the aforementioned 2ms endings ‏ת‎- and ‏ך‎- and Tiberian [-tɔː] and [-xɔː], respectively, positing a similar mismatch between consonantal ‏יו‎- and Tiberian [-ɔːv] helps to account for a degree of variation otherwise difficult to explain.

If the foregoing reading of the evidence is correct, it assumes a rather curious developmental sequence leading up to the spelling and phonetic realisation of the Tiberian Masoretic tradition:

(1)   a situation of mixed use of diphthongal and triphthongal phonological realisations and spelling, i.e., ‏ו‎- -*aw* and ‏יו‎- -*ayu/-eyu*;

(2)   emergence of mismatch between the dominant diphthongal
       phonetic realisation and the dominant triphthongal
       spelling—perhaps involving the preservation of a 'histori-
       cal' spelling paralleling the diffusion of a 'popular' pronun-
       ciation;[53]

(3)   an orthographical revision strongly favouring 'historically
       conservative' יו-, reflecting either persistence of a triph-
       thongal pronunciation or association of that spelling with
       the realisation *-aw*, leaving only a minority of the relevant
       forms ending in ו-;[54]

(4)   subsequent to the fixing of the orthographical and pronun-
       ciation traditions, the fusion of the two into the Tiberian

---

[53] Albright (1943, 22, n. 27) argues that ירחו in the Gezer Calendar ends
in *-êw*, comparing to "the archaic uncontracted form *-êhu* which appears
a number of times in Hebrew poetry" (see Bauer and Leander 1918–
1922, §28v). Tiberian *-āw* he explains (ibid.) as "an obvious confor-
mation to the parallel Aramaic suffix which appears in Bib. Aram.
as *-ôhī* and in Syriac as *-auhī* (written) and *-au* (pronounced)." Cross and
Freedman (1952, 47, 54–55, 68–9) view Masoretic יו- as "reminiscent"
(47) of North Israelite *-êw* and Tiberian *-āw* as Judahite. Pardee (1988,
179–80) objects, asking why this northern feature, and no other, should
figure so prominently in the Tiberian reading tradition. Without deny-
ing an areal explanation, I am content with a more general view of va-
riety in ancient Hebrew, incorporating such parameters as register, re-
gion, urban versus rural, diachrony, sociolect, and idiolect.

[54] Presumably, some of the forms left without *yod* are the results of sim-
ple inconsistency in the revision or were read as suffixes for singulars.
However, if *yod* was added to reflect a triphthongal realisation, then it
is possible that it was intentionally left out of forms where, according
to the reading tradition, a diphthong was intended.

Masoretic textual tradition, which involved the 'correc-
tion', by means of explicit *ketiv-qere* notation (from ‎וֹ- to ‎יו-)
or via simple vocalisation (with [-ɔːv]), of forms one might
be inclined to read otherwise, sometimes extended, signifi-
cantly, to forms that do not end in the 3ms suffix in ques-
tion.

4.0.   CLOSING REMARKS

Dissonance between written and reading traditions is an
acknowledged feature of the Tiberian Masoretic tradition, the au-
thenticity and antiquity of each supported by contemporary He-
brew and cognate material. The only question regards the extent
of the mismatch, i.e., its applicability and explanatory value with
regard to individual features. It has been argued here that such a
perspective helps to explain two vocalisation phenomena as rel-
atively early, organic developments, rather than anachronistic
post-biblicisms artificially visited upon BH. These may be added
to a series of over twenty instances or categories of instances in-
volving similar written-reading dissonance within the Tiberian
tradition. The ramifications go beyond the phonetic realisations
of the specific features in question, encompassing such issues as
the antiquity, authenticity, and reliability of the testimony of the
Tiberian reading tradition. Crucially, precisely at those points
where there is the most compelling reason to suspect anachro-
nism and artificiality on the part of the vocalisation tradition, i.e.,
where it deviates from a consonantal tradition generally ac-
corded greater antiquity, the reading tradition is seen to reflect

ancient and natural linguistic conventions in line with Second Temple or earlier practices.

5.0. REFERENCES

Albright, William F. 1943. 'The Gezer Calendar'. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 92: 16–26.

Andersen, Francis I., & A. Dean Forbes. 1986. *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*. Biblica et Orientalia 41. Rome: Biblical Institute Press.

Barkay, Gabriel, Marilyn J. Lundberg, Andrew G. Vaughn, and Bruce Zuckerman. 2004. 'The Amulets from Ketef Hinnom: A New Edition and Evaluation'. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 334: 41–71.

Barr, James. 1968. Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament. Oxford: Clarendon.

———. 1981. 'A New Look at Kethibh-Qere'. Remembering All the Way…: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Oudtestamenthische Werkgezschap in Nederland, edited by A. S. van der Woude, 19–37. Oudtestamentische Studiën 21. Leiden: Brill.

———. 1984. 'Migraš in the Old Testament'. *Journal for Semitic Studies* 29: 15–31.

Bauer, Hans, and Pontus Leander. 1918–1922. *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments*. Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Ben-Ḥayyim, Zeʾev. 1977. The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans, vol. IV: The

Words of the Pentateuch. Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language (in Hebrew).

———. 2000. *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew*. Jerusalem: Magnes and Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Blau, Joshua. 2010. *Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 2. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Brønno, Einar. 1943. *Studien über hebräische Morphologie und Vokalismus*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 28. Leipzig: Brockhaus.

Cross, Frank Moore, and David Noel Freedman. 1952. *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*. American Oriental Series 36. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society.

Fassberg, Steven E. 2007. 'Infinitival Forms in Aramaic'. Historical Linguistics 2005: Selected Papers from the 17th International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Madison, Wisconsin, 31 July–5 August 2005, edited by Joseph C. Salmons and Shannon Dubenion-Smith, 239–56. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Florentin, Moshe. 2017. ʾEx naflu giborehu va-yaqumu giborav taḥtehem: Maʿamad ha-he ben tnuʿot, kinuye ha-guf shel ha-nistar ve-ha-nisteret ve-kivuṣe ha-diftongim be-ʿivrit'. *Lešonénu* 79: 64–82.

Fox, Joshua. 2003. *Semitic Noun Patterns*. Harvard Semitic Studies 52. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Freedman, David Noel. 1992. 'The Evolution of Hebrew Orthography'. In *Studies in Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography*, edited by David Noel Freedman, A. Dean Forbes, and Francis I. Andersen, 3–15. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns. Biblical and Judaic Studies from the University of California, San Diego 2.

Garr, W. Randall. 2007. 'Prenasalization in Aramaic'. *Studies in Semitic and Afroasiatic Linguistics Presented to Gene B. Gregg,* edited by Cynthia L. Miller, 81–109. SAOC 60; Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Oriental Institute.

GKC = *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by Emil Kautzsch, translated by A. E. Cowley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910.

Gogel, Sandra L. 1998. *Grammar of Epigraphic Hebrew*. Resources for Biblical Study 23. Atlanta: Scholars.

Golinets, Viktor. Forthcoming. 'Some Considerations on Questions Philology Cannot Solve while Reconstructing the Text of the Hebrew Bible'. *Proceedings of the International Colloquium Philology and Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis), ed. I. Himbaza.

Groves, J. Alan, and Dale Wheeler. 2005. *Groves-Wheeler Westminster Theological Seminary Hebrew Morphology Database*, version 4.14. Glenside, PA: J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research.

Hadley, Judith M. 1987. 'The Khirbet el-Qom Inscription'. *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1) 50–62.

Hendel, Ronald. 2016. *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible*. Text-Critical Studies 10. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.

Hornkohl, Aaron D. 2018. 'Diachronic Exceptions in the Comparison of Tiberian and Qumran Hebrew: The Preservation of Early Linguistic Features in Dead Sea Scrolls Biblical Hebrew'. *The Reconfiguration of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period: Proceedings of the Seventh International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira at Strasbourg University, June 2014*, edited by Jan Joosten, Daniel Machiela, and Jean-Sébastien Rey, 61–92. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 124. Leiden: Brill.

Hughes, Jeremy. 1994. 'Post-Biblical Features of Biblical Hebrew Vocalization'. *Language, Theology, and the Bible: Essays in Honour of James Barr*, edited by S.E. Balentine and J. Barton, 67–80. Oxford: Clarendon.

Hurvitz, Avi. 2014. *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 160. Leiden: Brill.

Joosten, Jan. 2015. 'The Tiberian Vocalization and the Hebrew of the Second Temple Period'. Hebrew of the Late Second Temple Period: Proceedings of a Sixth International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira, edited by Eibert Tigchelaar and Pierre Van Hecke, 25–36. Studies on the Text of the Desert of Judah 114. Leiden: Brill.

JM = Joüon, Paul and Takamitsu Muraoka. 2006. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Subsidia Biblica 27. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute.

Kantor, Benjamin. 2017. 'The Second Column (Secunda) of Origen's Hexapla in Light of Greek Pronunciation'. PhD dissertation, The University of Texas.

Khan, Geoffrey. 2013a. A Short Introduction to the Tiberian Masoretic Bible and Its Reading Tradition. Gorgias Handbooks. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias.

———. 2013b. "Shewa: Pre-Modern Hebrew." *EHLL* 3, 543–54.

———. 2013c. "Tiberian Reading Tradition." *EHLL* 3, 769–78.

———. 2020. *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition of Biblical Hebrew: Including a Critical Edition and English Translation of the Sections on Consonants and Vowels in the Masoretic Treatise Hidāyat al-Qāriʾ 'Guide for the Reader.'* 2 vols. Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures 1. Cambridge: University of Cambridge and Open Book Publishers.

Knauf, Ernst A. 1990. 'War „Biblisch-Hebräisch" eine Sprache?— Empirische Gesichtspunkte zur linguistischen Annäherung an die Sprache der althebräischen Literatur'. *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik* 3: 11–23.

Kutscher, Eduard Yehezkel. 1982. *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Leiden: Brill and Jerusalem: Magnes.

Lemaire, André. 1977. 'Les inscriptions de Khirbet el-Qôm et L'Ashérah de YHWH'. *Revue Biblique* 84: 595–608.

Malessa, Michael. 2006. *Untersuchungen zur verbalen Valenz im biblischen Hebräisch*. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 49. Assen: Van Gorcum.

Mishor, Mordechai. 1993. "ʿAyin ha-Poʿal Rafa ba-Maqor "lifʿol"'. *Ḥiqre ʾEver va-ʿArav Mugašim li-Yhošuaʿ Blau ʿal yede Ḥaverav ve-Talmidav bi-Mlot lo Šivʿim*, edited by Ḥaggai Ben-Shamai, 383–95. Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University.

Morag, Shelomo. 1974. 'On the Historical Validity of the Vocalization of the Hebrew Bible'. *Journal of the American Oriental*

Society 94: 307–15 (an abridged translation of 'Ha-Masoret ha-Ṭavranit šel Lešon ha-Miqra: Homogeniyut ve-Heṭero-geniyut'. *Peraqim—Sefer ha-Šana šel Meḵon Šoqen* 2 [1974]: 105–44).

Orlinsky, Harry M. 1942–1943. 'The Biblical Prepositions *táḥaṯ, bēn, báʿaḏ,* and Pronouns *ᵃnū́* (or *ʾanū*), *zōṯā́h*'. *Hebrew University College Annual* 17: 267–92.

Pardee, Dennis. 1988. Review of Andersen and Forbes 1986. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 50: 276–80.

Qimron, Elisha. 1986. *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Harvard Semitic Studies 29. Atlanta, GA: Scholars.

———. 2018. *A Grammar of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi.

Reymond, Eric. 2014. *Qumran Hebrew: An Overview of Orthography, Phonology, and Morphology*. Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 76. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press.

———. 2016. 'The Passive Qal in the Hebrew of the Second Temple Period, Especially as Found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira'. *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, edited by Joel S. Baden, Hindy Najman, and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, vol. 1, 1110–27. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 175. Leiden: Brill.

Rollston, Christopher. 2003. 'Non-provenanced Epigraphs I: Pillaged Antiquities, Northwest Semitic Forgeries, and Protocols for Laboratory Tests'. *Maarav* 10: 135–93.

———. 2006. 'Navigating the Epigraphic Storm: A Palaeographer Reflects on Inscriptions from the Market'. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 68: 69–72.

Sarfatti, Gad Ben Ami. 1982. 'Hebrew Inscriptions of the First Temple Period: A Survey and Some Linguistic Comments'. *Maarav* 3: 55–83.

Tov, Emanuel. 2012. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. 3rd edition revised and expanded. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress.

Yeivin, Israel. 1985. *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization*. 2 vols. Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language (in Hebrew).

Yuditsky, Alexey (Eliyahu). 2017. *A Grammar of the Hebrew of Origen's Transcriptions*. Meqorot u-Meḥqarim 16. Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language (in Hebrew).

Zevit, Ziony. 1980. *Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs*. American Schools of Oriental Research Monograph Series 2. Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research.

———. 1984. 'The Khirbet el-Qom Inscription Mentioning a Goddess'. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 255: 39–47.