

International Organization for Masoretic Studies (IOMS)

212-30/1

Pedro Axelsson Gonçalves (Uppsala University)
Rare Note on the Occurrence of Kethiv/Qere אִהוּ
and Its Relation to the Masoretic Text

Rabbinic and Masoretic traditions are quite monolithic in holding that there are eleven exceptional feminine pronouns written *HY* in the Torah. This leaves exactly two-hundred occasions in which the feminine is written with the Kethiv *HW* in the Masoretic Text. The latter total, though, being the majority reading, is usually not expressed in masoretic notes.

A note, though, found in two Cairo Genizah fragments (of the same manuscript?) and in the Damascus Pentateuch, sets the total for the cases of Kethiv/Qere אִהוּ at 123.

Leaving out all cases with the demonstrative pronoun (אִהוּ) and the conjunction (וְאִהוּ) still renders 132 cases of אִהוּ. How to account for the discrepancy of nine cases?

The masoretic note (not contemplating an error) would seem to assume, in decreasing order of significance, a different consonantal text, vocalization, or accentuation (viz., use of the maqqeph) or some combination of the above.

My attempts to either harmonize the note with the standard Masoretic Text or to show how it assumes a different text have hitherto (May 2022) been unsuccessful.

Welcome to take part of this puzzle.

212-30/2

Vincent Beiler (University of Cambridge)
The Marginal Nun/Zayin: Purpose, Meaning, Localization

In some early Masoretic Bible codices, a large letter resembling nun or zayin may occur in the margin, often in conjunction with the marking of qere/ketiv. The Aleppo Codex does not have this marking even once, while

another illustrious codex, the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, has the marking more than 500 times on about as many pages (Martín-Contreras 2015, 81).

Scholars of the past and present have offered their opinions regarding both this signifier and what it might signify. Himbaza suggests that the marginal letter (a nun) serves to alert the reader of a textual problem (2000, 174). Martín-Contreras argues that in the Cairo Codex the letter is a warning marker, alerting the reader that something is happening in the consonantal text without explaining it (2015, 88). Penkower notes that the marginal letter is employed to mark points of dispute (2019).

Looking at a corpus of 38 early Bible MSS (10–12th century), I shall propose that the purpose of the letter, possibly a zayin, was (or became) practical: a means to avoid certain types of copyist mistakes when recording qere/ketiv notes. Because the sign occurs in certain script types more than others, I will also argue that the notation can function as something of a regional identifier, possibly Egypt, although the paucity of colophons prevents full identification.

212-30/3

Boris Kleiner (Tel Aviv University)

The Prosody of the Biblical Recitation and Its Relation to the Masoretic Accents

Throughout all Jewish traditions of recitation, the disjunctive accents often receive a peculiar realization that seemingly distorts sense relations. This realization is due to the indirect indication of the superordinate phrasing domains in the chanted recitation. These domains are identical to phrasing formations outlined by the hierarchically 'peaking' accents, whose peaking status has been previously unnoticed. Identical idiosyncrasies in non-related recitation traditions indicate universal prosodic principles in chanted recitation. The structural agreement with the accentuation suggests that the same principles operated in Masoretic recitation. The chanting prosody deviates from the assumptions of the previous research. The prosody reflects the sense only through the articulation of subordinate and superordinate phrases; the hierarchical significance of an individual caesura receives no direct expression in sound. The prosodic prominence of a caesura depends on its location within the superordinate phrase rather than on its mental depth. Phrasing domains are formed by the declamation rhythm, supported by the psalmodic melody, whose contour is not indicated by the accent signs. Melodic motifs become the principal indicator of domain borders only in the highest prosodic domains. The chant melody differs from the speech intonation; it merely assists in phrasing segmentation. This enables contrasting melodic realizations of the same accentuation. While all accents

determine the declamation rhythm and energy, some express mental distinctions referring to the sense-related phrasal hierarchy and grouping. Others guide the reciter through the prosodic domains, hinting at their structure and cadences. Different graphemes do not necessarily call for different acoustic shapes.

212-30/4

Yosef Ofer (Bar-Ilan University)
**The Presentation of the Song of Moses
in Manuscript L2 and in the Aleppo Codex**

The Song of Moses (Ha'azinu, Deuteronomy 32) is written in the biblical manuscripts in a variety of methods. The lecture will offer an explanation of the way of writing of this Song in MS L2 (MS RNL, St. Petersburg Evr II B 159, written in 943). At first glance it seems that the beginning of the Song is written in an orderly manner but the continuation is written without clear rules; An in-depth examination, however, reveals the writer's method and thought.

Two contradictory principles struggle with each other in writing the Song of Moses. One principle is to end each verse at the end of a line, and it is especially prominent in the writing of Emet books (Psalms, Proverbs and Job) in Babylonian manuscripts. The other principle is to adjust the division of the text into hemistiches to the natural rhythm of the Song. The development of these two principles will be examined in the tradition of seventy lines of Tractate Soferim, in the tradition of Sefer Tagey, in MS L2 and in the Aleppo Codex.