

# Poetic Forms in the Masoretic Vocalization and Three Difficult Phrases in Jacob's Blessing: יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת (Gen 49:3), יְצוּעֵי עֲלָה (49:4), and יְבֹא שִׁילָה (49:10)

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*In memory of my esteemed teacher,  
ז"ל Moshe Greenberg*

Jacob's Blessing in Genesis 49 is full of difficult phrases that have challenged exegetes since antiquity. In this article I shall discuss three of these: יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת (v. 3), יְצוּעֵי עֲלָה (v. 4) and יְבֹא שִׁילָה (v. 10). Although all of these phrases have been emended, I shall attempt to show that they make perfect sense as they are. I shall argue that, in all of these phrases, the Masoretes have succeeded in preserving linguistic features peculiar to the poetic dialect of Biblical Hebrew in their oral reading tradition(s). Finally, I shall note some other successes of the Masoretes (alongside some of their failures) and discuss the light that they shed on the history of the Masoretic reading tradition(s).

## I. יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת, "ENDOWED WITH EXTRA DIGNITY"

רְאוּבֵן בְּכָרִי אֶתָּה כְּחֵי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי יִתֵּר שְׂאֵת וַיִּתֵּר עָז  
(Gen 49:3)

The syntactic structure of רְאוּבֵן בְּכָרִי אֶתָּה כְּחֵי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי is reasonably clear. The first two words, אֶתָּה בְּכָרִי, constitute a simple verbless clause with many parallels in the Bible, for example, אֶתָּה בְּנִי (Ps 2:7), אָבִי אֶתָּה/אֶתָּה (Jer 2:27; Ps 89:27; Job 17:14), אָחִי אֶתָּה (Gen 12:13; Prov 7:4), עֲצָמֵי וּבָשָׂרִי אֶתָּה (Gen 29:14; 2 Sam 19:14), and so on. The last three words, כְּחֵי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי, are in apposition to the predicate noun בְּכָרִי and, hence, equivalent to it (cf. Deut 21:17, בְּנֵי־הַשְּׁנוּאָה יִכִּיר, "sons of the cursed one shall be known").

כִּי־הוּא רִאשִׁית אֹנִי . . .). Precisely the same syntactic (surface) structure is found in אָבִי אֶתָּה אֵלִי וְצוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי (Ps 89:27). Even the structure of the appositive phrase is the same; it consists of a single noun followed by a genitive phrase, both with a suffixed first common singular pronoun.

The syntax of the last four words in the verse is less clear. Does it continue the appositive phrase, or is it an independent part of the predicate of אֶתָּה? The answer depends, in part, on the syntactic category of יִתָּר. If it is a noun in the construct state (like רִאשִׁית), it can be taken as continuing the appositive phrase, assuming that שְׁאֵת and עָז can be elliptical for שְׁאֵתִי and עָזִי;<sup>1</sup> if it is a different part of speech, it must constitute a separate part of the predicate.

The Peshitta opts for the first possibility, taking יִתָּר as a noun meaning (ג-י) “remainder (of).” This is understandable, for the segolate יִתָּר looks like a noun and, in fact, is a noun everywhere else in the Bible, usually with the meaning “remainder, remnant, rest.” Most modern scholars follow the Peshitta in taking יִתָּר to be a noun, but since the usual meaning does not fit the context, they posit another meaning, unattested elsewhere: “excellence, preeminence.”<sup>2</sup> Many of these scholars, however, appear to assume that the appositive phrase ends with אֹנִי, presumably because the absence of a suffixed pronoun on שְׁאֵת and עָז seems to signal discontinuity. The parallel with Ps 89:27, which ends at אֹנִי, seems to support this sense of discontinuity. If so, the context would seem to call for an adjective here, and many scholars have alluded to this problem in one way or another.

J. P. N. Land notes that יִתָּר (properly “excellence” in his view) is used as an adjective, and he compares this use with the use of פָּחוּז (properly “ebullience” in his view) in the sense of “ebullient.”<sup>3</sup> August Dillmann suggests that the substitution of “pre-eminence” for “pre-eminent” is a poetic usage.<sup>4</sup> Arnold B. Ehrlich emends יִתָּר to יָתֵר, presumably on the analogy of the construct adjectives in קִבְד־יָפָה (Exod 4:10) and עָרַל שְׁפָתַיִם (Exod 6:12).<sup>5</sup> E. A. Speiser writes: “Heb.

<sup>1</sup> This possibility was raised by an anonymous *JBL* reader. For possible examples of ellipsis/gapping of suffixed pronouns in biblical poetry (double-duty pronominal suffixes), see G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Studies,” *JRAS* (1948): 164–65; M. O’Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 404. However, all of the examples occur within a single colon, between parallel hemistichs.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to BDB, 451–52, and many English versions, see S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes* (2nd ed.; Westminster Commentaries; London: Methuen, 1904), 382; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1910), 514; Nahum M. Sarna, *בראשית: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 333; Stanley Gevirtz, “The Reprimand of Reuben,” *JNES* 30 (1971): 88–89; and Raymond de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context* (OstSt 39; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Land, *Disputatio de carmine Jacobi Gen. XLIX* (Leiden: J. Hazenberg, 1857), 40–41, 44.

<sup>4</sup> Dillmann, *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament: Die Genesis* (3rd ed.; Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1875), 474.

<sup>5</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* (7 vols.; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908), 1:242.

yeter (twice), used as a construct adjective;<sup>6</sup> cf. the cognate Akk. (w)atar, notably in the familiar *Atar-ḥasīs* “exceeding wise.”<sup>7</sup> Stanley Gevirtz asserts that “the use of a substantive in the construct state to convey an adjectival idea is frequent enough in biblical literature, both prose and poetry, to warrant no concern.”<sup>8</sup> He refers us to GKC §128r, where we find examples like בְּמִבְחָר קִבְרֵינוּ (Gen 23:6) and רַע מַעַלְלֵיכֶם (Isa 1:16), glossed “our choicest sepulchres” and “your evil doings,” respectively. However, the ability of abstract nouns to function in genitive phrases as attributive modifiers of other nouns has no relevance here. At the end of the day, such genitive phrases are still noun phrases, whereas our context calls for an adjective phrase. In other words, Gevirtz’s translation, “pre-eminent in authority,” cannot be justified by the parallels in GKC; those parallels are, at best, evidence for the meaning “preeminent authority.”

A number of ancient translations use an adjective to render יֵתֵר. Since some of these may reflect views similar to those of Land and Dillmann, we shall restrict ourselves to two of the most literal translations: the Samaritan targum (J) and Aquila’s revision. The Samaritan targum renders יֵתֵר מִסְבֵּלָה, “endowed with extra endurance,” using the Aramaic adjective יֵתֵר, “extra.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Aquila translates περισσεύς ἄρσει, “extraordinary in dignity [lit., raising].”<sup>10</sup> Here he uses the masculine adjective περισσεύς<sup>11</sup> (followed by the dative of limitation) rather than the substantivized neuter adjective περισσεύς (followed by the genitive) that he uses to render יֵתֵר, “rest, remainder,” in 1 Kgs 14:19; 22:47.<sup>12</sup> Note that περισσεύς is the adjective that Theodotion uses to render the Aramaic adjective יֵתֵר, “extra,” in Daniel. Had Aquila been translating into Aramaic, he would no doubt have agreed

<sup>6</sup> This formulation seems to imply that יֵתֵר is not a construct adjective but is merely *used* as one.

<sup>7</sup> Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 1; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 364; cf. CAD 1/2:501. For the same comment (without attribution), see E. Testa, “La formazione letteraria della benedizione di Giacobbe (Gen. 49,2-27),” *SBFLA* 23 (1973): 184.

<sup>8</sup> Gevirtz, “Reprimand,” 89. For the same comment (without attribution), see Hoop, *Genesis* 49, 87.

<sup>9</sup> התרגום השומרוני לתורה (ed. Abraham Tal; 3 vols.; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980–83), 1:210. For the rendering “endurance,” see Abraham Tal, *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic* (HO, Nahe und Mittlere Osten 50; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2:629, s.v. עֻזָּה. For the rendering of יֵתֵר, see below. For Syriac commentaries that use יֵתֵר in our verse, see R. B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa’s Commentary on Genesis* (Traditio exegetica Graeca 6; Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 431. The Palestinian targumim also have the adjective יֵתֵר here, but their rendering is much less literal. See, e.g., *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch: According to Their Extant Sources* (ed. Michael L. Klein; 2 vols.; AnBib 76; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), 1:65–66: חוּיָא לְמִסְבָּ תְּלָתָא חוּלְקִין; וְכוּ יֵתֵרִין עַל אַחַד וְכוּ brothers. . . .”

<sup>10</sup> *Origenis Hexaplorum* (ed. F. Field; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1875), 1:69.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Haar Romeny, *Syrian in Greek Dress*, 430.

<sup>12</sup> *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 1:625, 644.

with the Samaritan targum in using יְתִיר to render יֵתֶר. But what is the justification for using an adjective to render יֵתֶר in a highly literal translation?

The answer is found in a lexicon of biblical homonyms composed by Judah Ibn Bal'am in the eleventh century: "יֵתֶר שְׁאֵת" is an adjective, like כָּבֵד עֹץ 'heavy with sin' (Isa 1:4) and עָרֵל לֵב וְעָרֵל בֶּשֶׂר 'uncircumcised of heart and uncircumcised of flesh' (Ezek 44:9), and I have mentioned this so that no one should err concerning it and think that it is a noun."<sup>13</sup> In other words, just as כָּבֵד (alongside כְּבֹד) is a construct form of the adjective כָּבֵד, and עָרֵל (alongside עֲרֵל) is a construct form of the adjective עָרֵל, so too יֵתֶר must be a construct form of the adjective יֵתֶר.

The adjective יֵתֶר has been overlooked in modern discussions of our verse, presumably because it is virtually unknown in the Bible (with the possible exception of Prov 12:26). To find clear attestations we must turn to postbiblical Hebrew. For example, in deeds of sale it occurs with its antonym in the formula meaning "more or less": אִם יֵתֶר/יֵתֶר אוֹ חֶסֶר (Mur 22 and 30)<sup>14</sup> = אִם חֶסֶר אִם יֵתֶר (*m. B. Bat.* 7:2, 3). Like its antonym, יֵתֶר is actually a stative participle. And just as the stative participle אֶבֶד is preserved by Mishnaic Hebrew but replaced in Biblical Hebrew by אָבַד(ו),<sup>15</sup> so too יֵתֶר is preserved by Mishnaic Hebrew but replaced in Biblical Hebrew by יָתֵר(ו).<sup>16</sup>

In the Mishnah, יֵתֶר also occurs with the meaning "extra," e.g., אֶצְבַּע יְתִירָה, "an extra talon" (*m. Hul.* 3:6 and passim).<sup>17</sup> When used of a person, it means "extra-endowed." Thus, a person with extra fingers and toes is said to be יֵתֶר בְּיָדָיו וּבְרַגְלָיו, "extra-endowed in his hands and feet" (*m. Bek.* 7:6). The Aramaic equivalent of יֵתֶר, the adjective יְתִיר (which, as noted above, is used to render יֵתֶר in several translations of our verse), is found in two syntactic constructions. In addition to יְתִיר X, "(an) extra X," we find genitive phrases of the form X יְתִיר, "extra-endowed with (an) X, endowed with (an) extra X," e.g., יְתִיר אֶבֶר, "endowed with an extra limb" (*Tg. Neof. Lev* 22:23) and יְתִיר י, "endowed with an extra *waw*" (Aleppo Codex, Masorah Marginalia).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> שלשה ספרים של רב יהודה בן בלעם (ed. Shraga Abramson; Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sepher, 1975), 51, s.v. יֵתֶר. Abramson notes that other medieval philologists did indeed make the mistake in question.

<sup>14</sup> P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (2 vols.; DJD 2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 118, 145, 147; Ada Yardeni, *יהודה ממדבר* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2000), 1:47, 51; 2:65.

<sup>15</sup> All that remains in Biblical Hebrew is the noun אֶבֶדָה, "lost object," a fossilized stative participle. For other fossilized stative participles in Biblical Hebrew (שָׁכֵן, "neighbor"; גֵּר, "resident alien"; and שֶׁקֶד, "almond"), see Richard C. Steiner, "עֵין and דָּת: Two Verbs Masquerading as Nouns in Moses' Blessing (Deuteronomy 33:2, 28)," *JBL* 115 (1996): 697–98.

<sup>16</sup> This is one of a number of archaic features of Mishnaic Hebrew that show that it is not a direct descendant of Biblical Hebrew.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Akkadian *ešemtu watartum*, "a superfluous bone" (*CAD* 1/2:500).

<sup>18</sup> For the latter example, see Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (trans. and ed. E. J. Revell; SBLMasS 5; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1980), 54.

The Biblical Hebrew phrase **יָתֵר שְׂאֵת** exhibits the same construction as **יָתֵר** **אֶבֶר** and **יָתֵר** **ו**; it means “endowed with extra dignity.” It may be compared also with the phrase **חָסֵר לֵב**, “endowed with insufficient intelligence” (Prov 6:32; etc.), in which **חָסֵר** “under-endowed with, deficient in,” is the antonym of **יָתֵר**. The relationship between these two forms is even more obvious in a Genizah fragment with Babylonian pointing, where the phrase from Prov 6:32 is vocalized with what appears to be the Babylonian equivalent of **חָסֵר לֵב**.<sup>19</sup>

## II. **יָצוּעֵי עֲלָה**, “THE BED OF A NURSEMAID”

**כִּי עָלִיתָ מִשְׁכְּבִי אָבִידָא אֶזְחִלְתָּ יָצוּעֵי עֲלָה**  
(Gen 49:4)

The phrase **יָצוּעֵי עֲלָה** has traditionally been taken to mean “my bed he mounted,” but this reading has numerous problems. The most obvious one is what John Skinner called “the harsh change from 2nd pers. to 3rd.”<sup>20</sup> Throughout most of the verse, Jacob refers to Reuben in the second person (**תּוֹתֵר**, **עָלִיתָ**, **חִלְלָתָ**) and to himself in the third person (**אָבִידָא**). The traditional reading implies that, at the end of the verse, Jacob refers to Reuben in the third person (**עָלָה**) and to himself in the first person (the suffix of **יָצוּעֵי**).

Now, shift in person deixis by itself is not unusual in the Bible, and at least one scholar considers our verse quite normal:

There are other cases of such shifts of pronominal reference in Genesis 49 (e.g., vv. 9, 24–26) that complement the shift in v. 4. . . . Throughout the “testament,” the ostensible audience of the 12 sons often gives way to the implied narrative audience. The sudden shift in v. 4 is consonant with this pattern and is fitting for the contextual desire to drive home Reuben’s heinous deed.<sup>21</sup>

It is true that the deixis shift in our verse is different from the ones in vv. 9 and 24–26, in that it involves the repetition of a verb in different persons: **עָלִיתָ** followed by **עָלָה**. Nevertheless, even that feature can be found elsewhere.<sup>22</sup>

In any event, this problem led to emendation of **יָצוּעֵי** already in antiquity. In 4Q252 (4QCommGen A) IV, 5, **יָצוּעֵי** is changed to **יָצוּעִי** to make it consistent

<sup>19</sup> Israel Yeivin, *מסורת הלשון העברית המשתקפת בניקוד הבהלי* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1985), 443. In other fragments, the form is **חָסֵר**.

<sup>20</sup> Skinner, *Genesis*, 515.

<sup>21</sup> Excerpted from a comment by an anonymous *JBL* reviewer.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Deut 32:15: **וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְטֹט שְׂמֹנֶת עֲבִית כְּשִׁית**. The shift in that verse seems to make more literary sense: Moses interrupts his dispassionate narrative and turns to the people with a stinging rebuke, repeating one verb but adding others.

with third person אַבִּיכָה.<sup>23</sup> In 1857, Abraham Geiger proposed emending יְצוּעִי to יְצוּעֵי (and בִּלְהָהּ to עֲלָהּ).<sup>24</sup> Geiger presented three arguments: (1) the noun יְצוּעֵי appears only in the plural elsewhere in the Bible; (2) the phrase יְצוּעֵי עֲלָהּ stands in parallelism to the genitive phrase מִשְׁכְּבִי אֲבִיד; and (3) the Septuagint translates “the couch” instead of “my couch.” In 1896, C. J. Ball added two new arguments: (1) חָלַל is transitive elsewhere in the Bible; and (2) the parallel passage about Reuben in 1 Chr 5:1 has וּבְחָלְלוּ יְצוּעֵי אֲבִיו.<sup>25</sup> These arguments have proved persuasive to the vast majority of scholars, and the emendation to יְצוּעֵי is widely accepted today. I shall argue below that, although Geiger was right in interpreting עֲלָהּ יְצוּעֵי as a genitive phrase, he was wrong to assume that his interpretation required an emendation.

Geiger’s emendation of עֲלָהּ to בִּלְהָהּ has proved much less popular than his emendation of יְצוּעֵי to יְצוּעִי. Later scholars proposed other emendations, including יוֹלֵדֶךָ, “your sire”;<sup>26</sup> יַעֲלָהּ, “female mountain-goat”;<sup>27</sup> and עֲלָהּ = Arabic *‘allah*, “co-wife.”<sup>28</sup> In 1971, Gevirtz suggested that all of these emendations are superfluous, for עֲלָהּ is the singular of the hollow participle עֹלֹת, “nursing,” attested five times in the Bible (Gen 33:13; 1 Sam 6:7; etc.).<sup>29</sup> Gevirtz conceded that all of those attestations refer to animals, but Jean-Daniel Macchi remedied this defect by noting that עוֹל, “suckling, nursing,” from the same root, is used of humans in the Bible (Isa 49:15; 65:20).<sup>30</sup>

Unfortunately, Gevirtz’s interpretation forced him to place “the act of filial impiety . . . during the period when Bilhah, still nursing Dan, was pregnant with

<sup>23</sup> George J. Brooke, “The Thematic Content of 4Q252,” *JQR* 85 (1994): 35.

<sup>24</sup> Geiger, *Urschrift und Uebersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judenthums* (Breslau: J. Hainauer, 1857), 374.

<sup>25</sup> Ball, *The Book of Genesis* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896), 107.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, 107.

<sup>27</sup> Ezekiel Mandelstamm, *באורים והערות על תורה ונביאים וכתובים* (Kiev, 1894), 18; Mitchell Dahood, “Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography III,” *Bib* 46 (1965): 319. I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for the first reference.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Reider, “Etymological Studies in Biblical Hebrew,” *VT* 4 (1954): 276, citing Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863–71), 2124. Hoop (*Genesis* 49, 90–91), citing Reider and Lane, changes their gloss of *‘allah* to “concubine.” This meaning (for which, see Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* [ed. and trans. J. Milton Cowan; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961], 633), appears to have developed later. Joshua Blau (oral communication) notes that it is not recorded in *Lisān al-‘Arab*, and he calls my attention to the phrase *banū l-‘allāt*, “the sons of co-wives,” which implies that the term *‘allah* refers to a reciprocal relationship between wives.

<sup>29</sup> Gevirtz, “Reprimand,” 97–98.

<sup>30</sup> Macchi, *Israël et ses tribus selon Genèse 49* (OBO 171; Fribourg, Suisse: Editions Universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 48 n. 42. The other forms cited there have no evidentiary value. On the relationship between עֲלָהּ and עוֹל, not fully clarified by Macchi, see further below.

Naphtali.”<sup>31</sup> This contradicts the plain sense of the narrative, according to which Reuben's action comes on the heels of Rachel's death and may well have been prompted by it:

This incident is directly linked to the foregoing because it is Rachel's demise that presents the occasion for Reuben's act. By violating Bilhah, Reuben makes sure that she cannot supplant or even rival his mother's position of chief wife now that Rachel is dead. As a statement in Shabbat 55b expresses it, “He resented his mother's humiliation. He said, ‘If my mother's sister was a rival to my mother, must the maid of my mother's sister be a rival to my mother?’” In this connection, it is interesting that Reuben had earlier been involved in the attempt to get his father to restore the conjugal rights of his mother (30:14–16). As a result of Reuben's cohabitation with Bilhah, she would thereby acquire the tragic status of “living widowhood,” as happened to David's concubines whom he left behind when he fled Jerusalem and who were possessed by his son Absalom, as recounted in 2 Samuel 15:16, 16:22, and 20:3.<sup>32</sup>

In short, Reuben's deed took place long after Bilhah stopped nursing her children. How then can עֵלָה refer to Bilhah?

I suggest that עֵלָה may have a broader meaning than commonly thought. In his commentary on Gen 33:13, Rashi takes עֵלָה to mean מגדלות עולליתן, “rearing their infants.” Evidence for that interpretation can be found in a line of the poem on wisdom preserved in the Psalms Scroll from Qumran: ועלה היתה לי, למלמדי (11QPs<sup>a</sup> [11Q5] col. 21: Sir 51:14–15).<sup>33</sup> J. A. Sanders translates “and she became for me a nurse; to my teacher I give my ardour,” adding: “Here Wisdom is in the role of the nursing mother, parallel here to her role as the teacher of the young man.”<sup>34</sup> Most scholars have accepted this interpretation;<sup>35</sup> a few have rejected it in favor of their own interpretations.<sup>36</sup> Among the latter is Isaac Rabinowitz, who argues: “Sanders' and Delcor's derivation of this word from עָל, ‘give suck,’ is doubtful, since the word is apparently not used in Hebrew of human wet-nurses, but rather of animals—in the תנ”ך cows and ewes only—giving suck

<sup>31</sup> Gevirtz, “Reprimand,” 98.

<sup>32</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 244.

<sup>33</sup> J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11* (DJD 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 80, line 6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 81–82.

<sup>35</sup> M. Delcor, “Le texte hébreu du Cantique de Siracide LI, 13 et ss. et les anciennes versions,” *Textus* 6 (1968): 33 (“nourrice”); Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997–98), 2:1175 (“wet-nurse”); Georg Sauer, *Jesus Sirach, Ben Sira* (ATD, Apokryphen 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 348 (“Amme”); *Weisheit für das Leben* (trans. Otto Kaiser; Stuttgart: Radius, 2005), 120 (“Amme”).

<sup>36</sup> Patrick W. Skehan, “The Acrostic Poem in Sirach 51:13–30,” *HTR* 64 (1971): 393 (עֵלָה, “profit”); Isaac Rabinowitz, “The Qumran Hebrew Original of Ben Sira's Concluding Acrostic on Wisdom,” *HUCA* 42 (1971): 177 (עֵלָה, “reason”); Charles Mopsik, *La Sagesse de ben Sira* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2003), 330 (עֵלָה, “holocaust”).

to their young.”<sup>37</sup> We have already noted the problem with this claim concerning the use of ע-ו-ל in the Bible.<sup>38</sup> It focuses on the *active* participle, עֹלָה, ignoring the *passive* participle, עוּל, “suckling, nursling [lit. suckled/nursed one].”<sup>39</sup> The latter is attested twice in the Bible, both times of humans and both times in poetic passages (Isa 49:15; 65:20). Thus, there is no reason to reject Sanders’s interpretation of עֹלָה in Ben Sira 51, which is also a poem. However, there is a reason to revise it slightly.

The parallelism with מלמד in Ben Sira 51 suggests that עֹלָה refers to a nursemaid-teacher rather than a wet nurse.<sup>40</sup> Further evidence for this revised interpretation emerges from a comparison of, למלמדי אתן הודו/, ועלה היתה לי, למלמדי אתן הודו/, “and she (Wisdom) was a nursemaid to me; I gave respect to my teacher, (but) I plotted mischief and played,” with וְאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אֶמּוֹן וְאֶהְיֶה שֹׁעֲשָׁעִים, “I (Wisdom) was with Him as an אֶמּוֹן, occupied with dandling every day, constantly playing in His presence” (Prov 8:30). There is a clear similarity, perhaps even dependence, between these two poetic passages. Just as וְאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אֶמּוֹן parallels מְשַׁחֲקֶת, so too עֹלָה-מלמד parallels אֶמּוֹן. But what is the meaning of אֶמּוֹן? Biblical Hebrew nouns on the פִּעוּל pattern like אֶמּוֹן are normally equivalent in meaning to the corresponding active participle: וְהִצִּילוּ גִזּוֹל מִיַּד וְהָצִילוּ גִזּוֹל מִיַּד עוֹשֶׁק, “and rescue from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed” (Jer 22:3) = וְהִצִּילוּ גִזּוֹל מִיַּד עוֹשֶׁק (Jer 21:12, with the same meaning); בְּגִדְהָ יְהוּדָה אֲחוֹתָהּ = אֲחוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה, “Faithless Judah, her sister” (Jer 3:7, 10) = אֲחוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה (Jer 3:8, with the same meaning); לִשְׁוֹא צִרָּה צִרָּה, “the smelter smelts in vain” (Jer 6:29) = הַבִּישׁ כָּל-צִרָּה, “every smelter is put to shame” (Jer 10:14); פַּח יָקוֹשׁ, “the fowler’s trap” (Hos 9:8) = מִפַּח יוֹקֵשִׁים, “from the fowlers’ trap” (Ps 124:7).<sup>41</sup> This is true in Proverbs as well: מֶלֶךְ/רֹדֵן, “king//ruler” (Prov 14:28) = מְלָכִים/רֹדֵנִים, “kings//rulers” (Prov 8:15; 31:4). In Syriac, the relationship between the two forms is quite regular: “With *ô* after the 2nd radical [and *ā* after the 1st radical], *Nomina agentis* may be formed from every Part. act. of the simple verb stem (Peal).”<sup>42</sup> If it is true

<sup>37</sup> Rabinowitz, “Qumran Hebrew Original,” 177–78.

<sup>38</sup> See at n. 30 above.

<sup>39</sup> For the *qal* II-*w* passive participle, cf. Biblical Hebrew מוּל, “circumcised”; Mishnaic Hebrew טוּחַ, “plastered” (*m. Mid.* 4:1) and צוּרָה, “depicted” (*m. Mid.* 1:3). Cf. also Old Aramaic עֵל, “foal” (KAI 222A, 22), probably to be vocalized as a passive participle, like Syriac עֵיל.

<sup>40</sup> The parallelism עֹלָה/מלמד is reminiscent of אֶמּוֹן/מִיִּנְקָתָהּ in וְהָיוּ מְלָכִים אֶמְנִיד וְשְׂרוּתֵיהֶם in מִיִּנְקָתָהּ (Isa 49:23). For the meaning of מִיִּנְקָתָהּ, see below.

<sup>41</sup> The examples to the left of the equals signs (and a few others) are cited in connection with Prov 8:30 by Avi Hurvitz, חל, בספר משלי ח, לדיוקו של המונח ‘אֶמּוֹן’ בפרשיו: in המקרא בראי מפרשיו, in *דיוקו של המונח ‘אֶמּוֹן’ בספר משלי ח*, ed. Sara Japhet; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 649. However, he draws a different conclusion from them than I do.

<sup>42</sup> Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (trans. James A. Crichton; London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), 69. In my view, the Hebrew use of the *pāʿōl* pattern as a stylistic variant of the active participle (in its nominal use) is a very early borrowing from Aramaic. In the Bible, the earliest occurrence of this pattern in a common noun is יָקוֹשׁ in Hos 9:8, a northern text. The earliest occurrence in a proper noun is אֶמּוֹן, governor of Samaria in the time of Ahab.



that the *pā'ōl* pattern functions in Biblical Hebrew as a stylistic variant of the active participle, we must conclude that אָמוֹן = אִמּוֹן.<sup>43</sup> This conclusion agrees with one of the interpretations suggested for אָמוֹן at the very beginning of *Genesis Rabbah*: אָמוֹן = פִּדְיוֹן = אִמּוֹן.<sup>44</sup> In short, two related poems about Wisdom, Ben Sira 51 and Proverbs 8, have parallel passages describing her as a nursemaid-teacher.

It appears, then, that עֵלָה, used only of animals in prose, was used of humans in poetry. It was a poetic synonym of מִיִּנְקָה, the normal Hebrew word for “wet nurse,” which is taken to mean “nursemaid, governess” (מַרְבִּיתָה/פִּדְיוֹגָתָה) in the Palestinian targumim to Gen 24:59 and 35:8. Both עֵלָה and מִיִּנְקָה, like English “nurse,” underwent a semantic shift that broadened their meanings to include the dry nurse as well as the wet nurse.<sup>45</sup> The background of the shift is fairly transparent:

The wet nurse is termed *meineket* in verse 7,<sup>46</sup> a word that corresponds to the Akkadian *musheniqtum*, “the one who suckles.” She frequently had the additional duties of *tarbitum*, rearing the child and acting as guardian. From Genesis 24:59 and 35:8 it is clear that Rebekah's *meineket* was an esteemed member of the household. Her position is reflected in the rendering of *meineket* by Targum Jonathan in those passages as *padgogtha*, from Greek *paidagogos*, “tutor.”<sup>47</sup>

We conclude that עֵלָה is a synonym of מִיִּנְקָה with the meaning “nursemaid, governess” in biblical poetry and that עֵלְעֵי עֵלָה means “the bed of a nursemaid.”

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This distribution is compatible with an Aramaic origin, since Aramaic influence was probably mediated to Judah via the northern kingdom. The names אָמוֹן, עֵמוֹס, and עֵמֶסֶה seem to express the wish that the newborn baby be carried and cared for by a divine nursemaid; cf. כְּאִשָּׁר יִשָּׂא הָאִמּוֹן אֶת־הַיֶּנֶק (Num 11:12). For יֶנוֹק, “child,” in Assyrian transcriptions of Old Aramaic (*ia-nu-qu/qa*, *Ia-nu-qu*), see Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 598, s.v. יֶנֶק.

<sup>43</sup> Michael V. Fox (“*Amon Again*,” *JBL* 115 [1996]: 701) rejects the notion that “Wisdom was doing the child-rearing” on the grounds that “there was not yet any child figure on the scene.” That is true if we assume that these verses refer to the same time period as the preceding ones, but why make that assumption? Since the form וְאֶהְיֶה has a *waw*-consecutive, why not render “and (then) I became”? Indeed, how else can one explain the references to תִּבְלָה, “the inhabited world,” and בְּנֵי אָדָם in v. 31?

<sup>44</sup> מדרש בראשית רבא (ed. J. Theodor and C. Albeck; Berlin: M. Poppeloyer, 1927), 1. The midrash cites כְּאִשָּׁר יִשָּׂא הָאִמּוֹן אֶת־הַיֶּנֶק (Num 11:12) as a proof-text, no doubt because the Palestinian targumim use פִּדְיוֹן to render אִמּוֹן there.

<sup>45</sup> The meaning of מִיִּנְקָה cannot be separated from the meaning of Mishnaic Hebrew תִּינוּק. The latter is used in *b. Yoma* 82a of a thirteen-year-old boy.

<sup>46</sup> That is, Exod 2:7.

<sup>47</sup> Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus שמות: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 10 (Exod 2:9).

Rachel's death left Benjamin in dire need of a foster mother. That may be why the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nursemaid, is reported eleven verses earlier. The job of raising Benjamin fell to Bilhah alone; hence, the use of the term עֲלָה to refer to her.

Let us return now to Geiger's interpretation of יְצוּעִי as a construct form. It too requires no emendation. I have argued elsewhere that \**ay* contracted in Old Canaanite to *i* when either (a) the glide *y* was strengthened (i.e., geminated) or (b) the nucleus *a* was weakened (i.e., unstressed).<sup>48</sup> The Masoretic vocalization preserves vestiges of this sound change in poetic passages, including Jacob's blessing. For environment (b) we have עִירָה (Gen 49:11), שִׁיתוֹ (Isa 10:17), עֵינוֹת תְּהוֹם (Prov 8:28); environment (a) will be discussed in section III below.

This Old Canaanite monophthongization should be viewed as a feature of the poetic dialect of Biblical Hebrew, much like the morphological and syntactic features that have been identified in the past.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the appearance of *hireq* instead of *šērê* in יְצוּעִי is probably no different from the appearance of *hireq* instead of *šērê* in עִירָה, a few verses later. In both cases, we are dealing with the Old Canaanite monophthongization of unstressed *ay* to *i*.<sup>50</sup>

The use and preservation of this feature in יְצוּעִי עֲלָה (but not in מִשְׁכְּבִי אֲבִיד) help to create a double entendre, with "my bed he mounted" as the secondary reading.<sup>51</sup> The parallelism with עֲלִית lures the reader into interpreting עֲלָה as the third person masculine singular perfect of ע-ל-י instead of the feminine singular participle of ע-ו-ל.<sup>52</sup> The pun works thanks to the use of two ambiguous poetic forms: יְצוּעִי (instead of יְצוּעִי) and עֲלָה (without the definite article, as normal in poetry).

<sup>48</sup> Richard C. Steiner, "On the Monophthongization of \**ay* to *i* in Phoenician and Northern Hebrew and the Preservation of Archaic/Dialectal Forms in the Masoretic Vocalization," *Or* 76 (2007): 73–83. In that article, I spoke of two distinct, albeit related, monophthongizations. I now view them as two aspects of a single Old Canaanite sound change, \**ay* > \**iy* > *i*, in which the nucleus *a* was totally assimilated to the glide *y*. In other words, the nucleus was overpowered by the glide either when the glide was strengthened or when the nucleus was weakened.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Raphael Sappan, הייחוד התחבירי של לשון השירה המקראית (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1981).

<sup>50</sup> Another possibility, which cannot be ruled out, is that יְצוּעִי has a *hireq compaginis* like אֶסְרִי and בָּנִי in 49:11, and possibly תְּכַלִּילִי in 49:12. This possibility is raised as an alternative to emendation by Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (SBLDS 21; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 78.

<sup>51</sup> The secondary reading presupposes that יְצוּעִי is singular. It is true that, as noted above, יְצוּעִי appears only in the plural elsewhere in the Bible, but there is a good literary explanation for the exceptional use of the singular here: it was needed to create the play on words.

<sup>52</sup> For a similar play on words in Isa 52:2 (הַתְּנַעֲרִי מִעַפְרֵי קוֹמִי שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם הַתְּפַתְחִי מוֹסְרִי) based on the homonymy of שְׁבִי, "sit [fem. sing. imperative]" and "captive," see David Yellin, *לשון המקרא* (Jerusalem: Va'ad ha-yovel . . . le-R. David Yellin, 1939), 2:62–63 = idem, *חקרי מקרא* (ed. E. Z. Melamed; Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1983), 262–63; Mitchell Dahood, "Some Ambiguous Texts in Isaiah," *CBQ* 20 (1958): 43–

### III. יָבֵא שִׁילָה, "TRIBUTE SHALL COME TO HIM"

לֹא־יָסוּר שִׁבְטְ מִיְהוּדָה וּמִחֻקֶּק מִבֵּין רִגְלָיו עַד כִּי־יָבֵא שִׁילָה וְלוֹ יִקְהֶת עַמִּים  
(Gen 49:10)

This is, of course, one of the most famous cruxes in the Bible. Adolf Posnanski's survey of the ancient and medieval exegesis of the verse,<sup>53</sup> extending to more than six hundred pages, gives some idea of its importance and its difficulty. According to Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman, "No satisfactory solution of the problems in this bicolon has ever been presented, and there is no present prospect of a definitive solution."<sup>54</sup> Most discussions have found the phrase יָבֵא שִׁילָה particularly enigmatic. Nahum M. Sarna writes: "Hebrew *yavo shiloh* is wholly obscure; neither the subject of the verb nor the meaning of *shiloh* is clear. . . . None of the many interpretations of *shiloh* is without objection, and the term remains an enigma, though the present translation<sup>55</sup> seems to be the most acceptable."<sup>56</sup>

At first glance, שִׁילָה appears to be the well-known toponym, attested dozens of times in the Hebrew Bible, albeit with somewhat different spellings.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, even the collocation with the verb ב-ו-א is attested in 1 Sam 4:12. Yet, surprisingly, there is not a single ancient source that takes שִׁילָה as a toponym in our verse.<sup>58</sup> Modern scholars, too, have largely abandoned previous attempts to find a role for the town of Shiloh here. Instead, they have taken a closer look at rabbinic exegesis.

Some midrashic sources interpret שִׁילָה as שִׁי לָהּ, "tribute to him." In one version of *Genesis Rabbah* we read:

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45; and Shalom M. Paul, "Polysensuous Polyvalency in Poetic Parallelism," in "Sha'arei Talmon": *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. Michael Fishbane et al.; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 154–55. To the evidence noted there, add the parallel between קוּמִי שְׁבִי and קוּם־נָא שְׁבָה "sit up" (Gen 27:19).

<sup>53</sup> Adolf Posnanski, *Schiloh: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Messiaslehre* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904).

<sup>54</sup> Cross and Freedman, *Studies*, 83.

<sup>55</sup> That is, "tribute . . . to him."

<sup>56</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 336–37.

<sup>57</sup> The spelling of the form has been cited by some scholars as evidence that it does not refer to the toponym. Although taken as a whole the spelling is indeed unique (as pointed out in a Masoretic note), the orthography of each syllable is paralleled in unambiguous occurrences of the toponym; see J. A. Emerton, "Some Difficult Words in Genesis 49," in *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas on His Retirement from the Regius Professorship of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge* (ed. Peter R. Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 87.

<sup>58</sup> S. R. Driver, "Genesis XLIX. 10: An Exegetical Study," *Journal of Philology* 14 (1885): 3.

עד כִּי־בֹא שִׁילָה שְׁעִתִּידִין כָּל אֻמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם לְהַבִּיא דוֹרוֹן<sup>59</sup> לְמֹשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד שֶׁנ'  
בָּעֵת הַהִיא יוֹבֵל־שִׁי לֵה' צְבָאוֹת.<sup>60</sup>

“Until there come tribute to him [שִׁי לֵה]” (means) that all the nations of the world are going to bring tribute to the Messiah descended from David, as it is said, “In that time, tribute [שִׁי] shall be brought to the Lord of Hosts.”

A slightly more revealing version of this midrash is found in *Yalqut Shimʿoni* to Isa 18:7:

בָּעֵת הַהִיא יוֹבֵל־שִׁי לֵה' צְבָאוֹת, שְׁעִתִּידִין אוֹ"ה לְהַבִּיא דוֹרוֹן לְמֶלֶךְ הַמֶּשִׁיחַ, וְכֵן א"א עַד  
כִּי־בֹא שִׁילָה קִרִּי בֵּיה עַד כִּי יוֹבֵל שִׁי לוֹ.

“In that time, tribute [שִׁי] shall be brought to the Lord of Hosts” (means) that the nations of the world are going to bring tribute to the King Messiah, and so it says, עַד  
כִּי־בֹא שִׁילָה—read “until there is brought tribute to him [שִׁי לֵה].”

It is telling that this interpretation is largely ignored by the major Jewish exegetes of the Middle Ages. The only important exception is Rashi, but even he labels it a *מדרש אגדה*, presumably because it seems to require revocalization and breakup of the word.<sup>61</sup> In an ironic role reversal, the past half-century has seen an increasing number of modern scholars and English translations that accept שִׁילָה = שִׁי לֵה as the plain sense of the verse.<sup>62</sup> At this point in time, it is probably legitimate to speak of an emerging consensus.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note that Mishnaic Hebrew דוֹרוֹן, used to gloss שִׁי in this midrash, is a borrowing of the Greek word δῶρον, used (in the plural) by the LXX to render שִׁי in Isa 18:7; Pss 67:30 (MT 68:30); and 75:12 (MT 76:12).

<sup>60</sup> *מדרש בראשית רבא* (ed. J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck; 1903–29; Jerusalem, 1965), 1219 lines 7–8.

<sup>61</sup> The medieval exegetes may have viewed the breakup of שִׁילָה as an example of *נוטריקון*-exegesis, similar to the breakup of the toponym חֶדֶרֶךְ (Zech 9:1; cuneiform *Ḫatarikka*) at the beginning of the *Sifre* on Deuteronomy. As the medievals knew well from the continuation of the *Sifre*, the *נוטריקון*-exegesis of חֶדֶרֶךְ, which also creates a messianic reading, elicited a vigorous protest from a *tanna* of Syrian origin: “Why do you twist the holy writings for us? I call heaven and earth to witness that I am from Damascus and that there is a place there whose name is Hadrach” (ספרי על ספר דברים) [ed. L. Finkelstein; Berlin: Jüdischer Kulturbund in Deutschland, 1939], 7 lines 5–6).

<sup>62</sup> See the literature cited by Robert Martin-Achard (“A propos de la bénédiction de Juda en Genèse 49,8–12[10],” in *De la Torah au Messie: Études d'exégèse et d'herméneutique bibliques offertes à Henri Cazelles pour ses 25 années d'enseignement à l'Institut Catholique de Paris, Octobre 1979* [ed. Maurice Carrez et al.; Paris: Desclée, 1981], 126), Gordon J. Wenham (*Genesis 16–50* [WBC 2; Dallas: Word Books, 1994], 478), and Hoop (*Genesis 49*, 130 n. 291). To the aforementioned literature we may add O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 172–73; Chaim Cohen, “Elements of *Peshat* in Traditional Jewish Exegesis,” *Emanuel* 21 (1987): 33; idem, *פרשנות ימי הביניים על*, ספר בראשית לאור הפילולוגיה המקראית בת זמננו — חלק שלישי: בראשית לז–מט, in *Zaphenath Paneah: Linguistic Studies Presented to Elisha Qimron on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday* (ed. Daniel Sivan et al.; Beersheba: Ben-Gurion University, 2009), 271–73; and Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis* (New Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 377.

<sup>63</sup> See already Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac*

The midrashic interpretation is certainly attractive. It has often been noted that it enhances the parallelism within the second half of the verse. Moreover, it makes *לֹא יִסּוּר שֶׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה* <sup>64</sup> a perfect antithetical parallel to *לֹא יִבָּרַח שִׁילָה*, “the scepter shall not depart from Judah,” in the sense of “rather tribute shall come to him.” Asseverative/adversative *כִּי* is used to contradict a preceding clause introduced by negative *לֹא*, as in *לֹא אָמוּת כִּי־אֲחִיָּהּ*, “I shall not die; rather I shall live” (Ps 118:17), and *וְלֹא־תִסָּב נַחֲלָה לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמָּטָה אֶל־מָטָה כִּי אִישׁ בְּנַחֲלַת מָטָה אֲבָתָיו יִדְבְּקוּ בָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל*, “so that no inheritance of the Israelites shall be passed around from one tribe to another; rather the Israelites shall remain bound to the inheritance of their ancestral tribes” (Num 36:7).<sup>65</sup> Similarly, *יָבֹא . . . לֵה*, “shall come to him,” is the antithesis of *יִסּוּר . . . מִיְהוּדָה*, “shall depart from Judah,” both with verbs of motion in the *qal* stem (see below). As for *שִׁי* (which we leave unpunctuated for the moment) and *שֶׁבֶט*, both are metonyms for dominion.

The first critical scholar to recognize the value of the midrashic interpretation of *שִׁילָה* was Ehrlich.<sup>66</sup> He emended *שִׁי לֵה* to *לֵה שִׁי* because he assumed a contradiction between Midrash and Masorah. Ehrlich was followed by W. L. Moran, who made the same assumption.<sup>67</sup> These scholars were hardly alone in making this assumption. Moshe Greenberg, in his review of the NJPS translation, cites the rendering “so that tribute shall come to him” with the accompanying note (“Shiloh, understood as *shai loh* ‘tribute to him’ following Midrash . . . ; Heb. uncertain . . .”) as an example of “an emendation . . . adopted in the body of the translation.”<sup>68</sup> J. A. Emerton writes: “Moran’s reading of the line is possible, but it lacks support in any ancient version<sup>69</sup> and departs from the pointing of the Massoretic Text. It is still necessary to ask whether the traditional vocalization can yield a satisfactory sense. . . .”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, it appears that all exegetes, medieval and

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*Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 283 n. 5: “The consensus today is tending towards reading *šay loh* . . .”; and Martin-Achard, “La bénédiction,” 126: “l’hypothèse de W. L. Moran . . . tend à être popularisée.”

<sup>64</sup> Not *עַד כִּי־יָבֹא שִׁילָה*! In a future article, I shall attempt to prove that *עַד* was originally part of the previous hemistich (with the meaning *לְעַד*, “to eternity”), as various Jewish exegetes suggest.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *לֹא כִי* in Gen 18:15 (“no, you *did* laugh”); 42:12; Josh 5:14; 24:21; Judg 15:13; 1 Sam 2:16; 2 Sam 24:24; 1 Kgs 3:22-23; Isa 30:16; Jer 42:14.

<sup>66</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 1:246. Mark S. Smith (*The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* [2 vols.; VTSup 55, 114; Leiden: Brill, 1994–], 291 n. 128) attributes the recognition to W. M. L. de Wette, but I have been unable to confirm this point. In de Wette, *Die heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (3rd ed.; Heidelberg: Mohr, 1839), 55, the rendering of *עַד כִּי־יָבֹא שִׁילָה* is “bis Ruhe kommt.”

<sup>67</sup> Moran, “Gen 49,10 and Its Use in Ez 21,32,” *Bib* 39 (1958): 412.

<sup>68</sup> Greenberg, “The New Torah Translation,” *Judaism* 12 (1963): 234 = *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (JPS Scholar of Distinction Series; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 255.

<sup>69</sup> On this claim, see the appendix below.

<sup>70</sup> Emerton, “Difficult Words,” 84.

modern, have assumed that the midrashic interpretation is incompatible with the Masoretic pointing. I suggest that that assumption is incorrect.

As noted above, I have argued elsewhere that *\*ayy-* contracted in Old Canaanite to *ī*; put differently, *ay* > *ī* / *\_y*.<sup>71</sup> This sound change is preserved by the Tiberian reading tradition in three poetic forms: עֵי, “ruin-heap” < *\*cayy-* < *\*cawy-* (cf. the toponyms עֵי = Γαῖ; עֵי = Ἀγγαῖ = Samaritan ʿāṭī; עֵי; עֵי), בִּי, “burning” (Isa 3:24) < *\*kayy-* < *\*kawy-* (cf. כִּוִּיָּה and Arabic *kayy-*, “burning”); and רִי, “saturation” (Job 37:11) < *\*rayy-* < *\*rawy-* (cf. רִוִּיָּה and Arabic *rayy-/riyy-*, “saturation”). All of these are attested exclusively in poetry; in prose, we find דִּי, “sufficiency, enough” < *\*dayy-* < *\*dawy-* (cf. Arabic *dāwī*, “much, abundant [food]”<sup>72</sup>) and חֵי, “alive” < *\*hayy-* < *\*hawy-* (cf. Arabic *hayy-*, “alive”).

All of these are from roots of the form *X-y-y* < *\*X-w-y*. Is the noun שִׁי, “gift, offering,” a member of this class as well? Already at the beginning of the thirteenth century, R. David Qimḥi asserted that “the root of the word is שׁיֵה or שׁוּה.”<sup>73</sup> There is, in fact, good evidence that (1) שִׁי is derived from *\*šayy-* and (2) *\*šayy-* is derived from *\*šawy-*.<sup>74</sup>

Evidence for (1) comes from an obscure Semitic text in Greek script. The previously undeciphered passage is read by Manfred Krebernik as follows: αμμουσδ αμασαι / σεΓιῑαῖα ιααβνα λα(ι) / ζαβδαια σαυιει / να αμμοδ ζαβ / δαια.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See n. 48 above.

<sup>72</sup> Lane, *Lexicon*, 941, s.v. *dāwī*.

<sup>73</sup> R. David Qimḥi, ספר השרשים (Berlin: G. Bethge, 1847), 383.

<sup>74</sup> The usual derivation, which goes back to H. L. Ginsberg (נוספות לעלילת אלאין בעל) *Tarbiz* 4 [1933]: 384 n. 16) is quite problematic. According to Ginsberg, שִׁי cannot be separated from (1) the Hebrew verb שָׁעַה, “accept (an offering)” (Gen 4:5), (2) the Ugaritic verb *šy*, “offer,” and (3) the Ugaritic noun *šy*, “offering.” Ginsberg’s defense of this derivation leaves much to be desired: “The letter ‘ayin is sometimes elided in *speech* in Hebrew; see Ges.-Buhl, 17. Aufl., s.v. ‘ע; in our case it could have been deleted in *writing* through haplography, since ‘ayin and šin are similar.” The obvious weaknesses in this Hebrew note have not been pointed out because later scholars have relied on the inaccurate English summary provided by William Foxwell Albright (“The Early Alphabetic Inscriptions from Sinai and their Decipherment,” *BASOR* 110 [1948]: 15 n. 41): “Ginsberg is probably right in deriving Hebrew *šay*, ‘gift,’ from *\*tašy* by partial assimilation.” It is this new version of Ginsberg’s etymology (including its misuse of the term “partial assimilation”) that Frank Moore Cross (“The Evolution of the Proto-Canaanite Alphabet,” *BASOR* 134 [1954]: 21 n. 19) accepts: “The derivation *tašy* > (by partial assimilation) *šay* > *šay(y)*, has been established by Ginsberg and Albright.” And it is this version that Gary A. Anderson (*Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in Their Social and Political Importance* [HSM 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987], 34 n. 18) finds problematic: “[Ginsberg] related this Semitic root [*šy*] to Hebrew *šay* by a process of partial assimilation. . . . The problem with this view is that the assimilation of ‘ayin is unparalleled.” We may add that the final nail in the coffin of Ginsberg’s theory is the Aramaic form *šayy* = שׁיֵי discussed immediately below; it must be derived from *\*šayy* rather than *\*tayy*.

<sup>75</sup> Krebernik, “Ein aramäischer Text in griechischer Schrift?” in “*Sprich doch mit deinen Knechten aramäisch, wir verstehen es!*” 60 *Beiträge zur Semitistik: Festschrift für Otto Jastrow*

I suggest that this is a transcription of Aramaic: לזבדיא // עמוד עמסי שייא יהבנא, "we donated the pillar<sup>76</sup> of the gift bearers;<sup>77</sup> for the offerings, we bestowed the pillar of offerings." The form  $\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\alpha$  shows that Aramaic שׂי, known also from the Old Aramaic dialect of Samal (KAI 214, 18),<sup>78</sup> had a geminated *yod* in suffixed forms. Indeed, the gemination has long been assumed based on the Masoretic vocalization of the noun with *pataḥ* instead of *qameṣ*.<sup>79</sup>

Evidence for (2) comes from the form  $\sigma\alpha\sigma\tau\epsilon\upsilon\alpha\alpha$  = שׂוּינא, "we have bestowed," in the passage cited above and from Ps 21:6 תְּשׁוּהָה עָלָיו הוֹדַדְרָה, "you bestowed splendor and majesty upon him." The root of these verbs is, of course, שׂ-ו-י.<sup>80</sup> Note that the recipient of the gift in the verse is the Davidic king; the three biblical attestations of שׂי (Isa 18:7; Pss 68:30; 76:12) refer to an offering to the Lord.<sup>81</sup> In Aramaic the root can be used of imposing tribute: ושׂוּי עֲלֵיהֶן מִדָּא, "and they imposed tribute upon them" (*Genesis Apocryphon* [1QapGen] 21:26). Thus, it is not clear whether the original meaning of שׂי (a verbal noun that acquired a concrete sense) was "bestowal" (with the *giver* as the underlying subject) or "imposition" (with the *recipient* as the underlying subject).

In light of the above, it is very likely that the form שׂי, "tribute," existed in Old Canaanite. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that שׂי, a poetic synonym of מְנַחָה, is vocalized like the prose forms מְנִי and מְנִי instead of the poetic forms מְנִי, מְנִי, and מְנִי. Perhaps Old Canaanite שׂי was displaced at some point (in the poetic dialect or the reading tradition) by Aramaic שׂי. In any event, the variation in Biblical Hebrew between שׂי and שׂי is paralleled by the variation in Biblical Hebrew between עִי and עִי.

The writing of שׂיִלָּה as a single word in the MT is not a serious problem.<sup>82</sup> Short proclitic words are occasionally written together with the following word in the Bible<sup>83</sup> and in inscriptions as well. In Qoh 4:10, we have וְאִילָּו, "and woe unto

zum 60. Geburtstag (ed. Werner Arnold and Hartmut Bobzin; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 427. The slashes indicate line breaks.

<sup>76</sup> See LaMoine F. DeVries, "Cult Stands: A Bewildering Variety of Shapes and Sizes," *BAR* 13, no. 4 (July/August 1987): 29: "Sometimes the pedestal has a pillar-like appearance with decorated registers at various levels on the pedestal; the bowl on top may be decorated with petals to resemble the capital of a pillar."

<sup>77</sup> The phrase עמסי שייא is reminiscent of Biblical Hebrew מְנַחָה שׂאִי.

<sup>78</sup> For this and other epigraphic attestations, see *DNWSI*, 1125, s.v. *šy*.

<sup>79</sup> See Anderson, *Sacrifices*, 34 n. 18.

<sup>80</sup> It may well be related to the root meaning "be equal." If so, it is worth noting that, from the cognate root in Arabic, *s-w-y*, "be equal," we find two forms of the verbal noun: *siyyun* < \**siwyun* and a dialectal variant *sayyun*.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Naveh ("More Hebrew Inscriptions from Mešad Ḥashavyahu," *IEJ* 12 [1962]: 30–31) assumes that the same is true of שׂי in an ostrakon from Mešad Ḥashavyahu belonging to the time of Josiah.

<sup>82</sup> I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for raising this issue.

<sup>83</sup> For a (nonexhaustive) list of fifteen examples, see *ספר אכלה ואכלה* (ed. S. Frensdorff; Hannover: Hahn, 1864), 96–97.

him,” written as a single word in the Leningrad Codex and other accurate Tiberian manuscripts,<sup>84</sup> as well as in Babylonian Genizah fragments.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, it is possible that the writing of שִׁילָה as a single word hints at a secondary meaning.<sup>86</sup>

For Ehrlich, the emendation of שִׁילָה to שִׁי לָהּ was not sufficient. In his view, a second emendation was necessary: יָבֵא, “shall come,” to יוֹבֵל, “shall be brought.”<sup>87</sup> Most later scholars felt that a more modest emendation was sufficient: יָבֵא to יָבֵא.<sup>88</sup> Both emendations are contradicted by all of the ancient witnesses to the text:

Samaritan: עַד כִּי יוֹבֵא שִׁילָה/שִׁלָּה (ʿād kī yābū šīlā)<sup>89</sup>

LXX: ἔως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκαίμενα αὐτῶ

<sup>84</sup> Jordan Penkower was kind enough to check eight Eastern (commonly called “Oriental”) manuscripts in the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the National Library of Israel. His findings are as follows: the reading וְאֵילֹ (one word) is found in seven of the eight manuscripts: Cairo, Karaite synagogue, #13 in Gottheil’s list, *JQR* 17 (1905); Letchworth, Sassoon 1053 (formerly); Oxford, Bodleiana Hunt. 591; St. Petersburg, Russian National Library (Firkowitch collection), Evr. I B 19a; Evr. II B 34; Evr. II B 94; St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies D 67. One manuscript, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Or. 1213, not to be listed among the group of “accurate Eastern manuscripts,” reads וְאֵי לוֹ (two words). He adds that the Aleppo Codex is no longer extant for Qohelet (with no other evidence of its readings therein) and that MS SP, RNL Evr. II B 92 is not extant here.

<sup>85</sup> For וְאֵילֹ (and וְאֵילֹךְ in Qoh 10:16!) in the Babylonian tradition, see Yeivin, *מסורת*, 1114–15. H. L. Ginsberg *קְהֵלֶת* [Tel Aviv: M. Newman, 1961], 82) compares אֵילֹ, “woe unto him” (twice), in *t. Ber.* 3:20 (Ms. Vienna) and in some versions of the Mishnah. We find אֵילֹ in *m. Yebam.* 13:7 according to two of the most important vocalized manuscripts of the Mishnah (Codex Kaufmann and Codex Parma De Rossi 138).

<sup>86</sup> It has been suggested that לָהּ is deliberately spelled with final *he* and placed at the end of the clause (instead of after יָבֵא) “in order to create a literary allusion to the holy place Shiloh” (Cohen, *פרשנות*, 273 n. 52). Another candidate for a secondary meaning of שִׁילָה in our verse is שְׂאִילָה, “his requested one,” an interpretation proposed by Paul Lagarde with a reference to Mal 3:1 (*Onomastica Sacra* [2 vols.; Göttingen: Adalbert Rente, 1870], 2:96). These two possibilities may not be as different as they seem. Ran Zadok (“On Five Biblical Names,” *ZAW* 89 [1977]: 267) has argued convincingly that the toponym שִׁלָּה derives from ש-א-ל (cf. the toponym אֶשְׁתָּאוֹל) and that the Jewish Aramaic personal name שְׂאִילָא (cf. Late Babylonian *Ši-la-ʾ*) is equivalent to the Palmyrene name שְׂאִילָא, “requested one” (cf. Neo-Assyrian *Sa-i-la-a* and NT Σιλᾶς). Indeed, there are several plays on the name שִׁלָּה in the story of Samuel’s birth: שְׂאִילָה מְעַמּוֹ (1 Sam 1:17); כִּי מָה שְׂאִילָתִי (1 Sam 1:20). Thus, it is not impossible that the orthography alludes both to Shiloh and to the requested one, that is, the king requested by Judah (cf. 1 Sam 12:17, *לְשִׂאֵל לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ*; 12:19, *לְשִׂאֵל לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ*).

<sup>87</sup> Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 1:246.

<sup>88</sup> N. H. Torczyner [Naphtali H. Tur-Sinai], *עַד כִּי יוֹבֵא שִׁילָה*, *Tarbiz* 13 (1941–42): 214 = הלשון הלבן, *ברך הלשון*, *והספר*, (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1954), 483; Moran, “Gen 49,10,” 412; Testa, “La formazione,” 193 n. 85; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (2 vols.; NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 1995), 2:661; Hoop, *Genesis* 49, 130; Cohen, “Elements,” 33; idem, *פרשנות*, 271–72.

<sup>89</sup> For the spelling of the verb with *waw* (all manuscripts), see *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (ed. August Freiherrn von Gall; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1918), 107; and *The Samaritan Pentateuch Edited According to MS 6 (C) of the Shekhem Synagogue* (ed. Abraham Tal; Tel Aviv:



*Onqelos*: עד דייתי משיחא, דדיליה היא מלכותא

Aphrahat and Ephrem Syrus: <sup>90</sup> בואא נבואא כן גולא מ, כלבואא

Peshitta: בואא נבואא כן גולא מ.

*Targum Neofiti, Fragmentary Targum*: עד זמן דייתי מלכא משיחא, דדידיה היא מלכותא

Samaritan targumim: עד הלא ייתי שלה/נמרה<sup>91</sup>

4Q252 (4QCommGen A) V, 3–4: עד בוא משיח הצדק צמח דויד<sup>92</sup>

*T. Judah* 22:2: ἔως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν τὸ σωτήριον Ἰσραήλ<sup>93</sup>

The earliest witnesses to א-ב-ו in the active voice are “עד-בא אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַמְשִׁיחַט,” “until the coming of him to whom punishing belongs,”<sup>94</sup> in Ezek 21:32 and הִנֵּה מִלְכָּךְ, “your king shall come to you,” in Zech 9:9, phrases believed to allude to our verse.<sup>95</sup>

Tel Aviv University, 1994), 51. For the oral reading tradition, see Z. Ben-Hayyim, *עברית וארמית* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1957–67), 3.1:34.

<sup>90</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *Peschitta und Targumim des Pentateuchs* (Stockholm: Etse, 1958), 25–27; T. Jansma, “Ephraem on Genesis XLIX, 10,” *ParOr* 4 (1973): 247–56; Robert J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage* (Monographs of the Peshitta Institute 3; Leiden: Brill, 1983), 172–75. For the relationship of these fourth-century citations to the official Syriac biblical text, see Sebastian Brock, “Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources,” *JJS* 30 (1979): 218, and the literature cited there.

<sup>91</sup> Tal, *התרגום השומרוני לתורה*, 1:210–13.

<sup>92</sup> Brooke, “Thematic Content,” 35.

<sup>93</sup> M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (PVTG 1.2; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 75.

<sup>94</sup> This is a slightly revised version of the translation given by Moshe Greenberg (*Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997], 417, 434), who follows Eliezer of Beaugency.

<sup>95</sup> For Zech 9:9, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Oracle of Judah and the Messianic Entry,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 57; and Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 501–2. For Ezek 21:32, see the literature cited by Hermann Gunkel (*Genesis* [1901; trans. Mark E. Biddle; Mercer Library of Biblical Studies; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997], 456), Moran (“Gen 49,10,” 416 n. 3), and L. Monsengwo-Pasinya (“Deux textes messianiques de la Septante: Gn 49,10 et Ez 21,32,” *Bib* 61 [1980]: 360 n. 16). And add E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christologie des Alten Testaments und Commentar über die Messianischen Weissagungen der Propheten* (Berlin: L. Oehmigke, 1829), 67; Charles Augustus Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy: The Prediction of the Fulfilment of Redemption through the Messiah* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1889), 96; Skinner, *Genesis*, 523; Driver, *Genesis*, 411; Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 502–3; and Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (NAC 1B; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 895. It is even possible that לא עֲתִבָּא in Hag 1:2 alludes to Gen 49:10 and/or Ezek 21:32 and should be allowed to have its literal meaning: “it is not the time of (the) coming” (instead of “the time has not come”); cf. לא־עַת הָאֶסְפִּי הַמִּקְנֵה, “it is not the time of the gathering [or: coming in] of the livestock” in Gen 29:7. In that case, the appositive phrase ה’ לְהִבְנוֹת, “the time for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt,” would imply that some of Haggai’s contemporaries argued that the temple could not be rebuilt until the coming of the messianic king. Such an

Despite all of this early and unanimous support for the Masoretic vocalization, most scholars have emended active יָבֵא to passive יָבֵא without even bothering to explain the need for emendation. The closest thing to an explanation I have found is given by André Caquot: "One will wonder whether *šay* 'tribute' is appropriate as the subject of the verb 'come'."<sup>96</sup>

In fact, the Masoretic vocalization here yields perfectly idiomatic Hebrew. An excellent parallel to the *textus receptus* is יָבֵא הַלְבָנוֹן אֵלַי יְבוֹא, "the riches of Lebanon shall come to you" (Isa 60:13); cf. also יָבֵא כְּבֶשֶׂם בָּא אֵלַי, "your money came to me" (Gen 43:23); לֹא־יָבֵא כְּבֶשֶׂם הַהוּא עוֹד לְרֹב אֲשֶׁר־נָתַנָּה מִלְּפַת־שֶׁבַע לְמֶלֶךְ, "never again did spices come in such great quantity as that which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon" (1 Kgs 10:10); לְבָלְתִּי־יָבֵאוּ הַכֵּלִים הַנּוֹתָרִים בְּבֵית־ה' וּבֵית מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם בְּבָלָהּ, "not to let the vessels remaining in the House of the Lord, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem come to Babylon" (Jer 27:18); וְיָבֵאוּ הַמְּדַדִּת כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם, "and the precious things of all the nations shall come" (Hag 2:7).<sup>97</sup> These parallels show unequivocally that the *qal* verb ב-ו-א can take as its subject inanimate nouns referring to precious objects. We may also compare the interchange between הָיִל גּוֹיִם יָבֵאוּ לָךְ, "the riches of nations shall come to you" (Isa 60:5), and לְהָבִיא אֵלַיִךְ הָיִל גּוֹיִם, "to bring the riches of nations to you" (Isa 60:11), and the interchange between הַכֶּסֶף הַשֶּׁבַע בְּאַמְתָּחַתֵּינוּ, "the money that returned in our sacks" (Gen 43:18), and הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוֹשָׁב בְּפִי אֲמָתָחַתֶּיכֶם, "the money that was returned in the mouth your sacks" (Gen 43:12).

The use of יָבֵא here with an inanimate subject is no doubt connected with the use of יָסֹר with an inanimate subject at the beginning of the verse. Both are *qal* verbs of motion that could have been replaced with their *huphal* counterparts. As noted above, לֹא־יָסֹר כִּי־יָבֵא שֵׁי לֵה stands in antithetical parallelism to מִהִּיָּדָה שֶׁבַט. Thus, there is a good literary explanation for the Masoretic vocalization of יָבֵא.

#### IV. ARCHAIC VOCALIZATIONS AND THE ORIGIN OF THE MASORETIC READING TRADITION(S)

The preservation of archaic, nonstandard vocalizations is an impressive achievement of the Masoretes. The three segolate construct adjectives discussed in

interpretation would eliminate the stylistic problems in Hag 1:2 discussed in Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 25B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 19–20.

<sup>96</sup> Caquot, "La parole sur Juda dans le testament lyrique de Jacob (Genèse 49, 8-12)," *Sem* 26 (1976): 24.

<sup>97</sup> The last parallel is noted by Moran himself ("Gen 49,10," 412) as evidence that the emendation "is not absolutely necessary."

section I are *hapax legomena*.<sup>98</sup> They appear to be the product of a Proto-Semitic syncope rule,<sup>99</sup> a rule that, thanks to the Masoretes, Hebrew managed to preserve better than any other Semitic language.<sup>100</sup> Most of the examples of the Old Canaanite monophthongization *\*ay > ī* discussed in sections II and III are also *hapax legomena*.

Even more remarkable is the fact that all of these anomalous forms are found only in poetry,<sup>101</sup> and several of them (עֵינֹת; עֵרֶל, כְּבֵד) contrast with forms found only in prose (עֵינָת; עֵרֶל, כְּבֵד). In other words, the Tiberian Masoretes<sup>102</sup> also succeeded in preserving a grammatical distinction between poetry and prose expressed solely in the vocalization. From them we learn that the language of poetry in ancient Israel had distinctive characteristics not only in the area of morphology, syntax, and lexicon, but also in phonology and morphophonemics.

One of the features in question, the monophthongization *\*ay > ī*, is not native to Hebrew; it is borrowed from a neighboring dialect. Such borrowing is known from the Modern South Arabian languages as well. According to T. M. Johnstone: "The language in which Šheri speakers compose poetry is indeed very specialized and is not well known to Dhofaris whose first language is Arabic. . . . This poetic medium is, in fact, a mixed language; most features of the phonology and morphology are Šheri, while a few important phonological features and many of the lexical items are Mehri."<sup>103</sup>

The Masoretes preserved these grammatically anomalous poetic forms without any help from postbiblical Hebrew and without any knowledge of their origin; they had to accept them on blind faith, resisting the temptation to substitute

<sup>98</sup> The form אֶרֶךְ—the segolate construct form of אָרָךְ occurring in the phrases אֶרֶךְ הָאֵבֶר (Ezek 17:3), אֶרֶךְ רֵיחַ (Eccl 7:8), and אֶרֶךְ אֲפִים (passim)—is of course far more common, but that is mainly because of the theological importance of the phrase אֶרֶךְ אֲפִים.

<sup>99</sup> See Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Historische Grammatik der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testaments* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1922), 176–77 §12c, 552 §70p–q; cf. 554–55 §70z; and Richard C. Steiner, "From Proto-Hebrew to Mishnaic Hebrew: The History of אָ and אֵ," *HAR* 3 (1979): 166 n. 20.

<sup>100</sup> The alternation of construct מַמְלָכָה < *\*mamlaktu* with absolute מַמְלָכָה < *\*mamlákatum* is a product of the same rule, which thus must go back to the birth of the *\*-t* allomorph of the feminine ending; see Carl Brockelmann, "Die Femininendung T im Semitischen," *Schlesische Gesellschaft für vaterländische Kultur. IV. Abteilung. Orientalisch-sprachwissenschaftliche Sektion* 81 (1903): 13–23. Hebrew—more precisely, Masoretic Hebrew—is the only Semitic language in which there is a class of nouns that have *\*-t* solely in the construct state and/or with pronominal suffixes. Other Semitic languages exhibit only vestiges of what must be considered the original conditioning; see Richard C. Steiner, "Vestiges of a Proto-Semitic Syncope Rule in the Semitic Languages" (forthcoming).

<sup>101</sup> The form אֶרֶךְ, too, is attested mainly in poetry.

<sup>102</sup> The fragments that survive show that the Babylonian Masoretes preserved some of these forms but not others. For the two construct forms of כְּבֵד (and חֶסֶד) in the Babylonian reading tradition, see Yeivin, *מסורת*, 443. On the other hand, they have עֵינֹת in Prov 8:28 (ibid., 869).

<sup>103</sup> Johnstone, "The Language of Poetry in Dhofar," *BSOAS* 35 (1972): 1.

the normal prose vocalizations (עִירוֹ, יְצוּעִי; עָרַל, כָּבֵד, יָתַר). Their success in preserving relic forms that even modern scholars have misunderstood confirms in full the judgment of Ian Young:

Firstly, the validity of the Masoretic vocalization as historical evidence of a period well before the Masoretic period has been demonstrated in recent scholarship. Secondly, it is the tendency of both reading traditions, and of language in general, to level anomalous forms. Therefore the retention of such forms can be taken with caution as survivals of earlier or divergent linguistic systems.<sup>104</sup>

The linguistic distinction between poetry and prose is only one of the many linguistic distinctions that the Masoretes managed to preserve in their oral reading tradition(s). The ones that are best preserved are so well known that we often lose sight of them in evaluating the Masoretic enterprise. One such distinction is that between Hebrew and Aramaic. The Masoretes of the early Islamic period (not to mention the pre-Islamic period) wrote and spoke Aramaic, and yet they managed to keep their Hebrew reading tradition(s) relatively free of Aramaic influence. This achievement, too often taken for granted, can be seen by comparing their pointing of Hebrew words with their pointing of Aramaic homographs with the same meaning, for example, שָׁמַח (passim) vs. שָׁמַח (Dan 3:10), לְמוֹת (2 Sam 15:21) vs. לְמוֹת (Ezra 7:26), יִיטֵב (passim) vs. יִיטֵב (Ezra 7:18), שָׂא (passim) vs. שָׂא (Ezra 5:15), יִבְקֶר (Lev 13:36) vs. יִבְקֶר (Ezra 4:15), עָנֹו (passim) vs. עָנֹו (passim), יָדַע (passim) vs. יָדַע (Dan 5:21), יָדַע (passim) vs. יָדַע (Dan 2:22), שָׂאֵל (passim) vs. שָׂאֵל (Dan 2:10), הָקִים (passim) vs. הָקִים (passim), עָרוֹת (passim) vs. עָרוֹת (Ezra 4:14), לְבַבְךָ (passim) vs. לְבַבְךָ (Dan 2:30). Synonymous homographic pairs of this type can be found within a single book, for example, עֲבָדְיָךְ (Ezra 9:11) vs. עֲבָדְיָךְ (Ezra 4:11), הִתְנַדְּבוּ (Ezra 2:28) vs. הִתְנַדְּבוּ (Ezra 7:15), מִתְנַדְּבִים (Ezra 3:5) vs. מִתְנַדְּבִים (Ezra 7:13), עֵינִי (Dan 8:3) vs. עֵינִי (Dan 4:31). They can even be found within a single passage, for example, יֹאבְדֹו (Jer 10:15) vs. יֹאבְדֹו (Jer 10:11), סִפֵּר (Ezra 7:11) vs. סִפֵּר (Ezra 7:12). Two of the distinctions, הֵ- vs. הֶ- and הֵי- vs. הֶי-, are particularly noteworthy since other Hebrew reading traditions (Origen, Samaritans) did not succeed in preserving them.<sup>105</sup>

At the other extreme, we find the Masoretes preserving the most minute and isolated distinctions. For example, we learn from several sources that the פ in the word אֶפְדָּנוּ (Dan 11:45) had a unique pronunciation, a pronunciation reflecting its origin as an Iranian loanword with an unaspirated *p*.<sup>106</sup> That the preservation

<sup>104</sup> Young, "The Diphthong \*ay in Edomite," *JSS* 37 (1992): 29. See also Shelomo Morag, "On the Historical Validity of the Vocalization of the Hebrew Bible," *JAOS* 94 (1974): 307–15, cited by Young.

<sup>105</sup> Ze'ev Ben Hayyim, *Studies in the Traditions of the Hebrew Language* (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1954), 22–39. See also Steiner, "From Proto-Hebrew," 157–64, and the literature cited there.

<sup>106</sup> Richard C. Steiner, "הפ"א הנחצית במלה אֶפְדָּנוּ (דניאל יא, מה), in *Hebrew and Arabic*

of such a phonological *hapax* was not a trivial accomplishment is shown by the transliteration  $\varphi\rho\alpha\delta\alpha\nu\omega$  in Theodotion's translation of the verse, with aspirated  $\varphi$  instead of the unaspirated  $\pi$  = Latin *p* reported by Jerome. The Masoretes managed to preserve it despite the fact that the word was not in use in Western Aramaic.

Another minute detail is preserved in Hos 2:7, where the Tiberian reading tradition has  $\text{פִּשְׁתִּי}$  instead of  $\text{פִּשְׁתִּי}$ , expected on both linguistic and literary grounds. Unlike virtually all modern authorities, the Tiberian Masoretes refrained from emending their tradition, even though they are not likely to have known that Hosea used a northern form here, a form well attested in Phoenician and Ugaritic.<sup>107</sup>

The archaic vocalizations discussed above would seem to imply that the Masoretes had an unbroken tradition stretching back to the biblical period. This conclusion is consistent with the conclusion of E. Y. Kutscher's study of the short high vowels *\*i* and *\*u*.<sup>108</sup> Kutscher noted that the lowering of short *\*i* to [ε] in closed unstressed syllables that we find in the Hebrew of the LXX (e.g.,  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega\rho$  =  $\text{צִפּוֹר}$ ,  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega\rho\alpha$  =  $\text{צִפְרָה}$ ) and Josephus (e.g.,  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$  =  $\text{צִפּוֹרִין}$ ;  $\epsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha$  =  $\text{אֵשָׁה}$ )<sup>109</sup> is found also in Galilean Aramaic (e.g.,  $\text{לֵבָא}$ , "the heart";  $\text{לִשָּׁן}$ , "tongue") and, we may add, in Syriac (e.g.,  $\text{ܠܒܐ}$ ,  $\text{ܠܝܫܢܐ}$ ,  $\text{ܬܝܪܐ}$ , "bird"). Coins minted at Sepphoris have the abbreviated forms  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega$  and  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega\rho$  under Vespasian (69–79 C.E.) and the form  $\Sigma\epsilon\pi\omega\rho\eta\gamma\omega\nu$ , "of the Sepphorites," under Trajan (98–117 C.E.).<sup>110</sup>

Now it is quite normal for the pronunciation of classical texts in Latin and Hebrew to be affected by developments in the spoken language.<sup>111</sup> And yet, in both the Tiberian and Babylonian reading traditions, we find unstressed closed-syllabic *\*i* unlowered in Biblical Hebrew (e.g.,  $\text{צִפּוֹר}$ ,  $\text{צִפְרָה}$ ) and Biblical Aramaic

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*Studies in Honour of Joshua Blau Presented by Friends and Students on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993), 551–61.

<sup>107</sup> Steiner, "Monophthongization," 81–83.

<sup>108</sup> Kutscher, *U I בתעתיקי העברית המקראית בארמית הגלילית ובלשון חז"ל*, in *ביצוע תנועות U I בתעתיקי העברית המקראית בארמית הגלילית ובלשון חז"ל* (ed. Moshe Bar-Asher; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1972), 129–65.

<sup>109</sup> The toponym, not cited by Kutscher, is found dozens of times in Josephus's works; for  $\epsilon\sigma\sigma\alpha$ , see *Ant.* 1.1.2 §36 (*Les Antiquités juives* [ed. Étienne Nodet; Paris: Cerf, 1990–], 1:7). I have deliberately chosen examples in which the lowering occurs in a syllable closed by a geminated consonant; see n. 112 below.

<sup>110</sup> Yoel Elitzur, *Ancient Place Names in the Holy Land: Preservation and History* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes, 2004), 81.

<sup>111</sup> For Latin in France, see G. C. Moore Smith, "The English Language and the 'Restored' Pronunciation of Latin," in *A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on his Seventieth Birthday* (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1930), 168: "Every change in the vernacular extended simultaneously to the pronunciation of Latin." For Latin in England, see Frederick Brittain, *Latin in Church: The History of Its Pronunciation* (2nd ed; London: Mowbray, 1955), 55: "Since the time of Erasmus, it has followed the changes in English phonetics step by step." For Hebrew examples, see Richard C. Steiner, "Variation, Simplifying Assumptions and the History of Spirantization in Aramaic and Hebrew," in *Sha'arei Lashon: Studies in Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish Languages Presented to Moshe Bar-Asher* (ed. A. Maman et al.; Jerusalem: Bialik, 2007), \*60 n. 30.



transcriptions of Josephus and Aquila<sup>117</sup> show that \**h* did not disappear from the biblical reading tradition(s) until the second century C.E., although signs of its decline are already apparent in the first century C.E.<sup>118</sup>

Another example is \**rr*, which is well attested in the LXX but underwent degemination in the Masoretic reading traditions,<sup>119</sup> for example, Ἀμορραῖον = אַמְרִי (cf. Akkadian *Amurru*), Ἀρρα = אֶרֶץ, Χαρρα = חָרֶץ (cf. Akkadian *Harrānu*), Χορραῖος = חָרִי (cf. Akkadian *Hurru*), Μερρα = מֶרֶץ, Σαρρα = שָׂרָה. Here again, the first century C.E. appears to be a time of transition. The name Σαρρα = שָׂרָה appears almost two dozen times in Josephus's *Antiquities*<sup>120</sup> with virtually no manuscript variation,<sup>121</sup> while inscriptions of the first century C.E. have Σαρα, Σαρας,<sup>122</sup> presumably reflecting the spoken language. In other names, Josephus seems to be inconsistent in his treatment of geminated *r*. In one passage of *Antiquities*, he has Ἀρρανης = אֶרֶץ four times with virtually no manuscript variation (1.6.5–1.7.1 §§151–54),<sup>123</sup> while in another passage he has Ἀρρανης = אֶרֶץ twice, again with virtually no manuscript variation (1.19.4 §289).<sup>124</sup> He seems to have a similar fluctuation in his renderings of אַמְרִי (13x).<sup>125</sup> Although in most places the manuscripts vary between Ἀμοριτις and Ἀμορριτις or between Ἀμοραιος and Ἀμορραιος, the forms Ἀμοριτις and Ἀμορραιος are each found in one place with almost no manuscript variation relevant to geminated *r* (4.5.1, 3 §§85, 94).<sup>126</sup>

In these cases, the difficulty of preserving sounds no longer extant in the spoken language was exacerbated by historical circumstances. As I have written elsewhere, “The change in the reading traditions may have been accelerated, if not initiated, by the death and destruction that resulted from the rebellion against the Romans (66–74 C.E.). Born in 37 C.E., Josephus must have received his education well before the rebellion, even though he did not complete his *Antiquities* until 93 C.E.”<sup>127</sup>

<sup>117</sup> I refer to those transcriptions that are independent of the transcriptions in the LXX.

<sup>118</sup> Steiner, “On the Dating,” 248–51, 266.

<sup>119</sup> The Tiberian tradition probably does have a geminated *r*, but in most cases it is a later innovation, not the reflex of Proto-Semitic geminated *r*. For geminated *r* in postbiblical Hebrew and Aramaic, see Yeivin, *מסורת*, 284–86, and the literature cited there.

<sup>120</sup> See Abraham Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 108.

<sup>121</sup> The form Σαρα is listed in the apparatus of Nodet, *Antiquités juives*, for only three of the twenty-two occurrences, each time from only a single witness.

<sup>122</sup> Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* (vols. 1, 3; TSAJ 91, 127; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002, 2008), 1:255. So too at Beth She‘arim (ca. 200–352 C.E.), the name appears in a dozen Greek inscriptions, always as Σαρα; see *בית שער* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1944–71), 2:98.

<sup>123</sup> Nodet, *Antiquités juives*, 1:25–26.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:48.

<sup>125</sup> Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch*, 10.

<sup>126</sup> Nodet, *Antiquités juives*, 2:23\*, 25\*.

<sup>127</sup> Steiner, “On the Dating,” 251.

The Masoretes and their predecessors lived in an age of harmonization. Take, for example, the two versions of the Ten Commandments. The Samaritans engaged in *textual* harmonization, replacing *זכור את יום השבת* (Exod 20:7/8) with *שמור את יום השבת* (Deut 5:12).<sup>128</sup> The targumists practiced *translational* harmonization, rendering *זכור את יום השבת* with *יומא דשובתא* with *הוון זהירין ית*, “be careful of the Sabbath day,” instead of *יומא דשובתא* with *הוון דכירין ית*, “be mindful of the Sabbath day.”<sup>129</sup> The rabbis engaged in *historical* harmonization, asserting that *זכור* and *שמור* were uttered simultaneously.<sup>130</sup>

The Masoretes, by contrast, strove to *prevent* harmonization or, at least, *textual* harmonization. As a means of preserving differences between parallel passages, they compiled treatises with names like *חלופי פסוקי התורה* or *דמיון*, “variation between similar Pentateuchal verses.”<sup>131</sup> In them they carefully noted the differences between the two versions of the Ten Commandments, including *זכור* vs. *שמור*.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, the Masoretes noted the discrepancies between their oral reading tradition and their written textual tradition; for them they created a marginal *ketiv-qere* apparatus.<sup>133</sup> In this article, we have dealt with linguistic variation solely within the oral reading tradition(s). The evidence suggests that the Masoretes were obsessive preservationists in that area as well. In the words of one student of their system:

In other words, all levels of analysis would seemingly lead to the observation that the Massoretes could not have sat down to their task by deciding which

<sup>128</sup> Emanuel Tov, “Proto-Samaritan Texts and the Samaritan Pentateuch,” in *The Samaritans* (ed. Alan David Crown; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 402–3.

<sup>129</sup> *Genizah Manuscripts of Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (ed. and trans. Michael L. Klein; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1986), xxxi, 267. The reading *זכירין* [דכ], given in the Targum Studies Module of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, is erroneous. The reading of Paul Kahle (*Masoreten des Westens* [2 vols.; Texte und Untersuchungen zur vormasoretischen Grammatik des Hebräischen 1, 4; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1927, 1930], 2:58) and Klein is *זהירין* and Klein’s photograph (vol. 2, plate 91) leaves no doubt that it is correct. A more striking example of translational harmonization is the targum of Isa 6:7, transferred unchanged from Jer 1:9. See also Michael L. Klein, “Associative and Complementary Translation in the Targumim,” *ErIsr* 16 (1982): 134\*–140\*.

<sup>130</sup> See Ezra Zion Melamed, “‘Observe’ and ‘Remember’ Spoken in One Utterance,” in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition* (ed. Ben-Zion Segal and Gershon Levi; Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), 191–217.

<sup>131</sup> See the lists in Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Massorah* (4 vols.; London, 1880–1905), 3:136–74, and the Prolegomenon by Aron Dotan in the reprint (New York: Ktav, 1975), xxv–xxx.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:138.

<sup>133</sup> For this view of the *ketiv-qere*, see Richard C. Steiner, “*Ketiv-Qere* or Polyphony: The *ש-ש* Distinction According to the Masoretes, the Rabbis, Jerome, Qirqisānī, and Hai Gaon,” in *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag* (ed. M. Bar-Asher; Jerusalem: Bialik, 1996), \*153 n. 5, \*174–76, and the literature cited there. Add now Yosef Ofer, *בתיב וקרי: פשר התופעה, דרכי הסימון שלה ודעות הקדמונים עליה* (2009): 255–79.



reading made the most sense at a given point. If they had worked this way, then a highly regularized patterning would have been likely. It would seem much more probable, then, that the Massoretes simply reduced to a writing system the pronunciation of biblical Hebrew that was traditional for them, i.e., that one generation had learned by rote from the prior generation.<sup>134</sup>

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The phrases discussed in this article—יָתֵר שְׁאֵת (Gen 49:3), יִצְוֵי עֲלָה (Gen 49:4), and יָבֵא שִׁילָה (Gen 49:10)—make perfect sense as they are, without the emendations that have been suggested. Their obscurity stems, in part, from the fact that they reflect linguistic features peculiar to the poetic dialect of Biblical Hebrew.

Although usually taken as a noun, יָתֵר is the archaic poetic construct form of the adjective יָתֵר, the latter known from Mishnaic Hebrew. יִצְוֵי is another poetic form, either the Old Canaanite form of יִצְוֵי (like עִירָה for עִירָה in 49:11) or a singular form with *hireq compaginis* (like אֶסְרִי for אֶסֶר and בָּנִי for בֶּן in 49:11). עֲלָה (used only of animals in biblical prose) is a poetic synonym of מִינְקָה; it is attested with the meaning “nursemaid” in the poem from Ben Sira preserved in the Psalms Scroll from Qumran (11QPs<sup>a</sup>). שִׁילָה is composed of שִׁי, “tribute,” another poetic form, plus לָהּ “to him.” שִׁי is the Old Canaanite form of שִׁי, serving in the Bible as a poetic synonym of מִנְחָה. The Masoretic vocalization of יָבֵא is supported by all ancient witnesses, including the allusions in Ezek 21:32 and Zech 9:9. The use of this verb with an inanimate subject has many parallels (e.g., Isa 60:13, כְּבוֹד הַלְבָּנוֹן יָבֹא [אֵלַי]; moreover, it has an excellent literary explanation: לֹא-יִסּוֹר שִׁבְט מִיְהוּדָה שִׁי לָהּ stands in antithetical parallelism to שִׁבְט מִיְהוּדָה שִׁי לָהּ).

In all likelihood, the Masoretes did not understand these forms any better than modern scholars do, but, unlike the latter, they resisted the temptation to emend them, thanks to their blind faith in their oral reading traditions. Although the Tiberian and Babylonian reading traditions evolved over the centuries in tandem with the spoken languages, the evidence shows that they preserve obscure forms and archaic features from the biblical period.

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL ECHOES OF THE שִׁי לוֹ INTERPRETATION?

It has usually been assumed that the שִׁי לוֹ interpretation is found only in midrashic literature, but that is by no means certain. Take, for example, the

<sup>134</sup> Gene M. Schramm, *The Graphemes of Tiberian Hebrew* (University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies 2; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 64–65.

rendering of the LXX (Gen 49:10): ἕως ἃν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, “until the things stored (put) away for him come.” Many scholars assume that this rendering is based on שילה = שולו = אשר לו.<sup>135</sup> Others hold that it is based on (or at least similar to) the שילי interpretation.<sup>136</sup> There is no room for certitude here. In the words of John William Wevers: “The Greek is almost as mysterious as שילה.”<sup>137</sup>

Another way of understanding the Septuagint is suggested by Symmachus’s use of τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτοῦ, “his stored (put) away things,” to render שיתו in Isa 10:17.<sup>138</sup> That rendering takes שית- to be the passive participle of ש-י-ת, “put,” presumably on the analogy of the passive participle שים in Hebrew and Aramaic. In Western Aramaic (Galilean Aramaic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Samaritan Aramaic), the feminine passive participle, סִימָה, has the meaning “treasure.”<sup>139</sup> The rendering τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτοῦ = שיתו in Isa 10:17 would seem to imply τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ = שית לה in Gen 49:10. In other words, the Greek translators may have taken שילה as a contraction of שית לה.

What of the targumim? *Onqelos* has: עד דייתי משיחא, דדיליה היא מלכותא, “until the coming of the Messiah, to whom kingship belongs.” *Neofiti* and *Fragmentary Targum* are more or less the same: עד זמן דייתי מלכא משיחא, דדידיה, “until the time of the coming of the King Messiah, to whom kingship belongs.” So too Aphrahat and Ephrem Syrus (both fourth century): עד דייתי מלכא, “until the coming of the one to whom kingship belongs.”<sup>140</sup> Medieval exegetes and modern scholars believe that this rendering takes שילה as equivalent to שולו, and indeed the Hebrew counterpart found in some

<sup>135</sup> Driver, “Genesis XLIX. 10,” 4; Driver, *Genesis*, 411; Walter Schröder, “Gen 49:10: Versuch einer Erklärung,” ZAW 29 (1909): 189; Roger Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums: A Study on the Targumic Interpretations of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33* (Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A., Humaniora 64.1; Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1986), 57 n. 155; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 2:660; Martin Rösel, “Die Interpretation von Genesis 49 in der Septuaginta,” BN 79 (1995): 63; Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (2nd ed.; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 78; James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 472.

<sup>136</sup> K. Kohler, *Der Segen Jacob’s mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der alten Versionen und des Midrasch kritisch-historisch untersucht und erklärt* (Berlin: J. Benzian, 1867), 52; Leo Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition in der Septuaginta* (Leiden: Brill, 1948), 68; Jerome A. Lund, “The Influence of the Septuagint on the Peshitta: A Re-evaluation of Criteria in Light of Comparative Study of the Versions in Genesis and Psalms” (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1988), 185; and Yeshayahu Maori, *תרגום הפשיטתא לתורה והפרשנות היהודית הקדומה* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995), 133 n. 175.

<sup>137</sup> Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 826.

<sup>138</sup> *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 2:450.

<sup>139</sup> Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 1990), 375; Friedrich Schulthess, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1903), 134-35; Tal, *Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, 584.

<sup>140</sup> See n. 90 above

versions of *Genesis Rabbah* (< *Tanhuma*) seems to support them: עד כי יבוא שילה, "until the coming of שילה, the one to whom kingship belongs."<sup>141</sup> This interpretation assumes that the verse is elliptical; we must supply "kingship" (or at least "it") as the subject of the asyndetic relative clause.

A different interpretation of the targumic rendering is suggested by one manuscript of *Genesis Rabbah* that has a slightly longer version: עד כי יבוא שילה עד שיבוא שלו. <sup>142</sup> According to this version, the paraphrase עד שיבוא שלו is based on the שי לו interpretation—assuming that שיילו is equivalent to שי לו. In other words, it is possible that the targumim take שילה to mean "the one to whom tribute belongs," with "tribute" as a metonym for מלכות, "kingship." After all, they certainly take שבט as a metonym—for עביד שולטן, "ruler," in the case of *Onqelos* and for מלכין (ושלטנין), "kings (and rulers)," in the case of the Palestinian targumim. According to this interpretation, the targumim are interpreting figurative language<sup>143</sup> rather than assuming ellipsis. I hope to provide further evidence for this interpretation of the targumim in a future article on Gen 49:10.

<sup>141</sup> מדרש בראשית רבא (ed. Theodor-Albeck), 1280 line 4.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 1208 line 15.

<sup>143</sup> For the treatment of figurative language in the targumim to Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33, see Syrén, *Blessings*, 21–24. Cf. R. Kasher, "Metaphor and Allegory in the Aramaic Translations of the Bible," *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 1 (1999): 53–77, and the literature cited there.

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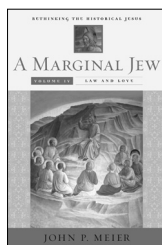
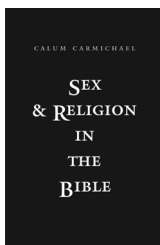
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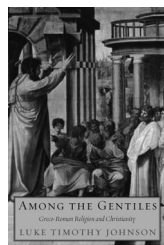
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