

The Aleppo Codex of the Bible

A study of its vocalization and accentuation by Israel Yeivin

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SUMMARY

1. In the course of my work in the Hebrew University Bible Project, I was given the opportunity to study the Aleppo Codex (*A*), mostly in photocopy, but also in the original, and I investigated the system of vocalization and accents used in it. According to tradition, as well as the evidence of the colophon (which was written about one hundred years after the MS), this codex was pointed and the Massora added by Aharon Ben-Asher, who is considered the most authoritative of the Massoretes. After the authenticity of this tradition was established by I. Ben-Zvi, M. Goshen-Gottstein and D. S. Löwinger, there were still some who doubted it, especially A. Dothan. An investigation of the vocalization and accents of *A* does not provide a complete proof of the validity of the tradition, but it does show that this codex was vocalized and accented with the utmost care, and that it preserves in the pure state all the most ancient features of the accentuation, which were corrupted in later MSS. In any event, from these points of view it remains the most accurate of all Tiberian Biblical MSS whose photographs I have checked.

It is a mistake to identify precision with consistency and systematization, and to assume that if the same word is not vocalized or accented in the same way when it appears in similar situations, this casts doubt on the accuracy of the MS. It must be remembered that accuracy in the period with which we are concerned did not mean blind adherence to a set of rules, but, on the contrary, fidelity to tradition, to the reading which had been established for generations; and this reading is by its very nature not uniform. In fact, adherence to a specific set of rules is one of the signs that points to a lack of fidelity to the received reading; it indicates domination by the system, which is a characteristic of later manuscripts and printed editions where the influence of the grammarians is clear.

Moreover, even those who have doubts as to the ascription of *A* to Ben-Asher must admit that of all Biblical MSS this one is closest to the Ben-Asher system as we know it from the *Hillufim* and the rules given in the *Diqduqé Hatte'anim*. It is true that there are certain inconsistencies between the text of *A* and what is given in these two sources, but *A* is still the closest to them of all the MSS known up to date, for in the other MSS the deviations from

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the text form attributed to Ben-Asher are much more common. *A* is, therefore, the MS which is worthy of being considered, more than any other, as representing the Ben-Asher text. Both in the light of this connection with Ben-Asher and his method, and on its own merits, this MS deserves a special place amongst the ancient MSS of the Bible known to us.

While the accepted description of the vocalization and accentuation of the Bible is based on various MSS and printed editions, usually late, in which different systems from different eras have become mixed, a description of the vocalization and accentuation of *A* probably reflects the uncontaminated system of one MS, which is, moreover, very old (approx. 920 C.E.) and very exact, and was apparently vocalized and accented by the most authoritative of the Massoretes.

2. In works such as Mišna, Talmud, Midraš, Piyyuṭ, there are considerable differences between the accepted printed editions and the MSS. A study of the Kaufmann MS of the Mišna (12th century), the Vatican MS of *Genesis Rabba* (10th century), for example, puts these works in a new light, both as regards the text and the language (vocabulary and grammar). We cannot expect to find such radical differences as a result of the study of old Biblical MSS from the post-Massoretic period, since meticulous care was taken to preserve the accuracy of every letter and mark in the Bible text. This was the main work of the Massora, the collection of instructions for the preservation of the text of the Bible. Generations of Massoretes took care that the received text of the Bible should be passed on without any change to the following generations. Differences between an accurate printed Bible today and MSS one thousand years old are, therefore, much fewer than in other works. Even where there are some differences, they generally have to do with matters of secondary importance: plene or defective spelling, addition or elision of *waw* copulative, etc., while there are hardly any differences in the consonant text, the vocalization, and the division of the main accents in the verse in general. The areas where differences are found are primarily the marginal matters of vocalization, which do not affect the sense of the word; the placing of the secondary accents, especially the *servi*, the *maqṣefs* and the *ga'yas*; and these are the matters which are our primary interest in this book.

Still, though we do not expect to find in our study of *A* new readings which are unknown to the modern printed editions, we are interested in those details which have changed and in seeing how *A* and those MSS close to *A* treat these problems.

3. *A* belongs to the family of MSS from the Tiberian School, that school which vocalized and accentuated the signs called "Tiberian", as distinct from the "Babylonian" school and the school which used "Palestinian" signs.

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Within the Tiberian tradition we must differentiate between the accepted Tiberian vocalization and the non-accepted systems, especially the "expanded" Tiberian, which also indicates *dageš lene* in letters other than *begadkefat*, and is careful to indicate consonantal 'alef, waw, yod etc. — that school which P. Kahle incorrectly associated with Ben Naftali, now called "pseudo Ben Naftali" (Diez Macho), "non-receptus" (M. Goshen-Gottstein), "Palestinian-Tiberian vocalization" (N. Allony, S. Morag) etc.

The accepted Tiberian tradition is reflected in a number of MSS, from the end of the ninth century onward, which are similar in the main lines of their system of vocalization and accentuation, while each MS differs from the others in some details; e.g., one adds a *maqgef* between two words where the other uses a conjunctive accent; one will employ a *ga'ya* in a certain word while the other does not. Some of the differences are more general, such as the use of one accent in a particular combination of accents in one MS and another accent in another MS. In fact, it is impossible to find, even within the same tradition, two MSS which are identical in every detail. Though these MSS belong to the Tiberian tradition, in their details they may be seen as representing different sub-systems within this tradition.

A represents, on the one hand, the accepted Tiberian School, that is, the Tiberian system of vocalization, accentuation and Massora. On the other hand, *A* represents a particular sub-system within this school, that of Aharon Ben-Asher. A study of *A* is likely to reveal these two aspects: the general Tiberian School and a particular sub-system, that of the most authoritative of the Massoretes.

4. A study of *A* should be complemented by a parallel study of the other MSS of the Tiberian School which are as close as possible to it in time. This has a twofold purpose:

(i) A more complete knowledge of the accepted Tiberian School, in places where the text of *A* is not clear or is defective. Very often the meaning of the reading in *A* is not clear, at times because the MS is faulty or difficult to read, or even where the MS is clear but the nature of the signs is not clear. In such instances the readings in MSS close to *A* are likely to aid in clarifying the reading in *A*, unless we assume, of course, that in those places their system differed from *A*. Similarly, not all of *A* has been preserved, and it is possible to use the related MSS to clarify the readings in the missing portions, naturally only in those places where we can safely assume that the systems were the same. In any event, when a reading is quoted in this book from any other MS, even if we can safely assume that the reading was the same in *A*, the fact is clearly stated.

(ii) A knowledge of other systems of the Tiberian School. A comparison

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of the vocalization and accentuation in *A* with the related MSS can give us a picture, though an imperfect one, of the different methods used by the Tiberian vocalizers in those days. In general, *A* differs from the related MSS in two ways:

a. "Completeness" of the marking. In places where the readings in *A* and related MSS are identical, the marking of the features in one MS is more "complete" than in another. For example, one MS often marks the *rafe* by placing a line above that letter and another rarely; one will use two *pašṭa* signs when the word is to receive the penultimate stress and the other uses only one; one indicates only some of the Light *Ga'yas* while another indicates many of them, etc. In these cases the MSS reflect the same reading, but differ only in the method of using the signs. From this point of view, *A* assumes an intermediate position; there are some MSS which are less "complete", like *B* and *S*¹; others are more "complete", like *C*, *G*; while others are similar to it in this respect, like *L*, *L*⁵, *L*¹⁶.

b. Some details of vocalization and accentuation. While the main lines of the vocalization and accentuation are the same in *A* and in related MSS, they differ greatly in details: vocalization of *dageš* and *ḥaṭef* in some situations, accentuation of the *ga'ya* in certain positions, and differences in details of accentuation, as in the accentuation of two *servi* to the *zarqa* in the Twenty-One Books, in the *servi* of *revia' mugraš*, *pazer*, and others in the accentuation of Psalms, Proverbs and Job. A comparison of *A* and the related MSS teaches us about the constants and the variables within the Tiberian School in that period, and the place of *A*'s system within that school.

Investigation of the early Massoretic and grammatical literature also helps in the study of the vocalization and accentuation of *A*, for approximately the same reasons. At times a Massoretic note may help to clarify a doubtful reading in *A*; at times, and this is most important, it can fill out our knowledge of the various systems concerning some details of vocalization and accentuation in the accepted Tiberian School, and the place of *A*'s system in this picture.

Just as the Massoretic literature and the ancient grammatical works can shed light on *A*, so, conversely, the study of *A* can often elucidate portions of these works which have hitherto not been properly understood. It is only on the basis of the readings in *A* and related MSS that we are able to understand the list of differences between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali, the comments ascribed to early Massoretes, Massoretic works like *Diquḏé Haṭṭe'amim*, *Hidāyat al-Qārī*, etc.

For this reason I have attempted to cite many examples of this type, first by examining the Massoretic notes in *A* and related MSS; by comparing Massoretic notes published by Ginsburg, *The Massorah*, and by checking the Massoretic

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notes and grammatical material in the Geniza fragments, most of which are very old, and which in any event reflect a stage earlier than that of the first grammarians. Still, this has not been an attempt to present all the material, neither that which has been published nor that which is still in MS.

5. In essence there is not much difference between the system of vocalization and accentuation in use today and that reflected in *A* and related MSS, but in many details there are differences, since development throughout the ages has taken place in two directions:

a. Systematization: In *A* and related MSS vocalized very close to the time when the reading of the Bible was still passed on by oral tradition alone, we find, especially with regard to accents and *ga'yas*, primary and subsidiary rules, each with many exceptions; in many matters there do not even seem to be any real rules, but tendencies whose limits are not always easy to define. Slowly, with the passage of time, systematization took over and various features were made more uniform. So for example, the Light *Ga'yas*, which in *A* and related MSS do not follow a clear system in their accentuation, but at most exhibit a tendency which is conditioned by the structure of the word and the type of accent, consistently appear in the later texts in certain types of syllable. The Regular Firm *Ga'ya*, which in *A* and related MSS is often found, inconsistently, in words with conjunctive accents, is in the current text indicated only for words with disjunctive accents, according to fixed rules. These examples can be easily multiplied. In these matters the development is clear: the reading, at first passed on by oral tradition, slowly becomes subject to fixed rules.

b. A simpler mode of notation took the place of difficult symbols not understood any more: Several features common to *A* and the related MSS have subsequently become blurred because they were no longer understood; a contributing factor was a lack of precision in the use of the signs. For example, in the current text the *merkha* does not come with *tevir* in the same word, since the *merkha*, which in *A* and in related MSS is clearly indicated, in later MSS became less distinct in its shape and was confused with the *ga'ya*. Similarly, there is some confusion in the current text in respect of many combinations of two accents in one word in the Three Books, found clearly in *A*, in words where the accent receded to the beginning of the word, in Euphonic *Ga'yas*, and others. These types of accentuation were not understood as early as 100–150 years after *A*, and so were simplified. In these matters we should not regard the development as systematization, but as the result of a lack of understanding and precision.

An investigation of *A* and the related MSS, compared with the Massoretic and early grammatical literature, may reveal details of vocalization and

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accentuation which have disappeared from the accepted system as a result of the tendency to systematization, or as a result of misunderstanding, and this study will bring us closer to an understanding of the method of the Tiberian School at the beginning of its activity.

Vocalization

6. In matters of vocalization, *ga'yas* and accents, which are passed on from generation to generation, it is unlikely that we should find a system which belongs to a specific vocalizer; nevertheless, two traits of the vocalizer of *A* may be discerned. The first is his tendency to detailed vocalization in order to indicate the exact pronunciation. This tendency is especially apparent in the use of the *ḥataf-hiriq* (p. 21), a sign unique to this MS which has almost no parallel in other MSS, and indicates that the *shewa mobile* is to be pronounced as an ultra-short *i* in certain circumstances. This tendency is also reflected in the extensive use of *ḥatefs* in non-guttural letters (chap. III). Regarding these *ḥatefs*, Dothan's assumption that the Massoretes and the writers of the rules in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*, who spoke of the "opening" (*petiḥa*) of a non-guttural letter, meant that this letter should be pronounced with a short *a* (similarly for the other vowels), and did not intend to say that it must be vocalized with a *ḥatef*, seems to me to be generally correct. This is because *A* itself, which of all the old MSS is the most prolific in its use of *ḥatefs*, does not do so in an entirely consistent manner, and also because among related MSS, which in other matters of vocalization and accentuation are similar to *A*, in this matter of vocalizing non-gutturals with a *ḥatef* there is almost no MS whose system is that of *A*. It seems to me, therefore, that even though the accepted rules indicated only those cases where the *shewa* was to be pronounced as *shewa mobile* (with short vowels), *A*, which vocalized with great minuteness, adds the *ḥatef* sign to prevent mistakes or the need to go back each time to the rules. These *ḥatefs* are not to be regarded as superfluous; on the contrary, there are instances, as the vocalization of *mem* after *he* with *pataḥ* at the beginning of a word, where only the careful study of the vocalization in *A* helps us to understand the rules properly. However, there are certain rules which relate to the "opening" of non-gutturals, like the rules for the vocalization of *reš* in the root *ברך* (p. 39) and the rule of the Massora cited on pp. 353–354, in which the "opening" of the letter is difficult to explain if we do not assume that a real *ḥatef* is intended.

Interesting, too, is the use of the *ḥataf-qameṣ* to reflect the short ("small") *qameṣ*, opposed to the *qameṣ* with *ga'ya*, which indicated long ("large") *qameṣ*. This use is common in MSS with "expanded" Tiberian vocalization, as well as in Ashkenazic MSS, but is occasionally used in *A* and in some of the MSS

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related to it (pp. 19–21). These signs seem to indicate in those MSS that the first vowel in a word like קִרְבָּה (imperative) is a short *qameṣ*, while the form קִרְבָּה (perfect) is read with a *qameṣ* followed by “loose connection” (*ga’ya*). These concepts are very similar to concepts of long and short vowels, but are not identical with them.

Of the other types of vocalization which we know from MSS with “expanded” Tiberian vocalization, we find in *A* and in some related MSS a consonantal *waw* with *ṣuruq* as וְשִׁתְּחוּ; but not every consonantal *waw* is so marked (as in MSS with “expanded” vocalization), but only the *waw* which is followed by an *u* vowel (pp. 64 ff.).

In this connection we should point out that in *A* (as in *C*) there is a differentiation between a *waw* with *dageš* and *waw* with *ṣuruq* (p. 49), and in the first the dot is placed somewhat lower than in the second, as וְקָוָה. This differentiation has disappeared from later MSS.

The second feature of the vocalizer of *A* is his “moderation” in adding signs to make the reading “complete”. He does not use these signs much, and so may be regarded as intermediate between MSS like *C*, which uses them extensively, and *B*, which uses them rarely. Thus there is not usually a *dageš* in the *’alef* to indicate it is a consonant (except for the four places in the Pentateuch where it is demanded by the Massora), as found for example in *C* (pp. 50–51); the *rafe* sign is used primarily in *begadkefat* letters, and rarely in the others (pp. 51 ff.), etc. The intermediate qualities of this MS are evident from its use of *ga’yas* and accent signs as well.

7. One of the interesting aspects of the vocalization of *A* and related MSS is the problem of forms with a *shewa* at the beginning of a word, followed by a *yod* with *hiriq*, as בִּי (pp. 60 ff.). The common assumption is that the Ben-Naftali system demanded that this combination should always be vocalized —בִּי, whereas Ben-Asher vocalized it —בִּי. I believe I have proved that Ben-Naftali only vocalized certain words in this way (יִשְׂרָאֵל, יִרְאָה, יִרְעָאֵל) and only when preceded by *b*, *k*, *l* (while if preceded by *waw* or by two prepositional letters, he vocalized as did Ben-Asher, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְיִרְעָאֵל, etc.). On the other hand, Ben-Asher, who always vocalized —בִּי, pronounced this combination as shorter than any other combination of *shewa* plus consonant plus vowel. There are several proofs of this contention, especially that there is never a *Ga’ya* with *Shewa* before י in *A*. Further evidence of this slight differentiation in the pronunciation of this combination is also the vocalization וְיִלְלֵת (and also apparently בִּיתְרוֹן), as if in the Ben-Naftali system, since the *shewa* after the י in these words is *mobile*, and the *hiriq* is in an open syllable (unlike בִּישְׂרָאֵל, where the *hiriq* is in a closed syllable). Finally, it is interesting to note the hyper-corrections that were made in the vocalization of this combination

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in *A*, and also in MSS which tend to the Ben-Naftali system (pp. 63 ff.).

In this section several words whose vocalization in *A* and in related MSS differs from the accepted form are cited, such as: *וְהַמִּלְקָחִים מִתְחַתִּיּוֹת וְכִנְבָּנָה*, *וְהַמִּלְקָחִים מִתְחַתִּיּוֹת וְכִנְבָּנָה* etc. (pp. 58–59, 68 ff., 216–217). The different vocalization in our Bibles is due to the forgetting of an ancient tradition or to corrections of grammarians.

In the MSS related to *A* there are, sometimes more and sometimes less, confusions between *pataḥ* and *segol*, *šere* and *segol* (p. 70), *shewa* or *ḥaṭef* and a vowel (pp. 17 ff.). Except for certain rare instances, these substitutions are not found in *A*.

In *A* and many of the related MSS there are some Babylonian vocalization signs found in the Massoretic notes (pp. 72 ff.). An investigation of this vocalization indicates that the pronunciation reflected is the Tiberian and not the Babylonian. This is an indication that the use of these signs was only an affectation of the scribe, who knew the meaning of these signs (and assumed the same knowledge for his readers). This is not proof that the MS was copied from a Babylonian source. The same is true for the rare use of Babylonian Massora terms (pp. 74 ff.). In the same way we may regard as a scribal mannerism the rare use of Tiberian vocalization signs placed *over* the letters in *A* and other MSS (pp. 75–76).

The Ga'ya

8. The *ga'ya* is part of the system of accents, but is not really an accent. Its rules affect the accentuation both in that at times a secondary accent replaces the *ga'ya*, and that at times the *ga'ya* determines what accent will be used for a particular word, as in cases of the different forms of *zaqef*, the *servi* of *zarka* and *tevir*, etc.

The *ga'ya* is one of the most common signs in the Bible and accompanies most of the accents in words of various forms. A description of its employment in *A*, comparing it with the related MSS, is one of the main topics of this book, taking up more space than any other.

The accepted description of the employment of the *ga'ya*s is mainly the result of the analysis of the grammarians, from Yequtiel Hannaqdan b. Yehuda until Baer, and is based mainly on the placing of the *ga'ya*s in the printed editions, where it underwent a long process of systematization. The characteristic feature of the placing of the *ga'ya* in *A* and in related MSS is the lack of consistency. This does not indicate, however, a lack of system or total chaos; on the contrary, there are clear tendencies to use the *ga'ya* in certain situations and to forego it in others. These are not hard-and-fast rules, but trends, with numerous exceptions of different types.

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The *ga'ya* serves to indicate a certain "stop" in the reading. This stop may come for musical reasons, as a kind of a musical addition to the accents under certain conditions, or for phonetic reasons — to insure the pronunciation of certain consonants, which were liable to be incorrectly pronounced if the word was read hastily.

Since most of the *ga'yas* are placed for musical reasons, and since the reason for the *ga'ya* is usually impossible to determine, the division of the *ga'yas* according to function is not likely to be helpful in determining the types of *ga'yas*. This division has to be made differently, according to the degree of uniformity in its use.

There are *ga'yas* which are uniformly placed, and this can be seen in three areas: (i) a similar form, with a similar accent, has a *ga'ya* in one place and the same *ga'ya* in another place; (ii) this *ga'ya* comes in the same word in the same place in most or all of the related MSS; (iii) this *ga'ya* may be mentioned in the literature, like the *Hillufim*, in variant readings mentioned in the margins of MSS etc. — this type of *ga'ya* is placed consistently; conversely, *ga'yas* which are not indicated in similar situations in the same MS, which are not indicated in that place in related MSS, and which are not discussed in the literature, are not consistently placed.

The types of *ga'ya* determined by this yardstick turn out to be almost identical with those in the accepted division, established by Yequiel Hannaqdan and Baer. The *ga'ya* in a closed syllable, the Firm *Ga'ya* in accepted terminology, is consistently placed, whereas the *ga'ya* in an open syllable, the Light *Ga'ya*, is not consistently placed; and this division, which fundamentally conforms with the accepted division, is used in this book.

Regarding the Regular Firm *Ga'ya*, that is, the one which comes in words of the form מִתְקַטְּלִים, Baer determined that it is indicated only in words with disjunctive accents, and not those with conjunctives. This is also the tendency in *A*, but there are scores of words (about 2% of the total possible), which have disjunctive accents without *ga'ya*, and several hundred words (about 20% of the total possible), which appear with conjunctive accents with *ga'ya*. Generally, a longer word will have a *ga'ya* with a disjunctive and sometimes with a conjunctive accent, and a shorter word will not have a *ga'ya* with a conjunctive and very rarely with a disjunctive accent. The differences between MSS related to *A* in the placing of this *ga'ya* are few. The placing of this *ga'ya* is much discussed in the literature and is one of the main topics in the *Hillufim* of Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali (chaps. XII/XXXII).

Regarding the Light *Ga'ya*, Baer determined that it appears in certain syllables according to fixed rules without being affected by the accent of the word. An investigation of *A* makes it clear that the Light *Ga'ya* can be placed

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in those types of syllable which Baer indicated; i.e. an open second syllable before the accent, a long vowel before *shewa*, the vowel before a *ḥatef*, etc.; but its placing is determined by the accent of the word. If it has the *disjunctivi pašta* and *zaqef*, the *ga'ya* will be placed in most cases; if it has the *'atnah*, *ṭipḥa* or *revia'*, it is placed in 10% of the instances; if it has one of the other *disjunctivi*, and certainly if it has a *servus*, it appears only rarely. Even in those circumstances where the *ga'ya* is placed, the accentuation is not uniform in *A*; similar words with the same accentuation patterns come sometimes with the *ga'ya* and sometimes without. The related MSS differ greatly in the placing of this *ga'ya*. *L*, for example, is very close to *A*, but employs this *ga'ya* somewhat more. *C*, on the other hand, places it very often, and it is given in words with the various *disjunctivi*, as well as *conjunctivi*, in as much as 75% of the instances which Baer's rules allow. In *S*¹, its use is even more restricted than in *A*, and this *ga'ya* is indicated in approximately half the instances in which it appears in *A*. Furthermore, this type of *ga'ya*, which is liable to appear in thousands of places in the Bible, is hardly mentioned in the *Hillufim* of Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali or in other similar lists (chaps. XV/XXXV).

There is a further special feature of the Light *Ga'ya* in *A*: it hardly ever appears in a word with penultimate stress whose accent is the *pašta* (pp. 156 ff.). Although the tendency to limit the use of the *ga'ya* in such circumstances exists in other MSS as well, it may be considered systematic only in *A*.

9. The other types of *ga'ya* can also be divided in accord with these two main types, the Light *Ga'ya* and the Firm *Ga'ya*. The Irregular Firm *Ga'ya* (chaps. XIII/XXXIII) and the *Ga'ya* with *Shewa* (chaps. XIV/XXXIV) belong to the subdivision of the Firm *Ga'ya*; though their use is less common, still it is also uniformly presented in the MSS, is discussed in the *Hillufim*, etc. On the other hand, the *ga'ya* that is placed with the roots *היה*, *היה* (chaps. XVIII/XXXVIII) and the Euphonic *Ga'ya* (chaps. XIX/XXXIX) belong to the category of the Light *Ga'ya*. They are not uniformly placed, do not serve as topics for *Hillufim*, etc. Assuming the intermediate position between these two categories is the *ga'ya* which comes at the end of a word with a *maqṣef* vocalized with a long vowel in closed syllable, as *גִּרְשָׁם* (chaps. XVII/XXXVII). Baer considered this to be of the Light *Ga'ya* variety, but in accordance with the principles which we have adopted, it is more proper to regard it as belonging to the Firm *Ga'ya* category, since its placing is consistent (though somewhat less so than the Firm *Ga'ya*), and it is consistently placed before a word whose stress is on the first syllable, or if it is in the third syllable, but not before a word whose stress is on the second syllable; it features in the *Hillufim* of Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali, in variant readings, etc.

The accepted rules (Baer's) for the placing of the *ga'ya* thus differ from the

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rules guiding its placing in *A* mainly as to frequency. That is, while according to Baer, the *ga'ya* comes whenever the rule demands it, in *A* it appears in only some of the appropriate cases, either in most or only in some. On the other hand, Kahle's contention that the placing of the *ga'ya*s in old MSS has nothing to do with Baer's system seems to me to be exaggerated, and should apply to the consistency of distribution and not to the rules themselves.

Moreover, there are many details where Baer's system differs from that of *A*, as for example his statement that the Irregular Firm *Ga'ya* is placed in the second syllable before the accent, as תַּחֲנִיכִי, while this is not the case in *A* and the related MSS; on the other hand, this type of *ga'ya* is found in the third syllable before the accent, even though Baer does not indicate it at all (p. 116). Baer states that a *ga'ya* is found in זֶרַעְכֶם etc., but this is not found in *A* and related MSS (p. 127). Baer says that an Euphonic *Ga'ya* comes at the end of a word preceding another which begins with a guttural, as יֵאָנֶה עִם, and even לִשְׁמֹעַ אֶל-, but this is not found in *A* and related MSS (p. 184). On the other hand, such a *ga'ya* is found preceding a word whose accent is on its first syllable and begins with *l*, or *n*. There are other details in which *A* differs from Baer's rules.

Another difference from Baer's rules is the system of preferences in *A*. When according to Baer's rules a word should get two *ga'ya*s (or more), one is preferred and placed, and the other not. So, for example, the word וַיַּעֲמֹד should get a Regular Firm *Ga'ya* in the *waw* and a Light *Ga'ya* in the *yod*. In *A* and most of the related MSS the Firm *Ga'ya* is preferred and is placed: וַיַּעֲמֹד (p. 94). On the other hand, if the word is accented with *pašta*, where the tendency to receive a Light *Ga'ya* is great, it is preferred over the Firm *Ga'ya*, as: וַיֵּאָסֶר (p. 99), and similarly the Light *Ga'ya* is preferred if it precedes the Firm one, as: וַאֲשֶׁתְּחֹהֶה (p. 98). Not always is the preference easily determinable; the rules for *ga'ya* preference (described in chaps. XX/XL) constitute one of the central issues which determine the placing of the *ga'ya*s in *A* and related MSS. Preference of *ga'ya*s is also a topic in the *Hillufim*. At times the different MSS have different preferences; e.g. in וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, the combination should receive a Regular Firm *Ga'ya* in the *he* (as in *A*, *L*) an Irregular Firm *Ga'ya* in the 'alef, and a *Ga'ya* with *Shewa* in the first *waw* (as in *S*¹).

When a word should have several *ga'ya*s, one is usually preferred in *A*. Only isolated instances of certain types receive two *ga'ya*s in one word (and more correctly: in words with *maqgef*). The system is one of preferences. This is true of most of the related MSS. Only in MSS of the type *L*¹⁸, *N* do two *ga'ya*s sometimes appear in the same word, and this is one of the signs that these MSS do not belong to the family of MSS related to *A*. Baer, on the other hand, places two *ga'ya*s on such words, as: וַיַּעֲמֹד, בְּנִי־אֶלְעָזָר. Similarly

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with words which should receive two Light *Ga'ya*s, as: וְהַשְׁכַּחְתִּים (in *A* only the second *ga'ya* is placed).

10. When we investigate the list of *Hillufim* between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali, and the many notes on the differences in readings in the margins of MSS and different works, which deal mainly with the placing of *ga'ya*s, it becomes clear that the version which they had before them was of the type of *A* and related MSS. Mostly they deal with matters where fixed rules do not apply even in *A* and the related MSS. For example, we have noted above (in § 8) that a word of the form מְתַקְטְלִים, with a disjunctive accent, usually receives a *ga'ya*; only in several scores of instances is there no *ga'ya*, and in most of these there is a difference between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali or a congruence. There is not a *Hilluf* in every instance. True, there is a tendency on the part of Ben-Naftali to place somewhat more *ga'ya*s of this type than Ben-Asher, but since this type no doubt includes several thousand words, the great majority of which Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali did not differ about, we cannot say that Ben-Naftali and Ben-Asher had two different systems in this regard; rather they had one system with some very slight differences (pp. 102, 105). This is typical of the *Hillufim*, and generally it is impossible to find any type of *ga'ya* about which they disagree fundamentally. Basic differences between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali are to be found only in the placing of a few types of *servi* in the accentuation of the Three Books. On the other hand, the differences between BA and BN can be understood only against the background of a Biblical text such as that of *A* and the related MSS, and not on the basis of the Baer version, for instance, where the placing of the *ga'ya*s is done according to rules, such that every word of the form מְתַקְטְלִים with a disjunctive accent has a *ga'ya*. Naturally, the *Hillufim* are not relevant to such a system. This is true also for the notes on variant readings found in the margins of MSS and similar places.

Accentuation of the Twenty-One Books

11. The current accentuation of the Twenty-One Books is not much different from the accentuation of *A* and the related MSS. The section on the accentuation of the Twenty-One Books includes only selected matters which have to do with the different disjunctive accents.

Regarding the *zaqef*, for example, it is interesting to note the different combinations in which it appears: *little zaqef*, *ga'ya-little zaqef*, *munah-little zaqef*, *great zaqef*, *metiga-little zaqef* (chap. XXII). In this matter there is a certain consistency in *A* which I did not find in other MSS: namely, where the *ga'ya* determines the combination of the *zaqef*, it is always found, and the *ga'ya* is never placed in a word which is accented with a *great zaqef* (p. 207). This is

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one of the few types of cases in which all the *ga'ya*s, even the Light *Ga'ya*, appear consistently and systematically. The accentuation of the combinations of the *zaqef* themselves in *A* is similar to the current accentuation, while in other related MSS various systems are employed, such as where *metiga-little zaqef* come after a word accented with a *pašta*, in others the *metiga* never comes with the *zaqef* at all, etc. (pp. 209 ff). The matter of the combinations of the *zaqef* is frequently mentioned in the *Hillufim* and in the notes in the margins of MSS.

The placing of the *pašta* in words with penultimate stress may give an indication of the degree of "completeness" in the MSS (pp. 212 ff.). In *A* the system is consistent: in a word with penultimate stress there are two *paštas* if between the stressed letter and the end of the word there is at least one other letter, as מֶלֶךְ, הַשְׁמִיעַ. If the letters are contiguous, then there is only one *pašta*, as מִזְבֵּחַ, וְיַעֲרֹכֶה. Some MSS, such as *S*, *L*¹, *G*, resemble *A* in this regard; others, less "complete", have, more or less consistently, one *pašta* even in words of the type מֶלֶךְ; this is the case in *B*, *S*¹. In MSS with the same system as that accepted today, like *L*, two *paštas* appear in all words with penultimate stress, even if the stressed letter is close to the end of the word, as מִזְבֵּחַ. In several of the MSS related to *A*, there are some words with ultimate stress which have two *paštas*, as שֹׁרֵב, in order to indicate more clearly the place of the stress. This system is used in a large number of the MSS with "expanded" Tiberian vocalization. It is interesting that in *A* and other related MSS there are also rare words, especially where mistakes in the place of the stress are more likely, which have a double sign of the other accents, which are not usually indicated in the stressed syllable, especially *little teliša* and *zarqa* (pp. 233–234), a type of use which was common in MSS with "expanded" Tiberian vocalization, and in several printed editions.

A's system of accentuating the *servi* of *pašta*, *tevir* (chap. XXIV), and *zarqa* (chap. XXV) is the accepted system. There are related MSS with different systems, for example with the second *servus*, close to the *zarqa*, always a *munah*, even before *paseq* and before a *ga'ya*; there are also some where the first *servus* is also a *munah*, whether consistently or only at times.

The Accentuation of the Three Books

12. The current description of the accentuation of the Three Books differs greatly from the accentuation in *A* and the related MSS. Because of the great similarity between the *ga'ya* and the *merkha*, various types of accentuation have become blurred, so that it is difficult already in *L* to differentiate them, and more so in late MSS and printed editions (chap. XLI). In all the chapters of this section, each devoted to a specific disjunctive accent, the rules which

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are derived from an investigation of the accentuation of *A* cover much that is not mentioned in the accepted literature describing the accentuation of the Three Books. In the literature, for example, there is no mention of several cases where two accents are placed on one word, as in the placing of the *merkha* with *revia'* *mugraš* (pp. 311–312), the placing of a *merkha* with a *munaḥ* as *servi* to the *šinnor* (pp. 328–329), two *merkhas* as *servi* to little *revia'* (pp. 323–324), a *merkha* with a *legarmeh* (p. 347) etc. The phenomenon where the accent recedes to the beginning of the word, as *נִבְהֵל* (p. 320), *יִרְעָשׁוּ* (p. 294), *לַעֲשׂוֹת* (p. 300), is not known at all in the later MSS and the printed editions. Moreover, in the printed editions there is a complete abandonment of the distinction between the *servus* of the 'olé *weyored*, "the reverse 'atnah", and the *servus* of the *pazer*, the *galgal*, which are easily distinguished in early MSS, while in the late MSS and in the printed editions they have become identical (pp. 333 ff.).

Even more than in other sections, the description in this part enables us to understand the background to the Massoretic and early grammatical works like *Hidāyat al-Qārī*; *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*, the *Hillufim* of Ben-Asher and Ben-Naftali and other variant readings, so much so that without an investigation of the accentuation of the type in *A* and related MSS, entire chapters of these works cannot be understood.

A and Ben-Asher

13. An investigation of the vocalization, the *ga'yas* and the accentuation of *A* reveals that *A* is a most precise MS, both because there are almost no scribal errors (p. 17) or differences between the text and the Massora, and because it reflects in pure form all the ancient characteristics of the accentuation which became blurred and disappeared in later MSS.

Amongst all the MSS in the family of *A* there is none which is so close to the version reflected in the *Hillufim* in the name of Ben-Asher as *A*; the same applies to the congruences between the two. There are, indeed, some places where the reading in *A* is similar to the Ben-Naftali reading. Some of these are difficult to explain, but as to several there is no doubt that a mistake has been made in the text of the *Hilluf*: for example, where the reading in *A*, and other MSS whose readings are generally similar to Ben-Asher's, is given according to Ben-Naftali in the *Hillufim*, and, on the other hand, several MSS which follow generally Ben-Naftali in the *Hillufim* give the Ben-Asher reading. In such a case there is no doubt that the listing in the *Hillufim* has been switched.

Regarding *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*, especially the Dothan edition, generally the version referred to by the title "*Quntresé Hammassora*" resembles the accen-

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tuation in *A* more closely than that which is presented as the version of the "*Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*". So, for example, in the chapter on the Regular Firm *Ga'ya* (chap. 15; cf., here, pp. 95 ff.), in the chapter on כל (chap. 5; without the exception כל מעיני בך), on the *tevir* (chap. 3; without the exception לא תהיה משכלה, cf., here, p. 219), and on the *dehi* (chap. 12; excluding the matter of the *šofar* after the *dehi*); generally, too, the version in the "*Quntresé Hammassora*" is also clearer.

There are contradictions between some of the rules in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* and the accentuation in *A*. Regarding the *tevir* there are two exceptions which were not included in the list in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* (p. 220). It is difficult to reconcile the rules of *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* for the second of two *servi* to the *zarqa* with the accentuation in *A* (p. 225); in the placing of one *servus* with the *šinnor* (p. 325), one *servus* of the *silluq* (p. 285 ff.; this rule is also given in the *massora magna* of *A*) and the *servi* of the *dehi* (p. 303), there are certain details and exceptions which are not mentioned at all in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*. The vocalization of the first of two identical letters with *shewa* or *ḥaṭef* mentioned as a rule in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* and in the *massora magna* of *A*, does not agree in all particulars with the vocalization in *A* (p. 47). All this leads one to assume a contradiction between what was said in Ben-Asher's name in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* and the MS *A*, attributed to Ben-Asher. But we must consider three facts:

- a. At times, as in regard to the *servi* of the *silluq* and the vocalization of the first of two identical letters, the contradiction is not only between *A* and other sources, but also between *A* and its own *Massora*.
- b. We cannot assume that there were other rules, as those in the "*Quntresé Hammassora*" and the "*Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*" are practically the same. In all the sources at our disposal we have not found in any of these matters a rule which corresponds more closely with the accentuation in *A* than the rules in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*.
- c. Amongst all the MSS known to us there is no MS more faithful to these rules than *A*, and after all *A* and the MSS related to it are the best group, and its accentuation is the closest to the rules found in the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim* and to the accepted rules in general.

One conclusion seems to be indicated: that we cannot regard these rules as absolute, as having no exceptions. It is enough to state that the version in *A* is approximately in harmony with them, and is closer to them than any other MS known to us.

A comparison of the rules of the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*, therefore, yields a similar conclusion to that which was the result of the comparison of the Ben-Asher version in the *Hillufim* with the text of *A*. *A* is not identical in every

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detail with what is given in these two sources, but it is closer to them than any other MS known to us. We are, therefore, entitled to conclude on the basis of these two criteria, that *A* is the MS which reflects the Ben-Asher version, as contained in the *Ḥillufim* and the *Diqduqé Haṭṭe'amim*, more than any other MS known to us. This is true even though there are a number of contradictions between *A* and what is given in these two sources.

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