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KETIV-ḲERE OR POLYPHONY: THE שׂ־שׁ DISTINCTION
ACCORDING TO THE MASORETES, THE RABBIS,
JEROME, QIRQISĀNĪ, AND HAI GAON

1. TIBERIAN שׂ

For more than a century, Semitists have debated the origin of Tiberian Hebrew שׂ. Some have claimed that it was an artificial creation of the Masoretes; most have held that it was not.[1] In all of this discussion, very little attention has been paid to the question of precisely what the Masoretes intended their שׂ-sign to represent. It has often been tacitly assumed that this sign was intended as a representation of a phoneme

1 See the literature cited in Steiner (1977:41-47, 1991:1501-3), and, more recently, Voigt (1992:45ff).

/ś/ which contrasted with /š/ and, at least originally, with /s/.[2] The first linguist to reject this assumption was Schramm (1964:19):

> It is quite certain that for the Tiberians, <ś> was nothing more than another way of writing <s>, since, in the passage cited above in connection with the pronunciation of <r>, the letter <s> is cited among the environments for the lenis pronunciation, but the examples illustrating this point are spelled with <ś> as well as <s>, and <ś> itself is not listed separately as one of the environmental factors.

Schramm also suggested the possibility that "the Tiberian diacritic which distinguishes between <ś> and <s> [sic, for <ś>] is in the nature of an orthographic compromise which indicated the emendations deemed mandatory without altering the rejected forms". In support of this possibility, he pointed to list 103 of 'Okhlah we'okhlah "headed by the caption 'Eighteen words spelled with sin[3] and pronounced as samekh'" (Frensdorff 1864:120-21).

Schramm cited only two pieces of evidence for his views. A small amount of additional evidence supporting those views was presented by Steiner (1977:46), but Semitists have continued to ignore them. The purpose of this article is to refine Schramm's insights based on a more comprehensive study of the evidence.

2. PROBLEM

In order to understand how the Masoretes viewed their ש-sign, it is helpful to consider how the matter was understood before the creation of that sign. How did the Masoretes and the Rabbis view the fact that their reading tradition had two different sounds, [š] and [s], corresponding to a single sign, ש, in the received consonantal text of the Bible?

2   See, for example, Moscati (1980:35-36).
3   In reading sin, Schramm follows Frendsdorff. The correct reading, as recognized by Gordis (1971:37), is śin. See further below.

Two answers are possible: (1) polyphony: like the בג"ד כפ"ת letters, ש is an 'ot kefulah[4] having two values, viz. [š] and [s]; (2) ketiv-ḳere: ש has only one value, viz. [š], but many words written with that sign are not read as they are written.[5]

The difference between these two analyses concerns the relationship between ש and [s]. Unlike analysis 1, analysis 2 assumes that the Masoretes did not view ש as representing [s] in Gen 40, 11 ואשחט 'and I squeezed' (read [wâ'äšhaṭ]), any more than they viewed ה as representing [h] in Song 1, 17 רחיטנו 'our rafters' (read [rahiṭenu])[6] or than Americans view <l> as representing [p] in lb. (read [paund]). It assumes that the Masoretic reading tradition reflects ואסחט rather than ואשחט, just as it reflects רהיטנו rather than רחיטנו. It should be noted that analysis 2 is almost completely ignored in modern scholarly literature. ש is almost never mentioned in discussions of ketiv-ḳere; even Gordis (1971:37)[7] contents himself with a brief mention of the list in 'Okhlah we'okhlah (Frensdorff 1864:120-21). And, outside of the aforementioned works of Schramm and Steiner, ketiv-ḳere is never mentioned in discussions of ש.

3. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Although the biblical authors of the First Temple period must have

4   This term, whose literal meaning is 'double letter,' is used in Sefer Yeṣirah to refer to polyphonous letters; see below.
5   I.e., many words which appear in the written text tradition (mâsoret) with <š> are realized with [s] in the oral reading tradition (miḳrâ'). For the independence of the two traditions as the source of the ketiv-ḳere distinction, see the works of Morag cited above and also Buhl (1892:100-101), Reach (1895:32-33), Schramm (1964:65), Levin (1972:67-73), Steiner (1977:46), Breuer (1977-8:104-5, 1980-1), Barr (1981), Morrow and Clarke (1986:420) and Morrow (1992:27). (I am indebted to S. Z. Leiman for the reference to Levin [1972], which led me to the works of Buhl and Reach.) See also §11 below.
6   ר' מלין דכתב' ח' במצע' תיבות' וקרין ר' מלין דכתב' ח' (Frensdorff 1864:102). It also has a list of ר' מלין כתבן ר' וקרין ר' and several long lists of כתי' ר'... וקרי' ר' (Frensdorff 1864:86-7, 102, 106-7). No one would suggest that the Masoretes viewed these as cases of polyphony.
7   I am indebted to David Halivni-Weiss for reminding me to check this work.

perceived שׁ as a polyphonous sign representing both /ś/ — realized as the voiceless lateral fricative [ɬ] — and /š/ (analysis 1), that perception was eventually altered by the merger of /ś/ with /s/ in the Second Temple period. With the notable exception of R. Hai Gaon, most Jews of the amoraic and geonic periods, Rabbanites and Karaites alike, viewed שׁ as having only one value, [š] (analysis 2).

The Rabbis, the Masoretes, Jerome's teacher, Qirqisānī, and the Jews to whom R. Hai Gaon addressed his responsum show clearly that they did not view the sibilant in [yisrāʾel] and [śimḥā] — an [s] descended from the older [ɬ] — as a second realization of the letter שׁ. They assumed, rather, that there was a discrepancy between spelling with שׁ and pronunciation with [s]. Unlike later generations, they viewed Tiberian שׂ = Babylonian שׁ̇ not as a separate letter *sin*, but as a hybrid: a *śin* from the orthographic point of view, but a *samekh* from the phonetic point of view. The fact that they labeled this hybrid a *ketiv-ḳere* sheds much light on the origin of the latter, as will be explained at the end of the article. And the fact that the sign שׂ was never intended to be a representation of the old phoneme /ś/ (and indeed is only indirectly related to it) means that, under some conditions, it is possible to connect that sign with original /š/ without emending the Masoretic pointing.

4. שׂ IN THE MIDRASH

Analysis 2 is the basis for midrashic interpretations of words containing שׂ, in which "die Hagada erlaubt sich... ohne Weiteres, auch ohne das sonst vorkommende אל תקרי, einfach die Lesung als **sch** zu Grunde zu legen" (Berliner 1872:40). Most of these *derashot* are marked by the word בשׁ[ין] or the word כתיב — usually both together (בשׁ[ין]

כתיב [ב]שׁין or (כתיב).[8] On rare occasions, we find כתיב שׂ' וקרי ס'. I have located a dozen *derashot* containing these phrases scattered throughout amoraic literature,[9] almost two dozen (some of them the same as the earlier examples) in the geonic *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot*[10] plus a few others in late sources. With rare exceptions,[11] *derashot* containing these

8   See Wertheimer (1989:246) = Marmorstein (1917:38) and *bYoma* 75b, below.

9   *Lam. Rab.* to 1, 14, 2, 6, 3, 8, *Lev. Rab.* 9, 3, 23, 10, *Pesiḳ. Rab Kaḥ.* 133b, *jSanh.* 28a, *j AZ* 41d, *bYoma* 75b, *bBB* 9a (but the phrase בשׁי"ן כתיב is missing in some manuscripts), *bSoṭa* 3a and 5a. There are apparently no tannaitic examples. Indeed, according to Naeh (1991-2), even *ketiv*-interpretations involving defective spelling are much less common in tannaitic literature than generally thought. I am very grateful to Daniel Boyarin for sending me Naeh's article, which is not yet available in New York, by fax and express mail. It was called to my attention by Shamma Friedman in a letter which arrived minutes before I was due to mail my article to the editors.

10   See Wertheimer (1989:242[§33], 245[§41], 246[§42,§44], 263[§76], 266[§83], 276[§102,§104], 287[§132], 288[§137], 302[§184], 305[§202], 322[§252,§253], 325[§264], 327[§267,§268], 328[§270], 329[§274,§276]) and Marmorstein (1917:36[§13]).

11   The most famous exception is *bBB* 9a: הלא פרושׂ לרעב לחמך בשׁי"ן כתיב פרוש והדר הב: ליה "'It is to share your bread with the hungry' [Isa 58, 7]. It is written with a *śin*: withdraw/clarify (*pəroś*) and then give him/it". In MT, the word is written with a *samekh*. Maori (1993:282) argues that the *derasha* presupposes a text different from MT, and hence is not an exception at all. The spelling with *śin* is, in fact, attested in the Halle manuscript of *ʾOkhlah weʾokhlah*, but that is not very strong evidence, since it is only one of several שׂ⁻ס spelling interchanges in that manuscript (Díaz Esteban 1975:XLI). Maori is not troubled by the absence of the phrase בשׁי"ן כתיב from some manuscripts, but the next two exceptions (especially the second one) show that this phrase was sometimes interpolated by later editors into contexts where it did not belong. The exceptions in question are found in *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot*. One of them begins and ends with שׂ: שׂעיר כתיב בשׁין שׁהוא מעמיד כל שׂערותיו שׁל אדם "Seir (*Śeʿir*), written with *śin*, for he causes all a man's hair (*śaʿarotåw*) to stand up" (Wertheimer 1989:245[§41] = Marmorstein 1917:44[§52]). The other one reads: לססתי ברכבי פרעה, לשׁשׂתי כתיב בשׁי"ן שׁשׂתי לרכבי פרעה וכו' "'To a mare (*la-susåti*) in Pharaoh's chariots' (Song 1, 9) — <l-śśty> is written, with *śin*. I rejoiced (*śaśti*) over the chariots of Pharaoh..." (Wertheimer 1989:325[§261] = Marmorstein 1917:72[§45]). It is obvious that this *derasha* is not evidence for a text different from the MT. It must be attributed to a misunderstanding on the part of a late editor. The version of this *derasha* preserved in the *Mekhilta* [Horovitz-Rabin 1960:112] and *Cant. Rabba* [cited below] had לססתי כתיב '<l-śsty> is written', i.e., [le-sasti] rather than <l-swsty> = [la-susåti]. This version suggests that the

phrases follow a strict pattern: they convert Tiberian שׂ into שׁ. By contrast, *derashot* which do not contain these phrases (e.g., those which contain the phrase אל תקרי)[12] do not exhibit any discernible pattern, substituting sibilants for each other with complete abandon.

A few of these *derashot* cite both the *ketiv* and the *ḳere*, taking one as a promise of reward and the other as a threat of punishment.[13] A clear example is found in *bYoma* 75b: כתיב שליו וקרינן סליו.אמ׳ור רבי חנינא "<šlyw> is written, but we read [səlåw]. R. Ḥanina said: The righteous eat it in tranquility (*šalwåh*); the wicked eat it, and it is like thorns (*silwin*) to them". According to one manuscript,[14] there is a second example in *bYoma* 76b = *bSanh.* 70a dealing with the effects of wine described in Ps 104, 15. In this case, however, only the *ketiv* is interpeted

orthographic anomaly which originally provoked the *derashah* was the defective spelling of the [u] vowel, not the spelling of the sibilant. According to Naeh (1991–2:405–7), even this version is not original.

12   Pace Gordis (1971:79), it seems likely that there was originally a clear distinction between *derashot* containing the phrase אל תקרי and those containing the word כתיב. The latter are *derashot* suggested by, or at least compatible with, the consonantal spelling; the former frequently contradict it, in unpredictable ways. As a result, I shall, for the most part, refrain from citing the many אל תקרי *derashot* involving שׂ cited by *Minḥat Shay* (to Zeph 1, 12 and Mal 2, 15), Berliner (1872:41, 1878–9:24–25), Waldberg (1969–70:4b) and Wertheimer (1989:206–7).

13   They are part of a larger class of *derashot* exhibiting the formula כתיב... וקרינן... זכה... לא זכה... "... is written, but we read.... If he has merit..., if not...". For some reason, they are particularly common in the last two chapters of *bYoma*: 72b, 75b, 76b (two examples, one of them found also in *bSanh.* 70a). Cf. also *bYebam.* 63a and the shorter variant ...אם זכה...ואם לא... in *Gen. Rab.* §8, §63 (Theodor-Albeck 1965:65, 686) and *Lev. Rab.* §13:4 (Margulies 1993:280). They assign reward-punishment readings to the orthographic ambiguities inherent in the unvocalized consonantal skeleton of the Masoretic text (defective spellings as well as spellings with שׂ). *Lev. Rab.* §13:4 suggests that these *derashot* have a biblical model, viz., Isa 1, 19–20. In *Gen. Rab.* §63, the formula is extended to the syntactic ambiguity of ורב יעבד צעיר "the elder shall the younger serve" (Gen 25, 23). The search for every imaginable type of ambiguity in the biblical text is mandated by the midrashic principle of omnisignificance.

14   According to the Talmud Manuscripts data base of the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research, JTSA Rab. 218 to *bYoma* 76b reads וקרינן ישמח. We should probably also read זכה מסממחו instead of זכה משמחו.

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midrashically, the *ḳere* being left in its plain sense: כתי׳ישׂשכ׳זה וקרינן יסמח. "<yšmḥ> is written, but [yəsammaḥ] is read. If he has merit, (the wine) cheers him (*məsammməḥo*). If he does not have merit, it desolates him (*məšamməmehu*)".[15] A third example is found in *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot* to Num 21, 18 (Wertheimer 1989:276[§104] = Marmorstein 1917:61): כל שרים בשי״ן ולמה, שאם זכו יוצאין מן העולם שרים בשירים ותהלה ושם טוב, ואם לאו סרים מ׳דרך טובה לדרך רעה במיתה לגיהנם "Every occurrence of *śarim* 'princes' is with *šin*. Why? Because if they have merit, they go out from the world singing (*šårim*), with songs and praise and a good name; and if not, they turn aside (*sårim*) from the good path to the evil path, going to hell at death".

Other *derashot* assign interpretations of the *ketiv* and the *ḳere* to different authorities. *Midrash Yelammedenu*, as cited by the *Aruch* (Kohut nd:191, s.v. כבש), reports such a controversy concerning Num 28, 3: בי״ש אומרים כבשים שהן כובשים את העונות ויום הכפורים בא ומכפר. אמרו להן בי״ה אף על פי שכתוב כבשים בשי״ן אנו קוראין כבסים בס׳ שהן מלבינין עונותיהן של ישראל כשלג שאמ׳ור כבסי מרעה לבך "The school of Shammai says, '(you shall sacrifice...) sheep (*kəvaśim*),' for they trample (*kovəšim*) the sins down, and then the Day of Atonement comes and atones. The school of Hillel said to them, 'Even though it is written <kbšym> with *šin*, we[16] read it [kəvåsim] with *samekh*, for they make the sins of Israel as white as snow, as it is said (Jer 4, 14): 'Wash (*kabbəsi*) your heart clean of wickedness".". The disagreement here may be whether יש כח למסורת "the oral reading tradition (pronunciation) has primacy" or יש אם למקרא

15   The letter ח was read [h] in Babylonia. Thus, the second interpretation apparently combines כתיב שי״ן with קרי ה״א, while the first combines כתיב חי״ת with סמ״ך.

16   If this were the exclusive 'we,' referring only to the school of Hillel, this would be a *derasha* of the אל תקרי type. That this is not the case is shown by a comparison of אף על פי שכתוב בשי״ן אנו קוראין בכסים בסמ״ך with the examples of כתיב ב׳ וקרינן ב׳ cited in fn. 14, above, and with *Nu. Rab.* §14:4 א׳א״ר ברכיה הכהן ברבי אנו קוראין מסמרות ואין כתיב אלא משמרות 'R. Berechiah the Priest son of Rebbi said: We read [masmərot] 'nails,' but it is <mšmrwt> that is written.'

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אם לניסורת "the written text tradition (spelling) has primacy".[17] Other examples of this type will be discussed below.

Normally, however, only the *ketiv* is mentioned, as in the following examples from amoraic sources: *bSoṭa* 3a to Num 5, 12 ריש לקיש אמר אין אדם עובר עבירה אא״כ נכנס בו רוח שטות שנא' איש איש כי תשטה אשתו תשטה כתיב "Resh Lakish said: A person does not transgress unless the spirit of insanity enters him, for it is said: 'When any man's wife goes astray (*tiśṭäh*)' – <tśṭh> 'goes insane' is written"; *jSanh.* 28a to Eccles 12, 11 וכמסמרות נטועים משמרות כתיב מה כמשמרות עשרים וארבע אף המסמרים עשרים וארבע "And like fixed nails (*maśmərot*)' – <mśmrwt> is written. Just as the watches (*mišmårot*) are twenty-four in number, so the nails (in a sandal to be worn outside on the Sabbath) are twenty-four in number"; *jAZ* 41d to Prov 27, 26 כבשים ללבושך ומחיר שדה עתודים כבשים כתיב הא תורה "Sheep (*kəbåśim*) for your clothing; he-goats, the price of a field' – <kbśym> is written. Howso? When students are small, simplify (*kəboś*) the words of the Torah for them"; *Pesiḳ. Rab Kah.* 133b to Isa 3, 17 ושפח כתיב, שוכר "And he will bare (*wəśippaḥ*)' משפחותם שלא יתערב זרע קודש בעמי הארצות – <wśpḥ> is written. He guards their families (*miś pəḥotam*) so that the holy seed not be mixed with the nations of the lands"; *Lev. Rab.* §9:3 to Ps 50, 23 (Margulies 1993:176) ושם דרך שין כת' דשים אורחיה סגי שווי "And he who sets (*śåm*) his way' – *śin* is written. He who evaluates (*śåm*) his way is worth much"; *Lev. Rab.* §23:10 to Judg 4, 18 (Margulies 1993:542): אמ' ריש לקיש חיזרנו על כל המקרא ולא מצינו כלי ששמו סמיכה, ומהו סמיכה, ש' "Resh Lakish said, 'We went over all of Scripture, and we did not found an object whose name is *səmikåh*. And what is (meant by) *səmikåh*? *Śin* is written, My name is here/so (*śəmi kåh/koh*). My name testifies that that wicked man did not touch her"; *Lam. Rab.* to 1, 14 נשקד שין כתיב שקד הקב״ה איך להביא עלי את

17   If so, the positions adopted here by the schools of Hillel and Shammai are the opposite of the ones attributed to them in *bSanh.* 4a = *bZev.* 37b; cf. fn. 28, below. For the subject in general, see Abramson (1985-6) and Naeh (1991-2) and the sources cited there.

הרעה "'bound fast (*niśḳad*)' – *śin* is written. The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He watched (*śåḳad*) for a way to bring catastrophe upon me"; *Lam. Rab.* to 2, 6 ויחמוס כגן שכו א"ר אבהו שכו כתיב "He has stripped his Booth (*śukko*) כיון שגלו ישראל שככה חמיתו של הקב"ה like a garden.' R. Abbahu said: <śkw> is written. When Israel went into exile, the anger of the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He subsided"; *Lam. Rab.* to 3, 8 כל המתפלל לאחר הצבור מעשיו נפרטין לכך נאמר גם כי אזעק ואשוע סתם תפלתי שתם כתיב לפי שתמו הצבור תפלתהון "When a person prays after the community, his deeds are scrutinized individually. For that reason, it says 'Even when I cry and shout, he shuts out (*såtam*) my prayer' – <śtm> is written, for the community had finished (*śåttammu*) their prayer".

It should be noted that at least half of the dozen amoraic examples, especially the ones in *Lamentations Rabba*, involve exceptional spellings with שׂ: Judg 4, 18 בשמיכה, Isa 3, 17 ושפח, Lam 1, 14 נשקד, Lam 2, 6 שכו, Lam 3, 8 שתם, and Eccles 12, 11 וכמשמרות. These cases were, no doubt, the first to draw the attention of the *darshanim*.[18] *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot*, on the other hand, adds many *ketiv-ḳere derashot* involving words in which the spelling with שׂ is common (e.g., שמחה 'happiness,' בשמים 'perfumes,' נשיאה 'lifting, forgiving'), presenting them in the form of generalizations: 'every X (in Scripture) is written with *śin*' (Wertheimer 1989: 266[§83], 305[§202], 325[§264]) = Marmorstein 1917:28bis, 49[§75]).

It should also be noted that these *derashot* are evidence that the letter-name *sin* did not arise until well after the talmudic period (perhaps under the influence of the Arabic letter-name *sin*).[19] Had it

18   They are also the cases which interested the Masoretes (see below). For additional parallels between midrashic literature and masoretic literature, see fns. 24 and 27, below.

19   According to Frensdorff (1968:205, s.v. שׂרר), the phrase כתיב סי"ן is attested in Jacob b. Hayyim's edition of the מקראות גרולות (Venice 1523-5), but the form סי"ן is nowhere to be found in any of the three places cited. All of them have שׂי"ן, printed in a font which does not distinguish clearly between שׂ and ס. However, in the subsequent edition (Venice 1546-8), כתיב סי"ן does appear in at least one of the three places (mp to Judg 9, 22). As

been possible to read the phrase שׁין כתיב as [sin ketiv], it is unlikely that that phrase could have been used as a justification for the midrashic intepretation of שׁ as [š].

Indeed, there seems to be great ambivalence in midrashic texts concerning the name and identity of the letter which we today call *sin*, an ambivalence which must be seen as another manifestation of the Rabbinic view of שׁ as a *ketiv-ḳere*. In sources focusing on the *ḳere*, the letter in question is called *samekh*. Thus, in *Gen. Rab.* §79 to Gen 33, 19 (Theodor-Albeck 1965:948), the interpretation of the second letter of קשׂיטה is: ס׳ סלעים 'samekh is for selas.' And in *Pesiḳta Rabbati* §8 to Zeph 1, 12, we have: והיה בעת ההיא אחפש א״ר אחא לא תהא קורא סמ״ך אלא שׂי״ן אחפש את ירושלים "'On that day, I shall search.' Rabbi Aha said, 'Read (ḳ-r-ʾ) not *samekh* but *šin* — [ʾăḥappeš] 'I shall free Jerusalem' '."[20]

> noted in fn. 41, below, the Arabic letter-name *sin* is used by Qirqisānī, Ibn Quraysh, and Al-Fāsī with reference to the sound represented by Hebrew ס and שׁ. The use of *sin* as a Hebrew name for שׂ is probably connected with the rise of the view that שׂ and שׁ are different letters. This late view, like the view which takes ו and וֹ to be different letters, reflects a reanalysis of the orthography based on the assumption that the Masoretic pointing is an integral part of it.
>
> 20   It should be noted that, in both of these examples, we are dealing with spellings with שׂ in the Bible. We have avoided evidence based on spellings with שׂ in Rabbinic sources, since such spellings may originate with later copyists. Thus, in *Gen. Rab.* §17 to Gen 2, 21, editions based on the Venice edition of 1545 read: א״ר חנינא ברי׳ דר׳ אירי מתחלת הספר ועד כאן אין כתיב סמ״ך. כיון שנבראת נברא שטן עמה "R. Hanina b. R. Idi (Ada) said: From the beginning of the book until here (*wayyisgor*), no *samekh* is written. When she was created, Satan (*śāṭān*) was created with her". However, this source cannot be cited as evidence that the Rabbis viewed the first letter of שׂטן as a *samekh*, since all of the manuscripts read סטן (*sāṭān*) instead of שׂטן (*śāṭān*) (Theodor-Albeck 1965:157). The same is true of evidence from those liturgical acrostics which have a word beginning with שׂ in lines where ס is expected (cf. Allony 1969:43-44). The occurrence of שׂכוחים in the ס-line of *El Adon* and of שׂקור and שׂיח in the ס-lines of *ʿAl Ḥeṭ*ʾ cannot be taken at face value, since it is likely that these words were spelled סכוחים, סקור, and סיח by the authors of these compositions; cf. סכוחה and סיח in the *maḥzor* published by Yahalom (1987:24) and מסיחין in *Gen. Rab.* §13 (Theodor-Albeck 1965:114). The alternative would be to assume that a change in the order of the alphabet had already taken place (see fn. 32, below), but the presence of שׂנאת in one of the שׂ-lines of *ʿAl Ḥeṭ*ʾ makes this unlikely.

In sources dealing with the *ketiv*, like the ones cited earlier, it is called *šin*. Thus, in *bSoṭa* 5a, where the word בשר (Isa 66, 23) is taken to be an abbreviation, one opinion holds that its middle letter stands for *săruḥåh* 'putrid',[21] while another holds that it stands for *šăʾol* 'Sheol', דכתיב בשׂי״ן 'since it is written (*ketiv*) with *šin*.' Already in the *Mekhilta* to Exod 15, 25 (Horovitz-Rabin 1960:156-57), we read: וישׁם נסהו ˉ שם נשׂא לו גדולה, דברי ר׳ יהושע, שנ׳ נשׂא אוילכ׳ מרודך ראש יהויכין מלך יהודה ואומ׳ נשׂא את ראש בני גרשון. אמר לו רבי אלעזר המודעי, והלא גדולה אינה תלויה אלא בשׂי״ן וכאן לא כתיב אלא בסמ׳׳ך. "'And there he tested them' — there he raised them up, so R. Joshua, as it is said (2 Kgs 25, 27), 'Evil-Merodach raised the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah,' and it says (Num 4, 22) 'Raise the heads of the Gershonites'."[22] R. Eleazar Hamodai replied, 'Raising up is dependent on *šin* but (the word) here is written (*ketiv*) with *samekh*.'[23] This is similar to *Cant. Rab.* §1:49 to Song 1, 9 דרש ר׳ פפיס לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה לסטתי כתיב. אמר הקב״ה כשם ששׂתי על המצריים לאבדם בים כך שׂשׂתי לאבד שנאיהם של ישראל... א״ל ר׳ עקיבה דייך פפיס. כ׳מ׳ שנאׂ׳ור שישׂה כתיב בשׂי״ן וכאן בסמ׳׳ך "R. Pappus[24] taught: 'To a mare (*lă-susāti*) in Pharaoh's chariots (I have likened you)' — <lssty> is

> 21   Read *sărihåh* 'putrefaction' with MS. Vatican 110 (Talmud Manuscripts data base of the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research).
>
> 22   He may hold that the second letter of נשׂא is *samekh* or he may simply be comparing Ps 4, 7 נסה 'raise up,' not to mention contemporary spellings like נסי, נסיא 'prince' used of Bar-Kokhba.
>
> 23   A similar midrash connecting נסה 'tested' with נשׂא 'raised up' is found in *Gen. Rab.* §55 to Gen 22, 1 (Theodor-Albeck 1965:588). This factor should be added to the linguistic ones cited by Dotan (1990:25) to explain why the *Masorah magna* of the second Rabbinic Bible to that very same verse lumps examples of נשׂא together with examples of נסה.
>
> 24   This is the version of the name given in the handbooks, but our text and a Genizah fragment of the *Mekhilta* have פוניס, and some MSS. of the *Mekhilta* have פפיס (Naeh 1991-2:405-6, Horovitz-Rabin 1960:112). This name, the same as that of a *tanna* cited in the Mishnah, is equivalent to *Papias*, a name borne in the same period (beginning of the second century) by the bishop of Hierapolis, Phrygia.

written.[25] The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He said, 'Just as I rejoiced (śaśti) to destroy the Egyptians in the sea, so I rejoiced to destroy the Israelites"[26] '... R. Akiva said to him, 'Enough Pappus! Every place where rejoicing is mentioned, it is written (ketiv) with šin, but (the word) here is with a samekh'."

The three passages cited in the preceding paragraph follow one and the same pattern. They end with a view which explicitly labels the letter in question a šin, but they open with a view which seems to assume that it is a samekh. In other words, like the passage cited above from *Midrash Yelammedenu*, some of them seem to record a disagreement over the identity of the letter ש stemming from a more fundamental disagreement over the relative authority of the oral reading tradition (pronunciation) vs. the written text tradition (spelling).[27]

5. ש IN THE TIBERIAN MASORAH

The same ambivalence towards ש is found in the writings of the Masoretes. Like the Rabbis, they did not have the letter-name *sin*;[28] they had a variety of ways of referring to the letter which we call *sin*.

At times, they call it *samekh*, as in the passage from Baer-Strack

25   I.e., without *waw*. According to this version, R. Pappus takes the verse to mean: "To 'I rejoiced over Pharaoh's chariots' I have likened you" = "To my rejoicing over the destruction of Pharaoh's chariots I have likened my rejoicing over your destruction". For a different interpretation, based on a Genizah fragment, see Naeh (1991–2:405–7).

26   Like the previous *derasha*, this one too is paralleled by one of the masoretic notes discussed in Dotan (1990:24). The relationship between Masorah and Midrash ought to be re-examined in the light of such parallels.

27   This is not true of the third example, however, where both opinions appeal to the *ketiv*. R. Pappus cites the defective spelling of the vowel as evidence for his interpretation, while R. Akiva cites the spelling of the sibilant with *samekh* as evidence against it. In the *Mekhilta's* version of the debate (Horovitz-Rabin 1960:112), the positions are reversed and R. Pappus does not mention the *ketiv*. According to an important Genizah fragment of the *Mekhilta*, neither does R. Akiva (Naeh 1991–2:406–7). It is interesting to note that, according to *bSanh.* 4a and *bḲid.* 18b, R. Akiva advocated the primacy of the pronunciation.

28   See fn. 20, above.

כאשר יסמך רי"ש לששה אותות סימנם זד"ט (1970:7) discussed by Schramm:[29] סצ"ת ורהיה תחת האות הסמוך לו שוא, יצא רי"ש ברפי, כמו בני ישראל, למרבה המשרה, ... "When *reš* is adjacent to one of six letters, whose mnemonic is *zd"ṭ ṣṣ"t*, and there is a *shewa* under that adjacent letter, the *reš* is pronounced softly as in [yiśrå'el], [miśrå] ...". Similarly, a list of twenty contrasting minimal pairs described as חד סמך וחד שין 'one *samekh* and one *šin*' in *'Okhlah we'okhlah* (Díaz Esteban 1975:93–94, Frensdorff 1864:56–57) includes seven pairs which today would be described as 'one *sin* and one *šin*' (e.g., גרש ־ גרש and השביעני ־ השביעני).[30] *'Okhlah we'okhlah* considers ש as equivalent to ס for the purposes of alphabetizing, as well (Díaz Esteban 1975:XXXIII and *passim*).[31]

At other times, the Masoretes call the letter in question *šin*, as in a long alphabetical list of unique forms described as דרישיהון ש 'beginning with *šin*' (Ginsburg 1975:592–97) but containing many forms beginning with *sin* (e.g. שא, the first item on the list). Similarly, the *Masorah magna* of the Aleppo codex (Goshen-Gottstein 1976:541) has the note כעש ד כת שין בלשׂ 'ka'aś: four morphologically related cases[32] written with *šin*' (Job 5, 2). The *Masorah parva* of codex Leningrad B19a has notes on exceptional spellings with ש like ל כת ש 'one case

29   See above.

30   Gordis (1971:35) correctly notes that in this list 'Sin [is] called Samekh.' Statements about ס illustrated by words containing ש are also found in the *Risāla* of Ibn Quraysh (Becker 1984:337–39; cf. his discussion on p. 59) and the *Jāmiʿ al-ʾalfāẓ* of al-Fāsī (Skoss 1936:444–45; cf. also p. 7, ll. 156–58).

31   The dictionaries of Saadia (Allony 1969:43–44) and al-Fāsī do the same. The principle involved is explained by Ibn Balʿam in *Sefer hassimmud* (Abramson 1975:70, s.v. שׂכר): והבאתי אלה המלות באות הסמך כי רדפתי אחרי המונ:טא לא המכתב "I cited these words under the letter *samekh* because I followed the pronunciation, not the spelling". The alphabetizing of ש together with ס is, of course, a departure from ancient practice (attested in Ps 111, 10, Ps 119, 161,162,165, Lam 3, 63, and Lam 4, 21) which grouped ש with שׁ. It has been suggested that this change in the order of the alphabet is evidenced already in the liturgy (Luzzatto 1966:20–21, Berliner 1878–9:23–24), but this is not certain (see fn. 21, above).

32   The word בלשנא 'in the language' is used to indicate cases of the morpheme with various affixes and morphophonemic alternations, rather than phonetically identical forms which may be unrelated morphologically.

written with *šin*' (Hos 8, 4, Lam 2, 6), שׁ לוכחֹ 'one case, and it is written with *šin*' (Judg 4, 18, Hos 9, 12), בֹ חד כחֹ שׁ וחד כחֹם 'two cases, one written with *šin* and one written with *samekh*' (Lam 3, 8).

When the Masoretes wished to avoid ambiguity, they had to refer to both aspects of שׂ. Thus, the *Masorah magna* of codex Leningrad B19a (Loewinger 1971:34, Weil 1971:168) contains a list of exceptional spellings with שׂ including five of the amoraic examples cited above: Judg 4̇, 18 בשׂמיכה, Isa 3, 17 ושׂפח, Lam 2, 6 שׂכו, Lam 3, 8 שׂתם, and Eccles 12, 11 וכמשׂמרות. Its heading is יׄכתׄ שׂוקרין ס 'ten (words) written with *šin* but read with *samekh*.' Most of the other published versions of the list (Frensdorff 1864:120-21, list 103 [and appendix, p. 42], Ginsburg 1975:601)[33] also have the words 'written with *šin* but read with *samekh*' in their heading. Now, the fact that these words exhibit *ketiv-ḳere* is completely irrelevant here; hence, it would have been much clearer and simpler to use the term *sin* (e.g., יׄכתׄ סין) had it been available.

6. שׂ IN JEROME'S COMMENTARIES

Analysis 2 is the basis of Jerome's discussions of שׂ. Failure to recognize that fact has led scholars to suggest that Jerome knew nothing of שׂ (Moscati 1980:36) or that he knew only a few examples of it (Sutcliffe 1948:122-23) or that he 'was not very clear about the matter' (Barr 1967:24).

Jerome exhibits the same inconsistency in referring to שׂ as the Rabbis and the Masoretes. In *Heb. Quaest. in Gen.* (Lagarde 1959:33-34), where he claims that Isaac commemorated his discovery of water at Beersheba by changing its name from באר שׁבע (Gen 21, 30) to באר שׂבע 'well of abundance' (Gen 26, 32), he uses the letter-name *samech*:

> Isaac ad nomen ciuitatis ... declinauit paululum literam, et pro stridulo Hebraeorum sin, a quo *sabee* incipitur, graecum simma, id est hebraeum samech posuit.

33   I am indebted to Jordan Penkower for the latter reference.

"Isaac ... altered slightly a letter in the name of the city, and, in place of the hissing Hebrew *šin* with which <šbʿ> begins, he put Greek *simma* (=sigma), i.e. Hebrew *samech*."[34]

In his commentary to Titus 3, 9 (Migne 1884:630), on the other hand, he shows that the letter-name *šin*,[35] used above of the שׂ in באר שׂבע, can also be used of the שׂ in ישׂראל:

> Nos et Graeci unam tantum litteram *s* habemus, illi vero tres, SAMECH, SADE et SIN: quae diversos sonos possident. *Isaac* et *Sion* per SADE scribitur: *Israel* per SIN, et tamen non sonat hoc quod scribitur. *Seon*, rex Amorrhaeorum, per SAMECH litteram et pronunciatur et scribitur.
>
> "We and the Greeks have only one letter *s*, but they, in fact, have three — *samech*, *şade* and *šin* — which have different pronunciations. Isaac and Sion are written with *şade*, and Israel with *šin*, and yet that which is written is not pronounced. Seon [סיחון] king of the Amorites is both pronounced and written with the letter *samech*."[36]

According to the interpretation of Sutcliffe (1948:122) and Barr (1967:24), the qualification 'and yet that which is written is not pronounced' pertains exclusively to 'Israel with *šin*.' We may assume that what Jerome has in mind is that the written letter *šin* is replaced in pronunciation by *samekh*, for he goes on to say that *Seon* is not only pronounced with a *samekh* but also written with one.

34   In other words, Isaac substituted the sound [s] for the normal sound of the letter *šin*, viz., the hissing sound [š].

35   Jerome writes *sin* here, but one must not be 'misled by the purely graphic coincidence of Jerome's writing *sin* with our usual writing *sin*' (Barr 1967:23). There can be no doubt that Jerome's *sin* is a transcription of [šin] (using *s* for [š], *faute de mieux*) rather than [sin] for 'Jerome's account of the sound of SIN is that it has a *stridor* foreign to the Latin tongue' and that it is different from the sound of *samech* which has the value of Latin *s* (Sutcliffe 1948:122).

36   I am indebted to David Berger for this translation and the one that follows.

Based on these passages, Sutcliffe (1948:123) comes to the following conclusions:

> First, the Palestinian Jews of Jerome's time had not divided the one character by name into the two values of *shîn* and *sîn*. They knew it by the one name *shîn* and the initial sound of that name indicates the phonetic value which they considered to be that of the character. Secondly, certain words written with this character were pronounced differently and not with the initial value of *shîn*. Thirdly, this was considered anomalous, a fact which shows that the original polyphonic nature of the character had been forgotten. Fourthly, these words, the pronunciation of which was considered anomalous, were pronounced with the sound of *samech*, and the language had lost the second of the two sounds originally designated by the one character *shîn*.

These judiciously formulated conclusions are virtually identical with the conclusions we have derived from Jewish sources. The only question is why, and in what sense, Jerome considered שׂ anomalous. Did he know only a few examples of it (Sutcliffe 1948:122), as a result of 'limited ability in the auditory classification of sibilants on his part' (Barr 1967:25)? Or did he hold that שׂ has only one value because the Jew who taught him the alphabet was, like the Rabbis, a proponent of analysis 2?

Analysis 2 certainly seems to be implied by the expression *non sonat hoc quod scribitur* 'that which is written is not pronounced.' Indeed, that expression is reminiscent of the expression לא כשאני נכתב אני נקרא 'I am not read as I am written' in *bPes*. 50a. And the subsequent, contrasting expression *et pronunciatur et scribitur* may be compared to the expression כת' וקר' in the *Masorah parva* of codex Leningrad B19a (1 Sam 6, 17); the Aramaic expression is used in the sense of 'not only pronounced but also written' to stress the absence of a *ketiv-ḳere* (Yeivin 1980:96), and that is what its Latin counterpart seems to indicate as well.

This would not be the only description of a phonetic *ketiv-ḳere* in Jerome's writings. In commenting on the word *Apedno* (אפדנו) in Dan 11, 45,[37] Jerome writes (Glorie 1964:935)

> Notandum autem quod ... in isto tantum loco apud Hebraeos scribatur quidem phe sed legatur pe.
> "Moreover, it should be noted that ... in this place alone in the works of the Hebrews, *phe* is written but *pe* is read".

Jerome's formulation here is highly significant. It would have been perfectly natural to present the phonetic peculiarity of אפדנו as an example of polyphony, by explaining that the Hebrew letter *phe*, normally pronounced like Greek φ,[38] has the value of Latin p[39] in this (foreign) word. Instead, Jerome adopts the language of the Rabbis and Masoretes, translating כתיב...וקרי... as *scribatur ... sed legatur* ....[40]

The expression *non sonat hoc quod scribitur* shows that he had a similar view of שׂ. That is the reason why Jerome never says that it has two pronunciations.

7. שׂ IN QIRQISĀNĪ's *Kitāb al-'Anwār*

Analysis 2 did not immediately sink into oblivion with the creation of the masoretic pointing systems in the post-talmudic period. It played an important role in the sectarian polemics of the ninth and tenth centuries. According to Qirqisānī (Nemoy 1939:113,11.7-16), one Rabbanite argued that the Karaite rejection of oral tradition in favor of Scripture was a sham, since the Karaites followed the Masoretic reading tradition even in places where it contradicts the received consonantal text:

37 For a full discussion, see Steiner (1993).
38 An aspirated [pʰ] in the Byzantine school pronunciation of Greek; see Steiner (1993:552).
39 An unaspirated [p]. The Iranian word from which אפדנו is borrowed also has an unaspirated [p].
40 For Jerome's use of Rabbinic terminology, see Brown (1992:191-3), based largely on (but more rigorous than) Krauss (1894:235, 251-2). I am indebted to S.Z. Leiman for the latter reference.

ת�'ם אן צאחב הד'א אכד' פי אלאחתגّאג פקאל פמן כّאלף אלחכמא יעני
אלרבّאניין יקאל לה אן כנת אנמא תעמّד פי קראה אלתוריّה עלי מא מא הו מכתוב
פאנך תגّד אסם אלבארי תעّאלי ותקדّס מכתובא ביוד והי פלם תקרא
בכّלّאף ד'לך פתקול אדّ-י וכד'לך יכתב ישראל בשין ואנת תקראה בסין וכד'לך
עשّית שמّחת שמלה שמّחה שישון כّל הד'א בשין ואנת תקראה בסין... ויכתב נער
ואנת תקרא נערה ויכתב וטמאה שבעים ואנת תקראה שבّעّים...ויכתב בעפלים
ואנת תקראה בטחרים וכד'לך גّמّיע אלחסירות ואליתירות ואלכתב ואלקרי....

"Then the author of this offered an argument, saying that
whoever opposes the Sages, i.e. the Rabbanites, should be told: 'If
you rely, in reading the Torah, only on what is written, and you
find the name of the Creator, may He be exalted and sanctified,
written with <y> and <h>, why do you read it contrary to that,
saying [ʾĂḏonåy]. Similarly, <yšrʾl> 'Israel' is written with <š>
but you read it with [s], and the same goes for <ʿšyt> 'you made,'
<śmḥt> 'you were happy,' <śmlh> 'garment,' <śmḥh> 'happiness,'
<śśwn> 'joy'; each of these is with <š> but you read it with <s>.[41]
And <nʿr> 'boy' is written [Deut 22, 23,28], but you read it
[naʿărå] 'girl'. And 'she shall be impure seventy <šbʿym>' is
written [Lev 12, 5], but you read it [šəvuʿayim] 'two weeks'....[42]
And <bʿplym> is written [1 Sam 5, 6,12], but you read it
[baṭṭəḥorim]. And the same goes for all cases of missing and
superfluous letters and ketiv-ḳere...".

41   Arabic *sin* referring to the sound [s] rather than the late Hebrew name of the
שׂ sign. Cf. the occasional use of *sin* to designate an [s] written with Hebrew
ס in the works of Qirqisānī's contemporaries, Ibn Quraysh (Becker
1984:309,#451 סתו) and Al-Fāsī (Skoss 1945:347,ll.19-20 סתם; cf. the
critical apparatus). See also the discussion of the name *sin* above.

42   As noted by Abramson (1985-6:31n2), this is an allusion to *bSanh.* 4a
'שבועיים קרינן ויש אם למקרא 'we read [šəvuʿayim] 'two weeks,' and the oral
reading tradition (pronunciation) has primacy' (cf. also *bZev.* 38a). The
Masoretes did not add a note on the peculiarity of this spelling, presumably
because they were interested only in minority details (Dotan 1990:18). Since
there are no other occurrences of the word, our form cannot qualify as a
minority spelling.

It is ironic that virtually the same argument was used by mainstream
Karaites against Ismāʿīl the ʿUkbarite, the ninth-century sectarian
whose radical rejection of oral tradition led him to deny the legitimacy
of the *ḳere* tradition and to insist that every word in Scripture be read
as it is written. According to Qirqisānī (Nemoy 1939:163), the
mainstream Karaites refuted Ismāʿīl by showing that even he was not
completely consistent, since he was compelled to accept the *ḳere* implicit
in every שׁ:

וקד רד אצחאבנא עלי אסמעיל אלעכברי קולה אן אלקראה תגّב אן תכון עלי
מّא הו מכתוב באן קאלוא אנה יגّב אן יקרא שّברתי לישועתך בשין ויקול
שברתי פיּלّרג' מן באב אלרגّא ויציר כסרת וכד'לך שّשّ אנכי על אמרתך יגّב אן
יקרא שّש פיّّלّרג' כّן אן יכון סרّורא ויציר סتّה וכד'לך שّרים יגّב אן יקרא בשין
וכّל נעّر'ה פי אלתוראה יגّב אן יקרא נער עלי מّא הו מכתוב פיّכّון מّענّאה צבי
לא צביّה....

"Our comrades have refuted the claim of Ismāʿīl the ʿUkbarite
that the reading [of Scripture] should be according to what is
written by saying that that would necessitate reading שִׂבַּרְתִּי
לִישׁוּעָתֶךָ 'I hope for Your deliverance' [Ps 119, 166] as שִׂבַּרְתִּי with
[š] and changing the meaning from '[I] hope[d]' to 'I broke'.
Similarly, שָׂשׂ אָנֹכִי עַל אִמְרָתֶךָ 'I rejoice over Your word' [ibid., 162]
would have to be read שֵׁשׁ and the meaning would change from
'rejoicing' to 'six'. Similarly, שָׂרִים would have to be read with [š].
And every נַעֲרָ in the Torah would have to be read נַעַר,
according to what is written, and its meaning would be 'boy'
rather than 'girl'."

8. שׂ IN A RESPONSUM OF R. HAI GAON

Analysis 2 is also implicit in a query addressed to R. Hai Gaon in the eleventh century (Mann 1920–1:470):[43]

לכֿוה כן ת[כֿתב] אות וקורין אות אחר כגון שכר, יששון, ישמחה, מעשר וכיוצא בהן

"Why is one letter written but another letter read, as in שכר 'wage,' יששון 'joy,' שמחה 'happiness,' מעשר 'tithe,' etc.?"

Hai begins by referring the questioner to *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot*, which, as we have already seen, provides midrashic explanations for the peculiarity in question — even for words commonly spelled with שׂ like שמחה. He then dismisses that work on the grounds that it does not have a fixed text, and proceeds to provide a more 'reliable' response.

Hai notes that the words listed by the questioner are spelled with שׂ not only in Scripture but also in everyday usage, suggesting that a more mundane explanation is in order. Indeed, he rejects the entire premise of the question, viz. analysis 2, in favor of analysis 1:

אילו במקרא ה[יו] כותבין שכר וששון ושמחה וכיוצא בהן בשין ונקראין בסמ[ך] היינו אומרים הרי אילו ככתבות וקרוייהן שניתנו להידרש, כי יש אם למקרא ויש אם [למ]סורת. ועכשו שכל מה שהוא כותב אפילו רבר חולין אינו כותב שכר ששון ושמחה שעיר שאר וכיוצא בהן אילא בשין, נורע כי לא נתנו רברים הללו להידרש אלא שין משמש שתי אותות, כדרכו הוא שין ויש בו לשמוש סמך במקום שנהגו סופרי הלשון הזה והע[תיקו לכתוב כן.

"If it were (only) in the Bible that שכר 'wage,' יששון 'joy' and שמחה 'happiness' were written with *šin* and read with *samekh*, we would say that these are like the *ketiv* and the *ḳere* which were given as a basis for midrashic interpretation, for 'the *ḳere* has authority' and 'the *ketiv* has authority'; but now that in everything one writes — even mundane things — one spells שכר 'wage', ששון ושמחה 'joy and happiness', שעיר 'goat',

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43   Cf. also Abramson (1985–6:31–36). Abramson's study is the first to bring together the discussions of Qirqisānī and Hai Gaon.

שעיר 'Seir(?),' שאר 'leaven' only with *šin*, it is obvious that these things were not given as a basis for midrashic interpretation. It is rather the case that <*š*>*in* serves as two letters: normally it is [*š*]*in*, but it has the ability to serve as [*s*]*amekh* in places where the scribes of this language had that custom and transmitted that spelling tradition".

It should be noted that Hai's answer, like the question, deals only with words like ששון and שמחה. It is possible that Hai would accept the amoraic *derashot* involving שכו, שתם and כעש, since these spellings do not conform to everyday usage. Although not all of the amoraic *derashot* involve spellings of the latter type, Hai directed his criticism against what he perceived to be the excesses of the geonic *Midrash ḥaserot wiyterot*.

9. שׂ IN *Sefer Yeṣirah*

The midrashic view of שׂ as a *ketiv-ḳere* provides an explanation for an anomaly in *Sefer Yeṣirah*'s classification of the Hebrew letters. According to that work, the Hebrew alphabet is divided into three groups. The first group (שלש אמות אמ"ש), discussed in chapter 3, consists of the three matrix letters through which air, water and fire were created. The second group (שבע כפולות בג"ד כפר"ת), discussed in chapter 4, consists of the seven double (i.e., polyphonous) letters used to create the seven planets, the seven days of the week and the seven orifices of the head.

Each of these groups has an anomaly which would be eliminated if ר and שׂ were to switch places. The problem with the first group is that

it does not consist of the initial letters of the biblical names for air,[44] water and fire. Thus, the matrix letters do not match the names of the elements they were used to create: ...המליך אות א׳ ברוח... המליך אות מ׳ במים... המליך אות ש׳ באש "He granted the letter *aleph* dominion over air ... the letter *mem* over water ... the letter *šin* over fire" (3, 6-8). If the first group were אמ"ר, we would have the much more logical: המליך אות ר׳ ברוח... המליך אות מ׳ במים... המליך אות א׳ באש.

The problem with the second group is that it is not homogenous, for the בג"ד כפ"ת letters have two different pointings indicating their two ungeminated realizations while ר does not.[45] If the second group were בג"ר כפש"ת, it would consist entirely of letters to which the Masoretes assigned two different pointings.

It follows that under analysis 1, שׂ would have had a stronger claim for membership in the second group than ר,[46] and its inclusion in that group would have had the added advantage of allowing ר to take its rightful place in the first group. Thus, the failure to include שׂ in the second group would seem to indicate that *Sefer Yeṣirah* agrees with the Midrash in accepting analysis 2.[47]

10. BABYLONIAN שׁ AND OTHER HYBRID SIGNS

In the Babylonian pointing system, the counterpart of Tiberian שׂ is a שׁ with a small ס above it (שׁ). It can be viewed as an attempt to represent the hybrid nature of an entity which is a *šin* from the

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44 Biblical רוח. The post-biblical name אויר, borrowed from Greek, can hardly have been considered relevant to the Creation.

45 For an explanation of this strange asymmetry, see Morag (1969-70:113-14). For the double realization, see Morag (1960b), Eldar (1983-4) and the literature cited there.

46 The fact that one of the realizations of שׂ is the same as the realization of another letter (ס) cannot have been a disqualifying factor, since כ is included in the list even though one of its realizations was the same as the Palestinian realization of ר (Eldar 1984:10-11).

47 Conversely, it would seem that the Midrash agrees with *Sefer Yeṣirah* in viewing the בג"ד כפ"ת letters as polyphonous, since there are no *derashot* of the form כתיב ב׳ וקרינן ר.

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orthographic point of view, but a *samekh* from the phonetic point of view (analysis 2). Even the positioning of the ס between the lines may hint at analysis 2, for, according to Dotan (1972:1419), 'the older method of marking the *qere* was to note in the margin, or in the Babylonian system to mark sometimes between the lines, only that portion of the word in which there is a change.' The occasional marking of a שׁ realized [š] with a second, smaller שׁ above can be taken to mean '*šin* is both written and read.' This interpretation of the sign שׁ is not the only one possible, but in my view it is the most likely one.

The orthographic systems of other languages have signs which seem to lend themselves to a similar interpretation. One such sign is Romance ç, a *c* with a 'small *z*' (*cedilla*) below it. It can be viewed as an attempt to represent the hybrid nature of an entity which is a *c* (=k) from the orthographic point of view, but a *z* (=[ts]) from the phonetic point of view. Another such sign is Swedish *å*, an *a* with a small *o* above it. It may also be understood as the representation of a hybrid entity.

All of these hybrid signs have a similar history. In each case, the diacritic is not original; it was added in response to phonetic or phonemic change.

The history of ç is well known. In Late Latin, /k/ was represented by *c* and /ts/ was represented by *z*. The palatalization of /k/ before /e/ and /i/ eventually led to a merger with /ts/. Instead of replacing *c* in that environment with *z*, the scribes in Spain and later in Italy and France occasionally placed a 'small *z*' under it (Pope 1973:290).

The history of *å* is similar. In Old Swedish, the letter *a* was used polyphonously for the reflexes of Common Scandinavian /ă/ and /ā/ (Wessén 1958:62). In the fourteenth century, the realization of the latter became progressively more closed, backed, and rounded until spellings with *o* began to appear here and there. From the middle of the fifteenth century, the sign *å* is sporadically attested (Wessén 1958:45). The small *o* placed above the *a* served to distinguish the raised and rounded reflex of /ā/ from the reflex of */ă/.

Like *å*, the sign שׁ developed out of an originally polyphonous letter.

In pre-exilic Judah, שׁ was used polyphonously for both /ś/ — probably realized as the voiceless lateral fricative [ɬ] (Steiner 1977 and 1991) — and /š/.[48] However, the merger of /ś/ with /s/ in the Persian period made the spelling of /ś/ with שׁ an anomaly, since /s/ was normally represented by ס. Sporadic spellings with ס appear already in Late Biblical Hebrew and the Aramaic of Elephantine, but such spellings were, for most part, successfully avoided for many centuries by stubbornly conservative scribes. The older spelling with שׁ was not only retained in the biblical text but also continued to be employed later, in the writings of the Qumran sect (Steiner 1991:1502-3) and even to a certain extent in documents from the period of the Bar-Kokhba revolt. Early in the post-talmudic period, a millennium after the sound change occurred, the Babylonian Masoretes finally acknowledged it by creating the sign שׂ.[49]

11. שׂ AND THE ORIGIN OF Ketiv-ḳere

We have argued that Tiberian שׂ = Babylonian שׂ was viewed in the amoraic and geonic periods as a hybrid: a šin from the orthographic point of view, but a samekh from the phonetic point of view.

The fact that this hybrid was labeled a ketiv-ḳere is hardly compatible with the traditional interpretation of the latter as a vehicle created for the purpose of preserving variant manuscript readings or correcting errors. Nor does it provide much support for Gordis' (1971)

48   Clearly, analysis 2 is out of the question for that period.
49   All of this is very similar to Schramm's suggestion concerning Tiberian שׂ quoted above, except that, for some reason, Schramm tied that suggestion to the unlikely possibility that 'the manuscript tradition, where Tiberian <ś> and <š> are both represented by the same skeletal letter, was based on a dialect of Hebrew in which, as in Samaritan Hebrew, the sound values of <ś> and <š> fell together, while the oral tradition stemmed from another dialect, where the sound values of <ś> <s>, instead, merged.'

view of it as an apparatus[50] consisting originally of commands[51] to the reader[52] to avoid the ketiv in cases where it was blasphemous, obscene, or phonetically misleading.

The ketiv-ḳere phenomenon is recorded, albeit only selectively (Yeivin 1980:§§95,103) in an apparatus (the lists and marginal notes of the Masorah), but it is not itself an apparatus. It is the set of all discrepancies (including those not noted in the apparatus) between the oral text/reading tradition (miḳrâ') of the Bible and its written text tradition (mâsoret).[53] The ḳere is rooted in oral tradition, and that is why, already in the first half of the ninth century, it became an issue in sectarian polemics concerning the authority of oral tradition in Judaism.

The two text traditions probably had different custodians, the written one being preserved by scribes and the oral one by readers (Breuer 1977-8:105, 1980-1:261). To be worthy of the title ḳârâ', a reader had to have mastered all the details of the oral text/reading tradition — he had to be able to recite the entire Bible 'with precision'.[54] That such readers were not dependent on a written text is clear from Jerome's testimony that, in studying together, the Jews recite the books of the prophets and Moses by heart (memoriter) (Krauss 1894:232). They read the word for 'Israel' with a samekh, ignoring the fact that the scribes wrote it with a

50   Gordis uses this term on pp. XIX (bis), 40, and 80.
51   According to Gordis (1971:7n1,31,79n49), the word ḳere is either an imperative, meaning 'Read so!', or, less probably, a passive participle with gerundive force, meaning 'to be read so!'
52   List 103 of 'Okhla we'okhla, which Gordis cites as evidence that the Kethib-Qere was addressed to readers, seems rather to have been meant as a guide for the scribe, for the Masorah parva of codex Leningrad B19a to many of the words in the list notes not their ḳere but their ketiv (see above).
53   See fn. 6, above.
54   דקרי אורייתא נביאי ובתובי בדיוקא (bḲid. 49a). The Talmud there contrasts the title ḳârâ' with the title ḳaryân, given to a man able to read three verses when called up to the Torah in the synagogue. The ḳârâ' / ḳâroy is mentioned in the same breath as the tannâ' / tânoy, who had committed tannaitic literature to memory (bḲid. 49b; Lev. Rab. §30:1) [Margulies 1993:690]. The division of labor between the scribes and the readers did not break down after the invention of the various masoretic pointing systems; the role of the ḳârâ'/ḳâroy simply evolved into that of the naḳdân / noḳedân 'vocalizer.'

šin. Thus, the dual nature of שׂ is simply one manifestation of the dual transmission of the biblical text.

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