

Two New Fragments from the Scribe behind the Leningrad Codex (B19a)

Early in the eleventh century, in the city of Fustat, Egypt, the scribe Samuel ben Jacob completed his labours on a full Bible codex.¹ As was his custom, he wrote and pointed the entire manuscript himself, and added Masoretic notes thereto.² Little could he have known that that manuscript was destined to acquire inestimable significance. Apparently by historical accident, B19a (the label later applied to this manuscript when it became part of the vast Firkowich collection) is the oldest complete Masoretic Bible.³ This fact, together with the excellent quality and accuracy of the codex, prompted BHK, BHS and BHQ to use this manuscript as their base text.⁴ Consequently, today B19a is unquestionably the most widely used Masoretic Bible manuscript. Nonetheless, relatively little is known of Samuel ben Jacob himself, or of his scribal habits, or of the rest of his scribal oeuvre.⁵

This article examines two Bible fragments from the Cairo Genizah, demonstrating that they, too, are the work of Samuel ben Jacob. The purpose of the article is therefore twofold: first, to present these two important fragments; second, to outline the several criteria on which this identification was made, with the hope that these criteria will then be used to identify many more remains of his work.⁶

Manuscripts Written by Samuel ben Jacob

Before presenting the new fragments, it will be useful to list the manuscripts thus far known to have been written by Samuel ben Jacob:

¹ For a discussion of ben Jacob's social and cultural setting, see Ben Outhwaite, "Samuel ben Jacob: the Leningrad Codex B19a and T-S 10J5.15," *Fragment of the Month* (January 2016): n. p., accessed 1 March 2016. Online: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fragment-month-janua-0>.

² See, for example, the colophon on f. 474 recto. For other ben Jacob manuscripts with similar colophons, noting that ben Jacob wrote, pointed and annotated the manuscript, see Richard Gottheil, "Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo," *JQR* 17, no. 4 (1905): 629, 636.

³ Victor V. Lebedev, "The Oldest Complete Codex of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), xxi–xxviii.

⁴ Rudolf Kittel, ed., *Biblia Hebraica*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1912). Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977). Jan de Waard, ed., *Biblia Hebraica Quinta: General Introduction and Megilloth*, vol. 18 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004).

⁵ These lacunae diminish our ability to assess the text of B19a in various significant ways. Most obviously, when a reading in B19a differs from the evidence available in the other model Masoretic codices, it is currently difficult to know how to weigh B19a's reading. Does the reading represent a tradition intentionally preserved by ben Jacob, or simply a *lapsus calami*? For example: in 1 Sam 27:10 B19a contains the apparently nonsensical reading: הַיְיִרְהָאֵלֵי, with the corresponding note in BHS: *sic L, mlt Mss Edd* הַיְיִרְהָ. However, the probability that this reading simply reflects an error on ben Jacob's part is somewhat diminished by the fact that another manuscript known to have been written by him contains the self-same reading. See Mordechai Breuer, ed., *The Masorah Magna to the Pentateuch by Shemuel ben Ya'aqov (Ms. Lm)*, 2 vols., The Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation Series 16 (New York: Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation, 1992), vol. 1, p. 9.

⁶ The task of expanding our corpus of ben Jacob's material is not straightforward. As Beit-Arié explains, the high degree of stereotyping of codicological elements of handwritten Hebrew books within each mediaeval geo-cultural area makes it extremely difficult to distinguish between different scribes. Of course, where colophons are extant the difficulty evaporates to a certain extent. However, when dealing with fragmentary biblical texts from the Genizah, colophons are a rare luxury. For this reason, listing a range of criteria by which to identify the product of a given scribe is as useful as it is difficult. This article constitutes a first attempt at such a list for the work of Samuel ben Jacob. See Malachi Beit-Arié, *The Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book: Studies in Palaeography and Codicology* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), 77–79.

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1. B19a—the “Leningrad Codex”
2. L^m: examined by Gottheil while it was still in situ in the Karaite synagogue in Cairo (Gottheil no. 14).⁷ This important manuscript of the Torah gains its particular significance from its Masorah magna (Mm), which contains a large number of notes from the Babylonian Masoretic tradition, and thus forms one of the most significant sources for the study of the Babylonian Masorah.⁸ In a colophon, ben Jacob claims to have written, pointed and annotated this codex.
3. Gottheil 27: a codex containing the former prophets, also examined by Gottheil during his visit to the Karaite synagogue in Cairo.⁹ In a colophon, ben Jacob claims to have written, pointed and annotated this codex. Breuer includes this codex together with Gottheil 14, referring to them both as L^m.¹⁰ Since the two codices appear to have been originally separate productions, recent discussion has reserved the label L^m for Gottheil 14.¹¹ Yeivin refers to Gottheil 27 as פ2.¹²
4. L^S: a Torah codex, also containing Saadia's *Tafsir*. As with L^m, the Mm of this codex is interesting and significant: ben Jacob included within it, in abbreviated form, many extracts from Menahem ben Saruq's famous dictionary: the *Mahberet Menahem*.¹³
5. T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar 1a.38: these fragments preserve parts of another copy of Exodus with Saadia's *Tafsir*, similar to L^S.¹⁴
6. Evidence of another manuscript written by ben Jacob is afforded by a single leaf found in the same Karaite synagogue that housed L^m and Gottheil 27. This leaf, containing Gen 26:9–33, was identified as the work of ben Jacob on palaeographic grounds, by Malachi Beit-Arié.¹⁵

T-S A2.46 and A3.35: Fragments from a Codex Written by Samuel ben Jacob

T-S A2.46 is a single page of vellum (42×38cm, incomplete) containing Exod 25:29a–26:8a. The page is torn obliquely across the top margin such that some of the Mm and a small amount of the biblical text are missing. The text is presented in three columns, 17 lines per column (on recto, with additional eighteenth line on verso). Each 17 line column measures approximately 25×7cm. Three (ruled) lines of Mm are visible in the top and bottom margins of the page. In the top margin, the Mm notes are arranged in two blocks. The larger block stretches over the left-hand and centre columns; the smaller block has the same margins as the right-hand column. The arrangement is reversed in the bottom margin. Masorah parva (Mp) notes are located in the right-hand margin, and between the columns. A slightly ornate *seder* marker is located at Exod 26:1, in the right-hand margin of the verso.

⁷ Gottheil, “Hebrew Manuscripts,” 629–630.

⁸ Breuer, *Masorah Magna*. See, also, Yosef Ofer, *The Babylonian Masora of the Pentateuch: Its Principles and Methods*, The Academy of the Hebrew Language: Sources and Studies VI - A New Series (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001), 13–25.

⁹ Gottheil, “Hebrew Manuscripts,” 636–637.

¹⁰ Breuer, *Masorah Magna*, 1.

¹¹ Ofer, *Babylonian Masora*, 24–25. See, too, Yosef Ofer, “A Masoretic Reworking of Maḥberet Menahem,” *Leshonenu* 62 (1999): 197, n. 23.

¹² Israel Yeivin, “A Biblical Manuscript very close to the Aleppo Codex: L11,” *Textus* 12 (1985): 87.

¹³ Ofer, “Reworking.”

¹⁴ See Ronny Vollandt, “Two fragments (T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar.1a.38) of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* by Samuel ben Jacob,” *Fragment of the Month* (November 2009): n. p., accessed 1 April 2016. Online: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/fotm/november-2009/>.

¹⁵ Ofer, “Reworking,” 197, n. 23. See, too, Ofer, *Babylonian Masora*, 25, n. 30. N.b. In the first of these citations Ofer mistakenly cites the microfilm reference number as 40190, rather than 40160 (as correctly written in the latter citation).

T-S A3.35 consists of a single, heavily mutilated page of vellum (35×39cm, incomplete) containing Lev 26:41a–27:10a. Most of the text is missing: of the three columns on the recto, only parts of the bottom two lines of the first and second columns are visible, along with most of the bottom 13 lines of the left-hand column. An equivalent amount of text survives on the verso. By reconstructing the text-layout, it is clear that originally each column consisted of 17 lines, with approximate dimensions 25.5×7cm.¹⁶ The Mm of the bottom margin is almost entirely intact. It consists of 2–4 lines of text arranged in blocks as described above. A few Mp notes are visible, as is most of a *seder* marker (at 27:1) in the top right-hand corner of the verso.

Both fragments have been ruled with a dry point, on the flesh side of the parchment. With regard to the grain, only faint traces remain on the hair side of T-S A3.35. According to these codicological elements, therefore, both fragments are quintessentially Oriental.¹⁷

The dimensions of their texts and pages, and their scripts, are consistent with the notion that T-S A2.46 and A3.35 once belonged to the same codex. This codex would have been a monumental production. The size of the pages and the script thereon, the lavishly wide margins, the skilful penmanship, and the precision of the copying all bespeak a codex of the highest quality, easily comparable to the other great Masoretic codices of the tenth and early eleventh centuries. Indeed, the codex once containing T-S A2.46 and A3.35 was apparently a more lavish production even than B19a itself, as the larger letters, fewer lines per page, larger format, and larger margins all testify.

Characteristics of Ben Jacob Manuscripts

T-S A2.46, and A3.35 can be shown, to a high degree of probability, to be the work of Samuel ben Jacob. In the absence of a colophon, such identifications can be made on the basis of a cluster of identifying features, in addition to palaeographic considerations. No single criterion is decisive in itself, but the cumulative evidence is compelling. The identifying features are of two basic kinds: para-textual and textual, and will be considered in turn.

Para-Textual Features

Beit-Arié claims that, typically, mediaeval Hebrew scribes left idiosyncratic traces in the “graphic elements which accompany the script letters.”¹⁸ The first seven features discussed below consist of such graphic elements—predominantly those connected with the writing of the Mm.

¹⁶ On the recto, the middle column ends with וַאֲרִי (Lev 26:44a). The first word visible in the third column is לְהַפֵּר (Lev 26:44a). From the available lines, the average number of letters per line is 11. Thus the line ending לְהַפֵּר reads, in full, לְכַלְתֶּם לְהַפֵּר. Above the word לְהַפֵּר sufficient ink is visible to suggest that the final word on the previous line (גַּעְלֹתִים) is followed by a line filler (half-*lamed*?). This suggests that the intervening 38 letters of text is arranged over four now-missing lines, as follows:

גַּם זֹאת בְּהִיּוֹתָם
בְּאֶרֶץ אֵיבִיהֶם
לֹא מֵאֲסֹתִים
וְלֹא גַעְלֹתִים

Similar calculations of the missing words between the final word of the recto, and the first visible word of the verso, support the conclusion of four missing lines. The height of the 13 visible lines is approximately 19.5cm.

¹⁷ Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Tentative Typology of Technical Practices Employed in Hebrew Dated Medieval Manuscripts*, Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes: études de paléographie hébraïque (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1976), 26, 74.

¹⁸ Beit-Arié, *Makings*, 79.

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Or, more elaborately, this florid combination of symbols:

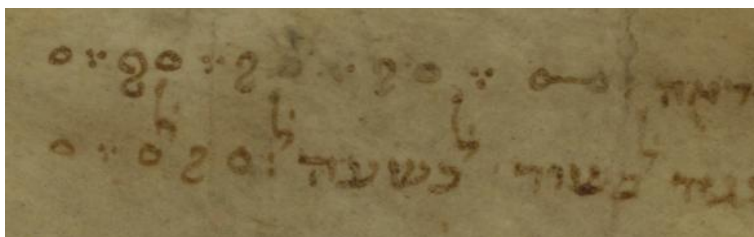


Fig. 2: Mm ornament from T-S A1.4

The Aleppo Codex regularly uses a simple circle at the end of each Masoretic note. By contrast, Or. 4445 uses a variety of ornaments. Usually it separates distinct notes using a simple circle. To justify the Mm to the left margin, the scribe was more creative, using a wide variety of symbols (most notably, two circles joined by a horizontal line. See, e.g. f.61r). Very occasionally, he used a colon-circle-colon symbol (:o:) as a left-justifier, sometimes configured vertically (e.g. f.57r), and—rarely—horizontally (e.g. f.48v).

The colon-circle-colon symbol (:o:) symbol is ubiquitous in the Mm of B19a. It is used both to separate distinct Masoretic notes, and at the end of each block of Mm. Often, a sequence of colons and circles (:o:o:o:o:) is used as a Mm left-justifier. It is also found in the other texts written by Samuel ben Jacob, for which images are currently available.²² It appears to have been ben Jacob's default symbol for separating Masoretic notes, and for use at the end of each block of notes, though he sometimes replaced it with a simple colon when space and left justification demanded.

Within the fragments of the Taylor-Schechter collection, this colon-circle-colon ornament is an unusual configuration. Of a sample of 110 manuscripts containing Mm, from which the pertinent information could be gleaned,²³ only 8 contained this ornament. These 8 include T-S A2.46 and A3.35, and three other fragments that may also be the work of Samuel ben Jacob. In both T-S A2.46 and A3.35, this tag is used both to separate distinct Masoretic notes, and at the end of each block of Mm text.

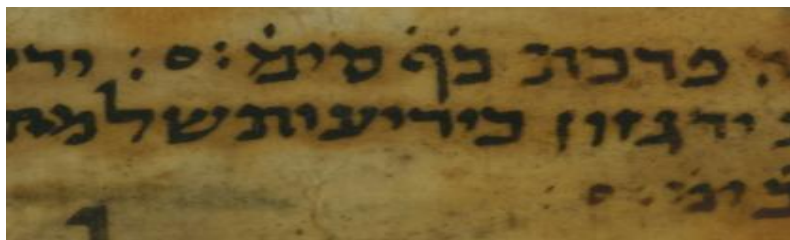


Fig. 3: Ornament from Mm of T-S A2.46: the colon-circle-colon pattern can be seen here between distinct Masoretic notes, and at the end of the note.

²² Namely, the codex of the Pentateuch containing Saadia's *Tafsir* (number 4 in the list above), held in the National Library of Russia (Evr. II C 1/1). NB: an image of this manuscript is available on the website of the National Library of Russia. The :o: symbol is clearly visible on f.2r. Likewise, T-S Ar.1a.38 (number 5 in the list above)—a fragment from another copy of the same work by Samuel ben Jacob—reveals the same symbol. T-S AS 72.79 is a small fragment; it does not contain any Mm. The leaf of Genesis 26 (number 6 in the list above) also contains the symbol.

²³ That is, the only manuscripts included in the sample were those where sufficient Mm was visible to ascertain whether ornaments were used at all, and if so, the configuration of the ornament.

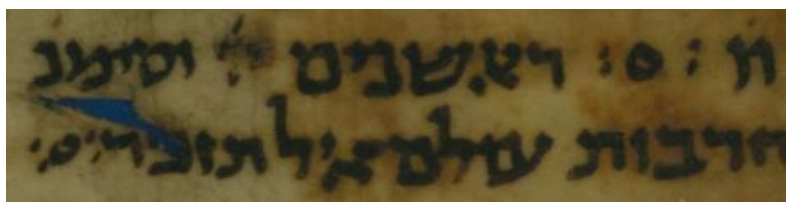


Fig. 4: Ornament from Mm of T-S A3.35: the colon-circule-colon pattern can be seen here between distinct Masoretic notes, and at the end of the note.

Centre Justification of the Final Part-Lines of Masorah Magna

A further pronounced tendency is visible within ben Jacob's Mm, as exemplified in B19a. When the block of Mm consists of two rows or fewer, these rows are almost always right justified. However, if the block of Mm consists of three or four rows, the final part-line is regularly centre-justified. Almost any folio of B19a demonstrates this tendency.²⁴ Or. 4445 also employs the technique of centre-justification of final part-lines, whereas the Aleppo Codex regularly right-justifies final part-lines. Of the sample of 110 Taylor-Schechter manuscripts, centre-justification of final part-lines was only found in 5 cases, including T-S A2.46 and A3.35.

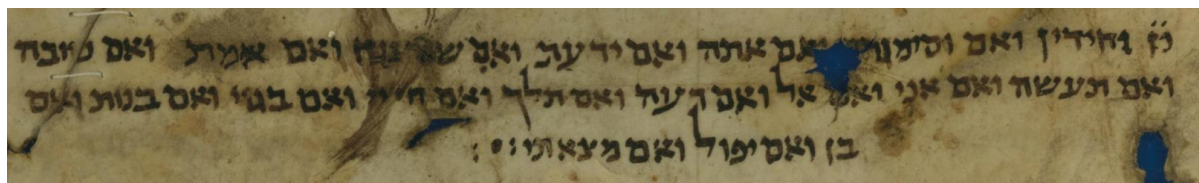


Fig. 5: Centre-justification of third row final part-line in lower Mm of T-S A3.35

Seder Markers

B19a appears to have at least two classes of *seder* markers: those apparently penned by ben Jacob himself, and those added by another hand. The later additions are usually recognisable by their addition of a transverse T shape above the ס symbol. Those apparently penned by ben Jacob show a measure of variety. Nonetheless, when a *seder* marker visible on ben Jacob's copy of the Pentateuch with Saadia's *Tafsir*,²⁵ and a *seder* marker from B19a are compared to the *seder* marker visible in T-S A2.46, it is difficult to deny that they derive from the same hand:



Figs. 6, 7: Seder marker from B19a f.71v (left), and seder marker from T-S A2.46 (right)

²⁴ It is also apparent in the aforementioned image of ben Jacob's copy of the Pentateuch with Saadia's *Tafsir*, held in the National Library of Russia (Evr. II C 1/1): number 4 in the above list, and see note 22 above.

²⁵ See note 22.

Left Justification

Early Oriental Bible codices often show non-strict attempts to justify the left margin of each column of the biblical text.²⁶ Ben Jacob, among many others, frequently employed dotted half-letters at the end of a line to achieve this left-justification. By far his preferred letter for this purpose was a dotted half-*alef*. In this respect, he was far from innovative. He also regularly used a dotted half-*lamed*.²⁷ These two symbols account for all but one of the fillers employed in T-S A2.46 and A3.35.²⁸ By contrast, none of B19a, T-S A2.46, or T-S A2.35 use the dilatation of final *mem* or *tav* so frequently employed for purposes of left-justification.

Blank Line Fillers

In B19a, I have found three occasions where ben Jacob leaves an entire line blank. He then fills these lines with small strokes, such that the line cannot be confused with a *pisqah petuḥah*.²⁹ T-S A2.46v shows identical strokes filling two blank lines:



Fig. 8: Blank line fillers on B19a, f. 9r



Fig. 9: Blank line fillers on T-S A2.46v

Substitutions for the Tetragrammaton

Beit-Arié suggests that the substitutions employed for the Tetragrammaton are another feature of a scribe's individuality that, in combination with other features, can be used to identify a particular scribe.³⁰ Moreover, he claims that such features tend to remain stable throughout the lifetime of a given scribe.³¹

In the Mm of both T-S A2.46 and A3.35 the Tetragrammaton is replaced with two horizontally adjacent *yods*, with a central supra-linear dot (TS A2.46 also employs two horizontally adjacent *yods* without the supra-linear dot). This substitution also appears in the Mm of B19a: e.g. ff. 152v; 153v; 154r; 222r. However, an apparently more frequent form pertains in the Mm to the Torah in B19a. This form also consists of two horizontally adjacent

²⁶ Beit-Arié notes that, having chosen a set of devices for left-justification, a scribe will normally adhere to them consistently. Beit-Arié, *Makings*, 82–84.

²⁷ Infrequently (in B19a), he would also use a dotted half-*shin*, particularly if the first word on the following line began with a *sin/shin*.

²⁸ In T-S A2.46v col 1, a half-*mem* has been used as a filler, in accordance with the fact that the first word of the next line begins with a *mem*.

²⁹ See f.9r; f.22r; f.76r. It is not clear to me why these lines are left unwritten. It may be significant that this phenomenon only occurs (in B19a) in the first column of the page. It may be, therefore, that ben Jacob either started writing the first column one line too low, or finished the column one line before the final rule. Then, when he realised his error, he simply filled the lines rather than erasing and rewriting.

³⁰ Beit-Arié, *Makings*, 87.

³¹ Beit-Arié, *Makings*, 90–92.

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yods, with a supra-linear dot. However, the left hand *yod* is written with a flourish such that it resembles a cursively written ך. Given that the Tetragrammaton substitution occurring in the Mm of T-S A2.46 and A3.35 also occurs repeatedly in B19a, this discrepancy (though curious) is not sufficient to cast significant doubt over the attribution of the fragments to ben Jacob.

These seven para-textual features provide the central positive evidence for the claim that ben Jacob was the scribe behind T-S A2.46/A3.35. Additional evidence, of a more corroborative nature, can also be found within the textual data itself. To this textual data, therefore, we now turn.

Textual Features

The features discussed above did not pertain to ben Jacob's writing of the actual Masoretic text, but to para-textual elements. By contrast, the discussion below relates to his writing of the consonants, vowels, and accentuation of the biblical text itself. In recent years no scholar has done more than Israel Yeivin in demonstrating and exploring the fact that, despite the rigid monolithicity of the Masoretic text, remarkable variation is still found among the early model codices with respect to the writing of certain features.³² This variation is not simply due to inevitable human error in copying. Rather, various sub-traditions, or practices, can be isolated within the broad framework of the Standard Tiberian Masoretic Text. These sub-traditions concern many aspects of the minutiae of the writing of the text—particularly its vocalisation and accentuation. Any individual model Tiberian Bible codex, therefore, contains a particular set of practices regarding the entire cluster of sub-traditions, which serves as a quasi-fingerprint for that manuscript. Moreover, on the assumption that at least some of these idiosyncrasies are the result of deliberate choice on the part of the scribe, one may expect to find some general continuity between the fingerprints of different manuscripts produced by the same scribe.

In the discussion below, therefore, some of the practices pertaining to the most significant sub-traditions visible in T-S A2.46/A3.35 are compared to the equivalent practices in B19a. To give some sense of comparison and contrast, two other model Tiberian codices are also examined for the relevant stretches of text: British Library Or. 4445, and the Damascus Pentateuch (DP). It will be seen that there is indeed very close correspondence between B19a and T-S A2.46/A3.35 regarding each specific practice.

The Consonantal Text

As is to be expected, the orthography among all four manuscripts is virtually identical across the pertinent text ranges (Exod 25:29a–26:8a; Lev 26:41a–27:10a). Only two small plene/defective spelling differences arise:

	T-S A2.46/A3.35	B19a	Or. 4445	DP
Exod 26:6b	היריעת	היריעת	הירעת	היריעת
Lev 26:45b	להית	להית	להיות	להיות

³² See, for example, the monumental work: Israel Yeivin, *The Aleppo Codex of the Bible: A Study of its Vocalisation and Accentuation*, Publications of the Hebrew University Bible Project Monograph Series, Vol 3 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968).

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One ought not build much on such slim data. Nonetheless, we note that T-S A2.46/A3.35 agrees with B19a in both cases; in the case of the reading from Leviticus, this agreement is over against both other manuscripts.

The Vocalisation

Only one difference in vocalisation emerges among the four manuscripts for the text range under discussion. In T-S A3.35, at Lev 26:43:b, the Qal perfect 3fs is incorrectly pointed with an initial *pataḥ* instead of a *qamets*. This error is so glaring and egregious that it is difficult to see it as anything other than an unfortunate *lapsus calami*.

Rafe

The extent to which *rafe* is used, and the precise details of use, varies widely among the great Masoretic codices. For example, the scribe behind Or. 4445 was very diligent in marking virtually all spirantized *begadkfat* letters with *rafe*. Likewise, he was assiduous in marking non-consonantal final *heh* with *rafe*. The scribe behind the Damascus Pentateuch employed the *rafe* far more extensively, over a wider range of letters.³³ By comparison, ben Jacob's practice in B19a is more sparing. His general practice is to mark spirantized *begadkfat* letters with *rafe*, but examination of virtually any line in the codex will reveal an exception. He shows a distinct tendency *not* to mark a spirant with *rafe*, if the letter already carries a supra-linear accent. By contrast, he almost always marks the *rafe* over two adjacent spirants (a single *rafe*, centrally placed). He inconsistently marks quiescent *alef* with *rafe*.³⁴ He appears more consistent in *not* marking non-consonantal final *heh* with *rafe*, as many manuscripts do, yet even here one finds exceptions (e.g. B19a: Exod 25:31: **הַמְנוֹרָה**).

The use of *rafe* in T-S A2.46/A3.35 accords perfectly with this general distribution seen in B19a, over against the more prolific use of *rafe* in Or. 4445 and DP.

Segolta

This accent is usually written in the form of a triangle of three dots, facing directly upwards. However, in some manuscripts the orientation of the sign is different: sometimes the triangle of dots faces down, and sometimes upwards at an oblique angle (as often in DP).³⁵ In both B19a and T-S A2.46/A3.35 the 'regular' orientation is used: a triangle of dots facing directly upwards.

Pashta

According to Yeivin, the *pashta* accent is the only post-positive accent that is regularly repeated on a penultimate stress syllable. Some manuscripts, however, nuance this repetition of *pashta*. For example, the Aleppo Codex (together with some other manuscripts) only repeats the *pashta* provided that at least one letter stands between the two letters marked with the accent. Other manuscripts do not repeat the *pashta* at all, or only do so sporadically.³⁶ The text sample extant in T-S A2.46 is sufficient to show that the scribe regularly (five out of five occurrences) repeats the *pashta* on penultimate stress syllables. This accords with ben Jacob's practice in B19a, and with the practice of Or. 4445 and DP. However, insufficient text survives in T-S A2.46/A3.35 to tell whether the scribe nuanced his repetition of *pashta* (for example, in the manner of the Aleppo Codex).

³³ See Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, ed. E. J. Revell, trans. E. J. Revell, The Society of Biblical Literature Masoretic Studies 5 (Missoula, MT.: Scholars Press, 1980), 286–287.

³⁴ A ready example of his inconsistency here can be seen in Exod 32:21–22 (in B19a). In the phrase **וַיֹּאמֶר מִשָּׁה** (v.21) ben Jacob marks the *alef* with *rafe*, but in the phrase **וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹרָן** (v.22) there is no such *rafe*.

³⁵ Yeivin, *Introduction*, 188.

³⁶ Yeivin, *Introduction*, 194–195.

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Methigah-Zaqef

The best, most ancient model codices show substantial variation in the marking of this variant of *zaqef*. Some manuscripts (such as Or. 4445) consistently mark it wherever appropriate. Others (such as DP) never mark it, instead using *zaqef qaton* alone. B19a generally, but not assiduously, marks the full *methigah-zaqef*.³⁷

There are two instances, in the text ranges under consideration here, where one might expect the *methigah-zaqef*. As the table below shows, each of Or. 4445, DP, and B19a behaves exactly as one might predict from the previous paragraph, and T-S A2.46/A3.35 follows B19a precisely:

		T-S A2.46/A3.35	B19a	Or. 4445	DP
Exod 25:34b	משקדים	<i>Zaqef</i> only	<i>Zaqef</i> only	<i>Methigah-zaqef</i>	<i>Zaqef</i> only
Exod 25:40b	בתבניתם	<i>Methigah-zaqef</i>	<i>Methigah-zaqef</i>	<i>Methigah-zaqef</i>	<i>Zaqef</i> only

Munah-Zaqef

The only accentual difference between B19a and T-S A2.46/A3.35, apart from the placement of *ga ʿyot*, concerns one occurrence of the *munah-zaqef*. This variant of *zaqef* occurs thrice in the pertinent text ranges: Exod 25:37b; 26:4b; 26:5b. B19a, Or. 4445 and DP all use the full *munah-zaqef* in each instance.³⁸ In T-S A2.46, however, the first occurrence (Exod 25:37b) is written as a simple *zaqef*. Since both other occurrences are represented accurately with the full *munah-zaqef*, it is likely that this is a simple error, rather than reflective of a different sub-tradition.

Ga ʿya

Of the making of many classes of *ga ʿyot* there is no end, and an excess thereof is a weariness to the flesh.³⁹ The use of certain classes of *ga ʿya* (such as *ga ʿya* in a closed syllable, or *ga ʿya shewa*) is relatively standard across the most accurate model codices.⁴⁰ Other classes of *ga ʿya* (such as the use thereof with the verbs *חיה* and *חיה*) is less standardised—different manuscripts show different tendencies. The various kinds of *ga ʿya* in an open syllable are perhaps the least codified aspects of the standard Tiberian Bible text.⁴¹ Here, we shall simply remark on the use of *ga ʿya* with *חיה/חיה*, and the use of *ga ʿya* in open syllables.

Regarding the use of *ga ʿya* with *חיה/חיה*, T-S A2.46/A3.35 behaves identically to B19a, in contrast to the usage evidenced in DP and Or. 4445. These latter two manuscripts employ four or five (respectively) such *ga ʿyot* (Or. 4445 thus uses a *ga ʿya* with *חיה/חיה* in every possible occurrence in the text range). By contrast, T-S A2.46/A3.35 and B19a only employ two such *ga ʿyot* (Exod 26:3a; Lev 27:9b).

³⁷ Yeivin, *Introduction*, 186.

³⁸ In fact, at Exod 26:4b Or. 4445 only writes the *munah*, omitting the *zaqef*. Clearly, this is a simple *lapsus calami*, which occur surprisingly frequently in Or. 4445. See Yeivin, *Aleppo Codex*, 359.

³⁹ According to Menachem di Lonzano in the sixteenth century. See his *ʿOr Torah*, 2b. Cited in Menachem Cohen, “Systems of Light Ga ʿyot in Medieval Biblical Manuscripts and their Importance for the History of the Tiberian Systems of Notation,” *Textus* 10 (1982): 45.

⁴⁰ The few occurrences of these types of *ga ʿya* in the text range under consideration are consistent across all the manuscripts under consideration (including T-S A2.46/A3.35).

⁴¹ See Cohen, “Systems.”

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By contrast, in the matter of *ga'ya* in an open syllable T-S A2.46/A3.35 differs from B19a. T-S A2.46/A3.35 contains fewer open-syllable *ga'yot* than B19a over the same stretch of text. However, this need not necessarily argue against the attribution of T-S A2.46/A3.35 to ben Jacob; many of the corrections ben Jacob himself made to B19a pertain to just such *ga'yot* (typically, removal thereof).⁴² Apparently, therefore, the extent of employment of open-syllable *ga'ya* was an area of flux within ben Jacob's practice.

Under eight headings, we have now examined some of the most important sub-traditions within the writing of the standard Tiberian Bible text. We have seen that, in each case, T-S A2.46/A3.35 shows close affinity to B19a, often in sharp distinction to Or. 4445 and DP. This affinity corroborates the para-textual evidence presented above. At the very least, it provides no evidence against the claim that ben Jacob was the scribe behind T-S A2.46/A3.35.

The Non-Trivial Nature of Making Scribal Identifications

A salutary warning regarding the difficulty of correctly identifying the scribe behind Oriental Masoretic codices can be gained by considering JNUL Heb 8° 2238. This beautifully ornate codex contains the *parashah Shlah* (Numbers 13–15). At first sight, one would doubtless be tempted to identify the codex as the work of ben Jacob: the scripts are very similar; the *seder* markers are almost identical, and the tell-tale circule-colon-circule pattern is used ubiquitously at the end of each Mm note. However, the colophon to the codex reveals that this manuscript is the work of Isaac ben Abraham the Levite, and was completed in 1106/7—a century after Samuel ben Jacob completed his work on B19a.

In fact, closer examination does reveal clear evidence that this manuscript is not the work of ben Jacob. The script of the Mm differs from that of ben Jacob.⁴³ The inner circle of the *seder* marker is larger than those produced by ben Jacob. Most telling of all: *rafe* over non-consonantal final *heh* is used far more regularly in JNUL Heb 8° 2238 than in B19a. Nonetheless, were it not for the colophon, it would be all too easy to be swayed by the ben Jacob-esque qualities of the work. Indeed, the various similarities raise the intriguing possibility that Isaac ben Abraham was consciously imitating the scribal habits of Samuel ben Jacob. If so, this would afford early evidence that ben Jacob's work was held in high esteem in at least some circles.

Conclusion

In this article I have provided a first attempt at a list of (non-palaeographic) criteria by means of which to identify manuscripts produced by Samuel ben Jacob. These criteria consist both of non-textual graphic elements, as well as elements pertaining to the writing of the actual Masoretic text.

Regarding the para-textual elements, the Masorah magna has proved a particularly fertile area for ben Jacob's individuality to be expressed. Ofer has already noted the peculiar manner in which ben Jacob lays out his Mm on the page. To this observation may now be added ben Jacob's characteristic :o: ornament, used to separate Masoretic notes, and at the end of a very high proportion of each block of Mm. In addition, we have observed his characteristic treatment of part-lines in each block of Mm. Again following Beit-Arié's lead, we have also considered the substitute forms ben Jacob uses for the Tetragrammaton in his

⁴² Harold P. Scanlin, "Erased Ga'ayot in the Leningrad Codex," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of the International Organization for Masoretic Studies*, ed. Ernest John Revell, The Society of Biblical Literature Masoretic Studies 8 (United States of America: Scholars Press, 1996), 105–125.

⁴³ For example, the upper horizontal stroke on both the Ⓜ and the Ⓝ are longer in JNUL Heb 8° 2238 than in B19a.

Mm notes. Para-textual elements not related to the Mm include the *seder* markers, choice of left justifiers, and line fillers.

Following the lead of scholars such as Israel Yeivin, we have also considered some of the sub-traditions employed in the writing of the biblical text of T-S A2.46/A3.35. Though the text sample is too small to allow definitive conclusions, it was seen that in each of the features examined T-S A2.46/A3.35 shows close affinity to B19a, often in sharp distinction to Or. 4445 and DP.

On the basis of these two sets of data, we claim that the codex from which T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35 apparently both derive, was, to a high degree of probability, the work of Samuel ben Jacob.

Our intention in this study has been to contribute to our understanding of the scribal habits and oeuvre of Samuel ben Jacob, not least due to the *de facto* significance of this scribe and his work. Nonetheless, the approach suggested here is generalisable: the combination of para-textual and textual considerations (alongside codicological and, where possible, palaeographic considerations) is a powerful tool for reuniting disparate fragments of biblical codices. Such efforts, though laborious, are a desideratum. Many dozens of high quality Masoretic codices currently lie in fragments, scattered among many libraries and repositories across the world. The immense labour of reuniting these individual leaves and pages is only just beginning. Some of these codices are of comparable age and quality with the very oldest and best Masoretic codices currently in our possession. This raw, scattered data holds the potential to reveal much about the development and consolidation of one of the most valuable Hebrew texts ever produced: the Tiberian Masoretic Bible.

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