

# Standardisation and variation in the orthography of Hebrew Bible and Arabic Qur'ān Manuscripts

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At certain stages in the history of the text of the sacred scriptures of both Judaism and Islam an effort was made to standardise their oral and written form. The standardisation of the written form of the text aimed to fix not only the content and its grammatical details but also the orthography in which the words were represented. When a manuscript of the Hebrew Bible or of the Arabic Qur'ān was produced the scribe was generally not free to follow the orthographic system which was customary in the period in which he lived but was required to reproduce the orthography which had been fixed at an earlier period, despite the fact that the orthography in use in other types of manuscript had changed.

In this paper I shall concentrate on the standardisation of the orthography of the Bible and the Qur'ān and discuss the constraint this imposed upon scribes in the production of manuscripts. It will be argued that this constraint was not absolute but was conditional upon other aspects of the manuscript which the scribe wrote.

In certain cases the constraint on orthographic innovation was relaxed and the scribe felt a certain amount of freedom to diverge from the traditional orthography. This constraint on orthographic innovation could be relaxed because the orthography became an integral component in the overall codicological structure of Bible and Qur'ān manuscripts which became fixed by tradition. If the codicological structure was altered in other aspects the constraint on orthographic innovation was weakened.

The extent to which the standardisation of the graphic form was observed also depended on the function which the manuscript played within society. In the production of a carefully executed model manuscript for a community the fixed tradition of the orthography of the text was meticulously followed. The Bible and the Qur'ān, however, were also written in manuscripts which, unlike these model manuscripts, were not intended to bear the burden of the preservation and control of tradition but were only written for private study. The writer of such 'popular' manuscripts did not feel himself so constrained by the traditional orthography of the text and did not take such care to reproduce it in all its details. These manuscripts no doubt generally functioned as an *aide-mémoire* for the

oral tradition of the text. They, in fact, are best considered as standing outside the written tradition, although they were generally influenced by it to a greater or lesser extent. Their existence reflects the fact that oral tradition of scripture was not always indissolubly bound with the written tradition. The transmission of the written tradition was in the hands of a specific group of people and did not have such a wide distribution in society as the oral tradition.

This leads us to another factor which is traceable in the history of at least Biblical manuscripts. Since the written tradition was controlled by a limited group of scholars it was susceptible of losing its hold on a sectarian group opposing the main religious orthodoxy with which the scholars were associated.

In what follows I shall discuss some aspects of the history of Biblical and Qur'ānic manuscripts which illustrate these tendencies. Hebrew Bible manuscripts will be dealt with first and then parallel phenomena will be sought in the development of Qur'ān manuscripts.

A study of the orthography of North West Semitic languages in the first millennium B.C. suggests that the traditional orthography of the Hebrew Bible was fixed during the Persian period (550 — 350 B.C.). Texts written earlier in the first half of the millennium exhibit a more sparing use of *matres lectionis* than is found in the traditional Biblical orthography whereas texts from the subsequent period attest to the use of an orthography which is fuller than the Biblical orthography. The official standardised orthography involved the revision of the earlier orthography and resulted in the change of such details as the spelling of final long *ō* with *waw* instead of with *he* and the insertion of *yod* before the 3rd person singular suffix of plural nouns<sup>1</sup>. The general uniformity and consistency of the fixed Biblical orthography gives the impression that it was the result of a single systematic act of recension in this period. It has recently been proposed by Andersen and Forbes that this revision of the Biblical orthography coincided with the change from the use of paleo-Hebrew script to the use of the square Hebrew script in Biblical manuscripts<sup>2</sup>. We know that this change in scribal practice took place at approximately this period<sup>3</sup>. The survival of the earlier more defective orthography in the Qumrān scroll 4QSam<sup>b</sup> and also

the continued use of the paleo-Hebrew script in a few of the Qumrān Biblical texts indicates that the early orthography and script type did have a certain strength of tradition<sup>4</sup>. The coincidence of the orthography reform with the change in script type in the Persian period would be an example of how the orthography of the text was integrally bound with the codicological structure of manuscripts.

The earliest Hebrew Bible manuscripts are the Dead Sea Scrolls. These emanated from a sectarian Jewish community who had broken away from mainstream Judaism and lived in a cenobitical community in Qumrān. The Bible manuscripts exhibit various types of orthography. Some manuscripts have an orthography which is very close to that of the model medieval Biblical manuscripts. Others have either a more defective or a more *plene* orthography than the standard so called 'Masoretic' orthography<sup>5</sup>. The fact that the official orthography of the Biblical text was already fixed explains why at least some of the Qumrān Biblical texts conform more or less to the standard orthography with its mixture of defective and *plene* forms. It is relevant to note that Biblical texts found in Wādī Murabba'āt in the Judaeen Desert datable to a period only slightly later than that in which the Qumrān manuscripts were produced all conform closely to the standard orthography. Why were Biblical manuscripts with non-standard orthography written in the Qumrān community? We may invoke two of the typological tendencies outlined above to explain this. Firstly it is of importance to note that the circles from which the Wādī Murabba'at texts came were loyal to Pharisaic Judaism and were likely to follow the orthography of the Biblical text which the authorities had fixed. The Qumrān community, on the other hand, were hostile to the Pharisaic authorities under whose auspices the orthography was fixed. It is, therefore, not surprising that their observance of this standard was no more than half-hearted<sup>6</sup>. Another factor which should be taken into account is that the texts with conspicuously *plene* orthography such as IQIsa<sup>a</sup> may have been popular texts. The expanded orthography was probably intended to guide the reader in private study with regard to the vocalism of the text<sup>7</sup>. Such texts, as observed in the introduction of this paper, to some extent stood outside the written textual tradition.

In the early Middle Ages Jewish scholars in various centres in the Near East began to develop systems of notation to indicate more details of the oral rendition of the Biblical text than was expressed by the traditional orthography. A systematic extension of the orthography by the addition of *matres lectionis* was not tolerated so vowel signs were devised which expressed phonetic details independently of *matres lectionis*. Three major systems of vocalisation evolved. These are usually known as the Palestinian, Babylonian and Tiberian systems respectively. There was also a hybrid type of Tiberian vocalisation which scholars

refer to by various names such as expanded Tiberian, Palestino-Tiberian, Pseudo-Ben Naphtali<sup>8</sup>. The ordinary Tiberian system eventually became the standard system and supplanted the other systems. Unlike the Palestinian and Babylonian systems, which were often used only to vocalise isolated words in the text, the Tiberian vocalisation was complete. The signs indicated all the phonemic vowel qualities. Vowel quantity was not phonemic in the Tiberian reading tradition of Biblical Hebrew. The Tiberian vocalisation system, however, in combination with the system of cantillation signs, which were placed on the stressed syllable of each word, allowed the reader to determine whether the vowel was pronounced long or short. Vowel length was dependent on the syllable structure. A vowel which was indicated by a vowel sign was long if it was in a stressed syllable or in an unstressed open syllable<sup>9</sup>.

Despite the fact that the vocalisation systems left the traditional consonantal orthography unchanged it was still felt to be an innovation in the graphic form of the Biblical text. It was only tolerated in manuscripts which had the form of codices but was not allowed in the manuscripts of scroll form, which was the traditional codicological structure of Biblical manuscripts used in the synagogue service. We have here, then, an example of how change in some other aspect of the codicological form of the manuscripts allowed the graphic form of the text to be modified. The vocalised codices were used for study. They contained details of the oral rendition of the text including the vocalism, the cantillation and also the cases where the reading tradition contained a word which differed from what appeared in the written tradition. Certain of the codices also contained textual or 'Masoretic' notes. In certain respects, therefore, the codices stood outside the written tradition of the Bible text which was perpetuated in the synagogue scrolls.

The 'Masoretic text' of the codices was itself standardised. This applied especially to the Tiberian Masoretic text which eventually supplanted the others. Communities possessed model codices which accurately reproduced the detailed notation which was perfected by the last generation of Tiberian Masoretes in the ninth century. A number of the old model Tiberian codices which were probably produced by the Tiberian circle of scholars themselves have survived. Many of them are in Leningrad library collections.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to these model codices, however, people also possessed 'popular' codices for their own private study. Many manuscripts of this type are found in the Cairo Genizah. They generally have a smaller format than the model codices. In most cases they are not carefully written and they deviate from the standard Tiberian text in a number of features. The majority of these deviations are the result of carelessness and lack of concern for complete accuracy rather than the result of a systematic conscious effort to modify the text such as was apparently the case in some of the 'popular' *plene* Qumrān manuscripts such as IQIsa<sup>a</sup>. In some of

the 'popular' medieval manuscripts the consonantal orthography is slightly more *plene* than the traditional orthography. Additional *matres lectionis*, however, only occur sporadically and are not introduced systematically. Their insertion was no doubt the result of an unconscious interference from the contemporary type of *plene* orthography which was used in non-Biblical manuscripts. The 'popular' Biblical codices also contain many deviations from the standard Tiberian vocalisation. These can be classified into two groups. Firstly deviations which resulted from interference from the scribe's own pronunciation tradition of the Biblical text. Although the Tiberian vowel notation system was standardised the actual Tiberian pronunciation tradition which it reflected was only used in restricted scholarly circles outside of the area of North Palestine where it originated<sup>11</sup>. The standard Tiberian vocalisation of the model codices was read with different forms of pronunciation in the local communities. These non-Tiberian pronunciation traditions interfered with the vocalisation of the 'popular' texts, the scribes of which were not concerned to reproduce accurately the Tiberian Masoretic notation. The second category of deviations in the vocalisation of the 'popular' texts is constituted by those which do not reflect a different pronunciation but rather are a different form of notation. I am not referring here to non-Tiberian systems of vocalisation such as the Babylonian or Palestinian systems but rather to a non-standard use of the Tiberian signs. This non-standard use in most cases does not seem to be related to the hybrid type of Tiberian vocalisation developed in certain Masoretic circles, to which I alluded above. It is more reminiscent of the popular forms of Tiberian vocalisation which were used in the Middle Ages in non-Biblical texts. Many of these vocalised texts have been preserved in the Cairo Genizah. They are predominantly Hebrew poetry and Talmudic texts though also include non-Hebrew vocalised texts such as Judaeo-Arabic, Judaeo-Persian and Judaeo-Greek. The major component of the vocalisation which falls into this category is the use of the *šewa* sign. The writers of the 'popular' Biblical codices, therefore, only felt weakly constrained by both the traditional consonantal orthography and the standardised Tiberian vocalisation. These texts may be considered as standing outside the written manuscript tradition of both the Biblical scrolls and the model codices. They were essentially *aide-mémoires* of the oral tradition of the text which were weakly influenced by the written tradition.

In the Middle Ages Judaism was split into two main groups, the Jews following the mainstream Rabbinic tradition known as Rabbanites and those who rejected the Rabbinic tradition known as Karaites. A number of medieval Hebrew Bible manuscripts written by Karaites have survived. Some of them exhibit a rather surprising feature — they are transcriptions of the Hebrew text into Arabic script. These were mostly

written between the tenth and twelfth centuries in scribal circles in Palestine.

The motivation for the Karaites to transcribe the Hebrew Biblical text had its origin in their sectarian opposition to the Rabbanites. The sect had an ambivalent attitude towards the written tradition of the Biblical text. The colophons of some of the old model codices emanating from Tiberian Masoretic circles indicate that, in at least some stage of their history, they were in the possession of Karaite communities. References to the Biblical text in the works of Karaite grammarians, lexicographers and Bible commentators make it clear that they were using Bible manuscripts written with the traditional Hebrew orthography and not Arabic transcriptions. Certain passages in Karaite literature, on the other hand, testify to their qualms about following the written tradition of the Biblical text, which had been transmitted by Rabbinic scholars. The Karaite al-Qirqisānī in his work *Kitāb al-'Anwār wa-l-Marāqib*, maintains that the present reading tradition represented the original reading of the Biblical text which had been preserved since the time of the prophets. In cases where the *kētib* (written text) conflicted with the *qēre* (reading tradition) the *qēre*, in his view, represented the original tradition and not a change to the text<sup>12</sup>. A more explicit impugment of the reliability of the written tradition of the Biblical text, which had been transmitted by Rabbinic scholars, is found in the work **חילוק בי הרבנים והקראים** by the twelfth-century Byzantine Karaite Elijah ben Abraham<sup>13</sup>.

The extant Karaite manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic script are not letter for letter transliterations of the traditional Hebrew orthography but are transcriptions of the oral tradition of the text. This is clearly shown by the fact that, where the *qēre* differs from the *kētib* only the *qēre* is represented. A number of different types of transcription are found in the manuscripts. These can be classified into three groups: 1. An orthography equivalent to the *plene* Hebrew orthography which was used in non-Biblical manuscripts in the Middle Ages; 2. a mixed orthography containing features of both Classical Arabic and also *plene* Hebrew spelling; 3. a Classical Arabic type of orthography (the system used in most of the extant manuscripts). The intention of the Karaite scribes was evidently to represent the oral tradition directly in a *plene* orthography and discard the traditional orthography of the Biblical text with its greater number of defective spellings and its frequent conflict with the oral tradition. The earliest system of transliteration which they used was the one based on *plene* Hebrew orthography. Why did they not simply write the text in Hebrew script and add more vowel letters as was done by some of the Qumrān scribes. We have mentioned already that the contemporary style of *plene* orthography did penetrate some 'popular' Biblical codices to a certain extent. Since, however, the extra *plene* spellings in these texts do not occur systematically they

resulted most likely from carelessness rather than from a conscious effort to rewrite the text with a different orthography. The Karaites, by contrast, set themselves the task of systematically representing the oral tradition of the text in a consistently *plene* orthography. The reverence for the fixed orthography of the Hebrew Bible, which, in the Middle Ages, had been fixed for over one thousand years, was deeply ingrained in Judaism. Despite their qualms about the written text this reverence was also felt by the Karaites. They were, therefore, constrained from rewriting the Hebrew text. It was only by writing the text in another script that they were freed of this constraint and could systematically change the orthography. We, therefore, have here an example of how the constraint of the tradition of the fixed orthography of the Bible was weakened when a change was made in some other aspect of the traditional codicological structure of manuscripts, in this case a change in script. The transcriptions were the result of a tension between the burden of tradition and sectarian opposition to authority. They were not intended to replace the traditional orthography but stood outside the written tradition and provided an alternative to it. Their status was similar to that of the aforementioned 'popular' Hebrew Bible codices. They were evidently only used for private study. This is shown by the fact that many of the manuscripts of the transcribed Bible texts also contained the text of one of the Karaite Bible commentaries. The traditional written tradition was continued in the Karaite communities by the model codices. One may perhaps compare this ambivalent attitude to the traditional Biblical orthography with the attitude of the Qumrān sectarians to the traditional fixed text which was followed by Pharisaic Judaism. The presence in Qumrān of Biblical scrolls such as 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>, the orthography of which is very close to that of the Masoretic text, indicates that the sectarians did not totally reject the traditional graphic form of the text. It is clear, however, from the numerous scrolls with a much fuller form of spelling that they did not feel very strongly constrained by it either<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, before closing our discussion of Hebrew Bible manuscripts it is relevant to draw your attention also to the orthography of the Samaritan Pentateuch. This exhibits a more abundant use of *matres lectionis* than the Masoretic text<sup>15</sup>. The Samaritans, who broke away from Judaism at an early period, clearly had little inclination to follow the orthographic tradition which was espoused by the Jewish religious authorities. Their development of an orthographic tradition which was independent of that of the Masoretic text was also, doubtless, facilitated by the fact that they did not use the Hebrew block script but their own Samaritan script.

There are a number of typological parallels between the history of Hebrew Bible manuscripts and that of

Arabic Qur'ān manuscripts with regard to the conditions in which the constraint of traditional orthography of the text was relaxed.

Some of the earliest manuscripts of the Qur'ān are written in a form of script which resembles in certain respects the rounded manuscript hand of Arabic papyri from the first century A.H.<sup>16</sup> The script is characterised by such features as the sloping of 'alif to the right and the general high extension of the *hastae* of letters. On the basis of a statement in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm with regard to the 'alif this script can be identified with the old Meccan-Medinan type<sup>17</sup>. These manuscripts generally exhibit extensive defective spelling of long medial *ā*.<sup>18</sup> One manuscript of this type among the Lewis palimpsests<sup>19</sup>, even contains a few instances of defective spelling of long medial *ī* and *ū*.<sup>20</sup> Such defective spelling, especially of long medial *ā* was customary in the pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions and Nabatean, from which the Arabic script was ultimately derived. Another corpus of early Qur'ān manuscripts are those written in a script which is more stiff and angular. This script is generally referred to as Kūfic and the origin of this style of manuscript was most likely Iraq. They exhibit a greater tendency to spell long medial *ā* with *mater lectionis* 'alif than is found in the Ḥijāzī manuscripts<sup>21</sup>. There may have been a certain chronological overlap between this new Kūfic manuscript type and the Ḥijāzī type manuscripts with their more defective orthography<sup>22</sup>. It is possible that this increase in the use of *mater lectionis* 'alif for long *ā* was the result of concerted policy of orthographic reform in Iraq. This is suggested by the report by Ibn 'Abī Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī in his *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* that the governor of Iraq, 'Ubaydallāh ibn Ziyād (d. 67 A.H.) instigated a more extensive use of *mater lectionis* 'alif to spell long *ā* in the Qur'ānic text and thereby increased it by two thousand letters<sup>23</sup>. Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 95), a later governor of Iraq, ordered that the letters of the Qur'ān be counted and that it be determined at which letter of which word the half way point of the text fell. He also required it to be divided into seven sections of equal length and, likewise, determine at exactly which letter the boundaries of the sections fell<sup>24</sup>. The purpose of this action of Ḥajjāj was evidently to provide a means of controlling the spelling of the Qur'ānic text and preventing any additions, even of single letters. Concern to prevent the orthography of the Qur'ān from being modified is expressed by such statements as the following attributed to Mālik (d. 179 A.H.):

وسئل مالك رحمه الله هل يكتب المصحف على ما أحدثه الناس من الهجاء فقال لا إلا على الكنية الأولى

'Mālik — may God have mercy upon him — was asked "Should the Qur'ān be written with the modified spelling which people have introduced" and he said "No (it should only be written) with the old orthography" (al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Muqni*, ed. Pretzl (Leipzig 1932), 10).

Was it a chance coincidence that the orthographic reform associated with 'Ubaydallāh ibn Ziyād was also accompanied by a modification in the script style from the Meccan-Medinan type to the more monumental Kūfic type, as is demonstrated by the extant manuscripts? We may have here an example of how the constraint of the tradition of orthography was weakened when other features of the traditional codicological structure of the manuscripts were modified.

The 'correct' type of orthography which was eventually prescribed in the literary sources such as al-Dānī's *Kitāb al-Muqni* and the successive works which were dependent on this represents a slightly fuller use of *mater lectionis* 'alif than is attested in the old Hijāzī type codices but still spells a substantial proportion of long *ā* vowels in medial position defectively. This type of orthography is the one used in the official Cairo edition of the Qur'ān, published in 1925, the consonantal text of which was reconstructed from the *Mawrid al-Zam'ān* by 'Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Kharrāz (d. 711 A.H.), a poetic work on orthography ultimately dependent on the *Kitāb al-Muqni*<sup>25</sup>.

A number of early Qur'ān fragments written on papyrus can be found in Arabic papyrus collections. They were apparently 'popular' texts intended for private study. The orthography of these texts is equivalent to that which was used at the same period in non-Qur'ānic Arabic manuscripts. A fragment formerly in the Michaelides collection, which is datable by its script to the first Islamic century, exhibits a mixture of *plene* and defective orthography for medial long *ā*<sup>26</sup>. This type of orthography with extensive defective spelling of medial long *ā*, which became the standard in model Qur'ān manuscripts, is attested in other papyrus documents from the first century<sup>27</sup>. Later papyrus Qur'ān fragments written in a script characteristic of the late second century or the third century A.H., in conformity with the orthography of contemporary papyrus documents, exhibit a regular use of *mater lectionis* 'alif for long medial *ā* except in words which retained their defective spelling in Classical Arabic orthography such as *ذلك*, *هذا*, *الرحمن*, *اولئك*. The deviation from the standard semi-defective orthography of long medial *ā*, which is attested in most of the contemporary Kūfic Qur'ān manuscripts, was facilitated by the fact that these papyrus Qur'āns were evidently used only for private study and functioned as *aide-mémoires* for the reading tradition of the text. The burden of continuing the written tradition of the Qur'ānic text was borne by the model codices. The second and third century papyrus popular Qur'āns, moreover, diverged from the model Qur'ān manuscripts in their use of a free cursive script<sup>28</sup>.

There are conflicting reports as to when vowel signs were devised for Arabic. They evidently emerged either in the last half of the first century A.H. or the first half of the second century. Their use to vocalise Qur'ān

manuscripts was at first disapproved of in many circles since they were thought to be an addition to the original graphic form of the text. A statement attributed to Mālik ibn Anas with regard to the writing of vocalisation signs in Qur'ān manuscripts is important for the theme of this paper:

اما هذه الصغار التي يتعلم فيها الصبيان فلا بأس بذلك واما الامهات فلا ارى ذلك فيها

'As for the small (codices) which are used for study by children — there is no harm in that, but I do not approve of that in the model codices.' (al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Naqt*, ed. Pretzl (Leipzig 1932), 133)<sup>29</sup>.

He forbade the writing of vocalisation signs in model Qur'āns used for official purposes (i.e. the manuscripts which people relied upon to preserve the details of the written tradition of the text) but permitted them to be written in small Qur'ān manuscripts which were used for instruction. This again reflects the weakening of the immutability of the written tradition in popular manuscripts, the codicological structure of which differed from that of the model manuscripts. Many of the extant old Qur'ān manuscripts do not have vowel signs or else have vocalisation which has been added by a later hand. Ibn 'Abī Dā'ūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316) states<sup>30</sup> that vowel signs were to be used only where strictly necessary whereas Al-Dānī (d. 444), writing over a century later, prescribes complete vocalisation yet he reports that even in his day many people persisted in reading unvocalised Qur'āns. Vowel signs in the early manuscripts were generally written in a different colour of ink from that which was used for the consonants so as not to appear to be integrated with the consonantal orthography<sup>31</sup>. Moreover the orthography was sometimes made fuller by adding *matres lectionis* in red ink<sup>32</sup>. This may be interpreted as another example of how some detail of codicological structure was changed in order to relax the constraint of the written tradition.

I hope to have shown by the foregoing short survey of some aspects of the history of Hebrew Bible and Arabic Qur'ān manuscripts that the fixed tradition of immutable orthography was relaxed under certain conditions. These included deviating from the traditional codicological structure and producing manuscripts for private study. What was fixed by tradition was the overall system of codicological details of the manuscript and not the individual details independently of one another. When the system was disturbed the tradition was weakened. Only a limited circle of people bore the burden of accurately preserving the fixed orthography of the written tradition of the sacred text. The other members of the populace produced manuscripts for their own private use without feeling so uncompromisingly bound by the written tradition. Unlike the oral reading traditions of the text, the written tradition was controlled by a circumscribed group of scholars who represented the dominant

orthodoxy. This circumstance of the transmission of the written tradition weakened its influence among sectarian groups opposing the religious orthodoxy.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> F.M. Cross, Jr., and D.N. Freedman, *Early Hebrew orthography* (New Haven 1952); D.N. Freedman, 'The Masoretic Text and the Qumrān scrolls: A study in orthography' *Textus* II (1962), 87-102; F.I. Andersen and A.D. Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible* (Rome 1986), 309ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 322-23.

<sup>3</sup> C.D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*. Second edition (New York 1966), 289ff.

<sup>4</sup> D.N. Freedman, *Textus* II, 96ff.; D.N. Freedman and K.A. Mathews, *The paleo-Hebrew Leviticus scroll (11QpaleoLev)* (American Schools of Oriental Research 1985).

<sup>5</sup> Freedman and Mathews, *ibid.*, 51ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the discussion of this question by R. Gordis, *The Biblical text in the making*. Augmented edition (New York 1971), xxxviiiif.

<sup>7</sup> E.Y. Kutscher, *The language and linguistic background of the Isaiah scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)* (Leiden 1974), 77ff.

<sup>8</sup> For a survey of the various vocalisation systems cf. S. Morag, *The vocalization systems of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic* ('s-Gravenhage 1962) and A. Dotan, art. 'Masorah', *Encyclopaedia Judaica* vol. XVI, cols. 1401-1482.

<sup>9</sup> G. Khan, 'Vowel length and syllable structure in the Tiberian tradition of Biblical Hebrew' *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXIII/1 (1987), 23-82.

<sup>10</sup> I. Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*. Translated and edited by E.J. Revell (Missoula 1980), 15ff.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Abraham ibn Ezra, *ספר צחות*, ed. G.H. Lippmann (Fürth 1827), 3b; al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-'Anwār wa-l-Marāqib*, ed. L. Nemoy (New York 1939-45), 140, line 14ff; B. Klar, *מחקרים ועיונים בלשון בשריה וספרות* (Tel Aviv 1954), 44, 328.

<sup>12</sup> Ed. Nemoy, 162.

<sup>13</sup> Ed. S. Pinsker in *לקוטי קדמוניות* (Vienne 1860), 102-3; cf. L. Nemoy, 'Elijah ben Abraham and his tract against the Rabbanites' *Hebrew Union College Annual* LI (1980), 73 and also A. Dotan, *Ben Asher's creed* (Missoula 1977), 43-45.

<sup>14</sup> With regard to the background and motivation for the Karaite Bible transcriptions see my article 'The medieval Karaite transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic script' *Israel Oriental Studies* 12 (1992), 157-176.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. Murtonen, 'On the interpretation of the *matres lectionis* in Biblical Hebrew' *Abr-Nahrain* XIII (1972-3), 66-121.

<sup>16</sup> *Geschichte des Qorāns von Theodor Nöldeke. Zweite völlig umgearbeitete Auflage. Dritte Teil, die Geschichte des Korantexts von G. Bergsträsser und O. Pretzl* (Leipzig 1938), 254-55.

<sup>17</sup> *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. G. Flugel (Leipzig 1871-2), 6; Cf. J. Karabacek, 'Julius Euting's Sinaitische Inschriften' *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* V (1891), 322-25; id. *Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer: Führer durch die Ausstellung* (Vienna 1894), 149 (PERF 592); M. le Baron de Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris 1883-1895), 89ff. [descriptions by M. Amari]; C.H. Becker, *Papyri Schott-Reinhardt I.* (Heidelberg 1906),

25ff.; N. Abott, *The Kurrah papyri from Aphrodito in the Oriental Institute* (Chicago 1938), 33-35.

<sup>18</sup> *Geschichte des Qorāns* III, 254. Cf. also H. Loebenstein, *Koranfragmente auf Pergament aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichische Nationalbibliothek* [Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichische Nationalbibliothek XIV. Folge] (Vienna 1982), nos. 1-4.

<sup>19</sup> Published by A. Mingana and A.S. Lewis, *Leaves from three ancient Qorāns, possibly pre-'Othmanic; with a list of their variants* (Cambridge 1914).

<sup>20</sup> *Geschichte des Qorāns* III, 54.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-57. Cf. the detailed study of the Kūfic codex known as the Samarqand Qur'ān by A. Jeffery and I. Mendelsohn, *JAOS* LXII (1942), 175-95. According to these scholars the codex was written in Iraq in the early third century A.H.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. the remarks by F. Déroche in his introduction to his catalogue of early Qur'ān manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes. Deuxième partie. Manuscrits Musulmans, Tome I, 1. Les manuscrits du Coran: Aux origines de la calligraphie coranique* (Paris 1983), 50.

<sup>23</sup> Ed. A. Jeffery in *Materials for the history of the text of the Qur'ān* (Leiden 1937), 117.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Sijistānī, *ibid.*, 119.

<sup>25</sup> G. Bergsträsser, 'Koranlesung in Kairo', *Der Islam* XX (1932), 5 and *Geschichte des Qorāns* III, 238-40, 273-74.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. A. Grohmann, 'The problem of dating early Qur'āns' *Der Islam* XXXIII (1958), 22ff. The fragment contains Sūra 54: 11-38, 45-55, 55: 1-32. It agrees with the official Egyptian edition with regard to the defective orthography of medial long *ā* in the following instances: ترك [ترك] (54:11), السماوات (55:13), [صا]صل (54:47), [رود]رود (54:37), [صا]صل (55:29, second *ā*). It has defective orthography where the Egyptian edition has *plene* in the following instances: صحيم [صحي]م (54:29), [للا]للا (55:9); and *plene* orthography where the Egyptian edition has defective in: [الوا]ح (54:13), السماوات (55:29, first *ā*).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. S. Hopkins, *Studies in the grammar of early Arabic* (Oxford 1984), 11-14; W. Diem, 'Der Gouverneur an den Pagarchen: Ein verkannter Papyrus vom Jahre 65 der Hiġra', *Der Islam* LX (1983), 106.

<sup>28</sup> An example of such a papyrus is P. Nour 1, published in G. Khan, *Arabic Papyri in the Nour Collection*. (forthcoming) The recto contains the text 36: 1-17, 36, 45. Except in the word الرحمن long medial *ā* is always written *plene*. The following are the instances of *plene* spelling where the official Egyptian edition omits the *mater lectionis* (some are missing due to *lacunae* in the papyrus): صراط (4), غافلون (6), اصحاب (13), احصيناه (12), فاغشيناهم (9), اعناقهم اغلالا (8). Another example is a papyrus formerly in the Michaelides collection (a plate of which was published by Grohmann, *Der Islam* XXXIII (no. IV). The recto contains Sūra 60:5 — 63:9. *Plene* orthography is consistently used where the Egyptian edition has defective, e.g.: دياركم (60:8), يقاتلوكم (60:8), دياركم (60:8), دياركم (60:9), يقاتلوكم (60:9), دياركم (60:9), وظاهروا (60:9), الظالمون (60:9).

<sup>29</sup> A variant version of this is quoted by al-Suyūṭī, *Kitāb al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Cairo 1318/1900), vol. II, 171.

<sup>30</sup> *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, ed. Jeffery, 144.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. al-Dānī, *Kitāb al-Naqt*, 133-4: ولا استجيز النقط بالسواد لما فيه من التغيير لصورة الرسم.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-7.