

THE MARGINAL *NUN* IN THE MASORA OF THE CAIRO CODEX OF THE PROPHETS: USE AND FUNCTION¹

Abstract

The sign like a large final *nun* that appears in the margins of some early manuscripts has been considered another way of expressing the *ketib-qere* phenomenon. The analysis and study of the more than five hundred occurrences located in the Cairo Codex of the Prophets question this explanation and make it possible to define its use and explain its function in the context of this codex. According to this analysis, the marginal *nun* is related to the consonantal text without any reference to the reading tradition; its function is to warn that something happens in the consonantal text but not to explain it; and finally, its use in the Cairo Codex is determined by the probability that the spelling of a word might lead to a serious error in understanding.

Keywords

Textual criticism, Masorah, main Tiberian codices

In some early manuscripts (dated before the 12th century), a sign like a large final *nun*, ן, appears in the margin where the MP notes are placed. It is also called a “marginal *nun*”. The exact role of this symbol and the Masoretic term it represents are still unknown. It has been explained as an abbreviation for קריין, ‘what are read’ (Kahle), for נסחה, ‘variant’ (BH3), as derived from a *zayin* representing זיטימא, ‘uncertain’ or just as a sign which happens to look like a letter, without representing any word². Most authors consider it another way of

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² I. Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*. Translated by E. J. Revell, (Missoula, Montana, 1980), pp. 52-53.

indicating the *ketib-qere* phenomenon³. Innocent Himbaza has suggested a different role: the marginal *nun* indicates some textual problem in the text⁴. None of these views are based on a detailed analysis.

Apart from the Cairo Codex of the Prophets (C), the presence of this symbol in the main Masoretic codices (those attributed or related to the Ben Asher family) is scarce or even null. It appears seventy-four times in the Leningrad Codex (L) and not once in the Aleppo Codex (A). But it occurs more than five hundred times in C. This study locates and analyzes all the occurrences of this symbol in C in order to describe how it appears and to explain its use in the context of this codex⁵. Moreover, these cases have been compared with other cases that share the textual phenomenon but appear without a marginal *nun*. For comparison purposes, I also present the study of the cases of marginal *nun* located in L in Appendix I. For this study I consulted some photographs of C held by the Masora team at the CSIC, which are of better quality than the D. S. Loewinger facsimile⁶.

ANALYSIS

The marginal *nun* is usually recorded in C in a bigger size than the other letters that appear in the Masora (with the exception of the sign for *sefer*) and in bold handwriting. However this big size is not regular throughout the manuscript and it can vary even on the same page. The marginal *nun* appears in a regular size and normal handwriting in 1 Sam 17:23, 2 Kgs 9:37, 19:23, Jer 23:18 and Ez 8:6.

The marginal *nun* is placed on the right or left margin of the line in which the word to which it refers appears and it is vertically aligned with the other Masoretic notes on the folio. It can appear alone or beside another Masoretic note, usually located on its left. In some cases, there is more than one Masoretic note to the right of the *nun* or below it. When these

³ Cf. A. Dotan, "Masora", *EJ* 13 (2007), p. 616; E. d. F. Francisco, *Manual da Bíblia Hebraica. Introdução ao Texto Massorético. Guia Introdutório para a Bíblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (3rd ed. Brasil, 2008), pp. 191-192; Yeivin, p. 53; E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2^a ed. Minneapolis-Assen, 2001), p. 59.

⁴ I. Himbaza, "Le *nûn* marginal et la petite Massore", *Textus* 20 (2000), pp. 173-191.

⁵ I have not taken into account those cases that are given between brackets in the Cairo edition. Cf. M^a. J. de Azcárraga Servert, *La masora parva del código de Profetas de El Cairo. Índice analítico* (Textos y Estudios "Cardenal Cisneros" 61; Madrid: CSIC, 1997).

⁶ D. S. Loewinger (ed.), *Codex Cairensis of the Bible from the Karaite Synagogue at Abbasiya* (Jerusalem, 1971).

notes are attached to the same word, it is necessary to determine which of them is related to the marginal *nun*. As a general rule, I have considered the note located on the left of the marginal *nun* as the principal one.

1. Alone

The marginal *nun* appears alone forty-four times, without any other Masoretic note at its side. It appears with no further Masoretic notes in 2 Sam 22:23. A *qere-ketib* note appears thirty-nine times on the opposite side of the column where the marginal *nun* is placed: Judg 11:37; 1 Sam 2:10; 5:6; 20:2; 2 Sam 12:20; 12:22; 15:8; 18:8; 19:32; 21:20; 22:23; 1 Kgs 5:17; 7:45; 2 Kgs 7:15; 11:9; 11:10; 16:17; 16:18; 19:23; 19:37; 25:17; Is 36:12; Jer 3:7; 6:25; 14:14 (x2); 17:10; 22:4; 29:23; 32:23; 48:18; Ez 23:16; 35:12; 39:11; 40:15; 42:9; 44:24 (x2); Zac 1:16. Two times, in Judg 20:13 and 2 Kgs 19:37, a *qere we-la' ketib* note is placed on the other side of the column and a *haser* note two other times, 1 Sam 9:26 and 2 Sam 14:11. Most cases involve the exchange of letters (twice the exchange of words) and to a lesser extent a lack of letters, letter reversals and extra/superfluous letters.

2. Beside other Masoretic Phenomena

Most of the times the marginal *nun* appears together other Masoretic notes, such as *haser*, *yatir*, *qere-ketib*, *qere we-la ketib*, *ketib we-la qere*, *ketib* notes and *let* notes.

2.1. *Haser*

The marginal *nun* appears fourteen times beside a *haser* note⁷: Judg 21:20⁸; 1 Sam 24:19; 25:8; 25:3; 2 Sam 3:3; 1 Kgs 15:18; 21:21; 2 Kgs 13:6; Jer 19:15; 32:35; 39:16; Ez 16:25; 23:43; Mic 1:15. In 1 Kgs 15:18, there is also a *qere* note on the right side of the column.

These cases can be classified into five groups according to the letter they lack:

- Words lacking a *heh* at their end: 1 Sam 24:19; Ez 23:43.
- Words lacking a *heh* at their beginning: 1 Kgs 15:18.

⁷ 'Defective spelling'. This may refer to *matres lectionis* (with or without the vowel letters *yod* and *waw*), letters (with or without any other letter) or words (with or without one or more other words).

⁸ The formulation of this note is quite different from the other *haser* notes because it offers all the possible spellings of the word *ויצאו חסד מל ואלו* *ל' ת' י'*, '[occurs] four [times], three [written] plene and once [written] defective'. The word is spelled defectively here.

- Words lacking an *alef* at their end: Judg 21:20; 1 Sam 25:8; 1 Kgs 21:21; 2 Kgs 13:6; Jer 19:15; 32:35; 39:16. The words in this group belong to the roots בוא, אטח, and אצו and the missing *alef* is one of the radical letters.

- Words written lacking a *yod* in the middle: 1 Sam 25:3; 2 Sam 3:3; Ez 16:25. The two cases in Samuel involve the proper name Abigail.

- Words written lacking a *waw* in the middle: Mic 1:15.

In most cases, the defective spelling of the word might make it difficult to recognize it, for example: מבי in Jer 19:15, MP: ׀ ח ם ך; or עת in Ez 23:43, MP: ׀ ח ם ך. By contrast and with some exceptions (e.g., 1 Kgs 21:29; Ez 7:4; etc.), the numerous *haser* notes without any marginal *nun*⁹ refer to the lack of the *matres lectionis yod* and *waw*. Their absences do not pose a problem in terms of understanding the word (e.g., יבא in Is 52:1, MP: ׀ ח ם ל, ‘unique [spelled] defective [without *waw*] in [this] book’).

2.2. *Yatir*

The marginal *nun* appears eighty times beside a *yatir* note¹⁰: Jos 6:7; 7:21; Judg 9:8.12; 13:17; 17:2; 1 Sam 15:16; 24:5; 25:34; 28:8; 2 Sam 1:16; 10:9.17; 11:1.24; 12:1; 13:8; 14:11; 16:2; 21:9; 23:20; 1 Kgs 1:27; 2:24; 6:16; 8:26; 9:25; 12:3.21; 14:2; 18:36; 22:13; 2 Kgs 7:12; 8:21; 11:1.2.15; 14:2; Is 23:12; 26:20; 42:24; Jer 1:5; 2:23; 3:4; 4:19; 5:7; 10:17; 15:16; 22:23; 31:21.39; 34:11; 41:17; 42:20; 46:11; 48:44; 49:28; 51:13; Ez 4:6; 9:5.8; 16:13.18.22.31(x2).43.47.51; 18:28; 23:14.42; 27:3; 29:4; 36:16; 47:10; Os 4:6; 10:14; Mic 1:3.10; Zac 1:4. In four of these cases (2 Sam 16:2; 1 Kgs 11:2; 14:2; Ez 47:10) there is also a *qere* note on the other side of the column. These notes mainly involve an extra *yod* (46 times) and extra *waw* (18 times); occasionally, they involve an extra *alef* (7 times), *heh* (4 times), *tet* (twice), *lamed* (once) and *bet* (once).

There are thirty-three more cases of *yatir* notes without a marginal *nun*.¹¹ Most of those cases involve an extra *alef* (16 times), nine an extra *yod* (all of them are verbs in *hipil*,

⁹ Cf. Azcárraga Servert, pp. 82-84, 89-131.

¹⁰ The term *yatir* means ‘superfluous’ and is used to indicate an extra letter in the word. It is also considered one of the terms used in *qere-ketib* situations (cf. Yeivin, p. 94).

¹¹ Cf. Azcárraga Servert, 70-74.

mostly in the infinitive absolute), six an extra *waw* and two an extra *heh* (both in the proper name חזאל).

The differences between both groups seem to be in the orthographic peculiarity, in the potential of the odd spelling to lead the reader or scribe into error. If the potential is high, then there is a marginal *nun*, but if the potential is low, the marginal *nun* does not appear. For example, the MP note to המלאכים in 2 Sam 11:1 says: ך יתיר א, ‘*alef* superfluous’; this is the only case in the whole Bible where the word ‘kings’, המלכים, appears written with an *alef*. The marginal *nun* seems to indicate this oddity and to try to avoid the confusion with the other sixteen occurrences of the consonantal text המלאכים in the Bible but refer to ‘messengers’ or ‘angels’. By contrast, the MP note to ההלכוּא in Josh 10:24 says: יתור א without marginal *nun*. This extra *alef* at the end of the word do not pose a problem in terms of understanding the word.

2.3. *Qere-ketib*

The marginal *nun* appears four hundred and fifty times beside a *qere-ketib* note: 29 in Joshua¹², 11 in Judges¹³, 55 in 1 Samuel¹⁴, 76 in 2 Samuel¹⁵, 29 in 1 Kings¹⁶, 47 in 2 Kings¹⁷, 41 in Isaiah¹⁸, 94 in Jeremiah¹⁹, 58 in Ezekiel²⁰, 4 in Hosea²¹, 1 in Joel (4:1), 3 in Amos (8:4.8;

¹² Jos 13:16; 4:18; 5:1; 6:5.9.13; 8:11.16; 9:7; 11:16; 15:4.35.47.48.51.53.63; 16:3; 18:19.24; 19:22.29; 20:8; 21:7; 22:7; 24:3.8.15.

¹³ Judg 1:27; 4:11; 6:5; 7:21; 16:21.25(x2).26; 19:3.25; 21:22.

¹⁴ 1 Sam 2:3.9.10; 3:2.18; 4:13; 5:9.12; 6:5; 7:9; 8:3; 9:1; 10:21; 11:6.9; 12:10; 13:8.19; 14:27.32(x2); 17:7.23; 18:1.6.9.14.22.29; 19:18.19.22.23; 20:2.24.38; 21:12(x2); 22:17.18(x2).22; 23:5; 24:9; 25:3.18(x2); 26:5.7(x2).11.22; 27:4.8; 29:5.

¹⁵ 2 Sam 1:8.11; 2:23; 3:2.12.15.25; 5:2(x2).8.24; 12:9.24.31; 13:37; 14:7.19.22.30; 15:12.28; 16:8.10(x2).12.18; 17:12; 18:3.13.17; 19:7.19.41; 20:5.8.14.23.25; 21:4.9(x2).12(x2).16.21; 22:8.15.34.51; 23:8(x2).9(x3).13.15.16.18.20(x2).21.35.37; 24:14.16.18.22.

¹⁶ 1 Kgs 1:47; 4:7; 6:5.6.21.38; 7:20.23.36; 8:48; 9:9.18; 10:5; 12:7.12.33; 14:2.25; 15:15; 16:26.34(x2); 17:15(x2); 18:42; 19:4; 20:21; 21:8; 22:49.

¹⁷ 2 Kgs 2:16; 3:24; 4:5.7(x2).16.23.34; 5:9.12; 6:10; 7:13.15; 8:1.17; 9:15.33; 10:27; 11:4.20; 12:10.12(x2); 14:6.12.13; 15:25; 16:6.15; 17:13.16.21.31; 18:27(x2); 20:4.18; 21:12; 22:5 (x2); 23:10.33.36; 24:10.14.15.18.

¹⁸ Is 3:15.16; 5:29; 9:2.6; 10:6.13; 12:5; 13:16; 16:3; 23:13; 25:10; 28:15(x2); 29:11; 30:6.32.33; 32:7.15; 37:30; 41:23; 42:20; 44:24; 45:2; 46:11; 47:13; 49:5.6.13; 52:2.5; 54:16; 55:13; 57:19; 60:21; 62:3; 63:9; 65:4.7; 66:17.

¹⁹ Jer 2:3.20.24.25.27; 3:2.19(x2); 4:5.19.30; 5:8.24; 6:21.29; 7:22; 8:1.6.7; 9:7; 10:13; 13:16.20(x2); 14:3; 15:4.8.9; 16:16; 17:8.19.23.24; 18:3.10.16.22.23; 19:2; 21:9.12; 22:6; 23:18; 24:9; 25:7; 26:6.18; 28:1; 29:14.18; 31:40; 32:1.4. 26; 34:17; 37:4.19; 38:2.11; 40:3.8.16; 43:10.11; 48:4.5.7(x2).20(x2).21.27; 49:25.30.36.39(x2); 50:6.8.11(x4).15.44; 51:34(x4); 52:1.11.21.31.32.

²⁰ Ez 1:8; 3:20; 4:15; 6:3; 7:2.21; 8:6; 9:4.5; 12:14; 16:51.53(x3).59; 17:21; 18:20.21; 22:18; 23:43; 27:6; 29:7; 30:16; 31:5; 32:31.32(x2); 33:13.16; 35:9; 36:14; 37:16(x2).19.22; 39:25; 40:6; 41:8.15; 42:5.9.14.16; 43:11(x2).26; 44:5; 45:3.5; 46:9.15.19; 47:11.12; 48:14.15.18.21.

²¹ Os 6:10; 8:12; 9:16; 10:10.

9:6), 1 in Obadiah (1:11), 2 in Micah (1:8; 3:2), 2 in Nahum (2:6; 3:3), 1 in Habakkuk (3:14), 1 in Zephaniah (2:7), 1 in Haggai (1:8) and 5 in Zechariah²².

Two cases have more than one marginal *nun* associated with a single word. In 2 Sam 13:37 there are two marginal *nunin* associated with the word עמיהוד. In 2 Kgs 4:7 there are three marginal *nunin*, one associated with the word ני and the other two with the word בניכי. According to the other Masoretic notes attached to both words, the two letters must be read in a different way: עמיהוד ק and בניך ק. Therefore, it may be inferred that each of the changes is indicated by one marginal *nun*.

In one hundred and one of the cases there are one or more Masoretic notes together with the one related to the *Qere*. These notes often contain information about how the word is written (e.g., MP to ברכתם in Ezek 46:19: חט ל, ח, תים ק, ח; read [ברכת]ים, unique written defectively'); to a lesser extent they provide general information on the form or phenomenon: e.g., MP to אחת in 1 Kgs 19:4, ו כת ת וקר ד, ו ד ק, ח; read [אח]ד, six [words] are written with *tav* but are read with *dalet*'. Most cases involve²³ the exchange of letters (sometimes the exchange of words) and lack of letters and to a lesser extent, letter reversals and extra/superfluous letters.

There are one hundred and thirty-two more *qere-ketib* notes that are not accompanied by a marginal *nun*²⁴. They mainly involve: a) nouns in the plural construct with a third person masculine singular suffix, written defectively; b) nouns with the older masculine singular ending *holem heh*; c) the third person masculine singular suffix written *heh*. However, this distinction is not systematic and it is possible to find cases in which the same word has a *qere* note with a marginal *nun* in one passage but without it in another (e.g., מראשתו in 1 Sam 26:7 and 26:11 with *nun* [ח תי ק] and in 26:16 without it [ח תי ק]).

2.4. *Qere we-la' ketib*

The marginal *nun* appears six times beside a *qere we-la' ketib* note²⁵: 2 Sam 16:23;

²² Zec 2:8; 4:2; 11:2; 14:2.6.

²³ According to the classification proposed by Ph. Cassuto, based solely on formal criteria; Ph. Cassuto, *Qere-Ketib et Listes Massorétiques dans le Manuscrit B19a* (Frankfurt, 1989), pp. 97-99.

²⁴ Cf. Azcárraga Servert, pp. 25-45.

²⁵ This refers to words that are not written in the text but that must be read. On this phenomenon in C, cf. E. Martín-Contreras, "The Phenomenon *Qere we la' Ketib* in the Main Biblical Codices: New Data", *VT* 62 (2012), pp. 77-87; 81-83.

18:20; 2 Kgs 19:31; Jer 31:38; 50:29; Ez 9:11. There are two other cases of *qere we-la' ketib* with a marginal *nun* standing alone on the other side of the column²⁶.

2.5. *Ketib we-la' qere*

The marginal *nun* appears five times beside a *ketib we-la' qere* note²⁷: 2 Sam 13:33; 15:21; 2 Kgs 5:18; Jer 39:12; Ez 48:16. In Jer 39:12, the Masoretic note provides general information on the phenomenon: כַּתּוּב וְלֹא קָרָא ; on the other side of the column there is another Masoretic note just for this case: כַּתּוּב וְלֹא קָרָא.

There is one more case of *ketib we-la' qere* in the Prophets without a marginal *nun*: Jer 51:3.

2.6. *Ketib* notes

The marginal *nun* appears seven times beside a *ketib* note²⁸: Jos 18:12; 18:14; 2 Sam 21:6; 1 Kgs 17:14; 2 Kgs 4:2; Jer 38:16; 50:6. On the other side of the column there is a *ketib we la' qere* note in Jer 38:16 and a *qere-ketib* note in the other six cases. In all seven, the Masoretic notes list the number of times that one word appears with a specific spelling (e.g., MP to הִיָּהּ in Jer 50:6: כַּתּוּב יְיָ וְקָרָא יְיָ, 'read [הִיָּהּ] יְיָ, seven [times] written [in this way]).

2.7. *Let* notes

The marginal *nun* appears thirteen times beside a *let* note²⁹: 1 Sam 2:16; 1 Kgs 1:37; 2 Kgs 5:25; 9:37; Jer 2:15; 2:16; 6:25; 17:11; 17:13; 25:13; 32:23; Ez 25:7; 48:14. In twelve of the cases, there is a *qere-ketib* note on the other side of the column.

Nine of the Masoretic notes (1 Kgs 1:37; 2 Kgs 5:25; 9:37; Jer 2:15; 2:16; 6:25; 17:11; 25:13; Ez 25:7) involve the unique spelling of the word (e.g., MP to לָבַג in Ez 25:7: לָבַגּ וְלֹא קָרָא לָבַגּ, 'unique with this writing'; 'unique written defectively'); one involves the accent of the word (MP to לוּ in 1 Sam 2:16: לוּ לֹא קָרָא לוּ, 'read לוּ. Unique with this accent position, לוּ'); and three (Jer 17:13, 32:23 and Ez 48:14) do not specify why the word is unique.

CONCLUSIONS

²⁶ Cf. Epigraph 1 in this article.

²⁷ This refers to words that are written in the biblical text, but should not be read.

²⁸ 'Written'. These kinds of notes indicate the way in which a word is written.

²⁹ 'Unique'. This may refer to words or expressions that appear once in the Bible (*hapax* in *sensu strictu*) and to words or expressions that are unique in some sense (spelling, vocalization, accentuation, meaning, location, etc).

This information, taken together, makes it possible to draw some preliminary conclusions. All the cases with a marginal *nun* have something in common: they have an orthographic oddity, in a broad sense. This oddity may refer to: the absence or presence of a letter that is essential to understand the word; the disagreement between what is written and read; and the odd spelling of a word. Therefore, we can infer that the marginal *nun* is related to the consonantal text without any reference to the reading tradition. This conclusion is also supported by the information given by the Masoretic notes that appear beside or related to the marginal *nun*, usually regarding the spelling of the word.

The more than forty cases in which the marginal *nun* stands alone without any other Masoretic note at its side suggest independence. Moreover, if it does not belong to the note/s it appears with, this implies that the marginal *nun* has its own value. Taking into the account the spelling of all the words and the information given by the other Masoretic notes, my hypothesis is as follows: the function of the marginal *nun* is simply to warn that something happens in the consonantal text but not to explain it. The other Masoretic notes appearing beside the marginal *nun* make explicit the oddity of the word.

The comparison between the cases with a marginal *nun* and those without it allows us to establish a parameter for the use of this symbol in C. With some exceptions, if a word might be difficult to recognize -due to its spelling- and this may lead to a problem of understanding, then there is a marginal *nun*; if the spelling does not cause any problem, the marginal *nun* it is not necessary.

In summary, the marginal *nun* is a kind of warning sign used to indicate a problem in the consonantal text, some orthographic oddity. It might be understood, loosely, as 'attention, not as written'. Its use in C is determined by the probability that the spelling of one word might lead to a serious error of understanding.

APPENDIX I

The marginal *nun* appears seventy-six times in L³⁰. It is usually recorded in a bigger size than the other letters that appear in the Masorah (with the exception of the sign for *seder*) and in

³⁰. The number of cases and their location vary slightly from those stated in Himbaza, pp. 175-176.

bold handwriting. However, in Job 7:1 the marginal nun appears in a regular size and normal handwriting. The marginal nun is placed on the right or left margin of the line in which the word to which it refers occurs and it is vertically aligned with the other Masoretic notes. It can appear alone or beside other Masoretic phenomena: *yatir*, *qere-ketib*, *qere we-la' ketib*, *ketib we-la' qere*.

3. Alone

The marginal *nun* appears alone, without any other Masoretic note at its side, ten times. In Job 39:20, it appears with no further Masoretic note. However, a *qere-ketib* note appears eight times on the opposite side of the column where the marginal *nun* is placed: Ps 129:3; Job 1:10; 7:1; 38:1; Lam 3:20; 4:3; 5:3; 5:21. In Rut 3:14, a *yatir* note is placed on the other side of the column. Most cases involve the lack of letters and to a lesser extent the exchange of letters, extra/superfluous letters, one word written as one but read as two and vice-versa.

4. Beside other Masoretic Phenomena

4.1. *Yatir*

The marginal *nun* appears in Prov 8:35 beside a *yatir* note. It involves an extra *waw*.

4.2. *Qere-ketib*

The marginal *nun* appears sixty-three times beside a *qere-ketib* note: 2 Chr 34:6; Sal 105:28; 139:6; Job 26:12; 30:11.22; 31:11(x2); 33:19.21; 39:12.26; 42:2.16; Prov 1:27; 2:7; 3:15.27.28.30.34; 6:14; 11:3; 12:14; 13:20(x2); 15:14; 16:19; 17:13; 18:17.19; 19:16.19; 23:24(x2).29; 27:10.24; 30:10.18; 31:16.18; Ruth 3:3(x2).4; Cant 1:17; Qoh 6:10; 7:22; 9:4; 10:20; Lam 1:8; 2:19; 3:10.32; 4:12.16.17; 5:1.5.7(x2); Est 1:16; Dan 2:10. In 2 Chr 34:6 there is one Masoretic note together with the one related to the *Qere*.

Most cases involve the lack of letters and the exchange of letters (sometimes of words) and to a lesser extent extra/superfluous letters and letter reversals.

4.3. *Qere we-la' ketib*

The marginal *nun* appears in Judg 20:13 beside a *qere we-la' ketib* note.

4.4. *Ketib we-la' qere*

The marginal *nun* appears in Ruth 3:12 beside a *ketib we-la' qere* note.

CONCLUSIONS

The cases with a marginal *nun* located in L share most of the characteristics with those located in C. All the cases have an orthographic oddity, in a broad sense, that may refer to: the absence or presence of a letter that is essential to understanding the word; the disagreement between what is written and read; and the odd spelling of a word. Therefore, the marginal *nun* in L is also related to the consonantal text and not to the reading tradition. The ten cases in which the marginal *nun* stands alone without any other Masoretic note also suggest that the function of this symbol is simply to warn that something happens in the consonantal text but not to explain it. Due to the scarce number of cases and their location (except for one case in the Prophets, all the rest are in the *Ketubim*), it is not possible to establish a parameter for the use of this symbol in L.