A New List of Words That Occur Twice with Two Different Meanings Found in Leningrad Codex B19a

The Masoretic annotations and long lists placed at the end of an important number of Hebrew biblical codices have received scant attention from scholars. Consequently, their content remains a mystery, especially regarding the annotations and lists that are displayed in figurative shapes on the so-called carpet pages. Their tiny script and design even further complicate the reading and understanding of the information they provide.

Leningrad Codex B19a (MS L) contains a large number of such masoretic annotations as well as long lists at its end after the biblical text, from fol. 463v to fol. 490r. This material, which has not yet been edited and studied, is displayed in three columns (fol. 463v–473r, 479v–488r) and figurative shapes (fol. 473v–479r, 488v–490r). The lists and annotations in figurative shapes are found on some of the sixteen carpet pages in MS L.

When I was working on the texts in the carpet pages located in the Cairo Codex and MS L in order to understand the function of those pages, I discovered a new list of words that occur twice in the Bible with two different meanings in MS L (בֹ בתרי לישני).

The existence of words that appear twice with two different meanings in the Hebrew Bible text is annotated extensively in the masorah, both in marginal annotations and long lists. They represent one of the most frequent types of masoretic notes concerned with semantics. The extant lists group pairs of two

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1 With the following exceptions: the masoretic lists included in the carpet pages of the Cairo Codex of the Prophets were edited and studied by D. Lyons, The Cumulative Masora. Text, Form and Transmission (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 1999; Heb.); the long lists at the end of the main sections and the end of MS BH Ms1 (M1) have been edited by E. Martín Contreras, Apéndices Masoréticos. Códice M1 de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros 74 (Madrid: CSIC, 2004); more recently, Y. Ofer studied some of the lists included in two carpet pages in MS Gottheil 14, cf. Y. Ofer, “An Ancient Masoretic Comment in Carpet Leaves of a Torah Manuscript by Shmuel ben Yaakov,” Leshonenu 80 (2018): 29–52 (Heb.).


4 Cf. E. Martín-Contreras, “Hebrew Carpet Pages through their Texts” (forthcoming).
unique words, remarking that each one of them has a different meaning, but without defining the exact meaning in each occurrence. These lists differ from each other in the number of items, the items listed, and the order in which the lemmas appear, indicating different traditions.\(^5\) The pairs gathered in these lists show a great variety. Some can be considered homonyms in the true sense: they are different in meaning and in origin (e.g., אָמִיר in Isa 17:6—common name—“tree-top,” and אָמִיר in Hos 4:7—verb hiphil—“I shall change”); others are polysemous words, different in meaning but of identical origin (e.g., בַּסָּבָה in Exod 1:16 “stools,” and בַּסָּבָה in Jer 18:3 “wheels”). The pairs can also be of the homophonic type, i.e., words that have orthographic or phonological similarity but are different in meaning and spelling (e.g., בֵּית בֵּית in Deut 6:16—proper name—“in Massah” and בֵּית בֵּית in 1 Chr 15:22—common name—“for song”).\(^6\)

This article presents an edition and a study of a new list displaying this phenomenon discovered in MS L.\(^7\)

1 Location

The list is found on fol. 473v of MS L, the first of the carpet pages in the manuscript. This carpet page contains two different elements: pure decorative elements and text in figured shapes. The text written in figured shapes is of two types: biblical verses and masorah. The biblical verses—all from the book of Isaiah—form the

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\(^5\) For the description and study of the extant lists, see A. Dotan, *The Awakening of Word Lore: From the Masora to the Beginnings of Hebrew Lexicography* (Jerusalem: Hebrew Academy, 2005), 77–115 (Heb.).


\(^7\) The information on the masorah from these pages in this paper is based on my own reading and study of these carpet pages. After finishing this study, I noticed that the following PhD dissertation on the carpet pages in MS L has been completed: Susan Schmidt, "The Carpet Illuminations of Codex Leningrad, National Library of Russia Firk. Ms. EBP. I B 19a" (PhD diss., University of the Holy Land, Jerusalem, submitted on March 2019). The dissertation is yet to be published but a brief summary and the table of contents can be read at Academia.edu: [https://www.academia.edu/38512885/The_Carpet_Illuminations_of_Codex_Leningrad_Phd_Dissertation](https://www.academia.edu/38512885/The_Carpet_Illuminations_of_Codex_Leningrad_Phd_Dissertation). From this summary, it is possible to check that our works differ in purpose, content, and methodology.
shape of a fishing net. The masorah annotations form a circle and the inner diamonds. There are thirty-seven diamonds in total, distributed in seven rows. The new list is located in these small diamonds.

2 Edition

The edition reproduces the text of the new list (henceforth: list “a”) in the form closest to the original, without any changes or modifications, with the exception of vowels added to the lemma and the identification of the catchwords added in Latin characters and in parentheses. Fragmentary words are reconstructed according to the Scripture text. Incorrect citations of the catchwords are indicated by sic.

The notes are transcribed according to the order followed in the reading, starting at the top and reading from right to left.

(2 Chr 3:7) (Gen 42:29) יִקְבָּא חַתּוֹת (8:1)

(1) וַיִּקְבָּא חַתּוֹת (בְּרָכוֹת)

(2 Chr 5:22) וַיָּהָר (Josh 18:2)

(2) וַיָּהָר (בְּרָכוֹת)

(Lam 5:8) יִשְׁעָר (Ps 7:3)

(3) יִשְׁעָר (פַּרְכָּא)

(Ps 39:14) חָשַׂע מֵעַנָּי (Isa 6:10)

(4) חָשַׂע מֵעַנָּי (קָשָׂע)

(Isa 15:72) וַיִּזְרַע (2 Sam 17:25)

(5) וַיִּזְרַע (יִשְׁרָאֵל)

(Job 42:9) בַּעַר (1 Sam 23:6)

(6) בַּעַר (קָשָׁע)

(Job 34:19) בַּעַר (1 Sam 23:7)

(7) בַּעַר (פַּרְכָּא)

(Ps 9:1) וַיִּמָּשְׁקֵן (1 Chr 27:12)

(8) וַיִּמָּשְׁקֵן (לַחַדְשָׁה)

(1 Chr 11:42) בִּנְשָׂא (Isa 47:8)

(9) בִּנְשָׂא (קָדְשָׂא)

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8 The circle is formed by the following four Masoretic notes: בְּרָכוֹת (Judg 5:2, 9; Ps 103:20–22).

9 The lemma is written defectively in this passage: חַתּוֹת.

10 יִשְׁרָאֵל.

11 The lemma is written יִשְׁרָאֵל in this passage.

12 בַּעַר, Masorah Parva (MP) annotation: בִּנְשָׂא.
יונתן בׄ בתֹ לישֹ  עָכַּר (1 Sam 14:29)
וכרמי (1 Chr 2:7)
אוֹיוֹל ב בַ תַר לישנ   נָשִׁיתִי (Jer 15:10)
משלמ (1 Sam 3:17)
עבש (Ezek 1:11)
אַרְי גֶּם וּדְ שׁוֹק (Prov 28:15)
משה (Exod 24:10)
כָּשָׁר (Jer 3:4)
לָאָו (Isa 33:4)
כֶּלֶל (Josh 19:26)
כַּפַּרְוֹת (Ezek 1:11)
לָאִילוֹר (Isa 29:2)
יתֶשֶׁן אֶת הָנְגָנָה (2 Kgs 12:16)
בַּאֶשֶׁר אֲוֹת (1 Kgs 21:27)
יוֹרָה בֵּשָׁמַע (Lam 2:14)
תָּעֲלֻמוֹת (Deut 15:2)
וֹרְא אֶלֶית (Exod 15:23)
וֹרְא אֶלֶית (Dan 5:19)
1. טִכָּר (1 Sam 14:29)
2. מַלְמָה (Jer 15:10)
3. עָבָשָׁה (Ezek 1:11)
4. אָוָי (Prov 28:15)
5. כָּשָׁר (Jer 3:4)
6. לָאָו (Isa 33:4)
7. כֶּלֶל (Josh 19:26)
8. כַּפַּרְוֹת (Ezek 1:11)
9. לָאִילוֹר (Isa 29:2)
10. יֶתֶשֶׁן אֶת הָנְגָנָה (2 Kgs 12:16)
11. בַּאֶשֶׁר אֲוֹת (1 Kgs 21:27)
12. יוֹרָה בֵּשָׁמַע (Lam 2:14)
13. תָּעֲלֻמוֹת (Deut 15:2)
14. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
15. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
16. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
17. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
18. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
19. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
20. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
21. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
22. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
23. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)
24. יַּהֵשֶׁן (Dan 5:19)

13 The lemma is written יָדִיעַכּ in this passage.
14 ל: אָוָי.
15 ל: פַּרְוֹת.
16 I have not added the vocalization because the word is vocalized with patah (לָאָו) in Exodus but with qames (לָאָו) in Joshua.
17 The lemma is written קרַֽאַתָּה in this passage and it has a MP annotation attached that says: קַֽרְּאַתָּהּ. יָדִיעַכּ.
18 I have not added the vocalization because the word is vocalized with patah (לָאָו) in 1 Kings but with qames (לָאָו) in Job.
19 The lemma is written בַּאֶשֶׁר in this passage.
20 The order found in the manuscript is: lemma, catchwords from Lamentations, textual information, catchwords from Genesis. I have rearranged them following the order in the other annotations.
21 ל: רַעְּלִמָה.
22 This word does not appear in this verse.
23 ל: יִשָּׁפְכִּית עָמִר.
3 Analysis

3.1 Form

As a general rule, an annotation starts on the upper right vertex of the diamonds that are at the beginning of each row (starting from the right) and on the bottom

24 The annotation only contains the catchwords from Ezekiel. According to the Masorah Magna (MM), the annotation is attached to this word in the verse in Ezekiel; the other verse involved is from Psalms.
25 ל: תירקית
26 The annotation only contains the catchwords from Ezekiel. According to the MM, the annotation is attached to this word in the verse in Deuteronomy; the other verse involved is 2 Kgs 5:6.
27 The lemma is written כָּלִיתִי in this passage.
28 ל: קָּרְצָה
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left vertex of the other diamonds and they go in a clockwise direction. The text in the diamonds tends to be regular and is arranged in the following way: the lemma and the numerical reference (בּ) are placed on one vertex of the diamond, the explicit reference to the textual phenomenon (בתר לָיש) on the opposite vertex, and the two catchwords on the two remaining vertices. However, the arrangement of the text in the diamonds can change due to the length of the lemmas. Moreover, the order of the information is changed in two annotations (nos. 10 and 19). In those cases, the direction of the script also changes.

3.2 Text of List “a”

The list contains a total of thirty-seven words that occur twice with two different meanings and their catchwords. The formula employed to designate the textual phenomenon is in Aramaic, בתר לָיש or any of its forms. The explicit reference to the textual phenomenon is missing in eight annotations, for which only the numerical reference is given. With the exception of annotation no. 23, the annotations located in the first diamond in each row (starting from the right) do not contain this explicit reference.

Following the methodology employed to analyse a masoretic note, I have consulted the masorah of the principal Tiberian biblical manuscripts (Or 4445, Cairo Codex, and Aleppo Codex) and the major masoretic lists and treatises to confirm the information given in the masoretic notes and to check whether they

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29 Annotations 1 and 35 start on the bottom right vertex and annotation 31 on the bottom left vertex.
30 Annotations 24, 29, and 37 start on the bottom right vertex and annotation 36 on the upper right vertex.
31 The script in annotation 28 appears in two different directions although the order of the information does not change.
32 Annotations 4, 8, 13, 17, 22, 23, 26, 31.
34 F. Díaz Esteban, Sefer Ochlah We Ochlah (Madrid: CSIC, 1975); A. Dotan, The Diqduqé hatteamím of Aharon ben Moshe ben Asher, with a Critical Edition of the Original Text from New Manuscripts (Jerusalem, 1967); S. Frensdorff, Das Buch Ochlah W'Ochlah (Hannover, 1864); C. D. Ginsburg, The Massorah Compiled from Manuscripts Alphabetically and Lexically Arranged, With an Analytical Table of Contents and Lists of Identified Sources and Parallels by A. Dotan, 4 vols. (New York: Ktav, 1975); B. Ognibeni, La seconda parte del Sefer Ochlah weOchlah (Madrid: CSIC; Fribourg: University of Fribourg, 1995).
contain any information similar to the note. Moreover, as list “a” appears at the end of MS L, I have also consulted the MP and MM annotations of that manuscript.

List “a” has no parallel in any of the main Tiberian biblical manuscripts, nor in any major masoretic lists or treatises. The alphabetical lists of words that occur twice with two different meanings presented in the two manuscripts of the treatise Okla we-okla, and in Ginsburg’s masoretic compilation are completely different from list “a.” Those lists contain between ninety-five and ninety-nine words displayed in alphabetical order. Only two of the words included in list “a”, הַּקֹּרוֹת (no. 1) and חָלְקוּ (no. 2), appear in one of those lists.

Apart from one case, the lemmas included in list “a” have attached marginal masoretic annotations in MS L. Most of these marginal annotations support the numerical information given in list “a.” Furthermore, the marginal annotations to the words הַּקֹּרוֹת (no. 1) and מָרִים (no. 2) note explicitly that they have two different meanings.

There is another list of words that occur twice with two different meanings in MS L (list “b” from this point on). It is also located at the end of the manuscript but on two of the folios that display the masoretic lists in three columns and the text is provided with vowels (fols. 484r–484v). That list was discovered, edited, and studied by Aron Dotan. The list starts with an introduction that states that these are the words in the Bible with two meanings that are not found in the MP, the MM, or in the sayings of the scribes. Then, twenty-five words and their

35 Paris manuscript: cf. Frendsdorff, Ochlah, list 59, 62–65; Halle manuscript cf. Diaz Esteban, Oklah, list 60, 103–6).
37 Cf. Frendsdorff, Ochlah, list 59, 62, lines 37–38, and 63, lines 1–2.
38 The same happens in A and C. Most of the lemmas have a marginal annotation that supports the numerical information given in the list. In A, six of the lemmas have a marginal annotation that states explicitly that they have two different meanings, cf. MM annotation to בָּשׁ in Ps 39:14; MP and MM annotations to מִיְּרָע in Isa 47:8; MM annotation to לָנוֹ in Josh 19:26; MP annotation to מֵי in Dan 5:19; MM annotations to נִבְרִיס in Ps 94:8 and Ezek 21:36; MM annotation to חָתַּת in 1 Chr 4:13. In C, it is only said about one lemma, cf. MP and MM annotations on יִתְרָה in 2 Sam 17:25.
39 The MP annotation to this word in 2 Chr 3:7 says: המררת נ. The MM note says: המררת נ. לישנין.
40 The MP and MM annotations attached to the word in Exod 15:23 and the MP annotation to the word in Dan 5:19 say: המררת נ.
catchwords are listed: 1. חָלְקוּ; 2. לְמִשְׁנֶה; 3. נָשִׁיתִי; 4. חֲתַּת; 5. לְרַּגְלִי; 6. וַּהֲרִיקֹתִי; 7. וְהִפְלָה; 8. לְרַּגְלִי; 9. יַּשֶּׁה; 10. מָרִים; 11. הֶחָבב; 12. קָח; 13. יַעֲרֹף; 14. חָלְקוּ; 15. אָן; 16. וַּיְמַּלְאוּם; 17. נִקְרֵאתִי; 18. לְמִשְׁנֶה; 19. קָרָאת; 20. רְוּחָה; 21. נָשִׁיתִי; 22. וְחַּנֹּתִי; 23. מַּשְׂאוֹת; 24. לִבְנַּת; 25. חֲתַּת.

I have compared both lists. While list “a” employs the formula לישנין בתרי בׄ in list “b” the formula is in Hebrew,رشים בשני לשנות. List 473v contains more items than list “b” (thirty-seven instead of twenty-five). They have thirteen items in common, but in a different order. They also differ in the length of their catchwords. List “a” tends to give only one or two words from each verse, but list “b” has long catchwords that quote half of the verses. Moreover, list “a” does not contain an introduction or a heading. None of the lists arrange the lemmas based on any criterion (alphabetical, biblical books, etc.).

Finally, I compared list “a” with three other lists that attest to a different tradition from that represented by the alphabetical lists. The first list is found in the Farhi Codex (MS Sassoon 368), a complete Bible dated 1366–1383 (henceforth: S). The second is found in a Yemenite manuscript belonging to the Rav Yosef Qapah Collection, containing a large amount of masoretic material dated, according to him, at the end of the thirteenth century and beginning of the fourteenth century (henceforth: Q). The third is an undated Genizah fragment (T-S D1.20) of oriental provenance (henceforth: C). The first contains eighty-three items, the second fifty-seven items, and the third eighteen items. All the lemmas

42 In parentheses I give the order of the words in list “a” followed by the order in list “b”: חָלְקוּ (No. 2/14), לְמִשְׁנֶה (No. 6/18), נָשִׁיתִי (No. 11/21), חֲתַּת (No. 14/24), קָח (No. 15/19), יַעֲרֹף (No. 19/23), חָלְקוּ (No. 20/9), קָרָאת (No. 22/10), רְוּחָה (No. 24/4), לְרַּגְלִי (No. 28/16), וַּהֲרִיקֹת (No. 29/25), נִקְרֵאתִי (No. 33/7).

43 Dotan discovered, edited, and studied these three lists. See Dotan, The Awakening of Word Lore, 87, 90–94, 98–115. He also compared the three lists with list “b” and concluded that they are based on one and the same origin; see Dotan, “Homonymous,” 143.


found in list “a” are attested by Q and almost all of them by S. However, the lemmas are arranged in a different way in each of the lists.

4 Conclusion

The new list of words that occur twice with two different meanings discovered in MS L is an innovation with respect to its location, form, and content. It is found on one carpet page at the end of the manuscript. The list is written in a figurative shape and forms one of the designs—the small diamonds—that are part of that carpet page. It is composed of thirty-seven words and their catchwords. Unlike other lists, no heading defines the group or enunciates the phenomenon. However, an explicit reference to the phenomenon is repeated with almost each lemma. The information contained in these annotations is presented homogeneously, similar to the annotations at the top and bottom margins of the pages with the biblical text.

The comparison of list “a” with the other extant lists shows that it transmits a different tradition to that presented in the two manuscripts of the treatise Okla we-okla and in Ginsburg’s masoretic compilation. List “a” contains an early version of the tradition present in the S, Q, and C lists.

This finding involves the existence of two lists of words with two different meanings located at the end of MS L. A comparison of list “a” with list “b” shows that they differ in: the form in which they are displayed, the formula used to name the phenomenon, the number of items they contain, the lemmas listed, and the order in which the lemmas appear. These differences indicate that list “a” is original in its final form and that both lists reflect two different versions of the same tradition. The coexistence of two different versions for the same phenomenon in a single manuscript attests to the plurality of the Masorah.

47 Five words are not attested by this list: נִכַּּר, הֵילֵל, חֲתַּת, יִצְרוֹ, לְרַּּגְלִי.