

An Esther Scroll from the 15th Century: Determining its Type among Five Traditions (Oriental, Sefardi, Ashkenazi, Italian, Yemenite)

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This study will analyze an Esther Scroll, MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10, and discuss its uniqueness. It will also define the textual transmission traditions of the Masoretic text of Esther, and show the place of the scroll within these traditions.

1. Description

Esther Scroll on parchment, containing Esther 2:12b–end (10:13). An Ashkenazi script from Italy of the 15th century; the date and place are determined by the script and the parchment.

7 sheets of parchment, 3 columns per sheet (the original scroll contained an additional 2 sheets, comprising 1:1–2:12a); 17 lines per column. Open and Closed sections; sons of Haman written in special layout. Some minor holes, mostly not affecting the text; very minor staining.

Our scroll is among the oldest surviving Esther scrolls. The scrolls in this group – and there are not many – are all from the 15th century. They include three Sefardi scrolls: London, British Library, Or. 1087; Or. 2086; Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library 4^o197/32; and two Ashkenazi scrolls: London, British Library, Harley 7620; Washington D.C., Library of Congress scroll.

In addition to the above five scrolls, the largest collection of 15th century Esther scrolls (seventeen) was recently identified by M. Beit-Arié in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma: 2 Sefardi; 3 Ashkenazi; 11 Italian (2 Ashkenazi

script, 4 Sefardi script, 4 Italian-Sefardi script, 1 Italian script). In addition, one scroll was from Spain or North Africa.¹

Furthermore, Beit-Arié has also identified the largest collection of 16th century Esther scrolls (twenty-six) in the same library: 5 Sefardi; 1 Ashkenazi; 20 Italian (4 Italian script; 7 Italian-Sefardi script; 9 Sefardi script).²

Among Yemenite scrolls, the earliest surviving Esther scrolls are from the 17th century: Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/33, dated 1627 C.E.; HU 4^o 197/36; HU 4^o 197/38.

The following are some of the features of our scroll:

1. The use of dilated letters to justify the left margin of the columns.
2. Dilated letters that are the result of corrections in the text; see below.
3. There are no “tagim” (tittles) on the seven letters: *shin*, *ayin*, *tet*, *nun*, *zayin*, *gimmel*, *zadiq*.
4. One can clearly see the dry-ruling lines, both vertical and horizontal, that were used to ensure straight lines and justified columns.
5. The letters hang from the top of the dry-ruled lines.
6. The columns do not begin with the word “*HaMelekh*” (as is a widespread custom today), nor with the letter *waw* (an alternate tradition, imitating a Torah Scroll tradition, known as “*Wawei Ha‘Amudim*”).
7. The scroll includes not only closed sections (the widespread custom today), but also open sections (8:15; 9:29), as was the earlier custom in various manuscripts; see below.
8. The layout of the sons of Haman differs from the current widespread layout; see below.
9. The text differs widely in spelling from the accurate text of the Aleppo Codex; see below.

The following are very unusual features:

¹ See B. Richler (ed.), *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma: Catalogue* (with palaeographical and codicological descriptions by M. Beit-Arié; Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 2001), 82-84.

² See *ibid.*, 84-85.

10. The corrections in *plene*-defective spelling, mostly in the spelling categories of *תבוא*, *לראות*, *אתו* (and similar words from these roots), *further distance* the text from the accurate text of the Aleppo Codex; see below.
11. The use of a small vertical line above the written line to mark the end of the verse; these have not been erased.
12. The use of an even smaller vertical line to mark the first pause in the verse (to the left of the word in question). All of these have been erased. Although features 11 and 12 are rare, they can be found separately in a few 15th century Ashkenazi and Italian Esther scrolls. Feature #11: (not erased) – MSS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina 3303 (Ashk.); 3310 (Ashk. in Italy); 3317 (end), 3319; (mark erased) – 3321 (excluding first [later] sheet; Ashk.). Feature #12: MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina 3304 (Ashk. in Italy); 3321 (Ashk.); 3608 (dot instead of vertical line). Aside from this group, we have not found either of these features in other scrolls. It should be noted that of these scrolls MS Parma 3321 (the main hand; i.e. excluding the first sheet), somewhat similar to our scroll, has both features and one of them has been erased; however, these scrolls differ as to which feature is erased: our scroll (#12); Parma 3321 (#11).
13. The widespread use of a “line-filler” to justify the left margin. The filler is in the form of the letter “*dalet*” with the head reversed, with 2 small vertical lines above the filler. Line-fillers of various sorts are known from masoretic codices, but generally were not used in scrolls prepared for ritual use; however, there is a group of early Torah scrolls that employs “line-fillers”. We have not found a “line-filler” in another Esther scroll.
14. The vocalization of 40 words in the scroll. These were marked to prevent possible mistakes in the reading of the scroll. All of these vocalizations were later erased. In torah scrolls, vocalization renders a scroll unfit for ritual use. So, too, Esther scrolls were generally not vocalized. However, surprisingly enough, according to several halakhic authorities, vocalization does *not* render a *megillah* unfit ritually; so R. Yehudai Gaon,³

³ B. M. Lewin (ed.), *’Otzar HaGeonim: Megillah*, (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1933), 5:24.

R. Solomon ibn Abraham Adret,⁴ and R. Joseph Qaro.⁵ On the other hand, R. Moses Isserlis, *Darkhei Moshe*,⁶ cited *Hagahot 'Asheri*⁷ that one should not add anything to the text of the *megillah*, not even [the 2 dots] to mark the end of the sentences. However, in his notes to *Shulhan 'Arukh*,⁸ Isserlis chose not to bring this comment.

The following are the vocalized words in the scroll, in the order of their appearance. The erasure of their vocalization is clearly visible; sometimes the original vocalization is not visible. In a few cases, the vocalization differs slightly from MS L (see below 5:2?; 5:14; 6:4?; 6:4; 6:9?; 6:11; 7:5?; 10:2):

יֵשֶׁב 2:19; וַיִּבְקֶשׁ 2:23; בְּחֻצֵר 5:2 (the erased *qamatz* is not really visible; possibly *patah*); וַתִּגַּע 5:2; עֲשֵׂתָהּ 5:5; וַתֹּאמֶר 5:7 (maybe there was the accent *etnahtah* there as well); וַנִּשְׂאוּ 5:11 (without *dagesh* in the *sin*); עֲשֵׂתָהּ 5:12 (original vowels not visible); קְרוּא 5:12; וַיִּתְּלוּ 5:14 (sic; וַיִּתְּלוּ L); וּבֵא 5:14; וַיְהִי 6:1; וַיִּמְצֵא 6:2; וַנִּעְשֶׂה 6:3 (without *dagesh* in the *nun*); בְּחֻצֵר 6:4 (original vocalization not really visible; possibly with variants); לְחֻצֵר 6:4 (sic; לְחֻצֵר L); וַיִּתֵּר 6:6; בָּתָן 6:8; וַיְהַרְבִּיבוּהָ 6:9; וַיִּקְרְאוּ 6:9 (*qamatz* not fully visible; possibly *patah*); מֵהָר 6:10; וַעֲשֵׂה 6:10; תִּפְּל 6:10 (without *dagesh* in *tav*); וַיִּלְבֹּשׁ 6:11 (without *dagesh* in *bet*); וַיְהַרְבִּיבוּהָ 6:11 (sic; בְּ L); וַיַּעֲשֶׂה 6:11; וַתֹּאמֶר 7:3; וַאֲלוֹ 7:4; מְלֵאוּ 7:5 (possibly *patah* under *lamed*; לְ L); וַיְהִיחֶם 8:10 (no *dagesh* in *yod*); לְהַעֲשׂוֹת 9:1; שִׁבְרוּ 9:1; וַאֲבַד 9:12 (possibly a *dagesh* in *bet*; but not so marked in 9:6); מֵהָ עֵשׂוּ 9:12 (this differs from the two cases of וּמֵהָ

⁴ R. Solomon b. Abraham Adret (Rashba), *Responsa* (ed. A. Zelznik; 5 vols.; Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1997-2005), 1:§370.

⁵ R. Joseph Qaro, *Beit Yosef*, in R. Jacob b. Asher, *'Arba'ah Turim HaShalem: 'Orah Hayyim [sections 495-697]* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1990), §691, para. 1-2; R. Joseph Qaro, *Shulhan 'Arukh [HaShalem]: 'Orah Hayyim [sections 581-697]* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 2002), §691, para. 9.

⁶ R. Moses Isserlis, *Darkhei Moshe*, in R. Jacob b. Asher, *'Arba'ah Turim HaShalem: 'Orah Hayyim [sections 495-697]* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1990), §691, para. 1-2, n. 2.

⁷ R. Israel of Krems (14th century, Austria), *Hagahot 'Asheri*; comments on the commentary of R. Asher b. Yehiel [=Ro"sh] to the Babylonian Talmud; printed in the standard editions of the Talmud, together with the commentary of R. Asher b. Yehiel. See *Megillah*, ch. 1, last comment.

⁸ R. Moses Isserlis, notes to *Shulhan 'Arukh [HaShalem]: 'Orah Hayyim [sections 581-697]*, by R. Joseph Qaro (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 2002), §691, para. 9.

that follow in the verse); וַתִּתֵּן 9:14; וַיִּקְהֵלוּ 9:15 (also *dagesh* in *qof*); וְהָרַג 9:16; קַיִם 9:31 (without *dagesh* in *yod*); קַיִם 9:32; וּפְרַשְׁתָּ 10:2 (apparently; רַ ל); גְּדִלוֹ 10:2 (without *dagesh* in *gimmel*).

In order to properly ascertain the place of our scroll among the different traditions of Esther Scrolls and masoretic codices, a comparison between the Scroll and five different traditions in Esther will be presented below. This comparison will focus on three components of the Esther Scroll: the text; the layout of the ten sons of Haman; the sections. First the scroll will be compared with the Aleppo Codex in each of these components, and then five traditions will be compared with the Aleppo codex in each component. At the end, a summary of the three components together will be presented. This comparison will show that our scroll typologically belongs to the Ashkenazi and Italian groups of traditions. This is in addition to the obvious characteristic of parchment, and in addition to a number of the above special features, e.g. marking the end of the verse with a vertical line, or similarly marking the first pause in the verse.

2. The Text of Esther

2a. MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10 Compared to the Aleppo Codex

Since the text of Esther in **A** is no longer extant, we are using the text of **A**, as reconstructed by M. Breuer in his Bible editions⁹ (and similarly M. Cohen in his *Mikra'ot Gedolot Haketer*).¹⁰ Characteristic of **A** is that it always agrees with the Bible text as reflected in the masoretic notes of the accurate Tiberian manuscripts.¹¹ Furthermore, **A** agrees with the text of the accurate Tiberian

⁹ M. Breuer, *Bible* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1977–1982; 3rd ed. in 1 vol., 1993; enl. ed., Jerusalem: Horev, 1997).

¹⁰ M. Cohen, ed., *Mikra'ot Gedolot Haketer: The Five Scrolls* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2012), *Esther*, 213–290; for online version, see <http://www.mgketer.org>.

¹¹ See M. Breuer, *The Aleppo Codex and the Textus Receptus of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976 [Heb.]); J. S. Penkower, *New Evidence for the Pentateuch Text in the Aleppo Codex* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1992), ch. 4 (Heb.).

manuscripts; and in cases of conflict between them, **A** agrees with the majority of those manuscripts, unless that text conflicts with the masorah.¹² Using these characteristics, Breuer in his Bible editions (and similarly Cohen in his CD) was able to reconstruct the text of the Aleppo codex for Esther (and elsewhere).

In addition, there are two sources that help in reconstructing the text of the Aleppo codex: *Me'orot Natan*, and Y. Qimhi's marginal notes in S. S. Yellin's Bible. In both of these 19th century sources, various data was brought concerning the Aleppo codex. Concerning Esther the data refers to cases of text, vocalization and accentuation. In *Me'orot Natan*, there are 37 text cases.¹³ In Qimhi's notes there are 6 *plene*/defective cases, all already noted in *Me'orot Natan*.¹⁴

In the extant text of our scroll, there are 68 variants between the first hand of our scroll and the Aleppo Codex (= **A**). It may be assumed that the total number of variants in the complete *megillah*, i.e. including 1:1–2:12a, was somewhat higher. 8 of the 68 variants were corrected, bringing the scroll closer to **A**. However, an additional 21 cases were corrected, *further distancing* the scroll from **A**. Clearly these latter corrections were based on another type of source; see further below. The final number of variants, with the corrections, is 81.

About half of all the variants in the scroll belong to recurring spelling categories and thus cannot be the result of random errors. For example, most of the 21 corrections distancing the text from **A** belong to the spelling categories of תבוא, לראות, אותו (and similar words from these roots).

The following are the recurring spelling categories among the scroll's variants. It should be emphasized that these variants not only contain spelling categories that are *plene* where **A** is defective, but also categories that

¹² See Breuer, *ibid*; Penkower, *ibid*.

¹³ See R. Zer, "R. Ya'aqov Sappir's *Me'orot Natan*," *Lěšonénu* 50 (1986), 151–213 (Heb.), esp. pp. 181–182; and below appendix 2.

¹⁴ See Y. Ofer, "The Aleppo Codex and the Bible of R. Shalom Shachna Yelin," in *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer Festschrift* (ed. M. Bar-Asher; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Academon, 1992), 1:295–353 (Heb.), esp. 345–346.

are defective where **A** is *plene*. This, too, shows that we are dealing with an alternate tradition, and not random errors:

- (1) לבא/תבא/ויבא/יבא/לבא/ותבאנה/אבא (2:13, 14, 15; 4:2, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 11, 16; 5:4, 8, 10; 6:5, 6). In the majority of these cases, 12 of 16 (i.e. excluding 4:2, 9; 5:10; 6:6), the variant was achieved by a correction, by erasure of the *waw*. These corrections distanced the text from **A**.
- (2) בשלשה/שלשה (3:12, 13; 8:9; 9:1, 17, 18). See also שלשים (4:11).
- (3) אחשוורוש (in the 4+1 places where **A** has defective spelling: 2:21; 3:12; 8:7, 10; [10:1])
- (4) אתי (5:12); אתו (9:25); אתם (9:22)
- (5) לראת/להראת/כראת/וכראת (3:4; 4:8; 5:2, 9)
- (6) אויביהם/איביהם (8:13; 9:5, 16, 22). See also אויבי (9:1).
- (7) ביהודים/היהודים, without *qere-ketiv* (i.e. without *ketiv* of double *yod*): (4:7; 8:1, 7, 13; 9:15)
- (8) בלשונו (3:12; 8:9)
- (9) להרג/והרג (7:4; 9:16)

Qere-ketiv variants (in addition to above #7):

- עתידים - עתודים (כתיב; עתידים קרי) - **A** (8:13)
 (9:27) וקבל (כתיב; וקבלו קרי) - וקבל(ו)
 (10:1) אחשרש (כתיב; אחשוורש קרי) - אחשו(ו)ר(ו)ש

Other types of variants:

- אל - על (4:10)
 (4:16) ואל תאכלו; <ו>אל תאכלו (4:16); גם - וגם (4:16); ואל - אל
 (7:9) חרבונה - חרבונא

The above list accounts for about 70% of the variants. The remaining variants are mostly *plene*-defective variants, with no recurring spelling categories. See appendix 1 for a complete listing of the variants in our scroll.

2b. Five Traditions Compared to the Aleppo Codex

In our discussion below of the various traditions, defined by geographical areas, we will divide the text variants into three main categories (with the

third category divided into three sub-groups): A (very accurate): 0-13 variants; B (intermediate): 14-34 variants; C1 (far): 35-90 variants; C2 (very far): 91-120 variants; C3 (extremely far): 121-175 variants.

9 *[Middle] Eastern masoretic codices with Tiberian masorah (10th-11th centuries)*

Foremost among these codices for accuracy is the Aleppo Codex (=A), of the 10th century, whose text has been shown to be the most accurate of the Hebrew Bible manuscripts.¹⁵ In addition to its text, its division of the sections and the Songs in the Pentateuch were given halakhic status by Maimonides.¹⁶ Similar to A, with respect to the text (with a small spread of variants), are a group of manuscripts written in the 10th–11th centuries in the [Middle] East; i.e. Eretz Israel, Egypt, etc. This has been shown for the Pentateuch and Prophets.¹⁷ The manuscripts to be analyzed below are #1–9 in our list, in the bibliography below. These also include one manuscript with a wider group of variants (#2). All these mss are from the 10th–11th centuries. We note that some of these MSS (#4, 6) are incomplete.¹⁸

In the book of Esther, the following are the results of a comparison of these manuscripts with A. As noted above, the text of A is based upon Breuer's reconstruction, which also includes 37 cases explicitly noted in *Me'orot Natan*.

The variants between this group of manuscripts (excluding one of them), in the first hand, and A, range from <8> to 28. These manuscripts can be divided

¹⁵ See Breuer, *Aleppo Codex*; M. Cohen, "Orthographic Systems in Ancient Massorah Codices and Their Import for the History of the Traditional Bible Text" (2 vols.; Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1973 [Heb.]); Penkower, *New Evidence*.

¹⁶ See M. Goshen-Gottstein, "The Authenticity of the Aleppo Codex," *Textus* 1 (1960), 17–58; J. S. Penkower, "Maimonides and the Aleppo Codex," *Textus* 9 (1981), 39–128; Penkower, *New Evidence*, ch. 3.

¹⁷ See Penkower, *New Evidence*, ch. 4; Breuer, *Aleppo Codex*.

¹⁸ MS Sassoon 1053=S1 is even more incomplete, and therefore we have not used it here. As we go to press, further analysis reveals that MS #2 should, in fact, be characterized as Ashkenazi, and not as Eastern. This should be kept in mind throughout this study. I thank Prof. Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for calling to my attention Ashkenazi codicological features in MS #2.

into two sub-groups: (very accurate) those with <8> to 10 variants (#6, 5, 7, 9), and (intermediate) those with 20 to 28 variants (#4, 8, 3). In the second hand, after the corrections, there remain between <5> and 14, (and even, once, 23) variants. Most of these manuscripts have between <5> and 11 remaining variants (#6, 7, 5, 9, 4). It is obvious that our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants differs greatly from these manuscripts.

Only one of these manuscripts differs widely from **A** and the rest of this group. MS #2, with 101 variants in the first hand, belongs to manuscripts that are very far from **A**; and even in the second hand, with 59 variants, it still belongs to manuscripts that are far from **A** (on these types of manuscripts, see below).

Sefardi manuscripts: 19 masoretic codices (13th–15th centuries) and 5 Esther Scrolls (15th century)

We will compare to **A** 19 masoretic codices from the 13th–15th centuries, as well as 5 Esther scrolls from the 15th century. These include #10–28 (codices) in our list in the bibliography, and #29–33 (scrolls). Below we will first present the evidence in the masoretic codices and then in the scrolls.

The masoretic codices can be divided into three types:

- (A) very accurate, as compared to **A**, with 0 to 7 variants: #20, first hand (2–4 variants), and second hand (0 variants); #11, first hand (2), and second hand (3); #23 first hand (4), and second hand (3); #15, 27, 28 – all second hand (3); #22 second hand (4); #16 second hand (4+1); #24 second hand (5); #18, first (6), and second hand (5); #26 second hand (6); #19, first (7) and second hand (5); #10 second hand (7).
- (B) intermediate, with 27 to 32 variants: #27 first hand (23); #28 first hand (25); #16 first hand (27); #15 first hand (28); #21 first (32) and second hand (30).
- (C1) far from **A**, with 37 to 82 variants: #24 first hand (37); #10 first hand (53); #22 first hand (54+4); #25 first hand (56), and second hand (44); #26 first hand (64); #12 first hand (82), and second hand (69).

(C2) very far from **A**, with 110 to 113 variants: #14 first hand (111), and second hand (110); #13 first hand (112), and second hand (112/111); #17 first hand (112), and second hand (112/113).

The scrolls can be divided into two groups:

(A) very accurate, with 10 to 11 variants: #33, first hand (10+1) and second hand (10); #30, first and second hand (11).

(B) intermediate, with 21+1? to 26 variants: #29, first hand (21+1?), and second hand (22+1?); #32, first and second hand (25); #31, first (26) and second hand (25).

The majority of Sefardi sources that we examined belong to the first or second type (A or B); i.e. they are very accurate or intermediate. All the scrolls examined belonged to these two types, and so, too, 53% of the masoretic codices. Among the codices of the second type that were corrected, most (4 of 5), as a result, changed status and now belong to the first type (#27; 28; 16; 15). Other codices of the first and second type, though corrected, did not change their status (all five of the codices of the first type, and one of the second type, #16). Nine masoretic codices examined belonged to the third type (C). Five of these were corrected, but did not change their type (two of the far MSS—#25, 12; and all three of the very far MSS); whereas four others (#24, 10, 22, 26) were corrected and changed their status to the first type.

The above details show that a salient feature of the Sefardi manuscripts is that in the second hand the majority (68%) belong to the very accurate manuscripts (in the first hand, almost half [47%] so belonged).

Our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants clearly does not fit in with the majority of Sefardi witnesses, including all five Sefardi scrolls examined, which are very, or relatively, accurate. Our scroll clearly belongs to the type that is far from **A**.

Yemenite manuscripts: 6 masoretic codices (14th–17th centuries) and 5 Esther Scrolls (17th–18th centuries)

We will compare to **A** 6 Yemenite masoretic codices and 5 Esther Scrolls. These include the following masoretic codices: #34–39 in our list in the bibliography. The Esther Scrolls to be discussed are #40–44 in our list.

Though the Yemenite codices accurately reflect the text of **A** in the Pentateuch (because they followed Maimonides, who wrote a Torah Scroll based on **A**), we will see below that that is not the case regarding Esther.

The masoretic codices can be divided into the three types noted earlier:

(A) very accurate, with 7–10 variants: #34, first (9) and second hand (7); #37 second hand (10).

(B) intermediate, with 15 to 27 variants: #38, first (17) and second hand (15); #35, first (17) and second hand (16); #37 first hand (24); #36, first (27) and second hand (24+2?).

(C1) far from **A**, with 36 to 38 variants: #39, first (36+2?) and second hand (37).

The scrolls examined fit into the second group:

(B) intermediate, with 14–25 variants: #40, first (15) and second (14) hand; #41 (17); #42 (17); #44, first (24) and second hand (24+1?); #43 (25).

The majority of Yemenite masoretic codices that we examined belong to the second type; i.e. they are intermediate. In addition, one other manuscript was very accurate (#34; 16th century), and one was far from **A** (#39; 14th century). Among the codices that were corrected (of both types), one, as a result, changed type; it now belongs to the first type and not the second (#37). In the rest of the manuscripts the reduction of the amount of variants was insignificant.

Our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants clearly does not fit in with the majority of the Yemenite codices and scrolls that we examined, which belong to the second type above, i.e. they were intermediate.

Ashkenazi manuscripts: 19 masoretic codices (12th–15th centuries), 3 tiqqunei soferim (13th–15th centuries), and 11 Esther Scrolls (15th–16th; 18th–20th centuries)

We will compare to **A** 19 Ashkenazi masoretic codices, 3 *tiqqunei soferim*; and 11 Esther Scrolls. These include the following masoretic codices: #45–63 in our list in the bibliography. The *tiqqunei soferim* examined are #64–66, and the Esther Scrolls examined are #67–77. As will be seen below, the striking characteristic among the majority of the masoretic codices is the large quantity of variants.

The Ashkenazi masoretic codices can be divided into three types; the third type, which contains the majority of these manuscripts, will be further subdivided into three types:

(A) very accurate, as compared to **A**, with 4 to 13 variants: #51 (4 variants); #45, second hand (11); #48, second hand (12); #52, first (13) and second hand (8).

(B) intermediate, with 22 to 33 variants: #46, second hand (30); #54, first (32) and second hand (22); #61, second hand (33).

(C1) far from **A**, with 36 to 83 variants: #57, second hand (57); #60, first (60) and second hand (56); #48, first hand (61); #59, first hand (61), and second hand (56); #63, second hand (61); #61, first hand (63); #49, second hand (69); #50, second hand (77); #62, first hand (78), and second hand (36); #56 second hand (76); #53, first (80) and second hand (57); #55, second hand (83); #58, second hand (60).

(C2) very far from **A** with 96 to 120 variants: #58, first (96); #50, first hand (103); #63, first hand (106); #57, first hand (111); #49, first hand (119); #56, first hand (120).

(C3) extremely far from **A** with 126 to 174 variants: #47, first hand (133), and second hand (126); #55, first hand (138); #45, first hand (146); #46, first hand (174).

The *tiqqunei soferim* examined fit mostly into the second group, with one in the first group:

(A) accurate, with 13 variants: #66, second hand (13).

(B) intermediate, with 16 to 26 variants: #64, first (20) and second hand (16); #65, first (23) and second hand (17–18); #66, first hand (26).

The scrolls examined (with a number of late date) fit into all three groups, with the majority in the first group:

(A) very accurate, with 7 to 12 variants: #69, first hand (6+1), and second hand (6); #72, first hand (7+1), and second hand (6+1); #77, first hand (9); a second hand added one more variant and a third hand restored the original text, thus eliminating the new variant); #67 and #68 (9); #76 (10); #73, first hand (11[12]), and second hand (8).

(B) intermediate, with 18–34 variants: #71 (18 variants); #74, first hand (31); the first sheet in a different hand has an additional 3 variants, so total is 34), and second hand (the first sheet corrected to 2 variants; thus, current total is 33); #70 (a combination of two scribes), second hand[s] (33 variants: 23; 10); #75, second hand (34).

(C1) far from A, with 43 variants: #75, first hand (43).

(C2) very far from A, with 95 variants: #70 (a combination of two scribes): first hand[s] (95 variants = 24; 71).

The majority of Ashkenazi masoretic codices that we examined belong to the third type, in all three of its sub-groups; i.e. they are either far, very far, or extremely far from A. In addition, four other manuscripts were very accurate (two of these in the second hand only), and three others were intermediate (two of these in the second hand only). Among the codices that were corrected (of the 3 main types), four, as a result, changed type: #45 went from C3 to A; #46 went from C3 to B; #48 went from C1 to A; and #61 went from C1 to B. One manuscript (#55) changed its sub-type from extremely far (C3) to far (C1); and six more (#58, 50, 63, 57, 49, 56) changed their sub-type from very far (C2) to far (C1). In short, in most of the manuscripts of type C (11 of 16), the corrections either changed the type altogether (4 MSS), or the sub-type (7 MSS).

Our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants clearly does not fit in with the Ashkenazi *tiqqunei soferim* or the majority of scrolls examined, which belong to the first or second types above, i.e. they were very, or relatively, accurate.

However, it clearly belongs to the third type (C), which formed the majority of Ashkenazi masoretic codices, which are far (or very far, or extremely far) from **A**. In particular, it fits in with the first sub-group of the third type; i.e. it is far, though not *very* far, from **A**. It also fits in with the minority of Ashkenazi scrolls examined, where we found two scrolls that belonged to this third group; one, #75, was far from **A**, but less so than our scroll; the other, #70 (a combination of two scribes) belonged to the *very far* sub-group.

Italian manuscripts: 6 masoretic codices (11th–14th centuries) and 16 Esther Scrolls (15th–17th centuries)

We will compare to **A** 6 Italian masoretic codices and 16 Esther Scrolls. These include the following masoretic codices: #78–83 in our list in the bibliography. The Esther Scrolls to be discussed are #84–99 in our list.

The Italian codices are divided into the second and third of the three types noted earlier; the third type will be further sub-divided into two types (equivalent to the first two of the Ashkenazi sub-groups noted above):

(B) intermediate, with 18 to 34 variants: #80, first (18+2?) and second hand (18); #78, second hand (22); #79, second hand (34).

(C1) far from **A**, with 37 to 68 variants: #79 first hand (37); #78, first hand (40); #83, first (58) and second hand (57); #82, first (68) and second hand (65).

(C2) very far from **A** with 92 to 94 variants: #81, first (94) and second hand (92).

The scrolls examined also all fit into the second and third groups, excluding three in the first group:

(A) very accurate, with 5 to 12 variants: #98 (Sefardi in Italy), first hand (5), and second hand (6); #86 (Italian), second hand; #89 (Italian-Sefardi), first hand (12), and second hand (11).

(B) intermediate, with 18–33 variants: #97 (Sefardi in Italy; 18 variants); #96 (Italian-Sefardi), first hand (21), and second hand (19). #86 (Italian), first hand (24); #84 (Italian; 24); #85 (Italian), second hand (26+); #90 (Ashkenazi in Italy), first hand (31), and second hand (28); #94 (Italian-Sefardi), first hand (32), and second hand (33).

(C1) far from **A**, with 35 to 65 variants: #85, first hand (33/34+); #88 (Ashkenazi in Italy), first hand, (39) and second hand (35); #87 (Ashkenazi in Italy), first hand (44), and second hand (46); #93 (Italian), first hand (49), and second hand (47); #91 (Sefardi in Italy), first hand (55), and second hand (53+2); #95 (Italian-Sefardi), first hand (56), and second hand (51 [50]); #92 (Italian Sefardi), first hand (65), and second hand (63).

(C2) very far from **A**, with 103 variants: #99 (Italian-Sefardi).

The majority of Italian masoretic codices that we examined belong to the third type, in the first two of its sub-groups, especially the first sub-group; i.e. they are far from **A**. In addition, three of the manuscripts examined were intermediate (one only after correction). Among the codices that were corrected (of both types), one, as a result, changed type; it now belongs to the second type and not the third (#78). In the rest of the manuscripts the reduction of the amount of variants was insignificant.

The majority of the Italian Esther scrolls that we examined, of several types of handwriting (Italian; Italian-Sefardi; Sefardi in Italy; Ashkenazi in Italy), belong to the second type (intermediate), and the third type – especially the first sub-group, that is, they are far away from **A**. In addition, a minority of scrolls belonged to the first group (very accurate), and an even smaller minority belonged to the second sub-group of the third type (very far from **A**).

Our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants fits in with one of the major groups of the Italian scrolls, as well as with the majority of the Italian codices, that we examined, which belong to the third type above. In particular, our scroll fits in with the first sub-group of the third type; i.e. it is far, though not *very* far from **A**.

A unique feature of our scroll, not found in the other scrolls examined, nor found in the codices, is the considerable distancing of our scroll from **A** as a result of the corrections. In our scroll the number of variants changed from 68 to 81; whereas in the other scrolls examined the corrections, in general, brought the scroll *closer* to **A** (and this was *always* the case in the codices). In the other few cases of distancing a scroll from **A**, the change in the number of variants was very minor: 1 variant (#98; 94) or 2 variants (#87).

If we look at the text evidence from all five geographical areas, we see that the Eastern manuscripts examined are mostly very accurate, and some are intermediate. The Sefardi scrolls are mostly intermediate, and a few are very accurate. About half of the Sefardi manuscripts are relatively or very accurate (53%). A bit less than half (47%) of the Sefardi codices examined (but not scrolls) are far, or very far, from **A**. When considering the second hand, however, the majority of codices are very accurate (67%). The Yemenite manuscripts are also mostly intermediate, while two are very accurate (one after correction). On the other hand, the Ashkenazi manuscripts exhibit more categories: most of the masoretic codices are far, very far, or extremely far, from **A**. Two are very accurate and one is intermediate. However, the *tiqqunei soferim* and the majority of Ashkenazi scrolls examined were all either very, or relatively, accurate. On the other hand, a minority of scrolls were far, or very far, from **A**. The Italian manuscripts, similar to the Ashkenazi ones, are mostly far from **A**, and one was very far from **A**. In addition, the Italian scrolls belonged mostly to the types that were intermediate, or far away, from **A**.

Our scroll with 68, and then 81, variants is far from **A**, and is thus similar to the majority of Italian masoretic codices and to one of the major groups of Italian scrolls, which are similar to the majority of Ashkenazi codices and a minority of Ashkenazi scrolls; i.e. belonging to the third category noted above, and in particular to the first sub-group of the third category. Our codex is unusual in that its corrections further distance it from **A**, with most of these corrections dealing with one spelling category. In almost every other case, in all of the five geographical areas, the corrections usually bring the manuscript's text closer to **A**.

2c. The Ashkenazi and Italian Manuscripts Which Are Far, and Very Far, from A

The above result concerning the large quantity of variants in the majority of Ashkenazi masoretic codices, based upon the above selection of sources, can further be shown to be characteristic of the Ashkenazi codex tradition by comparing all the variants from the above Ashkenazi sources (for this purpose we examined the variants of the above 16 Ashkenazi masoretic

codices that were far, very far, and extremely from A) to the apparatus in Kennicott's Bible (1776–1780).¹⁹ This comparison shows that of the 33 Kennicott MSS with the highest coincidence of the same variants as in our manuscripts, the majority (79%) consist of Ashkenazi MSS (61%) together with a few Italian ones (18%) (on the similarity of the Italian text tradition to the Ashkenazi one, see the results above).²⁰ Another 18% are of Sefardi origin; and one source is a printed edition (Hagiographa; Naples 1487). Of these 33 MSS, 5 are *extremely far* from A (between 123 and 140 variants)—all are Ashkenazi; 12 are *very far* from A (between 91 and 116 variants)—7 are Ashkenazi, 2 Italian, and 3 are Sefardi; and 15 are *far* from A (between 63 and 89 variants)—8 are Ashkenazi, 4 Italian, and 3 are Sefardi, (in addition, there is the above printed edition). Thus, we see that these codices of the far type are divided into the same sub-types as we saw above: Ashkenazi—three sub-types; Italian—two sub-types; Sefardi—two sub-types. The Ashkenazi MSS form the majority of these sub-types of MSS; and they are the exclusive purveyors in Western Europe of the *extremely far* sub-type.

We emphasize that among these Kennicott manuscripts there is a large amount of overlap in the very same variants. Thus, there are 109 variants that are common to 20–73 Kennicott manuscripts, and another 91 variants that are common to 9–19 Kennicott manuscripts. Furthermore, included in the above closest 33 Kennicott manuscripts are 6 of the very same manuscripts that in another study were among those with the highest coincidence of variants in Deuteronomy found in C3-first hand:²¹ MSS K107 (127 variants here in Esther), K18 (123 variants), K17 (110 variants), K108 (Italian; 108 variants); K196 (86 variants), K129 (77 variants; Ashkenazi—according to the Hebrew Palaeography Project; C. D. Ginsburg defined it as Italian). In other words,

¹⁹ B. Kennicott, *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum Variis Lectionibus* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1776–1780; reduced repr., Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 2003).

²⁰ See also J. S. Penkower, "A Tenth-Century Pentateuch Manuscript from Jerusalem Corrected by Mishael ben Uziel (Ms C3)," *Tarbiz* 58 (1988), 49–74 (Heb.), esp. 65–66; and see especially O. Kolodni, "The Pentateuch in Medieval Italian Bible Manuscripts and Tikkunei Soferim: Text, Open and Closed Sections, and the Layout of Songs" (Ph.D. diss., Bar Ilan University, 2008 [Heb]).

²¹ See Penkower, "Tenth-Century Pentateuch Manuscript."

MSS also have 11–15 variants for אַחשׁוּרשׁ, 95, 108, 117, 118, 121, 212, 240, 245, 253, 264 show a high coincidence of the categories בשלשה היהודים and יבא/ויבא וכו', but not אַחשׁוּרשׁ. One may say that these categories define several of the Ashkenazi manuscripts.

Several of the remaining spelling variants may be divided into further spelling categories, usually smaller categories of 2 or 3 examples. Thus, for example, (a) defective spelling: 6:13 נפול תפול [נפל תפל (=A)]; 1:19, 9:27 יעבר [יעבור (and similarly 4:14 יעמד [יעמוד]; 5:12 אותי [אתי], and 9:22 אותם [אתם]; 9:16, 17, 18 ונוח [ונח]; (b) *plene* spelling: 9:29, 31, 32 הפורים [הפורים] (the 3 places where it is spelled defective in A); 5:14, 7:9 גבה [גבוה]. There remain, nevertheless, tens of variants that do not fit into categories. However, over half of them are prevalent in Ashkenazi manuscripts. Thus, if we look at the 33 Kennicott manuscripts noted above (79% of which are Ashkenazi and Italian), 53 of these non-categorized spellings are found in 4–8 manuscripts; another 57 spellings are found in 9–19 manuscripts; and 16 spellings are found in 20–29 manuscripts. Thus, for example, we find concerning the latter 16 spellings: Esther 2:3 תמרוקיהן (29 MSS); 2:9 מנותיה (25); 2:12 המור (25); 3:13 ונשלח (25); 7:4 להרג (24); 8:4 שרביט (24); 8:5 כל היהודים (24); 8:16 וששון (24); 9:22 לאביונים (24); 10:2 הלא (24); 2:7 דודו (23); 3:8 ומפורד (21); 9:19 הפרזים (without *ketiv* הפרזים; 21); 1:4 שמנים (20); 1:14 והקרוב (20); 6:14 ויבהילו (20). Of these latter variants, 56% (9 of 16) are *plene* spellings. In short, many of these variants also define the Ashkenazi manuscripts.

How is one to account for this wide variance between the Ashkenazi (and some Italian) codices and A? It is clear that the Ashkenazi text variants, which are widespread in their manuscripts, cannot be the result of haphazard occurrences. Nor can the variants be explained by assuming that sometime in the Middle Ages the Ashkenazi scribes simply decided to write with *plene* spelling. For that would not explain why there are many spelling variants in the Ashkenazi codices which consist of *defective* spellings. It is our contention that these text variants represent an alternate tradition that was transmitted to Ashkenaz. As noted above, some of the Kennicott manuscripts that exhibit these variants are the same that exhibit a high coincidence of variants in

Deuteronomy as found in C3-first hand (10th century; Eretz Israel). One may assume that the variants in Esther are similarly to be traced to earlier sources.

We will now establish the connection to earlier sources in four of the above spelling categories. We will show that the alternate spelling in these categories in fact represents an alternate pronunciation that goes back to Second Temple times (and in one case, no later than the 3rd century C.E.). In other words, the spelling in these categories represents one type of pronunciation, and the [Tiberian] vocalization represents another. Thus, the above noted Ashkenazi manuscripts, without being aware of it, preserve two alternate ways of pronunciation in these categories (i.e. according to the spelling, and according to the vocalization).

Let us first consider the category of אַחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ spelled without *waw* after the *resh*. It is our contention that this represents an alternate pronunciation of the *resh* without a *holem*, but rather with some other vowel. What is more, in this case we have clear evidence that this alternate pronunciation is closer to the original pronunciation of this name. From various sources we know that the original Persian pronunciation of this king's name was *Khshayarsha*, i.e. without an "o" vowel at the end.²² See similarly the Greek equivalent of this name: Xerxes. Furthermore, we have early evidence that in Aramaic the name was also pronounced without an "o" vowel at the end: (1) In letters from the fifth century B.C.E., that are dated to the reign of this king, his name is spelled: חַשִּׁי(א)רֶשׁ;²³ (2) In the painting of a scene from the Esther story at the synagogue of Dura-Europas (3rd century C.E), in which the king is seated on his throne, his name is inscribed on the third of five stairs leading to the throne; it reads: חַשְׁהוֹרֶשׁ.²⁴ Thus we see that there is a long tradition of pronouncing the king's name without an "o" at the end (after the *resh*).

²² See I. Gafni and H. L. Ginsburg, "Ahasuerus-Xerxes," *EncJud* 2:454.

²³ See A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923; repr., Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967), 4 (no. 2): חַשִּׁירֶשׁ (in the 2nd year of King Xerxes); 10 (no. 5): חַשִּׁיאֶרֶשׁ (year 15 of King Xerxes); 168 (no. 20): חַשִּׁיאֶרֶשׁ; 169 (no. 29): חַשִּׁיאֶרֶשׁ[ר].

²⁴ See E. L. Sukenik, *The Synagogue of Dura-Europos and Its Paintings* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1947), 106-107 (Heb.).

However, when the name was transferred to Hebrew, an “o” was added. Nevertheless, the defective spelling (in the Ashkenazi manuscripts) preserves the earlier pronunciation. (In the Aleppo Codex the alternate pronunciation was reflected in the handful of cases with defective spelling). A somewhat similar case can be seen with the place name of Jerusalem. It is spelled consistently defective in the Bible (except for a handful of cases),²⁵ reflecting a pronunciation of *yerushalem*. However, this was later changed in Hebrew to *yerushalayim*, and the vocalization throughout the Bible reflects this later pronunciation (even though the *yod* is not present).

The category of שלשה with defective spelling is to be explained in a similar way; i.e., this reflects an alternative pronunciation of this word, the *lamed* without a *holem*, but with another vowel. To establish this hypothesis, we turn to the alternate pronunciation of the Samaritans, which represents an early alternate pronunciation of Hebrew (reaching back into Second Temple times). Here we find that they indeed pronounce this word without a *holem*: i.e. *shelasha*.²⁶ So in this case, too, the Ashkenazi manuscripts preserve in their spelling one type of pronunciation, and another type in their vocalization.

Similarly, the category of יבוא with defective spelling is to be explained as reflecting an alternate pronunciation of this word, the *bet* without a *holem*, but with another vowel. Again we turn to the alternate pronunciation of the Samaritans to prove this hypothesis. Here we find that they pronounce this word without a *holem*: i.e. *wyaba* (however, in cases without the *waw* at the beginning of the word, they write יבוא and pronounce it: *yabu*).²⁷

²⁵ Jer 26:18, Esth 2:6, 1 Chr 3:5, 2 Chr 25:1b, 32:9 (the first four preceded by *waw*, *mem*, or *bet*; the last with *he* at the end).

²⁶ See Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans* (5 vols.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1957–1977), 4:288a; 5:230 (Heb.).

²⁷ See Ben-Hayyim, *Literary and Oral Tradition*, 4:47a; 5:128. Similarly, the category of ישב/הישב may be explained in a similar manner. Turning again to the Samaritan pronunciation, we find that the word is pronounced without a *holem*: i.e. *yesheb/ayyesheb* (Ben-Hayyim, *Literary and Oral Tradition*, 4:131a). There are two cases of *yusheb*, but all of the others are *yesheb*.

As to the spelling of היהודיים and היהודים, which reflect alternate pronunciations, there was indeed an early 3rd century CE dispute concerning this word as recorded in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Megillah* 2:2 [73a]:²⁸ “R. Isaac b. Aba b. Mahsia and R. Hannanel argued in the presence of Rav each for one of the spellings/pronunciations (and would not defer to his colleague).” It is interesting to note that no decision on the part of Rav is recorded. On the other hand, it is recorded that R. Yohanan read all as היהודים [ה]. The result of this early dispute in its later manifestations was that in the Aleppo Codex most of the cases in the book of Esther were spelled and read היהודים, however there remain a handful that are spelled היהודיים, but are read היהודים.²⁹ On the other hand, the Ashkenazi manuscripts that write consistently היהודים in all cases, reflect one of the above two early conflicting opinions.

In sum, the alternative spelling categories in the Ashkenazi manuscripts reflect early alternate pronunciations. Thus, these codices unknowingly reflect in these cases two alternative pronunciations: one as reflected in the spelling, and another as reflected in the vocalization.

3. *The Layout of the Ten Sons of Haman*

3a. *Background*

The Bible contains a number of prose passages with a “repeating pattern,” i.e. with a repeating word(s) together with a word(s) that changes; for example, the list of kings that Joshua defeated (Josh 12:9–24); the list of seasons (Qoh 3:2–8); the sons of Haman (Esth 9:7–9). These passages lend themselves to be laid out in a special way that emphasizes the repeated pattern. They could be arranged in at least two different basic styles: (1) each line consisting of the basic unit, with a break between the two elements; (2) each line doubling up the basic unit, with a break between the two units. Thus, for example, in the list of seasons in Qoheleth, one could write:

²⁸ *Talmud Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2001), col. 759.

²⁹ Esth 3:7 (והיהודיים, ביהודיים, ביהודים ק), 8:1, 7, 13, 9:15, 18 (והיהודים ק).

| | |
|------------|-----|
| ללדת | עת |
| למות | ועת |
| לטעת | עת |
| לעקור נטוע | ועת |

Alternately, one could write:

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| ועת למות | עת ללדת |
| ועת לעקור נטוע | עת לטעת |

In this particular case, the latter layout has the double advantage of reflecting in each line the contrasting pair, and also taking up less space in a manuscript (14 lines, instead of 28 lines).

Of the above type passages, rabbinic literature takes note of two of them: the list of kings that Joshua defeated and the sons of Haman. Both are to be laid out in a specific way. The Babylonian Talmud (*b. Meg.* 16b) noted that the ten sons of Haman (and similarly the list of kings) should be laid out in a [ritually fit] Esther scroll differently than the regular prose text; specifically: in two columns with a space between them (אריח על גבי אריח ולבנה על גבי לבנה). The exact layout, however, was not specified. On the other hand, the Jerusalem Talmud (*y. Meg.* 3:7 [74b])³⁰ in the name of R. Yossi b. R. Bun specified the layout: וַאִישׁ should be at the head of the column, and וְאֵת at the end. Thus, the layout should be as follows:³¹

| | |
|---------|---------|
| וַאִישׁ | איש |
| וְאֵת | פרשנדתא |
| וְאֵת | דלפון |
| וְאֵת | אספתא |
| וְאֵת | פורתא |
| וְאֵת | אדליא |
| וְאֵת | ארידתא |
| וְאֵת | פרמשתא |
| וְאֵת | אריסי |

³⁰ *Talmud Yerushalmi*, col. 767.

³¹ See, e.g., the tosafist, R. Isaac Dampierre, as quoted in *Hagahot Maimuniot, Hilkhhot Megillah* 2:12 (though he quotes *Soferim*, see below; where he apparently did not have the text specifying the number of lines); Qaro, *Beit Yosef*, §691.

| | |
|------|-------|
| ואת | ארדי |
| עשרת | ויזתא |

Later, tractate *Soferim* 13:2 (8th century; Eretz Israel) repeated the Jerusalem Talmud's rule of the different layout and also specified the layout, in the name of R. Yossi b. Abun (13:3). However, there the instructions differed a bit: **איש** should be at the head of the column, **ואת** at the end, **in 6 lines** (thus the original text; Higger, in his edition of *Soferim*, mistakenly corrected the text to read 10 lines);³² **עשרת** at the end of the column. Thus, as reconstructed by Breuer,³³ *Soferim's* layout of the columns should be:

| | | |
|------|-------------|--------|
| ואת | ואת פרשנדתא | איש |
| ואת | ואת אספתא | דלפון |
| ואת | ואת אדליא | פורתא |
| ואת | ואת פרמשתא | ארידתא |
| ואת | ואת ארדי | אריסי |
| עשרת | | ויזתא |

Alternately, this could be laid out in the following manner, as noted by Yitzhaqi:³⁴

| | | |
|------|------------|---------|
| ואת | | איש |
| ואת | ואת דלפון | פרשנדתא |
| ואת | ואת פורתא | אספתא |
| ואת | ואת ארידתא | אדליא |
| ואת | ואת אריסי | פרמשתא |
| עשרת | ואת ויזתא | ארידי |

In our scroll, the two columns (of the Jerusalem Talmud layout) are reversed, and thus the final result looks as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| כרצונם ובשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד | |
| חמש מאות איש | |
| פרשנדתא | ואת |

³² Noted by Breuer, *Aleppo Codex*, 151, n. 1.

³³ Breuer, *Aleppo Codex*, 151.

³⁴ D. Yitzhaqi, "Opinion of Early Authorities on How to Write 'Haman's Sons' as Represented in Massekhet Soferim and the Jerusalem Talmud," *Tzfunot* 12 (1991), 55–63 (Heb.), esp. p. 59.

| | |
|--------|-----|
| דלפון | ואת |
| אספתא | ואת |
| פורתא | ואת |
| אדליא | ואת |
| ארידתא | ואת |
| פרמשתא | ואת |
| אריסי | ואת |
| ארידי | ואת |
| ויותא | ואת |

עשרת בני המן בן המדתא צרר

[another 4 lines =].....

In order to place the layout of our scroll within the traditions of the various scribes and geographical areas, we will look in detail at the types of layouts that we find in manuscripts and scrolls from the different areas. In order to facilitate this typology, we will first define four basic types of layouts, together with a number of sub-types.

3b. Four Basic Types of Layout (together with sub-types)

TYPE 1 (Jerusalem Talmud) – the basic unit on the end of one line and the beginning of the next on the other:

(1a)

| | |
|------|---------|
| ואת | איש |
| ואת | פרשנדתא |
| ואת | דלפון |
| ואת | אספתא |
| ואת | פורתא |
| ואת | אדליא |
| ואת | ארידתא |
| ואת | פרמשתא |
| ואת | אריסי |
| ואת | ארידי |
| עשרת | ויותא |

This layout occupies the whole column. This may be accomplished by either enlargening the letters, or by adding spaces between the lines (or a combination of the two).

(1b) The layout is the same as (1a), however, the layout does *not* occupy the entire column, rather only part of the column. It may begin the column, or may start within the column.

TYPE 2 (*Soferim*) – somewhat similar to type 1, but adding another basic unit in the middle of the line, often arranged in 3 columns:

(2a)

| | | |
|------|-------------|--------|
| ואת | ואת פרשנדתא | איש |
| ואת | ואת אספתא | דלפון |
| ואת | ואת אדליא | פורתא |
| ואת | ואת פרמשתא | ארידתא |
| ואת | ואת ארדי | אריסי |
| עשרת | | ויזתא |

This type does not occupy an entire column, but is rather part of the column.

(2b)

| | | |
|------|------------|---------|
| ואת | | איש |
| ואת | ואת דלפון | פרשנדתא |
| ואת | ואת פורתא | אספתא |
| ואת | ואת ארידתא | אדליא |
| ואת | ואת אריסי | פרמשתא |
| עשרת | ואת ויזתא | ארידי |

The above is similar to (2a) but the middle unit begins with the second line, and not the first.

(2c)

| | | |
|-----|--------|-------------|
| ואת | | איש |
| ואת | דלפון | ואת פרשנדתא |
| ואת | פורתא | ואת אספתא |
| ואת | ארידתא | ואת אדליא |

| | | | |
|--------|-----|-------|------|
| פרמשתא | ואת | אריסי | ואת |
| ארידי | ואת | ויזתא | עשרת |

This is similar to (2b), but laid out in four columns, not three.

(2d) Similar to (2b), but in the last line there, עשרת is moved to the beginning of the next line.

TYPE 3 – the basic unit on one line, in reverse order from Type 1:

(3a)

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| חמש מאות איש | |
| פרשנדתא | ואת |
| דלפון | ואת |
| אספתא | ואת |
| פורתא | ואת |
| אדליא | ואת |
| ארידתא | ואת |
| פרמשתא | ואת |
| אריסי | ואת |
| ארידי | ואת |
| ויזתא | ואת |

עשרת בני המן בן המדתא צרר

The advantage of this type over (1a) is that the basic unit is on one line, and does not begin at the end of one line and continue at the beginning of the next one. The disadvantage is that the basic unit is broken up on one line by a space between the words. There may be slight variants in the line that occurs before the list of names.

(3b)

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| ואבד חמש מאות איש | |
| פרשנדתא | ואת |
| דלפון | ואת |
| אספתא | ואת |
| פורתא | ואת |
| אדליא | ואת |

| | |
|--------|-----|
| ארידתא | ואת |
| פרמשתא | ואת |
| אריסי | ואת |
| ארדי | ואת |
| ויזתא | ואת |

עשרת בני המן בן המדתא צרר

This is similar to (3a), except that after the list עשרת begins at the very beginning of the next line, and not after a space on that line (=closed section). Here, too, there may be slight variants in the line before the list of names.

TYPE 4—doubling up the basic unit on one line, using Type 3 as the basic unit:

(4a)

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| ואבד חמש מאות איש | |
| ואת פרשנדתא | ואת דלפון |
| ואת אספתא | ואת פורתא |
| ואת אדליא | ואת ארידתא |
| ואת פרמשתא | ואת אריסי |
| ואת ארדי | ואת ויזתא |
| עשרת | |

There may be variants concerning the line above the list of names.

(4b)

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| ואבד חמש מאות איש | |
| ואת פרשנדתא | ואת דלפון |
| ואת אספתא | ואת פורתא |
| ואת אדליא | ואת ארידתא |
| ואת פרמשתא | ואת אריסי |
| ואת ארדי | ואת ויזתא |
| עשרת... | |

Similar to (4a), but עשרת begins at the very beginning of the next line, and not after a space on that line (=closed section). There may be variants concerning the line above the list of names.

(4c)

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| | ובשושן הבירה הרגו היהודים ואבד חמש |
| מאות איש | ואת פרשנדתא |
| ואת דלפון | ואת אספתא |
| ואת פורתא | ואת אדליא |
| ואת ארידתא | ואת פרמשתא |
| ואת אריסי | ואת ארידי |
| ואת ויזתא | עשרת בני המן בן |

Here, *איש* is part of the layout at the beginning, and similarly *עשרת* at the end (see above Types 1 and 2).

(4d)

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| | ואבד חמש מאות איש |
| ואת פרשנדתא | ואת דלפון |
| ואת אספתא | ואת פורתא |
| ואת אדליא | ואת ארידתא |
| ואת פרמשתא | ואת אריסי |
| ואת ארדי | ואת ויזתא |
| | עשרת |

This is similar to (4a), but laid out in four columns.

(4e) This is similar to (4d), but *עשרת* appears at the very beginning of the next line, and not after a space on that line (=closed section).

Having defined the basic four types, and their sub-types, let us look at the distribution of these types in the manuscripts and scrolls. First we will give an overall summary of the types as found in these sources, and then we will look at each geographical area separately.

Type 1 is the most prevalent layout in the manuscripts and scrolls, when these sources are considered as one group—56% (54 of 97 MSS [2 other MSS are missing the passage with the sons]) follow this layout: 30% (29 of 97) are type 1a, and 26% (24+1) are type 1b. The next most prominent type is type 3, though with less than half the amount of the previous type—22% (23 of 97): 12% (12) are type 3a, and 10% (11) are type 3b. The next two types are fairly

similar in quantity, and both are a bit less than half the amount of the previous type. Type 4 has 12% (12 of 97): 4a—7% (7); 4b—2% (2); 4c—1% (1); 4d—1%; 4e—1%. Type 2 has 8% (8 of 97): 2a—2% (2); 2b—2% (2); 2c—3% (3); 2d—1% (1).

We now proceed to see how these types are distributed in the different geographical areas. We will list the types in the order of their prevalence, and also summarize separately manuscripts and scrolls. (The percentages noted below are with respect to the manuscripts in a given geographical area).

3c. The Layouts of the Ten Sons in the Five Traditions

(Middle) Eastern

7 Manuscripts

Type 1b is the prevalent type: 71.4% (5 MSS)—#1 (see below), 2, 5, 7, 8. Type 2d and type 3a are each represented by 1 MSS (14.3% each)—#9; 3 respectively. Two of the Eastern MSS used in this study (#4, 6) are lacking the passage with the sons.

As far as the Aleppo codex (#1) is concerned, we know that similar to the majority of Eastern MSS, it too had a type 1 layout, as reported by Y. Qimhi.³⁵ We may assume, based upon the other Eastern MSS, that the Aleppo Codex also had a type 1b layout, i.e. the layout was part of the column, and did not occupy the whole column.

How are we to explain the fact that those Eastern manuscripts with type 1 all have type 1b and not type 1a? It seems that the scribes of these manuscripts, which were all written with more than 11 lines to the column = the length of the list of names (e.g. **A** with 28 lines, **L** with 27 lines), did not want to distort the normal size of the letters in order to fill up the length of the column. After all, nowhere in the Masorah is there any recording of majuscular letters for all of the letters of the sons and the repeating ואת.

In fact, there were three miniscular letters recorded in masoretic lists among the ten sons' names; thus: 'Okhlah #84: *zayyin* of ויזתא (9:9); *shin* of פרשנתדא

³⁵ See Ofer, "The Aleppo Codex," 324 and n. 14.

(9:7); and *tav* of פרמשתא (9:9).³⁶ As far as majuscular letters, 'Okhlah #83 recorded two cases in Esther, but not among the sons' names, rather *het* of חור (1:6), and the first *tav* of ותכתב (9:29).³⁷ It was only another source that recorded what was in effect one majuscular letter among the son's names, *waw* of ויחא (Soferim 13:4).³⁸

As is now known, the Eastern manuscripts did not mark miniscular letters, and even with majuscular letters, they only marked a few. As far as Esther is concerned, we note for example that in MS L, even though there are lists of majuscular and miniscular letters at the end of the manuscript,³⁹ the scribe did not mark any of them (as noted above) in the text itself. In short, one may say that, *a fortiori*, the scribes of these manuscripts saw no reason to add majuscular letters that had no masoretic source at all. Similarly, they did not feel it appropriate to add extra spaces between the lines. Thus, they advocated type 1b, and not type 1a.

Sefardi

19 Manuscripts

In order of prevalence (first three types are similar): **type 3**—31.5% (6 MSS): 3a (4)—#11, 13, 14, 21; 3b (2)—#19, 22; **type 1b**—31.5% (6 = 5 [all 15th century]—#10, 16, 18, 23, 27; + 1 MS [13th century]—#12, with slightly different first line); **type 4**—31.5% (6): 4a—28.6% (5—#15, 17, 24, 25, 26); type 4e—5% (1)—#28; **type 2c**—5% (1)—#20;.

5 Scrolls: All 5 scrolls (from the 15th century) are type 1a—#29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

³⁶ S. Frensdorff, ed., *Das Buch Ochlach W'ochlah* (Hanover, 1964; repr., Tel Aviv: Zion, 1969), 89 (Heb. with German notes).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

³⁸ M. Higger, ed., *Massekhet Soferim* (New York, 1937; repr., Jerusalem: Makor, 1970), 241.

³⁹ See *Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagiographa: Codex Leningrad B 19a* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Makor, 1970), 3:277-278.

*Yemenite***6 Manuscripts**

4 MSS (67%) are **type 3**: type 3a (3) – #37, 38, 39, and type 3b (1) – #36. 2 MSS (33%) are **type 1b** – #34, 35.

5 scrolls

All scrolls are **type 1**: 80% (4 [17th and 18th centuries]) are type 1a – #40, 41, 42, 44; and 20% (1 [17th century]) type 1b – #43.

*Ashkenazi***19 Manuscripts**

In order of prevalence: 42% (8 MSS) are **type 3**: type 3a (3) – #45, 61, 63; type 3b (5) – #47, 49, 53, 55, 57. 26% (5 MSS) are of **type 4**: type 4a (1) – #52; type 4b (2) – #46, 56; type 4c (1) – #50; type 4d (1) – #59. 16% (2 MSS + part of layout in another MS) are of **type 2**: type 2a (1 – #51; + 1 MS partial – #60); type 2c (1) – #48. Another 16% (3 MSS) are of **type 1b** – #54, 58, 62.

In other words, the prevalent types in the Ashkenazi manuscripts are types 3 and 4, making up 68% of the MSS.

3 *Tiqqunei Soferim* and 11 Scrolls

2 *tiqqunei soferim* are of **type 2b** – #65, 66, and 1 *tiqqun* is of type 1a – #64. All of the scrolls, except one, are of **type 1** (91%): type 1a (6) – #69, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77 (#69, 72, 73 are 19th–20th century); type 1b (4) – #67, 68, 74, 75 (#67, 68 are of Habad origin, 19th century). **Type 2c**: 9% (1) – #70.

*Italian***6 Manuscripts**

66.6% (4 MSS) are of **type 3**: type 3a (1) – #82; type 3b (3) – #78, 81, 82. **Types 1b** and **4a** each have one MS (16.6% each) – #80, and #79 respectively.

16 Scrolls

All the scrolls (12 from the 15th century, 4 from 16th century) are of **type 1**: type 1a: 81% (11 scrolls + 2 with some variant) – #84, 86, 88, 89, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99; #80, 88; type 1b – 19% (3 scrolls; 15th century) – #87, 90, 92.

To sum up the layout of the 10 sons:

- (1) When looking at the *scrolls* from all the geographical areas (we recall that there were no Eastern scrolls), there is almost 100% agreement as to type 1, with type 1a more prevalent: 5 Sefardi: 1a – 100%; 5 Yemenite: 1a – 80%, 1b – 20%; 11 Ashkenazi: type 1 – 91% (1a – 55%; 1b – 36%); type 2c – 9%; 16 Italian: 1a – 81%; 1b – 19%.
- (2) One should remember, however, that as far as the scrolls are concerned, the earliest ones before us are from the 15th century. One may assume that earlier scrolls also contained other types of layouts, just as we find in the codices from the various geographical areas.
- (3) When we look at the *manuscripts* (without the scrolls), a different picture emerges. Type 1 is no longer the prevalent type in all areas. In the Eastern manuscripts it is indeed the prevalent type (71.4%) – and here it is type 1b. In the Sefardi manuscripts, the prevalence is much weaker: type 1b has 31.5%, similar to types 3 and 4, both also with 31.5% (type 2c has 5%). On the other hand, in the Yemenite manuscripts, type 3 is prevalent with 67%, and type 1b only has 33%. In the Ashkenazi manuscripts, the prevalent types are type 3 with 42% (3a – 3 MSS; 3b – 5 MSS), and type 4 with 26% (together 68%). The other types, type 2 and type 1b, have only 16% each. Similarly, in the Italian manuscripts, the prevalent type is type 3 with 66.6% (3a – 1 MS; 3b – 3 MSS). The other types, type 1b and 4a, have only 16.6% each.
- (4) Our scroll with layout 3a, is thus similar to the prevalent type 3 found in the Ashkenazi and Italian *manuscripts*, but not in the Ashkenazi and Italian *scrolls* before us. (Though of the sub-types, 3a was somewhat less prevalent in these manuscripts than sub-type 3b). It is also similar to the prevalent type found in the Yemenite manuscripts, but they clearly did not influence our scroll. It should be emphasized that type 3 conflicts with the layout regulations set forth in the Jerusalem Talmud and in *Massekhet Soferim*, with וַת at the end of the column (and not at the beginning of the column).

4. Section Divisions in the Scroll of Esther

4a. Background

There was no one accepted tradition of section divisions among the masorettes of Tiberias. This was true for the Pentateuch, and *a fortiori*, for the other sections of the Bible as well. Therefore, one finds section variants among the Eastern manuscripts with Tiberian masorah, even in the Pentateuch. These variants involved, on the one hand, addition or omission of section divisions, and on the other hand, variation in the types of sections, closed for open, and vice versa. Section variants occurred not only in the Eastern manuscripts, but also in manuscripts from other geographical areas, e.g. the Ashkenazi and Italian manuscripts.⁴⁰

Eventually the Pentateuch section divisions were unified (with a variant or two remaining), following Maimonides' list in his *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Sefer Torah* 8:4, which was based on the Aleppo Codex. However, the section divisions of the other parts of the Bible (which were not ritually binding) did not undergo such unification, as neither Maimonides nor any other halakhic authority ever attempted to make a master list of sections for the Prophets and Hagiographa.

Even the book of Esther, which was annually read ritually from a scroll, did not undergo unification of the section division. Throughout the Middle Ages, even though there existed various section lists by halakhic authorities, no unification was achieved in the manuscripts. More recently, there has been a growing consensus concerning the section division of the scroll, following R. Solomon Ganzfried's *tiqqun* of Esther, in his *Qeset HaSofer*,⁴¹ who essentially agreed with the division as found in the text of the Mantua 1742 edition of the Bible (printed with *Minhat Shai*; though the author of *Minhat Shai* did not

⁴⁰ See J. S. Penkower, "A Sheet of Parchment from a 10th or 11th Century Torah Scroll: Determining Its Type among Four Traditions (Oriental, Sefardi, Ashkenazi, Yemenite)," *Textus* 21 (2002), 235–264, esp. 238–254; and see especially J. Peretz, "The Pentateuch in Medieval Ashkenazi Manuscripts, Tikkunei Soferim, and Torah Scrolls: Text, Open and Closed Sections and the Layout of the Songs" (Ph.D. diss., Bar Ilan University, 2008), 176–243 (Heb.); Kolodni, "The Pentateuch," 150–219.

⁴¹ R. Solomon Ganzfried, *Qeset HaSofer* (2nd ed.; Ungvar, 1871), fols. 133a–134b.

comment on the sections in Esther), and similarly as found in the printed *tiqqun* of Esther, *‘Ezrat HaSofer ‘al Megillat Ester* (Amsterdam, 1796).

In our scroll, we find a division into 12 sections [+ 5 sections; see below]. In order to place this section division within the traditions of the various scribes and geographical areas, we will look in detail at the types of section divisions that we find in the manuscripts and scrolls.

First we will give an overall summary of the types of divisions as found in the manuscripts and scrolls, focusing on the quantity of sections, and then we will look at each geographical area separately. In the following discussion we will also consider one more source, #66* in our list in the bibliography, which is R. Judah HeHasid’s list of sections. Thus, our total sources for the sections will be 100.

The most prevalent types of section divisions that we find in the codices and scrolls (both are referred to in this paragraph as ‘manuscripts’) with respect to quantity are 17 sections (28%, 28 of 100 MSS; and possibly 1 more) and 16 sections (24%, 24). These two types represent 52% of the manuscripts. The next two prevalent types, but with less than half the amount of the first two types, are 15 and 18 sections (each 11%, each with 11). The next group of prevalent types, with about half the amount of the last type, are 20 sections (7%, 7 and possibly 1 more) and 19 and 22 sections (each 5%, each with 5). Other types of section divisions are all represented by either 2 MSS—11 sections; or only 1—so 6, 11, 13, 21, and 24 sections.

The above general survey, whose purpose was to demonstrate the quantity of section divisions, does not consider the question of open and closed section variants within any given quantity type. This will be discussed below.

We now proceed to see how these quantity types are distributed in the different geographical areas. We will list the types in the order of their prevalence in the manuscripts, and summarize separately manuscripts and scrolls.

4b. The Quantity of Section Divisions in the Five Traditions

(Middle) Eastern

7+2 (incomplete) Manuscripts

The most prevalent type are 22 sections – (3 MSS – #1, 8, 9); and 20 sections – (1 – #5; +1? – #4). The other types, are all represented by 1 MS: 16 sections – #2; 17 sections – #6?; 18 sections – #3; 21 sections – #7.

The salient feature of these manuscripts is that the majority have 20–22 sections (5+1?).

Sefardi

19 Manuscripts

The prevalent type is 15 sections – (8 MSS – #13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25; 27 [first hand; second hand – 14 sections]). This is followed by the types of 17 sections – (3 – #16, 23, 25), and 18 sections – (3 – #12, 18, 28). Then comes the types of 16 and 20 sections with 2 MS each (#11, 20; and #10, 14), and finally 11 sections with 1 MS (#22).

5 Scrolls

The prevalent types are 16 sections – (2 MSS – #29, 32), and 17 sections – (2 – #30, 31). 19 sections is represented by 1 MS (#33).

Yemenite

6 Manuscripts

The prevalent types are 16 sections – (2 MSS – #35, 36), and 17 sections – (2 – #37, 38). More numerous divisions are represented each by 1 MS: 19 sections (#39), and 22 sections (#34).

5 scrolls

The prevalent type is 16 sections – (4 scrolls – #40, 41, 42, 44). 17 sections is represented by 1 scroll (#43).

*Askenazi***19 Manuscripts**

The prevalent types are 17 sections—(4 MSS—#48, 52, 56, 58), and 18 sections—(4—#46, 49, 53, 57). Then comes 16 sections—(3—#47, 60, 62); followed by 15 and 20 sections—(2—#50, 55; #51, 63). The remaining types are represented each by 1 MS: 6 sections (#61), 13 sections (#59), 14 sections (#45), and 24 sections (#54).

3+1 *Tiqqunei Soferim* and 11 Scrolls

Almost each *tiqqun* represents a different type: 19 sections (#66, 66*), 16 sections (#65), 17 sections (#64).

The prevalent type among the scrolls is 17 sections (7 scrolls—#69, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77; [#69 is a 20th century scroll; #71, 72 are 19th–20th century scrolls]). Other types are only minimally represented: 16 sections (3—#67, 68, 74; [#67, 68 are 19th century Habad scrolls]), 20 sections (1—#70).

*Italian***6 Manuscripts**

The slightly more prevalent type is 17 sections—(2 MSS—#78, 83). The other types are represented by 1 MS: 14 sections (#80), 16 sections (#82), 18 sections (#79), 22 sections (#81).

16 Scrolls

The two prevalent types are 16 sections (6 scrolls—#84, 85, 89, 92, 97, 98), and 17 sections (6—#86, 88, 90, 91, 94, 96). The other types are minimally represented: 18 sections (2—#87, 95); 15 sections (1—#99), 19 sections (1—#93).

To sum up:

- (1) When looking at the *scrolls* from all the geographical areas (excluding the Eastern scrolls, which have not been preserved), the two types that are prevalent are 16 sections and 17 sections. Thus, from among 5 Sefardi scrolls, 16 and 17 sections represent 40% each (together 80%) of these scrolls; from 5 Yemenite scrolls, 16 sections represent 80%; from 11 Ashkenazi scrolls, 17 sections are prevalent and represent 64% (16

sections represent 27%); and from 16 Italian scrolls, both 16 and 17 sections represent 37.5% each (together 75%) of these scrolls.

- (2) One should remember, however, that as far as the scrolls are concerned, the earliest ones that we have are from the 15th century. One may assume that earlier scrolls also contained other section divisions (other than 16 and 17 sections), similar to the other divisions that we find in the codices from the various geographical areas. Indeed, we have found even in the scrolls before us some other types: Sefaradi—19 sections (1 MS); Ashkenazi—20 (1); Italian—15, 18, and 19 sections (each with 1). In particular, one may assume that the Eastern scrolls (though no longer extant) represented a more detailed type of section division, with 20–22 sections, as we find prevalent in the Eastern manuscripts.
- (3) When we look at the *manuscripts* (without the scrolls), a somewhat different picture emerges. The divisions of 16 and 17 sections are indeed still prevalent in Yemenite manuscripts (33% each; together 66%). In Ashkenazi manuscripts the divisions of 17 and 18 sections are somewhat more prevalent (21% each; together 42%), with 16 sections not too far behind (15.8%). In Italian manuscripts the division of 17 sections is also somewhat more prevalent (33%). On the other hand, in Sefardi manuscripts, the prevalent type is 15 sections (42%).
- (4) However, we also find in all these areas several other divisions of sections, represented usually by one (or two) manuscript(s): Sefardi MSS—11, 16, 20 sections (also 17 and 18 sections with 3 MSS each); Yemenite—19, 22 sections; Ashkenazi—6, 13, 14, 15, 20, 24 sections; Italian—14, 16, 18, 22 sections.
- (5) The major difference concerning the section division in the *manuscripts* is what we find in the Eastern manuscripts. Unlike the other geographical areas, where 15 sections (Sefardi MSS), 16 sections (Yemenite MSS); 17 sections (Yemenite, Ashkenazi, and Italian MSS), and 18 section (Ashkenazi MSS), are the prevalent types, we find in the Eastern manuscripts that the prevalent types were more detailed, with 20–22 sections (5+1? MSS; 55–67%).

4c. Open and Closed Sections

Up until this point we discussed the quantity of sections in the various manuscripts and scrolls. We will now concentrate on the type of sections that we find in these sources.

At the outset, it should be pointed out that in current Esther scrolls *all* the sections are of the closed section type (and usually of the sub-type that begins in the middle of a line after a space, which occurs after previous text: [xxxxx xxxxxx]). At first glance, this exclusivity of closed sections seems to be rather unusual. What is the evidence in the manuscripts and scrolls concerning this practice?

As we shall presently see, contrary to current practice, open sections were a well-known type in the manuscripts and scrolls. First we will summarize how many manuscripts have *x* open sections; we will present this in descending order of quantity of manuscripts. Second, we will present this material divided into geographical areas. Finally, we will show which sections were divided into open sections, in descending order of frequency in the manuscripts and scrolls.

Among the 100 codices and scrolls (including *tiqqunei soferim*) examined, we found that the overwhelming majority of the sources, 72% (72 MSS), had open sections with the following frequencies (ordered by quantity of MSS): **1** open section—10 MSS (#16, 23, 35, 45, 50, 52, 55, 60, 75, 91), + 1 MS first hand (#59), + 1 MS second hand (#29). **4** open sections—10 (#12, 28, 39, 46, 47, 54, 61, 65, 66*, 83), + 1 first hand (#57). **5** open sections—7 (#27, 49, 62, 77, 80, 95, 99), + 2 second hand (#20, 58), +1 (one in middle of verse; #49). **6** open sections—7 (#1, 9, 17, 34, 38, 56, 78), +1? (#70). **3** open sections—7 (#13, 21, 25, 36, 53, 66, 74), + 1 second hand (#90). **7** open sections—7 (#4, 6, 7, 11, 63, 64, 81). **2** open sections—5 (#15, 32, 44, 51, 79). The remaining frequencies were found minimally: **8** open sections—3 (#19, 22, 26); **10**, **12**, and **13** sections—2 each (#48, 93; #2, 3; #10, 18); **9** and **11** sections—1 each (#14; #8).

When dividing this material according to geographical areas, we find the following distribution of open sections (presented in descending order of quantity manuscripts):

Eastern

9 manuscripts (2 incomplete): 7 open sections—3 MSS (#4, 6, 7); 6 and 12 open sections—2 each (#1, 9; #2, 3); 5 and 11 open sections—1 each (#5; #8). Thus, all of the Eastern mss contain open sections; these range between 5–12 sections. (We add that MS Sassoon 1053, which is incomplete, missing the third column of each page, has at least 6 open sections).

Sefardi

19 Manuscripts: 3 and 8 open sections—3 each (#13, 21, 25; #19, 22, 26). 1, 4, 5 and 13 sections—2 each (#16, 23; #12, 28; #20 [so according to Hilleli, noted in the margin; the manuscript itself has 1 open section], 27 [first hand]; #10, 18). 2, 6, 7 and 9 sections—1 each (#15; #17; #11; #14). Thus, 18 of the 19 Sefardi manuscripts (95%) contain open sections, ranging between 1–13 sections.

5 Scrolls: 1 open section—1 scroll, second hand (#29). 2 open sections—1 scroll (#32). Thus, 2 of the 5 scrolls (40%) contain a minimal number of open sections. It should be remembered that these scrolls are no earlier than the 15th century.

Yemenite

6 Manuscripts: 3 and 6 open sections—2 each (#35, 36; #34, 38); 4 open sections—1 (#39). Thus, 5 of 6 manuscripts contain open sections (83%).

5 Scrolls: 2 open sections—1 scroll (#44). Thus, only 1 of the 5 scrolls (20%) contains open sections. One should emphasize that these scrolls are from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Ashkenazi

19 Manuscripts: 1 open section—5 (#45, 50, 52, 55, 60), + 1 first hand (#59). 4 open sections—4 (#46, 47, 54, 61), + 1 first hand (#57). 5 open sections—1 (#62), + 1 second hand (#58), +1 (one of the sections in the middle of a verse; #49). 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10 sections—1 each (#51, #53; #56; #63; #48). We thus see

that all of the Ashkenazi manuscripts contain open sections; they range from 1–10 sections.

3+1 *Tiqqunei Soferim*: 3, 4, 5, and 7 sections—1 *tiqqun* each (#66; #66*, #65; #64). Thus, all *tiqqunim* contain open sections.

11 Scrolls: 1, 3, 5, and 6 sections—1 scroll each (#75; #74; #77; #70 [5+1?]). Thus, 6 of 12 Ashkenazi scrolls (50%) contain open sections; these range from 1–6 sections.

Italian

6 Manuscripts: 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 open sections—1 MS each (#79; #83; #80; #78; #81). Thus, 5 of 6 Italian manuscripts (83%) contain open sections; these range from 2–7 sections.

16 Scrolls: 5 open sections—2 scrolls (#95, 99). 1, 3 (=2+1?), and 10 open sections—1 scroll each (#91; #90; #93). Thus, 5 of 16 Italian scrolls (31%) contain open sections. It should be remembered that almost all of these scrolls are from the 15th century, with a few from the 16th and 17th century.

Summing up this material:

- (1) When considering the *manuscripts* alone (without the scrolls) from each of the geographical areas, we see that in each case either all the manuscripts (Eastern; Ashkenazi), or the overwhelming majority of them (Sefardi—95%; Yemenite and Italian, each—83%) contain open sections.
- (2) On the other hand, when considering the *scrolls* alone, we see that the evidence is reversed. At most, half of the scrolls have open sections (Ashkenazi), and usually less than half (Sefardi—40%; Italian—31%; Yemenite—20%).
- (3) This difference can be accounted for chronologically. All the scrolls are from the 15th century and later. The majority of these scrolls, like the minority of the manuscripts (not necessarily as late as the scrolls), were influenced by the halakhic opinion that one should use only closed sections in the Esther scroll (see below).

In order to further show the entrenchment of the tradition of open sections in Esther, we will list in order of frequency those sections that were divided as open sections in the 72 manuscripts and scrolls that contain open sections.

Esther

| | | | |
|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 2:1 – 35x | 1:16 – 23x | 1:13 – 13x | 4:13 – 6x |
| 3:1 – 31x | 7:5 – 18x | 4:1 – 12+1x | |
| 6:1 – 27x | 9:29 – 17x | 1:9 – 12x | |
| 8:1 – 26x | 3:8 – 16x | 8:3 – 10x | |
| 2:5 – 24x | 10:1 – 16x | 9:7 – 10x | |
| 2:21 – 24x | 8:15 – 14x | 8:7 – 8x | |

For the sake of completeness, we note that Esth 9:10 occurs as an open section in 5 MSS; Esth 1:10, 3:7, 7:9, 9:20, 10:3 each occur as open sections in 2 MSS; and Esth 1:19, 2:12, 2:22, 6:4, 6:7, 8:16, 9:5, 10:2b, each occur as open sections in 1 MS.

The above list shows that certain sections were laid out as open sections in several manuscripts, and were not simply errors or the whim of a particular scribe. Furthermore, those open sections that occur with higher frequency, occur in all the geographical areas. This further shows the entrenchment of these traditions.

One should further emphasize that, as noted above, all of the Eastern manuscripts contains open sections. This is also true of all of the Ashkenazi manuscripts, and of the overwhelming majority of manuscripts of the other geographical areas. It remains, therefore, to clarify what caused the other (later) custom of using only closed sections in the Esther scroll.

The Section Divisions in MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10

Before we turn to the history of only closed sections in the scroll of Esther, we will first summarize the section divisions in our scroll. The scroll has 12 sections from Esther 2:12b-end. These include 10 closed sections (2:21, 3:1, 3:8, 4:1, 6:1, 7:5, 8:1, 8:7, 9:10, 10:1), and 2 open sections (8:15, 9:29). We may assume that in the two missing sheets, which consisted of Esther 1:1–2:12a,

the scroll had another 5 sections. This follows from the fact that in the 6 Italian manuscripts and 16 Italian scrolls that we examined, all 22 of them contained sections at Esther 1:9, 1:13, 1:16, 2:1, and 2:5 (excluding 1 MS and 1 scroll vis-à-vis 1:13 – #80; #98). Thus, we may assume that our scroll had 17 sections in total. It is possible that one or more of the above surmised sections in our scroll were open sections, as we find some Italian manuscripts and scrolls with open sections there (1:16 – 2 MSS and 3 scrolls [#81, 83; # 90, 93, 95]; 2:1 – 2 MSS and 1 scroll [#80, 81; #93]; 2:5 – 3 MSS [#78, 81, 83]; 1:9 – 2 scrolls [#93, 95]; 1:13 – 1 MS [#93]); but nothing can really be said with certainty on this matter.

Our scroll, with 17 sections – 12 sections at hand, and 5 more surmised – fits in with the evidence that we found in the manuscripts and scrolls. As we saw above, in the Ashkenazi scrolls (several were late) and in the Italian scrolls, 17 sections (or 16 sections) were the prevalent types. We also found that 17 sections were prevalent in the Ashkenazi and Italian manuscripts (but less so than in the scrolls). The Yemenite manuscripts, which were chronologically later, also showed prevalence of 16 and 17 sections; but they clearly did not influence our scroll.

This type of division with 17 sections differs from the Eastern manuscripts, where, as we recall, the majority of manuscripts have a more detailed division with 20–22 sections.

The fact that our scroll contains at least two open sections, also fits in with the evidence already presented. Namely, even though today open sections are not the accepted practice, we found that the overwhelming majority, 72 of the 100 manuscripts and scrolls (72%), contained open sections. Above we saw that when breaking down this evidence by geographical areas, either the total number or the overwhelming majority of *manuscripts* in all of the areas had open sections. The *scrolls* of each area, on the other hand, have a much smaller percentage containing open sections (Ashkenazi – 50%; Italian – 30%; and we also note: Sefardi – 40%, Yemenite – 20%). Our scroll with open sections, therefore, belongs to the minority of Italian *scrolls* and, on the other hand, to the majority of Italian *manuscripts*. It is witness to the earlier tradition of open sections in the Esther scroll.

One should emphasize that the specific combination of the two open sections in our scroll is not found in other sources that have 2 open sections (MSS #15, 32, 44, 51, 79). On the other hand, one of these latter sources, #79, is Italian, and does contain one of the two open sections found in our scroll (9:29). One should further emphasize that the two specific open sections in our scroll, are nevertheless found separately in several sources (and three of these manuscripts contain both of these open sections – #2, 18, 63). Thus we find **8:15**—in 11 manuscripts (Eastern—#2, 7, 8; Sefardi—#14, 18, 26; Yemenite—#39; Ashkenazi—#57, 62, 63; Italian—#80) and 3 scrolls (Ashkenazi—#65 [*tiqqun*]; Italian—#91, 99); **9:29**—in 14 MSS (Oriental—#2, 3; Sefardi—#11, 13, 18, 19, 22, 28; Ashkenazi—#46, 47, 63; Italian—#78, 79, 80) and 3 [+1] scrolls (Ashkenazi—#70, 74, 66* [*tiqqun*]; and also: R. Jacob Tam's scroll, as related in this *tiqqun*). This evidence shows that in these two cases there is also early Eastern evidence for open sections. Our scroll, however, should be considered more directly connected with the Ashkenazi and Italian precedents.

4d. *The History of Employing Only Closed Sections in the Esther Scroll*

We return now to describe the history of the tradition to employ only closed sections in the Esther scroll. This has been ably discussed by David Yitzhaqi,⁴² and here we will summarize the facts.

At first glance, it appears that the origin of writing only closed sections in the Esther scroll is the result of an halakhic decision by R. Jacob Tam (d. 1171 CE), the well-known grandson of Rashi. For we find that R. Meir of Rothenburg (Germany, second half of the 13th century), in one of his responsa states that it was R. Jacob Tam who declared that one should write

⁴² D. Yitzhaqi, "Customs of Writing the Scroll of Esther," in [*Qovets Torani*] *Zekhor Le'Avraham* (ed. A. Berger; Holon: Bet Midrash Yeshivat Eliyahu, 1993), 431–478 (Heb.), esp. 439–464 (on the sections); idem, "The Sections of the Scroll of Esther in the Regensburg Pentateuch: The Origin of the Closed Sections of R. Moses Isserlis and the Open Sections of the Earlier Authorities," *Yerushaseinu* 1 (2007), 26–32 (Heb.).

closed sections only.⁴³ This responsum was also cited by R. Meir HaCohen (a student of R. Meir of Rothenburg), in his *Hagahot Maimuniot, Hilkhoh Megillah*, 2:11. It was further cited by other halakhic authorities: R. Moses b. Isaac Mintz,⁴⁴ R. Israel Isserlein,⁴⁵ and R. Joseph b. Moses.⁴⁶ Based upon these sources R. Moses Isserlis (d. 1572), in his notes to *Shulkhan 'Arukh*,⁴⁷ ruled that one should write only closed sections in the Esther scroll, and if one wrote open sections the scroll is ritually unfit. Isserlis' ruling was decisive in the later exclusivity of closed sections in the Ashkenazi tradition.

On the other hand, *all* the other medieval Ashkenazi scholars do *not* mention the closed section ruling when they cite R. Jacob Tam's rulings about a ritually fit Esther scroll. Even R. Meir of Rothenburg did not cite this ruling in another responsum⁴⁸ where he discussed R. Jacob Tam's rulings concerning a ritually fit Esther scroll. In addition, those scholars that preceded R. Meir, and who cited R. Tam's halakhic opinions concerning the Esther scroll, do *not* mention the issue of closed sections. Thus, R. Abraham Ibn Yarhi (d. 1215 CE), in his *Sefer HaManhig*,⁴⁹ and thus R. Eliezer b. Yoel HaLevi (1140–1225 CE), in his halakhic compendium *Sefer Ra'aviyah* (an acronym of his name),⁵⁰ who cites R. Tam's complete responsum (to R. Yom Tov, the son of R. Judah b. Nathan [= Rivan]; the son-in-law of Rashi)

⁴³ R. Meir of Rothenburg, *Responsa, Rulings and Customs* (ed. I. Z. Cahana; 2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1970), 1:§138 (Heb.).

⁴⁴ R. Moses b. Isaac Mintz, *Responsa* (ed. Y. Domb; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1991), 52-53 (Heb.).

⁴⁵ R. Israel b. Petahiah Isserlein, *Terumat HaDeshen HaShalem: Pesaqim uKhtavim* (ed. S. Avitan; Jerusalem, 1990), 333, §23.

⁴⁶ R. Joseph b. Moses, *Leqet Yosher: Yoreh De'ah* (ed. J. Freimann; 2 vols.; Berlin, 1903-1904), 53-54.

⁴⁷ Isserlis, notes to *Shulkhan 'Arukh*, §691, para. 2.

⁴⁸ R. Meir of Rothenburg, *Responsa*, §139.

⁴⁹ R. Abraham b. Nathan HaYarhi, *Sefer HaManhig: Rulings and Customs* (ed. Y. Raphael; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1978), 1:238-239 (Heb.).

⁵⁰ R. Eliezer b. Yoel HaLevi, *Sefer Ra'aviyah* (ed. A. Aptowizer; Berlin, 1913-1929), 2:249-250, §548; revised edition (ed. D. Deblitzki; Bnei Braq: D. Deblitzki, 2005), 2:163, §548.

concerning the laws of the Esther scroll; so, too, R. Isaac b. Moshe of Vienna (1180–1250 CE; the teacher of R. Meir of Rothenburg, and a student of Ra'aviyah), in his halakhic compendium, *'Or Zaru'a*,⁵¹ who (as he notes at the end)⁵² had copied the material from his teacher.

Furthermore, all the other students of R. Meir of Rothenburg (aside from R. Meir HaCohen), and other later scholars do *not* mention the closed section ruling in the name of R. Jacob Tam. Thus: R. Shimshon b. Zadoq, *Tashbetz Qatan*⁵³ (he cites the second responsum of R. Meir of Rothenburg, as noted above); R. Mordekhai HaKohen, in his halakhic work known as *Mordekhai*,⁵⁴ *'Orhot Hayyim*,⁵⁵ *Kol Bo*⁵⁶ (he cites the second responsum of R. Meir of Rothenburg); R. Alexander Zusslein, *Sefer Ha'Agudah*,⁵⁷ R. Jacob b. Asher, *'Arba'ah Turim*,⁵⁸ R. Jacob Landau, *Sefer Ha'Agur HaShalem*.⁵⁹

In fact, from a letter written by R. Shim'on, possibly the tosafist R. Shim'on of Joinville,⁶⁰ quoted by R. Eliezer b. Yoel HaLevi in *Sefer Ra'aviyah*,⁶¹ and also

⁵¹ R. Isaac b. Moshe of Vienna, *'Or Zaru'a* (Zhitomir, 1862), 2:78b, §373.

⁵² *Ibid*, 78c.

⁵³ R. Shimshon b. Zadoq, *Sefer Tashbetz*, (Jerusalem: Kolliel Taharat Yom Tov, 1974), fol. 22a, §180; and with different numbering of the responsa: idem, *Sefer Tashbetz [Qatan]* (ed. S. M. M. Schneerson; 2nd ed.; Jerusalem: Written Torah Istitute, 2005), 119-120, §176.

⁵⁴ R. Mordekhai ben Hillel HaKohen, *Sefer HaMordekhai*, published at the back of the standard editions of the Babylonian Talmud; *Megillah*, ch. 2, §795.

⁵⁵ R. Aharon HaKohen of Lunel, *'Orhot Hayyim* (Florence, 1750; repr., Jerusalem: Y. D. Stizberg & Son, 1956), *Hilkhot Megillah uFurim*, §17.

⁵⁶ David Abraham, ed., *Kol Bo* (8 vols.; Jerusalem: D. Abraham, 1990), 2:315 (*Hilkhot Purim*).

⁵⁷ R. Alexander Zusslein, *Sefer Ha'Agudah* (ed. E. Brizel; 5 vols.; Jerusalem, 1966-1973; rev. and enl. ed., 1992-1994), 2:93 (Tractate *Megillah*, ch. 2, fol. 18a).

⁵⁸ R. Jacob b. Asher, *'Arba'ah Turim HaShalem: 'Orah Hayyim [sections 495-697]* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1990), §691, para. 1-2.

⁵⁹ R. Jacob Landau, *Sefer Ha'Agur HaShalem* (ed. M. Hirschler; Jerusalem: Moznaim, 1960), 165, §1051.

⁶⁰ See Deblitzki's notes to *Sefer Ra'aviyah*, 2:164, n. 29; p. 198, n. 57. For another opinion, see V. Aptowitz, *Introduction to Sefer Ra'aviyah* (Jerusalem, 1938; repr., Bnei Braq: Sifre Yahadut, 1984), 414 (Heb.).

⁶¹ *Sefer Ra'aviyah*, 2:253; Deblitzki's ed., 165.

quoted by his pupil R. Isaac b. Moses of Vienna in *'Or Zaru'a*,⁶² it appears quite clear that the origin for the exclusivity of closed sections is R. Shim'on's opinion: "Concerning the sections, I have not heard if they are open or closed sections; and it seems probable to make them closed sections, similar to [the section division of the biblical passages in] phylacteries and mezuzot."⁶³ It seems that R. Shim'on's statement was a reaction to the list of sections that R. Eliezer had cited (which included open sections).

The above reconstruction concerning R. Jacob Tam's opinion on the section division in the Esther scroll, that he did *not* sanction the exclusive use of closed sections, has recently been corroborated explicitly by a copy of a section list written by R. Judah HeHasid (d. 1217 CE). This list was noted by Avraham Grossman in the 1997 additions to his book, *The Early Sages of France*.⁶⁴ Therein he cited the title of the list and also the crucial statement (=by R. Judah HeHasid) that in R. Jacob Tam's Esther scroll (autograph) there was an open section at Esth 4:1. More recently, Yitzhaqi,⁶⁵ apparently unaware of Grossman's reference, once again brought this information. Moreover, this time R. Judah's list was cited in full; and from there we learn that there was also an open section in R. Tam's autograph scroll at Esth 9:29 (we recall that this is also the division in MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10). Yitzhaqi correctly pointed out that the evidence of these open sections (both were cases with a complete empty line before the beginning of the new text) proves that R. Tam was not the source for the exclusivity of closed sections in the Esther scroll.

We add that the information about R. Tam is found in a few manuscripts. For example, in addition to R. Judah HeHasid's complete section list, as found in MS #48, we found in MS London, BL Or. 2696, at Esth 4:1, that the masorete added the following note in the margin opposite the (previous line,

⁶² *'Or Zaru'a*, 2:78c, §373.

⁶³ בפרשיות לא שמעתי אם פתוחות ואם סתומות, ומסתברא לעשות סתומות, כעין תפילין ומזוזות

⁶⁴ A. Grossman, *The Early Sages of France: Their Lives, Leadership and Works* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1995; rev. ed., 1997), 610. In the 1995 edition, p. 66, the information about the list was incomplete.

⁶⁵ Yitzhaqi, "The Sections."

closed) section space: במגילת ר'ת [=רבינו תם] מכתיבת ידו נמצא' פתוח' שורה ובמגילת 'סתומ' 'ר'י' ט'ע' [=ר' יוסף טוב עלם] מכתיב' ידו נמצא' סתומ' במגילת ר'ת' פתוח' ובר'י' ט'ע'. Both of these notes are ultimately based upon R. Judah HeHasid's section list, where this information was brought (though in the second case R. Judah HeHasid's list is more specific here about R. Tam's section: 'פתוח' (שורה). Both of these notes also point out that R. Joseph Tov Elem = Bonfils (11th century), wrote these two sections in his *Megillah* as closed sections.⁶⁶

For whatever reason, in a number of sources R. Shim'on's opinion was attributed to R. Tam. That in turn eventually gave way to the exclusivity of closed sections in the Esther scroll. However, throughout the Middle Ages, the old tradition(s) of open sections in the scroll continued to be maintained in all geographical areas, as seen above.

5. *Summing Up*

5a. *Text, Layout of the Ten Sons, and Sections in the Five Traditions*

We will now summarize the three topics discussed above: text, layout of the ten sons, and sections, according to the different geographical areas.

Eastern MSS: (1) Text – the majority of MSS belong to category A, and some to B. In the second hand, these all belong to A. There is one exception, belonging to category C2, and which in the second hand belongs to C1. (2) Ten Sons – the majority of MSS belong to type 1b. Other types, represented each by one MS, are 2d, and 3a. (3) Sections – the majority have a detailed division of 20–22 sections. Other types minimally represented are 16, 17, 18. As to open sections, all the MSS have open sections. The quantity of open

⁶⁶ For the sake of completeness, we add that just before going to press, we found in MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 35 inf., two other Esther section notes concerning R. Tam and R. J. Tov Elem. At Esther 6:1 (a closed section in the manuscript): 'פ"ש (=פתוחה שורה), וע"פ רבי יוסף ט"ע ס', ג"א סדורה: (סתומ' פתוח' ובר'י' ט'ע'); i.e. the section should be an open section preceded by a complete empty line, whereas R. Joseph Tov Elem requires a closed section, and another text has a *sedurah*. At Esther 10:1 (a closed section in the manuscript): 'ולר"ת סת', פתוח', i.e. the section should be an open section, whereas R. Tam requires a closed section.

sections, in diminishing numbers of MSS: 7 sections, followed by 6 and 12; and finally 5 and 11 (1 MS each).

Sefardi MSS: (1) Text—the scrolls and the majority of the MSS belong to types A and B. In the MSS, first hand, there is a strong representation of type C: C1, C2, and C3. However, in the second hand, several type C1 MSS change to type A, and so, too, type B changes to type A. The salient feature in the MSS is that in the second hand 68% belong to type A. (2) Ten Sons—in the MSS, we find almost all divided into an equal amount of types 3 (more 3a than 3b), 1b, and 4 (4a, 4e). Type 2c is represented by 1 MS. However, all the scrolls (15th century) are of type 1a. (3) Sections—in the MSS the prevalent type is 15 sections. We also find in decreasing proportions: 17 and 18 sections, and then 16 and 20 sections (and minimally 11 sections). In the scrolls, 16 and 17 sections are prevalent (19 is also found in one scroll). As to open sections—95% of the MSS have open sections. The quantity, in diminishing sequence of MSS: 3 and 8 sections; 1, 4, 5 and 13; and finally 2, 6, 7, and 9 sections (1 MS each). In the scrolls, only 40% have open sections; 1 and 2 sections (each represented by 1 MS).

Yemenite MSS: (1) Text—the majority of MSS belong to type B. Minimally represented are also types A and C1. In the second hand, type B changes to type A. In the scrolls, type B is the exclusive type. (2) Ten Sons—in the MSS, the prevalent type is 3, especially type 3a (with minimal type 3b). Type 1b is also represented. All the scrolls belong to type 1, with 1a more prevalent than type 1b. (3) Sections—in the MSS, 16 and 17 sections are prevalent. 19 and 22 are represented by 1 MS each. In the scrolls, 16 is prevalent; 17 represented by 1 MS. As to open sections, 83% have open sections; 2 and 3 sections (2 each), and 4 sections (1). In the scrolls only 44% have open sections; 2 sections (1 scroll).

Ashkenazi MSS: (1) Text—the majority of MSS belong to type C: C1, C2, and C3. There are also a few MSS of types A and B. In the second hand, many of type C change their type or sub-type closer to the Aleppo Codex. The *tiqqunei soferim* are of type B and A. The majority of scrolls are of type A, with a few of type B. C1 and C2 are represented each by 1 scroll. (2) Ten Sons—in the MSS, type 3 (3a, 3b) is prevalent and then type 4 (4a-4d). Together they

consist of 68% of the MSS. These are followed equally by types 2 (2a, 2c), and 1b. The *tiqqunei soferim* are of types 2b and 1a. The scrolls are almost all of type 1 (1a, 1b). One is of type 2c. (3) Sections—in the MSS, the prevalent types are 17 and 18 sections. Other types represented, in lesser quantities, are 16, 15 and 20 sections. (Minimally represented are 6, 13, 14, 21, 24). The *tiqqunei soferim* have 19, 16, and 17 sections. In the scrolls, 17 sections is prevalent (these include several late scrolls). Considerably less scrolls have 16 sections, and one has 20 sections. As to open sections, all the MSS have open sections, they range from 1 to 10 sections (in order of prevalence: 1, 4, 5; and then 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10 [1 MS each]). Similarly, all the *tiqqunei soferim* have open sections; 3, 4, 5, and 7 (1 *tiqqun* each). In the scrolls, half contain open sections; 1, 3, 5, and 6 sections (1 MS each).

Italian MSS: (1) Text—type C (mostly C1; also C2) is prevalent. This is followed by type B. Contrary to the Ashkenazi MSS, there is hardly any change in the second hand (only 1 MS changed from type C to B). In the scrolls, prevalent are types B and C1. C2 is also represented, and a few are of type A. (2) Ten Sons—in the MSS, type 3 is prevalent (especially 3b; also 3a). These are 66.6% of the MSS. These are followed equally by types 1b and 4a. The scrolls all belong to type 1, with 1a the prevalent type (and some 1b present). (3) Sections—in the MSS, 17 sections is slightly more prevalent; followed by 14, 16, 18, 22 (each with one MS). In the scrolls, 16 and 17 sections are the prevalent types. Minimally represented are 15 and 18 sections; and also 19 sections (1 MS). As to open sections, 83% of the MSS have open sections; 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 sections (each with one MS). In the scrolls, only 31% have open sections; 5; and then 1, 3, and 10 sections (each with one MS).

5b. The Three Categories in MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10 Compared to the Five Traditions

Our scroll is characterized as follows: (1) Text—type C1, which in the second hand remains as type C1, but is *further distanced* from the Aleppo codex. (2) Ten Sons—type 3a. (3) Sections—12 [+5] = 17 sections. The scroll contains 2 open sections.

When we compare the characteristics of our scroll with the above characteristics of the sources from the five different areas, we note the following:

- (1) Our scroll differs from the Eastern MSS in all three topics. With respect to the third topic (sections), we do find 17 sections represented in the Eastern MSS, but the prevalent type there has a more detailed division (20–22). As to open sections, there, too, we already find open sections. However, they are more numerous there (prevalent are 7, followed by 6 and 12).
- (2) Our scroll differs from the Sefardi sources in the following areas. Text—though there is a strong representation of type C in the sefardi MSS, we saw that in the second hand 68% belong to type A. Ten Sons—though type 3 is prevalent in the MSS, all the scrolls are of type 1a. Sections—the prevalent type in the MSS is 15 sections (though 17 is also found). On the other hand, in the scrolls 16 and 17 sections are prevalent (the latter quantity like our scroll). As to open sections, there too, we find open sections in 95% of the MSS; though 3 and 8 sections are more prevalent (2 is minimally represented). In the scrolls, where only a minimum have open sections, we do find 1 MS with 2 sections (though not identical to our scroll).
- (3) Our scroll in comparison to the Yemenite sources. Text—the majority of MSS there belong to type B (C1 is only minimally represented), and so do all of the scrolls. Ten Sons—the MSS belong to type 3, especially 3a (like our scroll). However, the scrolls all belong to type 1 (with 1a prevalent). Sections—16 and 17 are prevalent in the MSS (the latter like our scroll); whereas 16 is prevalent in the scrolls, with 17 only minimally represented. As to open sections, 83% of the MSS have open sections, 2 sections are found there (though not identical with our scroll). In the scrolls only 44% have open sections, but 2 sections are found (again not identical with our scroll).
- (4) Our scroll in comparison to the Ashkenazi sources. Text—the majority of the MSS belong to type C, similar to our scroll. However, concerning the sub-types, the MSS there also consist of types C2 and C3, still further from

- the Aleppo Codex than our scroll. In addition, the second hand there often changes the type or sub-type, closer to the Aleppo Codex. Our scroll, as we recall, further distances our scroll from the Aleppo Codex. The *tiqqunei soferim* are of type B and A; and the majority of scrolls are of type A; though C1 and C2 are represented each by 1 scroll. Ten Sons – similar to our scroll, the prevalent type in the MSS is type 3 (later followed by type 4). On the other hand, the *tiqqunei soferim* are of types 2b and 1a; and the scrolls are almost all of type 1 (1a, 1b). Sections – the prevalent types in the MSS are 17 (like our scroll), and 18. 17 is also found as one type in the *tiqqunei soferim*. It is also prevalent in the scrolls (which include several late scrolls). As to open sections, all the MSS have open sections; prevalent are 1, 4 and 5 sections, however, 2 is also represented minimally (and not identical to our scroll). All the *tiqqunei soferim* have open sections, but in greater quantity than 2 (3, 4, 5, and 7). In the scrolls, half have open sections, but mostly in greater quantity than 2 (1, 3, 5, and 6).
- (5) Our scroll in comparison to the Italian sources. Text – the prevalent type in the MSS, like our scroll, is type C (mostly C1). There are hardly cases of a second hand, or of changes of type or sub-type by a second hand. In the scrolls, one of the prevalent types is C1, like our scroll. Ten Sons – type 3 is prevalent in the MSS, like our scroll; though there type 3b is more prevalent than type 3a. On the other hand, all the scrolls belong to type 1, with type 1a the prevalent type. Sections – 17 sections is slightly more prevalent in the mss; it is also, along with 16, the prevalent type in the scrolls (though other types are also minimally represented). As to open sections, 83% of the MSS have open sections, with 2 sections among the possibilities (along with other types, all minimally represented). On the other hand, only 31% of the scrolls have open sections, with 5 sections being the prevalent quantity (and other quantities minimally represented, but not 2 sections).

5c. *A Comparison of MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 10 to the Other Scrolls Discussed Above* Text—as we saw above, the Sefardi scrolls belong to types A and B; the Yemenite scrolls belong to type B. Even the Ashkenazi scrolls belong mostly to type A, a few to B and only one to C1 and one to C2. *In this respect our scroll is similar to other Italian scrolls examined, where C1 was prevalent, as was B, too.*

With respect to the second hand, which is not common in the Italian sources, but more common in the Ashkenzai sources, it *further distances our scroll from the Aleppo Codex. As noted above, this is quite unique, for the second hand almost always brings the MS closer to A.*

Ten Sons—though we find type 3 prevalent in Italian *manuscripts* (though 3b was more prevalent there than 3a), and also in Ashkenzai MSS (and even in Yemenite MSS, and one of the prevalent types in Sefardi MSS), when it comes to *scrolls*, our scroll is unique. For as we saw above, the scrolls from all the different areas belong to type 1: Sefardi—1a; Yemenite—1a, also 1b; Ashkenazi—1a and 1b (and one scroll of 2c); Italian—1a, and also 1b. (We are excluding the Eastern scrolls, which do not exist; however, based upon the evidence in the MSS, we assume they were of type 1b). *In other words, our scroll with type 3a, reflects the Ashkenazi and Italian manuscripts (and no doubt earlier scrolls), but not the currently surviving scrolls which are no earlier than the 15th century.*

Sections—the quantity of 17 sections is similar to what we found prevalent in the Ashkenzai and Italian scrolls. However, it differs from the Eastern manuscripts (and no doubt their scrolls which have not survived), which have a more detailed division (20–22 sections). As to open sections, as we saw above, the prevalence of open sections in the *scrolls* of the different areas was the opposite of their prevalence in the *manuscripts* of those areas: Sefardi—MSS 95%, scrolls 40%; Yemenite—MSS 83%, scrolls 44%; Ashkenaz—MSS (& *tiqqunei soferim*) 100%, scrolls 50%; Italy—MSS 83%, scrolls 31%. Our scroll with open sections (2), *although following the minority of surviving scrolls, reflects the earlier widespread custom, as found in overwhelming majority of manuscripts from all areas.*

From the above summary we see that our scroll fits in best with the characteristics of the Ashkenazi and Italian manuscripts: Text – C1, far from the Aleppo Codex; Ten Sons – type 3(a); Sections – 17 sections, including open sections (2).

Appendix 1: The Variants in the Scroll

(in their order of appearance; following the variant is the reading in the Aleppo codex)

2:12 המר [המור (A)

ובתמרקי [ובתמרקי

2:13 לבוא (לב(ו)א (distancing from A)

2:14 תבוא (תב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated

2:15 לבוא (לב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated

2:15 ראייה [רואיה

<2:16 scribal error: למ>ל<כותו the *lamed* added above the line>

2:21 יושב [ישב

2:21 אחשורש [אחשורוש

3:1 וינשאהו [וינשא(י)הו *heh* dilated

(3:4 באמרם [בא(ו)מרם ? *mem* is rewritten large; possibly there was a *waw* there, possibly second hand)

3:4 לראות (לרא(ו)ת (distancing from A); *tav* dilated

3:8 מפוזר [מפוזר

ומפרד [ומפורד

3:12 בשלושה [בשלושה

3:12 כלשונו [כלשונו

3:12 אחשורש [אחשורוש

3:13 ונשלח [ונשלח

<scribal error: 3:13 <ד>(ף) המל(ף)>

3:13 בשלושה [בשלושה

3:14 עתדים [עתידים

4:2 ויבא [ויבא

- 4:2 לבוא (לב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 4:3 יצע [יוצע י
 4:4 ותבואנה (קרי) ותבואנה (קרי); (still distanced from A) *bet* dilated
 4:4 קבל [ק(י)בל *qof* dilated
 4:7 לשקול [לשק(ו)ל here there was a correction towards A and then away from A
 4:7 ביהודיים (כתיב; ביהודים קרי) [ביהודים קרי)
 4:8 להראות (להרא(ו)ת *tav* dilated (distancing from A)
 4:8 ולצוות [ולצו(ו)ת *tav* dilated (distancing from A)
 4:8 לבוא (לב(ו)א *bet* dilated (distancing from A)
 4:9 ויבא [ויבא י
 4:10 ותצוהו אל [ותצוהו על
 4:11 ידעים [י(ו)דעים *dalet* dilated
 4:11 יבוא (יב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 4:11 לבוא (לב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 4:11 שלשים [שלשים י
 4:14 יעמוד [יעמד י
 4:16 ואל תאכלו [ו<א>ל תאכלו (*waw* added outside the right margin line)
 4:16 וגם [וגם י
 4:16 ונערתי [ונערותי י
 4:16 אבוא (אב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 5:2 כראות [כרא(ו)ת (*tav* dilated (distancing from A); *tav* dilated
 <error? 5:3 ויאמר written on erasure>
 5:4 יבוא (יב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 5:8 יבוא (יב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated
 5:9 וכראות [וכרא(ו)ת (*tav* dilated (distancing from A); *tav* dilated
 5:10 יבוא [ויבא י
 5:12 אותי (או(ו)תי (*tav* dilated (distancing from A); *tav* dilated
 5:14 גבה [גב(ו)ה י
 <error: 5:14 אמר() erasure before *aleph*>
 6:1 הזכרונות [הזכרונות י
 6:3 וגדולה [וגד(ו)לה (*dalet* dilated (distancing from A); *dalet* dilated
 6:5 יבוא (יב(ו)א (distancing from A); *bet* dilated

6:6 ויבא [ויבא]

<error 6:10 ? (מכל) מכל original *lamed* is dilated; apparently wrote מכל twice and erased second one; thus now original *lamed* dilated till second *lamed*>

6:13 לנפל [לנפ(ו)ל] *lamed* dilated

6:14 ויבהלו [ויבהילו]

7:4 להרוג [להרג]

7:7 גנת [גינת]

7:8 לכבש [לכבש]

7:9 חרבונה [חרבונא]

8:1 היהודיים (כתיב; היהודים קרי) [היהודים]

8:4 שרבט [שרביט]

8:7 אחשורש [אחשורוש]

8:7 ביהודיים (כתיב; ביהודים קרי) [ביהודים]

8:9 בשלושה [בשלשה]

8:9 כלשנו [כלש(ו)נו] *nun* on erasure and dilated

8:10 אחשורש [אחשורוש]

8:12 בשלושה [בשלשה]

8:13 היהודיים (כתיב; היהודים קרי) [היהודים]

8:13 עתודים (כתיב; עתידים קרי) [עתידים]

8:13 מאיביהם [מאויביהם]

8:16 וששן [וששון]

9:1 בשלושה [בשלשה]

9:1 איבי [איבי]

9:1 לשלוט [לשלט]

9:5 איביהם [אויביהם]

9:9 ארדי [ארדי]

(note only *waw* of ויזתא has unusual size; rest of names have regular letters; also the largeness of the *waw* was corrected from extending below)

9:15 היהודיים (כתיב; היהודים קרי) [היהודים]

9:16 מאיביהם [מאויביהם]

9:16 והרוג [והרג] (note erasure after *resh* is dot of *holem* and not tiny *waw*)

9:17 שלושה [שלשה]

(note only once has qere-ketiv 9:18 (והיהודיים))

- 9:18 בשלושה]בשלושה
 9:19 ומשלח]ומשלוח
 9:22 מאיביהם]מאויביהם
 9:22 אותם (distancing from A); *tav* dilated
 9:22 לאבינים]לאביונים
 9:24 והפל]והפיל
 (error: 9:25 על on erasure; perhaps wrote אל first)
 9:25 אותו (distancing from A); *tav* dilated
 <error 9:26 <ל>(ז) על כן על כן>
 9:27 וקבל dilated *lamed* (כתיב; וקבלו קרי)]וקבלו (ו)
 9:27 יעבור]יעבר
 (9:29 גרת]א(י)גרת
 9:31 הפרים]הפורים
 10:1 אחשרש (כתיב; אחשורש קרי)]אחשו(ו)ר(ו)ש
 10:2 הלוא]הלא

Appendix 2: Readings of Esther in the Aleppo Codex, Noted in Me'orot Natan

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------|------|------------------------------------|------|---------------|
| 1:3 | שלוש | 3:13 | ונשלוח | 9:2 | לשלח |
| 1:13a | ידעי | 3:14 | עתדים | 9:2 | לפניהם |
| 1:13b | ידעי | 4:7 | לשקול | 9:16 | ונוח |
| 1:19 | תבוא | 4:11 | ידעים | 9:19 | ומשלח <מנות> |
| 2:2 | בתולות | 5:2 | כראות | 9:21 | לקים <עליהם> |
| 2:3 | תמרקיהן | 6:2 | לשלח | 9:22 | ומשלח <מנות> |
| 2:9 | מנותה | 6:2 | אחשורוש | 9:22 | לאבינים |
| 2:17 | הבתולות | 6:9 | והלבישו | 9:24 | והפל <פור> |
| 2:19 | בתולות | 6:9 | והרכיבהו | 9:31 | לקים |
| 2:21 | יושב | 6:10 | היושב | 10:1 | אחשרש (=כתיב) |
| 2:21 | לשלח | 7:8 | <לכבוש> | 10:3 | לרב |
| 3:6 | לשלח | 8:5 | את היהודים (ולא: את כל היהודים) | | |
| 3:9 | אשקול | 8:11 | ולהרג | | |

*Bibliography*99 [+1] *Manuscripts (Codices) and Scrolls of Esther***(Middle) Eastern****9 MSS**

1. Aleppo Codex (=A), ca. 930 CE; text reconstructed by Breuer, also Cohen.
2. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. 1213; 10th–11th century.
3. Cairo, Karaite Synagogue, Gottheil 13 (in *JQR* 17 [1905], 627–629); 1028 CE.
4. St. Petersburg, RNL, (Firkowitch) Evr. II B 34 (=L13); 10th century.
(bound 1130 CE); incomplete.
5. St. Petersburg, RNL, (Firkowitch) Evr. II B 92; 11th century.
6. St. Petersburg, RNL, (Firkowitch) Evr. II B 94 (=L12); beginning 11th century
(bound 1100 CE); incomplete.
7. St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences, D67; 930 CE.
8. St. Petersburg, RNL, (Firkowitch) Evr. I B19a (=L); 1008 CE.
9. Oxford, Bodleiana Hunt. 591 (Neub. 98); 11th century.

Sefardi**19 MSS**

10. Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. Hebr. 1; 1251 CE.
11. Haverford (Penn.), Haverford College, Heb. Vol. 1; 1266 CE.
12. London, British Library, Add. 15250 (Marg. 53); 13th century.
13. London, British Library, Harley 5715 (Marg. 144); 13th–beg. 14th century.
14. London, British Library, Kings 1 (Marg. 56); 1385 CE.
15. London, British Library, Or. 2201 (Marg. 52); 1300 C.E. (on the date, see D. Sassoon, *’Ohel Dawid*, “addenda” at beginning of volume 1, p. li).
16. London, British Library, Or. 2628 (Marg. 62); (Nov/Dec) 1482 CE.
17. Oxford, Bodleiana, Arch. Seld. A 47 (Neub. 1); 1304 CE.
18. Oxford, Bodleiana, Kennicott 1 (Neub. 2322); 1476 CE.
19. Letchworth, Sassoon 16; 1383 CE.
20. Letchworth, Sassoon 82; 1312 CE.
21. Letchworth, Sassoon 368; 1366 – 1382 CE.

22. Letchworth, Sassoon 508; 1307 CE. (same scribe as MS BL Or. 2201).
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24. Munich, Merzbacher 156 (formerly; now New York, private collector); sold 1399 C.E.; 13th or 14th century).
25. Paris, BN héb. 20; 1301 CE.
26. Paris, BN héb. 25; 1232 CE.
27. Paris BN héb. 26; 1272 CE.
28. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 2668 (de Rossi 782; Richler 1); 1277 CE.

5 Scrolls

29. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/32; 15th century.
30. London, British Library, Or. 1087 (Marg. 38); 15th century [now in book form].
31. London, British Library, Or. 2086 (Marg. 39); 15th century.
32. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3347 (de Rossi 890; Richler 426); 15th century.
33. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3602 (Richler 413); (14th–)15th century.

Yemenite

6 MSS

34. Cambridge, University Library, Add. 1753 (Reif 63); 16th century.
35. London, British Library, Or. 1475 (Marg. 153); 1605 CE.
36. London, British Library, Or. 2212 (Marg. 151); 1586 CE.
37. London, British Library, Or. 2375 (Marg. 147); 15th century (second half).
38. London, British Library, Or. 2376 (Marg. 152); 16th–17th century.
39. Oxford, Bodleiana Opp. Add. 4^o 139 (Neub. 2333/4); 15th century (beginning).

5 Scrolls

40. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/33; 1627 CE.
41. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/36; 17th century.
42. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/37; 18th century.
43. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/38; 17th century.
44. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4^o 197/39; 18th century.

Ashkenazi**19 MSS**

45. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Hamilton 80, 1;
13th century (end).
46. Budapest, National Library (Orszagos Szechenyi Konyvtar) 2⁰⁴; mid 15th century.
47. Cambridge, St. John's College A1; 1260 CE.
48. Jerusalem, Israel Museum, 180/52; 13th–14th century.
49. Jerusalem, JNUL, Heb. 4⁰ 7024; 1280 CE.
50. Jerusalem, Schocken Library, 14940; 14th century (beginning).
51. London, British Library, Ar. Or. 16 (Marg. 118); 13th century.
52. London, British Library, Or. 4227 (Marg. 58); 14th century.
53. London, British Library, Add. 9401–2 (Marg. 70); 1286 CE.
54. London, David Sofer Collection, 1; 1264 CE.
55. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, hebr.1; 13th–14th century.
56. Oxford, Bodleiana, Opp. 717 (Neub. 97); 12th century.
57. Paris, BN héb. 1–3; 1286 CE.
58. Paris, BN héb. 8–10; 1304 CE.
59. Parma, Biblioteca Palantina, Cod. Parm. 2673 (de Rossi 754; Richler 104);
mid 14th century.
60. Parma, Biblioteca Palantina, Cod. Parm. 2808 (de Rossi 2; Richler 3);
early 13th century.
61. Princeton, University Library, Scheide 136; 1313 CE.
62. Wroclaw (formerly: Breslau), University Library M 1106. 1238 CE.
63. Wroclaw (formerly: Breslau), Ossolinski Library, Pablikowski 141;
13th century (end).

3 [+1] *Tiqqunei Soferim*, 11 Scrolls,

64. Oxford, Bodleiana, Opp. 186 (Neub. 37); 15th century (beginning) [*Tiqqun Soferim*].
65. Paris, BN héb. 52; 13th century [*Tiqqun Soferim*; so the scribe defined his
manuscript at the end of the Pentateuch, he possibly considered the five scrolls
also a *tiqqun*].
66. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3082 (de Rossi 185; Richler 73);
1304 CE [*Tiqqun Soferim*].

- 66*. Jerusalem, Israel Museum, 180/52, fol. 58a, R. Judah HeHasid's section list (the original list was from the 12th century).
67. Brooklyn, Lubavitch Library, R. Samuel Schneerson scroll, 19th century (Russia).
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Italian

6 MSS

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79. London, British Library, Harley 5710–5711 (Marg. 54); 13th century, first half (sold 1240 CE.)
80. Paris, BN héb. 54; 1369 CE.
81. Rome (Vatican), Biblioteca Apostolica, Vatican ebr. 9; 1287 CE.
82. Rome (Vatican), Biblioteca Apostolica, Rossiana ebr. 554; 1286 CE.
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16 Scrolls

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87. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3303 (de Rossi 52, Richler 416); 15th century.
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89. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3309 (de Rossi 241, Richler 418); 15th century.
90. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3310 (de Rossi 242, Richler 419); 15th century.
91. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3317 (de Rossi 316, Richler 420); 15th century.
92. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3318 (de Rossi 320, Richler 414); 1480 CE.
93. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3319 (de Rossi 330, Richler 421); 15th century.
94. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 3324 (de Rossi 448, Richler 424); 15th century.
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