Mono- and Bi-syllabic Middle Guttural Nouns in Samaritan Hebrew

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I

1. One hundred years ago, J. H. Petermann made public the Samaritans' pronunciation of Hebrew in their Torah reading by publishing the Book of Genesis in a transcription that included the vowels.[1] Until then, the Samaritan pronunciation had been known only through thoroughly unreliable and random examples, while a systematically vocalized Samaritan Torah version was virtually non-existent. Petermann also attempted to describe the morphology of this Hebrew, which is considerably different from that expressed in the usual Tiberian vocalization system of the Bible. That very year Nöldeke reviewed Petermann's book.[2] He sensed the serious defects of the transcription, which distorted the whole pattern of this language, but nevertheless, by virtue of his particular perception, he succeeded in drawing attention to the regularity of several phonological features, especially the *ō-ū* relationship (*o-ū* being correct, but he was led astray by the transcription), and correctly evaluated this linguistic tradition: "Abstrahieren wir nun von allen diesen Entstellungen, so gelangen wir zu einer Aussprache, welche der masor. gar nicht so fern steht." It is thus surprising that historical and comparative Hebrew research, developing at that time and reaching its peak at the beginning of this century, ignored the data of the Samaritan tradition when dealing with the complex problems of Hebrew phonology and morphology.

This has no explanation other than blind faith in the phonological "laws" laid down by the comparative grammar of Hebrew and its Semitic sister-tongues (mainly Arabic and Aramaic), such as Phillipi's law *ā-ō*, *aʾ>ā>ō*, determination of vowel quantities not indicated by the orthography-rules which "hebraized" the language under study. The neo-grammarians (Junggrammatiker) hold the opinion that phonological rules should

1 J. H. Petermann, *Versuch einer hebräischen Formenlehre nach der Aussprache der heutigen Samaritaner*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 5 (Leipzig, 1868).

2 Th. Nöldeke, "Über die Aussprache des Hebräischen bei den Samaritanern," *Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* No. 23, (1868), 485–504.

apply consistently and without exception.[3] However, every linguist engaged in interpreting a given linguistic picture in any language whatever is aware of not a few exceptions to the rules. He must then find alternate explanations for them, first and foremost in paradigmatic analogy, but also in dissimilation and similar processes, which have in common the fact that they do not behave regularly.

An additional solution has become common in dealing with Hebrew grammar: rejection of an irregular feature by considering it an error of the tradition and not a true language form. And whereas living Old Hebrew speech ceased some 1600 years ago and for generations Bible reading was transmitted orally by speakers of Aramaic, it seems reasonable to assume that each and every irregularity is actually a contamination, whether called a quasi-Aramaic reading or a memory lapse and error in vocalization.[4] Since the Samaritan tradition apparently contradicts to a considerable extent what is understood from the rules built upon the Tiberian vocal tradition, it is no wonder that grammarians regarded it with distrust. Bauer and Leander admitted explicitly: "Uns erschien der Wert der samaritanischen Aussprache einstweilen zu fraglich, als dass sie für unsere weitere Darstellung ernstlich in Betracht kommen könnte.[5]

2. This decisive statement, which Nöldeke's review shows is unjustified even if Petermann's faulty transcription is taken into account, prevented them from utilizing fully the tradition of the Samaritans in order to understand the developments which had taken place in Tiberian Hebrew, developments not easily understood from Tiberian Hebrew alone. This habit is still rife among scholars of Biblical Hebrew: to mediate between different rules on the basis of the accepted vocalization—that is, the orthography—as if they were definite, as if whatever disagrees with them is mistaken and is not worthy of attention.

When, in the fifties, the picture of the Samaritan Hebrew tradition began to be clarified, and when considerable material in other Jewish traditions had been amassed and a more thorough understanding of the development of Tiberian Hebrew had been achieved, the introduction of the Samaritan tradition began to stimulate the historical study of Hebrew. But while this is considerably good, it also promotes the danger of abusing and misusing this linguistic tradition by comparing its data with those of the accepted Tiberian tradition, without prior assessment of the Samaritan data in their own framework, viz., the rules and paradigmatic relationships of Samaritan Hebrew. On the one hand, we have simplistic equations such as **ʾuhl* (*ʾhl*)>*åʾol*, *śīd* (*śyd*)>*šiyyåd*,

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3 It is worth noting that in those very days Nöldeke wrote, in his review of Prym-Socin's book *Der neuaramäische Dialekt des Ṭur-ʿAbdīn* in *ZDMG* 35 (1881), 221: "das jetzt so beliebte Dogma von der unbedingten Wirkung der Lautgesetze als eine arge Uebertreibung erwiesen wird"; and see also Yakov Malkiel, "Etymology and Historical Grammar," *Philology* 8 (1954/5), 191.

4 In particular, G. Bergsträsser's *Hebräische Grammatik* is full of assumed errors in text or vocalization. In Part II, p. 157, one finds the statement that the vocalization of *yᵉrå(ʾ)ɪæ* (Josh. 4:24) is mistaken, of course, because the regular and expected form is *yᵉre(ʾ)ɪæm*; this exception in Tiberian Hebrew is the rule in Samaritan: *yårâttimma*, or, according to H. Bauer- P. Leander, *Historische Grammatik der Hebräischen Sprache*, p. 588, *ṣonaʾḳæm* is a scribal error, as if the Massoretes couldn't have corrected it using the *kᵉtiv-qᵉri* system.

5 Bauer-Leander, ibid., p. 171, n. 1.

**ḥulum* (*ḥlm*)>*ēlom*, which do nothing to explain the evolution of the Samaritan forms, while even contradicting a rule or two of their own tradition, for example, *ēlom*, since no historic short *u* becomes *o* in Samaritan Hebrew. On the other hand, we find a grammarian declare that forms which contradict Hebrew rules—as known to and considered by him "facts of life"— are mere errors of transmission. In other words, they never existed in the living language but were created by a combination of graphic form and the reader's "faulty memory."

Sometimes the scholar's faith in the regularity of the laws and the devices employed to explain exceptions to them is so great that it results in amusing conclusions. One grammarian has denied the reading *wnēquttå* (*wnqyt*, Gen. 24:8) by the Samaritans (there are indications of such a vocalization in the mss.), since the rules predict the form *wnåqītå* (which has incorrectly been defined as *niphal*[6] because of the accepted Tiberian vocalization, while it is actually *qal*), despite the fact that anyone listening to the Samaritan reading can hear it. Another has ruled that *a* precedes *r* in segholate patterns, and consequently the vowel *ə* before *r* indicates the patern *q'tīl*. Thus an absolute form **yēṣår* has been deduced in haste from *yiṣru*. However, the absolute form actually exists, being *yēṣər*, which does not conform to the rule as postulated.[7]

Indeed, exaggerations of this kind are no different substantially from what can be found in grammars concerning the forms *miqqᵉdåš* or *mammᵉrorim* or *båttīm*. They indicate that the *dageš* in these forms does not denote the doubling customary in the traditional pronunciation because it is difficult for the grammarian to find a regular framework to explain it, while the *dageš* in the word *ʾt* 'you' denotes such doubling, naturally because it can be justified etymologically. It should be noted that the Samaritan tradition as well, wholly uninfluenced by the Tiberian vocalization, doubles the *t* of *btym: battəm*, while in the (Aramaic) pronunciation of *ʾt*, no doubling is evident: *ʾat*!

Of this ilk are the explanations offered for the typical Samaritan phenomenon shown in the pronunciation of the words *zēʾot* (*zʾt*), *ṣēʾon* (*ṣʾn*), *rēʾoš* (*rʾš*):[8] 1) the enunciation of the *ʾ* stems only from orthography, from the desire to express the written *ʾ* orally; 2)

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6 A. Murtonen, *Materials for a Non-Masoretic Grammar* (Helsinki, 1958-64), 2:150; R. Macuch, *Grammatik des Samaritanischen Hebräisch* (Berlin, 1969), 362.

7 S. B. J. Mandel, *The Development of Samaritan Hebrew* (unpublished Harvard dissertation, 1977), 106, 166. Elsewhere, on p. 318, one finds the singular form *råš* and the plural *rēʾūšəm*, but I have no idea where they came from. There are singular *rēʾoš*, plural *råšəm* (!), and the whole semantic differentiation made there is groundless. What is the basis for the statement that *hāʿol* was pronounced *ʿāl* (ibid., p.324)? There is no such form in the Pentateuch. There is *ūl*, derived from a med. *waw* root, while *bʿl* in Deuteronomy 8:3 was pronounced *bāl*, but there is no connection in Samaritan between this noun and *ʿwl*. Nevertheless the author treads on thin ice when he suspects the Samaritan tradition of mistaken readings and transmissions, and of Aramaic influence (e.g., pp. 56,101,171,173,177,190,205, etc.), while the laws he uses are insufficient to interpret the Samaritan form properly. Indeed, to derive the form *tirruwʾwā* (*trwʿh*) from the root *trʿ* (p.119), and to classify the noun under the *qittūla* pattern means ignoring the consonant doubling here and in the nouns *tnwʾh*, *tlnh* as well.

8 By Mandel, ibid., 311. I must regretfully admit that the idea that the Samaritan reading is influenced by orthography, and that in this way the pronunciation *rēʾoš* came into being, was expressed by me thirty-six years ago in my preliminary report in *Lešonenu* 12 (1943), 124. It would have been fitting simply to mention

zēʾot followed *ze* analogically, and *rēʾoš* followed *mēʾod* (*mʾd*). If one asks why the ʾ pronounced in *mʾd* is regular while that of *rʾš* is irregular and analogical, one will receive the answer: "I don't know, but at least it hasn't [quiesced] in TBH [=Tiberian Hebrew]."

All this means that if Tiberian Hebrew is under discussion, the form dealt with is an actual linguistic phenomenon—albeit difficult from the point of view of the known rules—but if the very same form appears in the Hebrew of the Samaritans, it is surely an error. Since Samaritan Hebrew has many forms difficult to reconcile with the rules derived from Tiberian Hebrew, it follows that claims of memory lapse or error are common. This approach precludes *a priori* the possibility of understanding what really developed in Samaritan Hebrew, hence there is no point in using it for proper comparison with the Tiberian dialect. Most important of all, the following question should be asked: If the Samaritans forgot the pronunciation of the simplest of words, what purpose can be achieved in using this dialect in Hebrew research?

In the ensuing study I propose to review the structure of mono-syllabic and bisyllabic middle guttural (ʾ, *h*, *ḥ*, ʿ) nouns and attempt to explain their development and their ties with parallel nouns in Tiberian Hebrew, fully aware that the use of all the literary and oral evidence (the various pronunciations) outside the Tiberian tradition can be of great value in comprehending Tiberian Hebrew itself.

II

3. Prior to the presentation of the material, certain facts must be specified in order to facilitate understanding the subject.

a) Of historical ʾ, *h*, *ḥ*, ʿ only ʾ remains in Samaritan Hebrew, *h*, *ḥ*, ʿ having merged with it in almost every position, except initially, before long or short *a*, *å*, where ʿ also appears, representing historical *ḥ* as well. There are clear signs that this development occurred in Hebrew in the period when Hebrew served as the Samaritan vernacular.[9] Wherever ʿ disappeared in the specified position as well, it is reasonable to assume that at the time this process was in effect, the ʿ did not precede an *a*/*å* vowel. When the merger was complete and all four gutturals had coalesced as ʾ, they behaved as ʾ, becoming *y* after *i* (*ī*) as in Aramaic and occasionally in Biblical Hebrew—such as *nᵉbiyyå*, *dåniyyel*—and becoming *w* after *u* (*ū*), as in the proper noun *puwwå*<*puʾå*. Only sporadically does the ʾ in these conditions remain viable.

b) Vowel quantity and syllabic structure being interdependent, the former is determined mechanically: 1) A vowel is short in a closed syllable even if it originates in a long vowel; 2) it is long in an open syllable even if it originates in *schwa mobile*. Samaritan Hebrew, however, also has 3) and extra-long vowel, extremely noticeable to

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the amazing fact without attempting to explain it, as did Nöldeke (ibid., 490) earlier. As soon as I realized my error, as a result of my better knowledge of the Samaritan pronunciation, I raised my voice against it as early as 1946 in *Lešonenu* 15 (1946), 76, and later in my book, *Studies in the Traditions of the Hebrew Language* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1954), 85f., I explained the feature as I do here. But Mandel, following Kutscher, preferred my first, erroneous, explanation.

9 The indications stem from the lack of Pentateuchal *aleph* and *he* alternating with *ʿayin* and *ḥet* under conditions in which the *ʿayin* is pronounced. See the writer's *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the Samaritans* (henceforth *LOT*), 5:28.

the ear in normal reading (in melodical reading there are as a rule vowel quantity fluctuations). This extra-long vowel is very common in both open and closed syllables. For example: (1) *ban* (*bn*); *bit* (*byt*); *šim* (*śym*); *qol* (*qwl*); (2) *gåmål* (*gml*); *bēnu* (*bnw*); *kīli* (*kly*); (3) *nå:lå* (*nḥlh*); *nā:ra* (*nʿrh*); *når* (*nhr*); *nār* (*nʿr*); *lēm* (*lḥm*); *ṭēm* (*ṭʿm*) (in open syllables a colon added to the macron indicates this unusual length; in closed syllables, there is no need for this, since every long vowel in such a position is extra-long).

The reader is liable to get the impression from the examples listed in (3) that the extra-length *always* represents a vanished guttural consonant, but such is not the case, as will be seen below.

4. From here on we shall consider middle guttural nouns: a) Monosyllabic nouns appear in the Torah in the following patterns:

1) *qil:* only *bir* (*bʾr*), (including *ber* in special contexts);
2) *qīl: zīb* (*zʾb*); *bīr* (*bʿyr*) and *ṣʿyp, ṣʿyr, ʿyr* as well;
3) *qēl: lēm* (*lḥm*), and also *nḥl, rḥl, rḥm, tḥt; bʿd, ṭʿm, rʿd;*
4) *qāl: qāl* (*qhl*) and also *yḥd, mḥr, nḥš, šḥp, tḥš; bʿl, yʿr, mʿl, nʿš, nʿl, nʿr, pʿm, rʿb, śʿr, šʿr; rā* (= Tib. *roᵃʿ*) belongs to this category as well;
5) *qål:* only *yår* (*yʾr*);
6) *qål: låm* (*lʾm*), *nʾm, rʾm, śʾr, šʾr, tʾr; bhq, zhb, ṭhr, lhṭ, nhr, shr, ṣhr, šhm; lḥṣ, phd, rḥb* (=Tib. *råḥåb, roḥab*), *rḥq, šḥd, šḥr* (=Tib. *šaḥar, šåḥor*), *tḥt; nå* (*noᵃḥ*) and *kå* (*kḥ* Lev. 11:30) may belong to this category as well;
7) *qūl: būr* (*bḥwr*), *tūm* (*thwm*).

A comparison of these nouns with their parallels in the Tiberian tradition reveals that a Samaritan monosyllabic noun with a long vowel may be matched with a segholate noun, that is, an originally bisyllabic noun, or a bisyllabic noun. The nouns with short vowels, *bir* and *yår,* are a separate matter and will be dealt with below.

The same relationship is found when comparing bisyllabic Samaritan nouns with their Tiberian parallels.

Note: Only those nouns are intended which have as their second syllable neither a feminine suffix, like *nā:ra* (*nʿrh*), nor a plural suffix, such as *rēmməm* (*rḥmym*).

These are the nouns:

1) (*īʾaC*>) *iyyåC; tiyyåm* (*tʾwm*);
2) (*īʾoC*>) >*iyyoC: šiyyol* (*šʾwl*);
3) *ēʾu: bēʾu* (*bhw*) and also *thw*;
4) *ēʾoC: mēʾod* (*mʾd*) and also *ṣʾn, rʾš, rḥwm* and in extra-Pentateuchal Hebrew *mʾwm*;
5) *āʾi: tāʾi* (*tʾy*) *sic* in the Samaritan version, as against *tʾw* in the Jewish Pentateuch; and also *lḥy, yʿh*;
6) *āʾu:* (ʿ)*aʾu* (ʾ*ḥw*);
7) *āʾəC: yaʾəd* (*yḥyd*) and also *mḥyr, nḥš, šḥyn; kʿs, mʿyl, pʿl, śʿyr* (Gen. 27:11);
8) *åʾəC: fåʾər* (*pʾr*)—only the plural appears: *fåʾēri—ṭhr, khn, mhr, ṣhb*;
9) *åʾoC: åʾol* (ʾ*hl*), and also ʾ*ḥwr-*ʾ*ḥr, bhn, gḥwn, kʿws, rḥwq.*

Note: mibbayyåro written *mbḥyryw* (Num. 11:28 in the Samaritan version), whatever its derivation, does not belong to this framework.

5. From the standpoint of the Tiberian traditional forms, and on the basis of conclusions drawn from them concerning the structure of these nouns in the "pre-Massoretic" period, the evolution of the Samaritan traditional forms seems most confusing, since it is difficult to perceive the regularity usually stemming from phonological developments. For the merging of all gutturals into *aleph*—which took place doubtlessly at the very end of the period of living Hebrew speech, and no earlier—is common to all these nouns, and so it is not easy to understand why some segholate nouns, like *pʾl, mhr, nḥš* (=Tib. *naḥaš*), *thw*, and also *pʾr, rʾš, ṣʾn* (with etymological ʾ), became bisyllabic, while others like *rḥb, bhq, zʾb, rʾm, tʾr* became monosyllabic. This also applies to originally bisyllabic nouns like *yḥyd, mʾyl* on the one hand, and *bʿyr, ṣʿyr* on the other. Yet the confusion may diminish if the following is considered.

In all the bisyllabic nouns, the *aleph* (historical ʾ, *h, ḥ,* ʿ) appears between two qualitatively different vowels. It is thus reasonable to assume that at least those monosyllabic nouns which are not segholate in Tiberian Hebrew featured the *aleph* between two qualitatively identical vowels, and when the *aleph* disappeared the two merged forming one extra-long vowel. It is impossible to determine exactly when this development took place, but I doubt that it occurred in either Hebrew or Aramaic at a time when these were still spoken by the Samaritans. For in a manuscript of a grammar book dating from the fourteenth century, two identical vocalization points appear where today a single syllable is heard, as in י׳נ׳ה׳לתין = *wnå:låtən*, ור׳ח״ן = *wråṣ*, מצר׳ח׳ת׳ = *amṣår'råt*.[10] In such cases Petermann, in his book (p. 161), states that he could not determine (in 1853) whether he heard two syllables or one.

It is thus clear that in both traditions the common basis of bisyllabic nouns in Tiberian Hebrew can lie in the assumption that at an earlier stage they had two syllables in Samaritan Hebrew as well. Nouns exhibiting *a/å*, such as Tib. *šåḥor,* do not pose any specific problem since it is clear, at any rate, that historical *u* became *a/å* in Samaritan Hebrew (and evolved even further). The development was thus as follows: **šaḥur*>**šaḥar*>**šaʾar*>*šår*. Incidentally, it can be said that the Samaritan tradition bears witness to the fact that the *ḥolem* of *šåḥor* represents an historically short vowel. It is also reasonable to assume that in the word *nᵉʾum*—appearing always as it does in the construct form—Samaritan Hebrew inherited a short *u*. Neither is there any difficulty in interpreting nouns showing *schwa,* if we consider what occurs in the Yemenite tradition. Supported by Massoretic remarks and the rules formulated by medieval grammarians, the *schwa has no quality of its own,* and in the vicinity of gutturals it was pronounced like the vowel adjacent to it. The Massoretes pronounced *bʿyr: bⁱʿir, thwm: tᵒhom*, and this is the pronunciation behind the monosyllable forms in Samaritan Hebrew.

10 See *LOT* 5:50. It is interesting to note that the word *yhyh thyh* pronounced today *yēyyi, tēyyi,* are fully and partially vocalized in the same ms. but the first *h* never lacks its vowel sign, thus: יֹהֵיה (*LOT*, 1:193), יֹהֵיה (loc. cit.), תֹהֵיה (ibid., 183).

This explanation leads ineluctably to the hypothesis that the basic form of words such as *ṣ^{c}yr, ṣ^{c}yp* is not the absolute form as it appears in Tiberian Hebrew, but rather the *construct* or declined form. This phenomenon is not limited to nouns having a guttural middle consonant, but is apparently also found in the nouns *dēbår* (=Tib. *dåḇår:*, Sam. *dåbår* = Tib. *daeḇaer*), *rēša* (Tib. *råšå^{c}*) and perhaps in λαρεσα (Hexapla, second column, Ps. 36:2), λαμεσατ (ibid., Ps. 49:5).[11]

6. The description offered here raises two questions, as yet unanswered: For nouns like *nār* (*n^{c}r*), *ṭēm* (*ṭ^{c}m*), should a base form of two syllables be assumed, or perhaps of one syllable, with the extra-long vowel compensating the loss of the guttural, viz.: **na^{c}r> *na^{ɔ}r> nār, *ṭi^{c}m* (*ṭ^{c}em* in Aramaic)*>*ti^{ɔ}m>ṭēm*, as occurs in Tiberian Hebrew, **ṣi^{ɔ}t>ṣet, *ši^{ɔ}t>šet* (*ṣiyyåt, šāt* in Samaritan)? Second, why, in words like *|b^{e}^{c}i(y)r>| bīr*, does the *schwa* assimilate to the following vowel, while this does not take place in words like *mā^{ɔ}əl |<m^{e}^{c}i(y)l|*?

Concerning the first question, it is difficult to assume that the segholate noun remained monosyllabic so long in Samaritan Hebrew, until *h, ḥ, ^{c}* merged with *^{ɔ}*, despite the common knowledge that the evolution of the segholates was a relatively late development.[12] At any rate, original monosyllabic nouns of stable consonantal roots do not support this assumption, as is learned from *mlk: målək, qdš: qådəš, ngb: nēgəb.* Nor does this assumption match the findings in the Samaritan tradition concerning an original guttural consonant directly preceding another consonant. In this position the guttural does not vanish without leaving its mark on the word: it assimilates to the following consonant. Examples: **šama^{c}ti>šāmātti, *ra/iḥmīm>rēmməm*, and so forth. Even original *aleph*, after *h, ḥ, ^{c}* had merged with it, behaved similarly by virtue of analogy; for example, *måṣåttå* (*mṣ^{ɔ}t*), *yåråttå* (*yr^{ɔ}t*), etc. On the basis of today's pronunciation, a guttural consonant disappears with no trace only in final position, since the accent is usually penult, and the vowel preceding the final consonant and following the accent does not allow for special lengthening; only if the accent is ultimate—apparently, irregularly—can the vowel attain extra length, such as *må'nū* (*mnwḥ*). The fact that alternating forms such as *bā:la / bālli* (*b^{c}l*), *få:dåk* (*pḥdk*) occur, must be interpreted as stemming from the existence of *schwa* during an earlier period, or from its absence, so that *ba^{c}le(y) / ba^{c}^{a}lå(h)* (the opposite of the custom in Tiberian Hebrew) produced Samaritan **ba^{c}li>bālli / *ba^{c}ala>bā:la.* Alternates of this kind, even within the paradigm of a given word, are to be found in Tiberian Hebrew as well; for example *ma^{c}^{a}lå(h) / >ma^{c}lå(h)*.

It seems to me that from the evolution of nouns of stable root-consonants and from the existence of an aleph in the above-determined position, we must come to the conclusion that all middle guttural nouns pronounced today as single syllables were originally bisyllabic nouns, including those called segholate by virtue of their form in Tiberian Hebrew. This applies not only to those having original *h, ḥ, ^{c}*, but also to those nouns with original *^{ɔ}* such as *zīb* (*z^{ɔ}b*), *låm* (*^{ɔ}m*), *råm* (*r^{ɔ}m*), which have a parallel in Tiberian *to^{ɔ}ar*, which is *tår* in Samaritan.

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11 See *LOT*, 5:189. Of course, a pattern different from the Tiberian can be assumed in Samaritan, here a kind of *q^{e}tål.*

12 Z. S. Harris, *The Development of the Canaanite Dialects* (New Haven, 1939), 80.

Another conclusion can be drawn here: the anaptyctic vowel formed when the consonant cluster parted was not of a stable quality. Rather, like *schwa*—and originally no different from it in brevity—it would vary according to its proximity to the consonants and the basic vowels of the word.[13]

In those few cases where today we find two syllables, such as *fāʾəl* (*pʿl*), *måər* (*mhr*), it may be assumed on principle that the origin of these nouns was different from that of their counterparts in Tiberian Hebrew. But it is also quite possible to assume an identical origin, with a qualitative difference between the basic vowel and the anaptyctic vowel, for whatever reason there may have been. From the situation today it is difficult to define exactly what may have been the reason that the anaptyctic vowel and *schwa* did not assimilate in a few nouns; but the final result is entirely clear, and from it we can deduce the existence of *trends* in this assimilation process as opposed to rigid regularity. There can be no better evidence for this than the surprising development of two forms so very similar to one another in their base forms as **y*^{i}*ḥi* [Tib.*y*^{e}*ḥi*(*y*)]>*yī* on the one hand, and **y*^{a}*hi* [Tib.*y*^{e}*hi*(*y*)]>*yåi*, on the other. It is likely that at the onset the variations of vowel quality were not discernible, but when their brevity changed and they became full vowels (even long ones according to the conditions active in Samaritan Hebrew), the difference became clear and a phonetic fact.

7. If this explanation is deemed satisfactory—as I hope it is—we are still obliged to clarify the evolution of forms such as *ṣēʾon*, since the Tiberian forms *ṣo*(ʾ)*n*, *ro*(ʾ)*š*, *ṣe*(ʾ)*t*, etc. necessitate the assumption that *aleph* in a closed syllable had already vanished in the distant past, at any rate prior to what was handed down in Tiberian and Samaritan Hebrew. For the very *o*-vowel in the Tiberian tradition cannot be comprehended other than by means of the following development: **ṣʾan*>**ṣān*>*ṣōn*. The *o* in the Samaritan also testifies to its long origin in words like *ṣēʾon*, and not an historically short *u*. How then did the Samaritan words, having originated like the Tiberian in *ṣon*, *roš* become bisyllabic?

This brings us to inquire into the formation of the extra-long vowel in the Hebrew of the Samaritans. One source is already familiar to us: a reduction of two syllables containing identical vowels. But this offers no explanation of the extra length in the nouns *tūldåt* (*twldt*), *qārbəm* (*qrbym*), on the one hand, and that found in med. *waw* nouns *opening* in a guttural, like *īš* (ʾ*yš*), *ūṣ* (*ḥwṣ*), *ūr* (ʿ*wr*) [but: *or* (ʾ*wr*) and *oṣ* (*ḥwṣ*)!] and certainly not the Aramaic *šīrtå šyrth; LOT*, 3/2: 63), *lamdīntå* (*lmdynth;* ibid., 286), *sålbi* (*slwy*; ibid., 135 [in Hebrew *šalwi*, (*šlwy*)]), *kållån* (*khln*; ibid., 197), *kålkon* (*khlkwn*; ibid. 56 [but *kållå*-(*klh*)], *ållən* (ʾ*hlyn;* ibid., 135), *båryå* (*bʾryh*; ibid., 44, 68), *qānyån* (*qʿnyn,* ibid., 152), *qēbūrtåk* (*qbwrtk*; ibid., 188); and forms of med. *waw* verbs such as *qām* (*qʿm*; ibid., 45, 53, etc.) *dār* (*dʿr*; ibid., 51), *ṣåm* (*ṣʿm*; ibid., 78), *ṣår* (*ṣʿr;* ibid., 98), *tåb* (*thb*; ibid., 181, 246) written as usual *plene* [but not necessarily, as in *råm* (*rm;* ibid. 224)] and also *qāmån* (*qʿmnn*; ibid., 70), *tåbnå* (*thbnn*; ibid., 165).

13 See *LOT* 5:39f. in detail. An identical situation is found in Palestinian Syriac, as evidenced by the spellings with *waw* and *yod*, even in the same word. For a detailed discussion, see M. Bar-Asher, *Studies in Palestinian Syriac* (Hebrew University dissertation: Jerusalem, 1977), 421f. and especially 447f. I cannot follow the opinion "that the original epenthetic vowel was uniformly e" (Richard Steiner, *Afroasiatic Linguistics* 3/5 [1976], 15).

At the same time one finds in Samaritan Aramaic the forms predictable on the basis of other Aramaic dialects, such as *qāʾəm* (*qʿm*; ibid. 244), *tāʾər*(*tʾr*; ibid., 199) 'understands', *måʾər* (*mhr*; ibid., 85) 'is nourished', *šåʾəm* (*šʾm*; ibid., 195) 'sees' *såʾər* (*shr*; ibid., 102) 'encompasses'. With regard to nouns such as *tūldåt* in Hebrew or *bårya* in Aramaic, it may be possible to explain the abnormal sound length as compensation for the reduction of two syllables to one, whether one of them had *schwa* or whether it had a full vowel. In this case, the vowel length before the contraction was retained; indeed, vowel length in a closed syllable is found in the Bible in words like *mʿdīntå, ʿåḷlīn,* and similarly in Syriac. However, this explanation is not feasible with med. *waw* verbs,[14] and is certainly not applicable to words like *sålbi* (*slwy*). The Samaritan Hebrew tradition exhibits only short vowels in closed syllables in med. *waw* verbs, and the phonological rules of Hebrew and of Aramaic are identical in all other respects. However, it is noteworthy that concerning med. *waw* verbs, Hebrew vocalization differs in such forms as *qamtå*, etc., from that of Aramaic (and of Syriac): *qåmtå*—with *qameṣ*.

As a general rule: it is clear from almost all the examples quoted above, with self-evident etymologies, that the extra-long vowel today was historically long as well. The reason this length was retained in a closed syllable, contrary to the well-grounded rule that a long vowel cannot appear in a closed syllable, is unknown, and I doubt if it can possibly be discovered. But the result of the trend is certain and clear: in place of the normal length that cannot be realized in the given circumstances, extra-length appears, as in all those syllables contracted from two.

When did this process occur? It seems likely to me that it took place prior to the contraction of two syllables leading to the formation of the extra-long vowel (see section 5 above), and forms such as *rēʾoš* indicate that it took place while Hebrew was still spoken by the Samaritans. It should be recalled that the extra-length not having resulted from syllable reduction is sporadic, and there even appear alternates of the same form, like *råm* (*LOT*, 3/2: 123) / *råm* (ibid., 224); *qåm* in Hebrew / *qām*, the usual form in Aramaic. This is similar to the behavior of the descending diphthong in Samaritan. In that tradition, there is a general contraction of descending diphthongs in all positions—*ay*> *ē*(*ī*), *aw*>*ō*(*ū*)—but if the vocalic component is originally long, as in *ūy* or *āy*, the nisba termination in Aramaic (and also in Hebrew), the contraction may not occur. The diphthong behaves virtually as a closed syllable (as in Tiberian Hebrew), and so vowel-shortening can be expected; however, the tendency not to contract preserved the extra-length in the diphthong, finally bringing about its split into two syllables. Thus one finds: *āw*>*o* in the 3rd person sing. masc. pronominal suffix in Hebrew, and also *ōhī*>*ūy*>*o* in Aramaic; **galūy*>*gålo*, (**ḥūbōhī*>) **ḥūbōy*>*ūbo* 'his sins'); but **gōy*>*guwwi*, **raṣūy*>*råṣuwwi*. *åy* (stressed) in forms like (*yʿḥīdāy*>) *yīʿdåy*—one cannot clearly perceive if it is pronounced thus or *yīdåʾi*, like *ʿbrʾy: ibråʾi* (*LOT*, 3/2: 52,286), and similarly one cannot tell if forms like *zakkåʾi* represent *zakkay* or *zakkåʾe*(*y*). Just as a dipththong may split, so may an extra-long vowel divide, and if the extra-length resulted from contraction, the original situation would reappear, as happens when instead of *å:šən* (*hḥšn*) *åʾåšən* is pronounced, or when *åʿʿād* (*hʾḥd*) is

14 See *LOT*, 5:67, and the Addendum, ibid., 280.

uttered instead of *ʿād,* also predictable for *hʿḥd* (according to *ʿāmməm* |*hʿmym*| and not *åʿamməm*!).

8. In this way, in my opinion, the nouns *ṣēʾon* and *rēʾoš*, and also *zēʾot* developed from *ṣōn, rōš*, and *zōt* at a stage prior to that before us, apparently during the period of historic Hebrew, and not in Proto-Hebrew. And so: *rōš*>*rôôš* (with a double peak)>*rōʾošˑ*>*rēʾoš*. The dissimilation of *u/o . . . u/o* to *ē . . . o* or to (*å*)*ā . . . o* is a common phenomenon in Samaritan.[15] It is to be found in the words *bēʾu* (*bhw*), *kåmēʾu* (*kmhw*) as well. It seems that in Samaritan Hebrew parallel developments took place in the medial *aleph* segholate nouns, developments having in common the inability to utter a normally long vowel in a closed syllable: a) brevity, predictable by rule and by prevalent conditions, perhaps[16] in the nouns *bir* (*bʾr*), *yår* (*yʾr*)—which can also be interpreted otherwise—but surely in the Aramaic noun *riš* (*rʾš*) 'head'; b) extra length: *zīb* (*zʾb*), *tår* (*tʾr*); c) length splitting: *rēʾoš*. Of course, the splitting restored to these nouns the *aleph* which had grown silent many generations earlier, and the nouns *ṣēʾon, mēʾod* indicate that paradigmatic analogy had nothing to do with this process. It should not be overlooked, that the Samaritan tradition treats the Hebrew and Aramaic words for 'head' differently, as noted above with regard to the noun *šalwi* (*šlwy*)/*såłbi* (*slwy*).

The feature of retention of vowel length under conditions opposed to the general trend of the language, for reasons which are unclear to us (remember: extra length resulting from the contraction of two syllables separated by *aleph* is a late phenomenon and is not to be confused with words like *zīb, tår*) can be classified as a kind of hypercorrection, as Blau[17] assumes for *bʾr, zʾb*. But the correction was not intended to retain the *aleph* out of paradigmatic considerations—which do not exist for *ṣʾn* or for *mʾd* or *zʾt*. On the contrary, the appearance of the *aleph* is a secondary result of the split, and it appears in the nouns *fāʾəl* (*pʿl*) and *måʾər* (*mhr*) as well, even though they have no historical *aleph*.

As stated above, we are dealing here with a sporadic development, which can be uncovered only by comprehending the entire complex of factors in effect in Samaritan Hebrew, and one has to distinguish between them and this dialect's "inheritance" from Hebrew in general. Chronologically, Samaritan Hebrew is not all of a kind. For whatever is found in the Samaritan tradition similar features can surely be found in the other Hebrew traditions, but this is not the place to expound on the matter.[18] One who rejects the proffered explanation concerning nouns like *rēʾoš* [and concerning *ēʾūkəl* = Tib. *ʾokal, tåʾūkəl* = *tokal*][19] because it does not apply to other nouns of the *qol*

15 See *LOT*, 5:64. It would have been suitable to mention *i...u* as well, in the noun *šiṿṿol* (=*šiṿol*)-*šʾwl*, written *šywl* in Palestinian Syriac.

16 Concerning *bi/er,* it may be assumed that the base-form is *bayir* (Jer.6:7), despite the spelling *bʾr* (*LOT,* 5:183). With regard to *yår,* a loan-word from Egyptian, it is possible that despite its spelling—the same as in the Jewish version—it represents another form, closer to the original *yrw,* not med. guttural att all. The ultima accent of its unusual plural form *yårīm* (see *LOT,* 5:50) supports this assumption.

17 J. Blau, "Marginalia Semitica III," *Israel Oriental Studies* 7 (1977), 22.

18 Concerning the Babylonian vocalization tradition, a detailed discussion can be found in Y. Yeivin's *The Babylonian Vocalization and the Linguistic Tradition Reflected in It* (Jerusalem, 1968), 195 f. [in Hebrew].

19 See Mandel, *The Development of Samaritan Hebrew,* 308, 310.

pattern cannot reject parallel developments in the language, too.[20] Otherwise one would have to supply a reasonable explanation for the existence of the many form-pairs in the Tiberian tradition, like *layil/lel, ʾåwæn/ʾon, yo(ʾ)ḥez/yæ(ʾ)ḥoz,* and others. Yet, at least one example of vowel splitting in med. *waw* verbs can be brought as evidence from Samaritan Aramaic in the form *gāʾēzu* (*LOT,* 3/2: 134), which cannot be etymologically separated from *gåz* (in Hebrew).

Scholars who deal with synchronic descriptions of language like to claim that it is as important to explain what *did not* take place in a language as it is to explain what actually occurred. But I have yet to see a scholar dealing with an ancient language or with the traditions of an ancient language succeed in realizing it because many links of the whole system—both synchronically and diachronically—are unknown to him. He who wants to learn more than the data can tell him will have to construct something to which can be applied:[21] הרי הם בהררים התלוין בשערה שהן מקרא מועט והלכות מרובות. The linguist should be satisfied with truly succeeding in interpreting correctly what is actually found in the language.

20 See on this matter Malkiel's article (cited in n. 3 above), 192.

21 Mishna *Ḥagiga* 1:8