

The Orthography of the Relative Pronoun **הַ** in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods*

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I. Introduction

Some 50 years ago J.N. Epstein¹ collected seven examples from Tannaitic literature in which he believed that *he* served as a *mater lectionis* for medial ϵ . Since then scholars have identified additional examples of *he* representing medial ϵ in Tannaitic manuscripts, Late Biblical Hebrew, and epigraphic material, and, consequently, today it is generally accepted that “*he* is a *mater lectionis* for ϵ ”.² In Syriac T. Nöldeke³ noted at the end of the last century that *he* appeared in Greek words transcribed in Syriac manuscripts where the Greek had ϵ or $\alpha\iota$ (realized as ϵ). Recently A. Wasserstein⁴ investigated the transcription of Greek vowels and the *spiritus asper* into Hebrew and Aramaic. He concluded, among other things, that the *he* which corresponds to the *spiritus asper* sometimes served as a *mater lectionis* for ϵ and similar vowels in certain lexical items in Rabbinic literature (in both Jewish Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew)⁵ and was not consonantal, as is generally assumed. Wasserstein related the use of the *he* for ϵ in Greek loanwords to the phenomenon pointed out by Epstein in Tannaitic Hebrew.

* This is a revised version of an article that appeared in Hebrew: ש' פסברג, הכתיב "שה"- לכינוי הויקה: כלום משמשת ה"א אם קריאה מצעיה ל- ϵ בחקופת בית שני? 118-109 עמ' (תשנ"ו) עמ' 118-109. I remember fondly the many discussions I had with my father-in-law, Abraham Wasserstein, about his article on transcriptions and my Hebrew article.

¹ J.N. Epstein, מבוא לנוסח המשנה, 1948, 1252.

² J. Naveh, *On Sherd and Papyrus. Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods*, 1992, 110 (Hebrew).

³ T. Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik*², 1898, 6 (§4). See also C. Brockelmann, *Syrische Grammatik*¹², 1976, 7-8 n. 2 (§4); A. Schall, *Studien über griechische Fremdwörter im Syrischen*, 1960, 34.

⁴ A. Wasserstein, "A Note on the Phonetic and Graphic Representation of Greek Vowels and of the Spiritus Asper in the Aramaic Transcription of Greek Loanwords", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 12, 1993, 200-208.

⁵ Occasionally the same word appears in both Jewish Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew.

Does *he* really serve as a *mater lectionis* for medial ϵ in Hebrew words as Epstein, Naveh, and others think? And does the orthography of Greek loanwords in Syriac, noted by Nöldeke, reflect the same phenomenon as the orthography of Greek loanwords and Hebrew words in Rabbinic literature, as suggested by Wasserstein? These questions arise in the light of the orthography of *he* attested in Hebrew words that were not borrowed from Greek: *he* occurs in Hebrew words only after the relative pronoun -ש .⁶ The fact that the apparent use of *he* to mark medial ϵ is limited in Hebrew words to the relative pronoun -ש hints that this orthography is related to the realization of the relative -ש .

We propose that *he* does not serve as a *mater lectionis* for medial ϵ in Hebrew words in the Second Temple and Mishnaic periods, but rather has a different orthographic function.

II. Evidence

II.1 Hebrew Words in Tannaitic Hebrew, Late Biblical Hebrew, and Epigraphic Sources

Epstein presented six examples from MS Kaufmann of the Mishna and a seventh example from the Geniza fragments of the Jerusalem Talmud.⁷ With the exception of one example, the *he* has been erased each time:⁸ $\text{שְׁ(ה)הִרְקֵן לִילְךְ וְלִהְיוֹק}$ (*Bava Qamma* 1:1); $\text{שְׁ(ה)בְחוּכוֹ וּמִשְׁקִין וּמִשְׁקִין}$ (*‘Eduyyot* 1:14); $\text{שְׁ(ה)נִחַלְקָה לְשָׁנִים}$ (*‘Eduyyot* 3:9); שְׁ(ה)עֵבֶר זְמַן (*‘Eduyyot* 7:7); שְׁ(ה)בְסוּרֵייה (*‘Eduyyot* 3:9); $\text{שְׁ(ה)מַחֲשֶׁבֶת נּוֹכְרִי}$ (*Hullin* 2:7); $\text{שְׁ(ה)מַחֲשֶׁבֶת נּוֹכְרִי}$ (y. *‘Avoda Zara* 2.41c).⁹ Epstein commented that in all these passages, “*he* occurs in place of *sōḡol* and *pataḥ*, η in Greek”.¹⁰

In the last decade M. Bar-Asher has identified more examples from Tannaitic sources. Two of the examples are from the consonantal text of MS Kaufmann. The first is $\text{וְאֵת שְׁהַעֲרָה לְחֹכֵהוּ אִסּוּר}$ (y. *‘Avoda Zara* 5:7; cf. *שְׁעִירָה* in MSS Parma A, Lowe, Leiden, et al.). The vocalizer misunderstood the verb as belonging to

⁶ Kutscher noted that “scriptio plena with *he* is actually found only after -ש ”. See E.Y. Kutscher, “Some Problems of the Lexicography of Mishnaic Hebrew and its Comparison with Biblical Hebrew”, *Archive of the New Dictionary of Rabbinical Literature*, ed. E.Y. Kutscher, 1972, 1:33 (Hebrew).

⁷ Epstein (n. 1), 1252.

⁸ This phenomenon testifies to the different traditions attested in MS Kaufmann, the most notable being the tradition of the scribe (consonantal text) and the tradition of the vocalizer (pointed text). See, e.g., M. Bar-Asher, *Hebrew Language Studies Presented to Professor Zeev Ben-Hayyim*, ed. M. Bar-Asher et al., 1983, 83-110 (Hebrew).

⁹ L. Ginzberg, *Yerushalmi Fragments from the Geniza*, 1909, 275.

¹⁰ Epstein did not explain the process that led to this phenomenon.

the *Hif'il* conjugation and consequently pointed it as שֶׁהֶעֱרָה whereas the scribe intended the *Pi'el*, which is the conjugation used in Tannaitic Hebrew. Bar-Asher pointed out that the orthography with *he* is attested in two additional witnesses to this passage, one a Geniza fragment of Mishna, שהעירה, and the other, a Geniza fragment of the Babylonian Talmud, שהעיר (the final *he* was deleted by mistake = שֶׁעָרָה).¹¹ In the second example that Bar-Asher isolated in MS Kaufmann one finds שהשמקה לו (Mo'ed Qatan 1:7).¹² Bar-Asher also found an example in MS Vatican 32 to *Sifre Bemidbar*: ומה האב שהרשות נדרים מתרוקנה לו (¶153 ed. Hurvitz, p. 203 line 16).¹³

The data from Tannaitic manuscripts are supported by evidence from other corpora. The orthography with *he* is attested in Late Biblical Hebrew, as has been noted: שהתקין (Qoh 6:10);¹⁴ כִּשְׁהַסְכֵּל (Qoh 10:3); שֶׁהֶשְׁמַם (Lam 5:18 in occidental manuscripts vs. שֶׁשְׁמַם in most manuscripts). It also shows up in papyri from the Judean Desert and in inscriptions:¹⁵ שהתשלחו (Hev 51); בית מדרשו של רבי אניאנה (Dabbura [Golan] lintel inscription);¹⁶ שהלרבי אליעזר הקפר זה [שהלרבי] (sarcophagus from Beth She'arim).¹⁷ The same phenomenon may also be evidenced in שהצלכם (= שאצלכם) (Mur 43).¹⁸

There appears to be another example from the Judean Desert documents that has gone virtually unnoticed: נאום בלעם בנבעור ונאם הגבר שהתם בעין (4QTestim

¹¹ M. Bar-Asher, "On Vocalization Errors in MS Kaufmann of the Mishna", *Massorot* 1, 1984, 9 (Hebrew). Bar-Asher shows that most of the textual witnesses read שַׁעִירָה in *Pi'el*.

¹² *Ibid.*; M. Bar-Asher, "A Preliminary Study of Mishnaic Hebrew as Reflected in Codex Vatican 32 of Sifre-Bemidbar", *Te'uda* 3, 1983, 143 n. 26 (Hebrew).

¹³ Bar-Asher (n. 12), 143.

¹⁴ E. Qimron, "ההתקין (Qoh. 6:10) — An Unnoticed Aramaism", *Lěšonénu* 56, 1991, 117 (Hebrew). Qimron does not deal with the *kəṭiv*.

¹⁵ Naveh (n. 2), 110.

¹⁶ J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic. The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues*, 1978, 25 (Hebrew).

¹⁷ J. Naveh, "Varia Epigraphica Judaica", *IOS* 9, 1979, 30-31; idem, "Hebrew versus Aramaic in the Epigraphic Finds of the Second Temple — Bar-Kokhba Period", *Lěšonénu* 56, 1992, 315 (Hebrew).

¹⁸ Wasserstein (n. 4), 207. Milik reads שאצלכם (*DJD* 2:159). Cf. שהצלכן (*HevEp* 12 5/6). Kutscher and Naveh interpret the *he* as an example of the weakening and confusion of gutturals. See E.Y. Kutscher, לשונן של האיגרות, העבריות והארמיות של בר-כוסבה ובני דורו: האיגרות העבריות (*Lěšonénu* 26, 1962, 15 (Hebrew); Naveh, (n. 2), 110.

1:10).¹⁹ The author (or scribe) of the document has interpreted the difficult שָׁמַח הָעַיִן (Num 24:3) as שָׁמַח הָעַיִן .²⁰

II.2 Greek words in Syriac and in Rabbinic Literature

There are many spellings in Syriac of Greek words written with *he* as against ϵ and $\alpha\iota$, e.g., סַחֲסִי < $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\xi\iota\varsigma$; $\text{פּוֹנְטֵ$ < $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon$; פּוֹדָא < $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\alpha$. Nöldeke thought that *he* for ϵ and $\alpha\iota$ reflected a learned attempt on the part of scribes to give full graphic representation to loanwords.²¹ One may surmise that *he* was used for this purpose for two reasons: 1) the other *matres lectionis* (*alef*, *waw*, and *yod*) already represented other Greek vowels (*alef* = α ; *yod* = ι ; *waw* = $\omicron, \omega, \upsilon$); 2) *he* is frequently written but not pronounced in Syriac²² and therefore available for use.

Wasserstein cited examples from Jewish Aramaic and from Rabbinic Hebrew of Greek loanwords in which *he* appeared for ϵ and similar vowels, e.g., סְנַהֲרִין < $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\delta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$.²³ In this example he preferred to view the *he* as a *mater lectionis* and not the retention of the original *h* in $\acute{o}\delta\text{-}$, $\acute{\epsilon}\delta\rho\text{-}$.²⁴ Three reasons underly his assertion that the *he* is a *mater lectionis* in סְנַהֲרִין and in certain other loanwords

¹⁹ J.M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature", *JBL* 75, 1950, 183 (= *DJD* 5:58). J. Strugnell is the only scholar who has raised the possibility that the relative pronoun is present in the Qumran form: "est-ce que הָעַיִן se compose d'un relatif שָׁ avec הָעַיִן ou du relatif שָׁ avec הָעַיִן ?" See J. Strugnell, "Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan'", *RQ* 7, 1969-1971, 228.

²⁰ Last century A. Dillmann hesitantly suggested that the consonantal text of the Bible reflected שָׁמַח הָעַיִן , basing his reading on the Septuagintal $\acute{o}\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{o}\rho\acute{o}\nu$ and Tg. Onqelos הָשִׁיר הָעַיִן . See A. Dillmann, *Die Bücher Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua*, 1886, 156. Many scholars have sought to emend the vocalization in a similar manner. On the different interpretations and emendations of שָׁמַח הָעַיִן , see L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner et al., *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon*³, 1990, 4:1540 s.v. שָׁמַח and S. Morag, "'Layers of Antiquity' — Some Linguistic Observations on the Oracles of Balaam", *Tarbiz* 50, 1980-1981, 12-13 (Hebrew). An adjective in construct to a noun is well-attested in the Bible. See B.K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 151 (§9.5.3c); P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 1991, 468 (§129i).

²¹ Nöldeke (n. 3), 6. Wasserstein (n. 4), 205 n. 13 also believed this to be a learned orthographic practice on the part of scribes; he pointed out that the orthography is especially prevalent in words that were not absorbed into the living Syriac language, but rather merely written down in texts and dictionaries.

²² Nöldeke (n. 3), 25-26 (§38).

²³ Wasserstein (n. 4), 206.

²⁴ According to Krauss (and others), the *he* was pronounced in this example. See S. Krauss, *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, 1898, 1:63.

in rabbinic literature: 1) the use of *he* as a *mater lectionis* in loanwords is well attested in Syriac; 2) the fluctuation between *he* and *alef* (e.g., היליסטון/אליסטון, and the alternation between *he* and \emptyset (e.g., סנהדרר/סנדרר)²⁵ in loanwords testify to the fact that the *he* was not pronounced; 3) in loanwords the *he* occurs only before ϵ and similar vowels.

II.3 Additional Evidence

Naveh has pointed out the use of *he* in a Greek dedication written in Samaritan letters from the Byzantine period.²⁶ In the inscription, which was discovered at Beth She'an, Naveh reads קהריה ביתה אפרי קהי ענן = Κύριε βοήθει Ἐφραι καὶ Ἄναν ("Oh Lord, help Ephrai(m) and Anan!"). He noted the use of *he* in transcribing Κύριε, which in the Byzantine period was written at times in the East with ϵ or ι in the first syllable. The orthography קהי (= καὶ) reflects the pronunciation κ*ε*.

III. The Origin of the Orthography *שֶׁ*- in Hebrew Words

Despite the external similarity between the use of *he* marking ϵ in Greek loanwords in Syriac and rabbinic literature and the use of *he* in Hebrew words, there does not appear to be any connection between the two phenomena. In Syriac the orthography is limited to Greek loanwords, as is the case in rabbinic literature (Hebrew and Aramaic). In Hebrew words, on the other hand, this orthography is limited to the relative pronoun. Since *he* is found only after the relative pronoun *שֶׁ*, it would appear that the phenomenon is related to the realization of the pronoun.

The relative pronoun *שֶׁ* was realized in Biblical and Tannaitic Hebrew as consonant + short vowel + geminated consonant, usually *שֶׁ* ($\$ \in CC-$), for example, שֶׁלֶם (Cant 4:2). Other realizations are rare: *שֶׁ* (שֶׁקָמָה) Judg 5:7 ([2x]; *שֶׁ* Cant 1:7), *שֶׁ* (שֶׁאָתָה) Judg 6:17), *שֶׁ*-שֶׁהֶם-בְּהֶמָה (Qoh 3:18).²⁷ The

²⁵ This fluctuation is found, for example, in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan. See E.G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance*, 1984, 413.

²⁶ J. Naveh, "A Greek Dedication in Samaritan Letters", *IEJ* 31, 1981, 220-222; *idem* (n. 2), 179.

²⁷ On the pointing of the relative pronoun with *šdwa*, see S. Morag, *The Hebrew Language Tradition of the Yemenite Jews*, 1963, 184-185 (Hebrew); M. Bar-Asher, "Introduction", *Mishna Codex Parma "B"* "De Rossi 497 Seder Teharoth, 1971, 15 (Hebrew = also appeared in בר-אשר, ל, בעריכת מ' בר-אשר, (תשל"ב, 180). On the pointing of the relative pronoun with *patah*, see M. Bar-Asher, "The Study of Mishnaic Hebrew Grammar — Achievements, Problems

phenomenon of gemination following a proclitic particle is a salient feature of the Hebrew language,²⁸ and occurs not only after -שׁ ($\text{\$eCC-}$), but also after the *waw* consecutive -וַ (waCC-), the definite article -הַ (haCC-),²⁹ the interrogative -הֲ (maCC-), the demonstrative -הִזֵּ (zeCC-) when proclitic (e.g., $\text{וְהַמְּזַבְּחַ$ 1 Chr 22:1),³⁰ and the *daḡeš conjunctivum* ($\text{d\dot{o}h\dot{i}q}$, e.g., לִכְהֹנֵן Num 22:6; *'ate meraḡiq*, e.g., עֲשֵׂה פֶרִי Gen 1:11).³¹ It should be noted that gemination occurs in most of these categories following a *he* that appears in the orthography.

We propose that the orthography -הַשׁ is related to the phenomenon of gemination found in the above categories. It seems that the Hebrew scribes related the gemination occurring after the proclitic particle to the written *he* that preceded the gemination. In other words, on the analogy of the *he* preceding

and Goals”, *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies. Panel Sessions Hebrew and Aramaic Languages*, 1988, 8 n. 37a (Hebrew). As a result of the merger of ϵ with *a* in the Babylonian tradition, one finds $\text{\$aCC-}$ as against Tiberian $\text{\$eCC-}$. See I. Yeivin, *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization*, 1985, 1158-1162 (Hebrew).

28 Gemination in Biblical Hebrew is demonstrated in Greek and Latin transcriptions and the traditional Hebrew pronunciations of many Jewish (non-Ashkenazi) communities. See G. Lisowsky, *Die Transskription der hebraeischen Eigennamen der Pentateuch in der Septuaginta* (Inaugural-Dissertation, Universität Basel), 1940, 123, 143-144; C. Siegfried, “Die Aussprache des Hebräischen bei Hieronymus”, *ZAW* 4, 1884, 73; S. Morag, “Pronunciations of Hebrew”, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1971, 13:1134-1135, 1141.

29 Gemination is also attested after the definite article in Phoenician-Punic, as evidenced by the Neo-Punic spelling עממקמ (= המקום ; KAI 173:5). See J. Friedrich and W. Röllig, *Phönizisch-Punische Grammatik*², 1970, 52 (§117); S. Segert, *A Grammar of Phoenician and Punic*, 1979, 107 (§51.35). See also T.O. Lambdin, “The Junctural Origin of the West Semitic Definite Article”, *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. H. Goedicke, 1971, 326-330.

30 W. Gesenius, E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, *Hebrew Grammar*, 1910, 72 (§20d).

31 A. Dotan believes that the terms *deḡiq* and *'ate meraḡiq* are used by the Masoretes to reflect the same feature and not two related, but different phenomena. See A. Dotan, “The Problem of *deḡiq* and *até méraḡiq*”, *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, 1968, 2:101-105 (Hebrew). Many scholars are of the opinion that this *daḡeš* marks vowel quality, and not gemination. For discussions, see, e.g., Joüon and Muraoka (n. 20), 80-81 (§18h-j); G. Bergsträsser, *Hebräische Grammatik*, 1918, 1:64-66 (§100-s); Lambdin (n. 29), 325 n. 18. Dotan, 105 n. 23 thinks that the function of the *daḡeš* is to separate the two words in order to preserve the vowel between the stressed syllables. Yeivin suggests that the *daḡeš* marks both the separation between the two words and gemination. See I. Yeivin, “A Massoretic Fragment from the Cairo Geniza”, *Textus* 1, 1960, 198-199.

gemination in forms like *הַשְׂדֵה*, *מֵה-זֶה*, *זֶה-מִזֹּבַח*, *לִכְה-נָא*, and *עֵשָׂה פְרִי*, scribes inserted a *he* after the relative *šin*:³²

mazze: מֵה-זֶה :: *šezze*: שֶׁהֵזֶה*

zemmizbe^ah: זֶה-מִזֹּבַח :: *šemmizbe^ah*: שֶׁמִּזֹּבַח*

If we are correct in linking the insertion of the *he* to gemination, then one would also expect *he* to be inserted after the proclitic particles *בכ"ל* on determined nouns (*לְבֵית*, *כְּבֵית*, *בְּבֵית*) and after the *waw* consecutive *וַ*. Forms like *בְּהֵבִית*, *וַהֵבִית*, *כְּהֵבִית*, *וַהֵבִית* are attested in Late Biblical Hebrew. Although there are some examples in Classical Biblical Hebrew,³³ the phenomenon is a salient feature of the later language,³⁴ and one should take them as late³⁵ and not early forms, in which the original *he* survived. The examples from Late Biblical Hebrew are

³² It is conceivable that a diachronic analogy along the lines of

שְׁבִית > ש + ה + בית :: בְּבִית > ב + ה + בית

also was a factor in linking the relative pronoun to the *he*.

³³ *וְלִהְיֶה לְךָ בְּהַשְׂדֵה* (2 Sam 16:2) *וְלִהְיֶה לְךָ וְהַקִּיץ* (1 Sam 13:21) *וְלִהְיֶה לְךָ וְהַיָּמִים וְלִהְיֶה לְךָ וְהַיָּמִים* (2 Kgs 7:12). Böttcher and Lambert thought that the three examples in Classical Biblical Hebrew are mistakes. See F. Böttcher, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache*, 1866, 402; M. Lambert, *Traité de grammaire hébraïque*, 1946, 98 n. 4 (§224). Böttcher maintained that this orthography is due to attraction since in the three passages the unexpected *he* occurs near another *he* in a similar phonetic environment.

A parallel phenomenon occurs in some late Punic texts, e.g., *בְּהַשְׂדֵה* “in the year” (KAI 130:3), though in Phoenician the definite article is regularly elided after the proclitic prepositions *ב-* and *ל-*, and the conjunction *ו-*. See Friedrich and Röllig (n. 29), 53 (§119); Segert (n. 29), 108 (§51.355); W.R. Garr, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.*, 1985, 54-55. According to Segert, “the laryngeal seems again to appear after a one consonant particle. In these instances the article was probably restored”. Lambdin maintains that the definite article was syncopated after all prepositions and not just proclitic particles (Lambdin [n. 29], 327-328).

Ginsberg has suggested that *he* occurs after *waw* as a *mater lectionis* in several words in the Masoretic text; however, in all of the forms he cites, e.g., *וְהַמְדִינוּהָ* (Qoh 2:8); *וְהַסְכִּלוּהָ* (Qoh 7:25), the *he* appears to be the definite article. See Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel*, 1948, 81 n. 23. He also suggests that there is a similar use of *alef* in an Old Aramaic inscription from Zincirli (KAI 215): *וְאִנִּים* (5), *וְאִחִי* (12), *וְאִסְכֵּב* (16), though these forms are analyzed differently by other scholars, who take the *alef* as consonantal. See H.L. Ginsberg, “Aramaic Studies Today”, *JAOS* 62, 1942, 235-236.

³⁴ H. Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache des Alten Bundes*⁸, 1870, 619 (§244a); Joüon and Muraoka (n. 20), 114 (§35e); Lambert (n. 33), 98 (§224); A. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, 1971, 2:634 (Hebrew).

³⁵ R. Meyer, *Hebräisches Grammatik*, 1969, 2:19.

נְהַחֲלִינוּ (Ezek 40:25); וּלְהַגְרִים (Ezek 47:22); בְּהַשְׁמִים (Ps 36:6); קֹהֵקֶם (Qoh 8:1); בְּהַדְרֵךְ (Neh 9:19); לְהַוֹמֶה (Neh 12:38); לְהַעֵם (2 Ch 10:7); לְהַגְדִיד (2 Chr 25:10); לְהַמְצִיחַ (2 Chr 29:27).³⁶ The orthography and pointing in these examples may not necessarily reflect the phonetic realization; it is conceivable that the *he* was never pronounced by the scribes who wrote these words.³⁷

Even though *he* is not frequent after the proclitic particles בכ"ל in Tannaitic literature, it is attested.³⁸ There is an example in *m. Middot* 4:2 (the reading according to MS Kaufmann): נִיכַס לְהָתָא וּמִהָתָא לְהִיכַל,³⁹ and two more examples in a papyrus from Wadi Murabba'at:⁴⁰ [רש"י] הַלּוּקָח וַיִּרְשׁוּ לְהַמְכֹר הַזֶּה (Mur 30 II 22); אֵין לִי לְהַמְכֹר הַזֶּה (Mur 30 II 31). Bendavid argued that this phenomenon is common in the Babylonian Talmud, citing מִכָּאן וּלְהַבָּא; however, Breuer has refuted this and shown that the feature is limited to this one expression and thus is a unique and frozen form.⁴¹ The marking of gemination by the insertion of *he* after בכ"ל may also underlie the orthography of שֶׁל הַגּוֹאֵין (= *šellaggō'in?*) in Nahal Ḥever 51.⁴² The orthography של ה- in printed editions of rabbinic literature (as against של- [*šellaCC-*] in reliable manuscripts)⁴³ may, too, reflect this phenomenon.

³⁶ The pair כְּהַיּוֹם / כַּיּוֹם is not relevant to the discussion since speakers used the *he* to make a semantic distinction (כַּיּוֹם = “first of all”, כְּהַיּוֹם = “immediately”). See Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley (n. 30), 112 (¶35n) and more recently D. Talshir and A. Dotan, “Comments on M. Rottenberg’s Kayyōm”, *Lēšonēnu* 48-49, 1985, 220-221 (Hebrew). As for the form לְהַלְיֹ (Dan 8:16), some scholars argue that the *he* should have been syncopated, among them Lambert (n. 33), 98 (¶224); however, the *he* in this example is the original demonstrative element and not the definite article.

³⁷ There is no evidence that the *he* in -הַ was pronounced. One should note that the *he* is not pointed in three examples in the Hebrew Bible: בְּהַשְׁרָה (2 Kgs 7:12), שְׁהַתְּקִין (Qoh 6:10), כְּשֶׁהִפְכֵל (Qoh 10:3).

³⁸ Bendavid (n. 34), 634.

³⁹ Cf. לְהָתָא (4:3 [4x]).

⁴⁰ *DJD* 2:145.

⁴¹ Y. Breuer, “The Babylonian Talmudic Hebrew According to the Manuscripts of Tractate Pesahim” (Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), 1993, 101 (Hebrew). In the Mishna one finds מִכָּאן וּלְבָא (MSS Kaufmann and Parma B); see Bar-Asher (n. 27), “Introduction”, 14 n. 164.

⁴² This was suggested by M. Broshi and E. Qimron, “I.O.U. Note from the Time of the Bar Kochba Revolution”, *EI* 20, 1989, 259 (Hebrew). Kutscher, on the other hand, believed that the orthography שֶׁל הַגּוֹאֵין reflected a dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew that differed from the dialect in which של- (as a proclitic particle) occurred (Kutscher [n. 18], 26:10).

⁴³ H. Yalon, *Introduction to the Vocalization of the Mishna*, 1964, 26-27 (Hebrew).

There is additional evidence to support the idea that the function of the *he* is to mark gemination and not the vowel ϵ . In documents from the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods *yod* serves as a *mater lectionis* for ϵ ,⁴⁴ for example, שיעלעילה (*Kil'ayim* 7:7; MS Kaufmann);⁴⁵ שיעיקרו (*Sifra* ¶233; MS Vatican 66);⁴⁶ שיהי (=שהיא) (*Sifre be-Midbar* ¶158 ed. Hurvitz, p. 214, line 11; MS Vatican 32).⁴⁷ The spelling -שי is also attested in the Copper Scroll from the Judean Desert:⁴⁸ שיבצפון (3Q15 IX 14); שיבית הכרם (3Q15 X 5). Moreover, *alef* can serve as a *mater lectionis* for medial ϵ (in addition to marking \bar{a} and e), and is found after -ש;⁴⁹ Epstein cited an example from Tannaitic Hebrew, שאח[י]רחרום הרחשים (*Sifre Zuta, Parašat Para*), and he noted that this orthographic practice is common in Amoraic sources (e.g., שאהטבל [y. *Halla* 3.59c]) and particularly in Geonic sources.⁵⁰ The orthography with *alef* has also turned up in 4QMMT from the Judean Desert, where -ש is written together with the *mater lectionis alef* as a separate word:⁵¹ שא א[נ]ח[נ]ו (B 2); שא היא (B 9); שא יהיה (B 16); שא כתוב (B 27). There is one example of proclitic -שא- in 4QMMT: שאיאכל (B 37). May we take the orthographies -שא and -שה as reflecting the same

⁴⁴ M.H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, 1927, 26 (¶39); E. Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1986, 19-20 (¶100.33-34).

⁴⁵ See Epstein (n. 1), 1243 for additional examples.

⁴⁶ G. Haneman, "On the Linguistic Tradition of the Written Text in the Sifra Ms.," *Henoch Yalon Memorial Volume*, ed. E. Y. Kutscher et al., 1974, 94 (Hebrew).

⁴⁷ Bar-Asher (n. 12), 142-143.

⁴⁸ *DJD* 3:199-302.

⁴⁹ Epstein (n. 1), 1234-1235; E. Qimron, "Medial Alef as a Vowel in Hebrew and Aramaean Documents from Qumran Compared with Other Hebrew and Aramaean Sources", *Lěšonénu* 39, 1974-1975, 135-136 (Hebrew).

⁵⁰ J.N. Epstein, "Additional Fragments of the Jerushalmi", *Tarbiz* 3, 1932, 132 line 35 (Hebrew).

⁵¹ *DJD* 10:68-69, 225; Qimron (n. 49), 135; Qimron (n. 44), 22 (¶100.61). There is also an example from a Geniza fragment of *Yellamḏenu*: שא אילו (Epstein (n. 1) 1235). The writing of the relative pronoun as a separate word is known from Phoenician (אש) and Ammonite (אש). See Garr (n. 33), 85. It has been argued that this phenomenon also occurs in the language of the Deir Alla plaster texts. See J.A. Hackett, *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Allā*, 1980, 31. Although written as a prefix in Masoretic Hebrew, -ש is given its own cantillation sign (שעם) by the Masoretes, who, in doing so, indicate that they treat it as a separate word, e.g., שא אהבה (Cant 1:7); שהימים (Qoh 7:10). See M. Breuer, *שעמי המקרא בכ"א ספרים ובספרי אמ"ה*, 1982, 96ff.

37). May we take the orthographies -ש and -שה as reflecting the same phenomenon?⁵² If, indeed, this is the case, the *alef* may be viewed as the result of the weakening of the gutturals (h>Ø) at this period.⁵³

IV. Conclusion

Our discussion has investigated the use of *he* as a medial *mater lectionis* in the Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods. It is generally accepted that *he* marks the vowel ϵ in Hebrew words. This view assumes that the use of *he* in marking final ϵ — an orthographic practice found in the demonstrative הַזֶּה, verbs III-y (בִּינְיָה, יִבְנֶה) and in nouns derived from roots III-y (שָׂרָה) — was extended to the middle of the word.⁵⁴ We conclude from the conditioned distribution of *he* in Hebrew words (it is found only after the relative pronoun -ש) that this orthography is related to the realization of the relative pronoun: $\psi + \epsilon +$ gemination. It would appear that scribes associated the gemination following a proclitic particle with the written *he* that preceded the gemination. By analogy with forms like הַשְּׂרָה, הַזֶּה-זֶה, מִזֶּה-זֶה, לִכְהֵנָּה, and עֲשֵׂה פְרִי scribes inserted *he* after the relative pronoun, creating the orthography -שה.

⁵² According to Naveh (n. 17), 30-31, the orthographies -ש and -שי strengthen the view that the *he* in -שה functions as a *mater lectionis* for ϵ .

⁵³ On the weakening of the gutturals, see Segal (n. 44), 26-27 (§41); E.Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)*, 1974, 505-511 [= Jerusalem, 1959, 398-403 (Hebrew)].

⁵⁴ It is possible to suggest two additional origins for the *he*. The first is a conflation of the relative -ש and the definite article -ה (functioning as a relative pronoun). The use of -ה as a relative pronoun is common in both Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew before the participle; however, in the present examples, save one, -ה does not occur before a participle. The second possible origin is a conflation of the relative -ש and -ה (the first element in the 3rd person independent pronoun) found in the Rabbinic Hebrew syntagm of -ש + independent pronoun (הוּא, הֵם, הֵן, הֵי, הוּא) + participle. This syntagm is a salient feature of the Palestinian branch versus -ש + participle in the Babylonian branch. Here, too, however, one does not find the *he* occurring before the participle. On -ה as a relative pronoun, see G.B. Sarfatti, "Definiteness in Noun-Adjective Phrases in Rabbinic Hebrew", *Studies in the Hebrew Language and the Talmudic Literature Dedicated to the Memory of Dr. Menahem Moreshet*, ed. M.Z. Kaddari and S. Sharvit, 1989, 154-163 (Hebrew). On the syntagm שהוּא + participle, see M. Bar-Asher, "The Different Traditions of Mishnaic Hebrew", *Working with No Data*, *Semitic and Egyptian Studies Presented to Thomas O. Lambdin*, ed. D. M. Golomb, 1987, 37 [= *Tarbiz* 53, 1984, 215-216 (Hebrew)].

There does not seem to be a relation between the use of *he* in Greek loanwords in Syriac and in rabbinic literature (both Hebrew and Aramaic) and the use of *he* in Hebrew words.⁵⁵ The differently conditioned distribution of the orthography in the sources suggests different functions. In Syriac the *he* occurs only when there is a medial ϵ in Greek loanwords, and, as Wasserstein argues, it appears that this scribal practice also existed in Greek loanwords in rabbinic literature. In Hebrew words, on the other hand, *he* is limited to the relative pronoun -הַ and appears to mark the gemination associated with the pronoun.

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⁵⁵ Whereas the feature in Hebrew can be explained as an extension of the use of *he* as a final mater lectionis for ϵ , Syriac does not use *he* to mark final *e*, but rather *alef*.