

# The Babylonian Aramaic in Tractate *Karetot* According to MS Oxford

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## Abstract

This article describes the Aramaic of Tractate *Karetot* of the Babylonian Talmud according to MS Oxford Bodl. heb. b. 1. Tractate *Karetot* is one of the tractates which exhibit a special kind of Babylonian Aramaic. The first part of the article contains a description of this kind of Aramaic, with an attempt to define its unique features and their origin. MS Oxford Bodl. heb. b. 1 is the oldest dated manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud (BT) to have reached us. The second part of the article describes the features found in this manuscript which are different from the type of Aramaic known from the printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud. This is the first comprehensive description of a manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud outside the Yemenite manuscripts.

## Keywords

Babylonian Aramaic, Babylonian Talmud, *Karetot*

## o. Introduction

This article describes the type of Babylonian Aramaic (BA) found in Tractate *Karetot* according to MS Oxford Bodl. heb. b. 1 (O).<sup>1</sup> This manuscript, found

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<sup>1</sup>) The following sigla are used for the talmudic manuscripts used in this article: E = Escorial G-I-3; F = Florence II-I-7; G = Göttingen 3; Ha165 = Hamburg 165; He = Jerusalem, Yad Harav Herzog 1; J218 = JTS Rab. 218; J1608 = JTS Rab. 1608; J1623 = JTS Rab. 1623; C = Columbia X893-T141; L = London BL Add. 25717; LH = London BL Harl. 5508; M6 = Munich 6; M95 = Munich 95; M141 = Munich 141; MG = Moscow-Günzburg 1134; O23 = Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23; O51 = Oxford Bodl. heb. e. 51; O726 = Oxford Opp. 726; O249 = Oxford Opp. 249; P = St. Petersburg RNL Evr. I 187; PA = Paris Alliance H147A; PE = Printed Editions; Ps1337 = Paris 1337; V108 = Vatican 108; V109 = Vatican 109; V110 = Vatican 110; V111 = Vatican 111; V113 = Vatican 113; V115 = Vatican 115; V119 = Vatican 119;

in the Geniza, contains only part of the tractate.<sup>2</sup> Dated to 1123, it is the oldest dated manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud (BT) to have reached us.<sup>3</sup> In describing the BA of this manuscript I shall proceed in the two main directions that research in this field has taken in the recent decades.

First, the main breakthrough in the academic study of all rabbinic sources involved grounding the research in reliable sources, such as manuscripts and oral traditions, rather than the printed editions, in which the text was heavily corrupted. Nevertheless, thus far BA has been described only according to Yemenite manuscripts<sup>4</sup> and the Yemenite oral tradition.<sup>5</sup> Only a few and incomplete descriptions are based on Geniza fragments.<sup>6</sup> This article contains the first comprehensive description of a non-Yemenite manuscript.

Second, it has long been known that BA is not uniform and contains many alternative parallel forms.<sup>7</sup> The causes of this phenomenon may be grouped into

V120 = Vatican 120; V122 = Vatican 122; V123 = Vatican 123; V125 = Vatican 125; V140 = Vatican 140; V487 = Vatican 487.

<sup>2</sup>) 4b–6a; 18a–end.

<sup>3</sup>) According to Firkowitz, one manuscript, P, contained a colophon with the date corresponding to 1112. However, the colophon is now illegible, and his testimony is doubtful; See Raphael Nathan Nata Rabinovicz, *Variae lectiones in Mischnam et in Talmud Babylonicum* (Hebrew) (Munich: Heinrich Ressel, 1877), VIII, p. 8, on Codex 14. He cites Firkowitz's statement and adds 'ואולי הוא כן' 'and it may be so'. See also S. Schechter and S. Singer (eds.), *Talmudical Fragments in the Bodleian Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), p. 6 of the introduction, n. 1; David Rosenthal, 'Mishna Aboda Zara: A Critical Edition' (Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1980, I, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup>) Yechiel Kara, *Babylonian Aramaic in the Yemenite Manuscripts of the Talmud* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Language Traditions Project, 1983).

<sup>5</sup>) Shelomo Morag, *Babylonian Aramaic: The Yemenite Tradition* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1988); Shelomo Morag and Yechiel Kara, *Babylonian Aramaic in Yemenite Tradition: The Noun* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Jewish Oral Tradition Research Center, 2002).

<sup>6</sup>) Shelomo Morag, 'Some Notes on the Grammar of Babylonian Aramaic as Reflected in the Geniza Manuscripts', *Tarbiz* 42 (Hebrew) (1972), pp. 60–78; idem, *Vocalized Talmudic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Shamma Friedman, 'Early Manuscripts to Tractate Bava-Metzia' (Hebrew), *Alei Sefer* 9 (1981), pp. 5–55; idem, 'An Ancient Scroll Fragment (B. Hullin 101a–105a) and the Rediscovery of the Babylonian Branch of Tannaitic Hebrew', *JQR* 86 (1995), pp. 9–50. I am excluding from this the Aramaic of the Geonim, to which some descriptions have been devoted, and the Aramaic of the incantation bowls.

<sup>7</sup>) See J.N. Epstein, *A Grammar of Babylonian Aramaic* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Magnes and Dvir, 1960), pp. 14–16; Caspar Levias, *A Grammar of Babylonian Aramaic* (Hebrew) (New York: Bloch, 1930), pp. 17–18; M.L. Margolis, *A Manual of the Aramaic Language of the Babylonian Talmud* (= *Clavis Linguarum Semiticarum*, 3; Munich: Beck,

three major types: (1) Archaic Aramaic is used in certain literary genres, such as proverbs and legal documents,<sup>8</sup> and in sayings attributed to certain speakers, notably the earlier<sup>9</sup> and western<sup>10</sup> Amoraim. This type will not be dealt with in this article. (2) A second type of BA resembles the Aramaic of Targum Onqelos and of the Geonim in many respects. This type is used mainly in tractates *Nedarim*, *Nazir*, *Karetot*, *Meila*, *Tamid* (and to some extent in *Temura*). Only one work has so far been devoted solely to this type, which will be referred to here as ‘Nedarim Babylonian Aramaic’ (=NBA, after the largest tractate in the group).<sup>11</sup> The description given here is the first description of NBA in a tractate other than *Nedarim*.<sup>12</sup> The first part of this article will describe NBA as found in O. (3) Even Standard Babylonian Aramaic (SBA) contains many competitive forms. Although these forms may be used in the same manuscript, in many cases we can discern a consistent difference between manuscripts, or between the printed editions and manuscripts. When one is describing the linguistic tradition of a manuscript, all such differences need to be collected in order to classify the manuscript according to them. The second part of this article will deal with such forms in O.

Some brief descriptions, mentioning unique features of O, were published with the printed edition of O.<sup>13</sup> In the age when this edition appeared, however, more than a century ago, manuscripts were not studied in a systematic way and the printed editions constituted the main source for comparisons. Hence

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1910), pp. 2–3.

<sup>8</sup> Shamma Friedman, ‘Three Studies in Babylonian Aramaic Grammar’ (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 43 (1973–1974), pp. 58–69 (58–62).

<sup>9</sup> Eljakim Wajsberg, ‘The Aramaic Dialect of the Early Amoraim’ (Hebrew), *Leš* 60 (1997), pp. 95–156.

<sup>10</sup> Eljakim Wajsberg, ‘The Aramaic Dialect of the Palestinian Traditions in the Babylonian Talmud’ (Hebrew), *Leš* 66 (2004), pp. 243–282; 67 (2005), pp. 301–326; 68 (2006), pp. 31–61.

<sup>11</sup> Solomon F. Rybak, ‘The Aramaic Dialect of Nedarim’, Ph.D. dissertation, Yeshiva University, 1980.

<sup>12</sup> Among the various manuscripts, O is unique in its frequent use of NBA forms (see 1.4.2). The decision to base this study on O results from this fact as well.

<sup>13</sup> The edition is Schechter and Singer, *Talmudical Fragments*. The description is given in the introduction, pp. 5–6. See also W. Bacher, ‘Talmudical Fragments’, *JQR* 9 (1897), pp. 145–151. This printed edition contains many mistakes; see Yoav Rosenthal, ‘Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Karetot: A Study of its Textual Traditions’ (Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 2003, p. 97, n. 2. Rosenthal, pp. 97–154, describes the tradition of O, but his main interest is the literary tradition. On p. 98 he briefly comments on the linguistic nature of O.

all features differing from the printed editions were considered unique to O. Today we have descriptions of manuscripts and direct access to them, enabling us to define the nature of such features more precisely. We can conclude that most of them are not unique to O: some are characteristic of NBA, some are characteristic of manuscripts in general (as opposed to printed editions), and some belong to a specific type of BA; only a few are unique to O.

## 1. NBA features in O

### 1.1. *Introductory remarks*

Although NBA forms have been described,<sup>14</sup> there seems to be a fundamental shortcoming in the approach taken so far. All published research has remarked that these forms appear in certain tractates. In fact, they are to be found everywhere in the Babylonian Talmud, leading us to wonder what is unique about these tractates.<sup>15</sup> This problem is greater in the light of the manuscripts, where in all tractates these forms are more common than they are in the printed editions. For example, Kara has pointed out that such forms are quite abundant in Yemenite manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Friedman maintains that in Ashkenazi manuscripts מידעם ‘something’, one of the NBA forms (rather than SBA מידי), is widespread even in the ‘regular’ tractates.<sup>17</sup>

It is true that in these sources NBA forms are in the minority. But they are also a minority in the ‘special’ tractates. Accordingly, it is hard to define what

<sup>14</sup> See above, nn. 7, 11, and the literature cited in those works.

<sup>15</sup> Here are some examples of such forms in the printed editions: עבדי להון נקירותא וטשו ‘made for themselves hollowed out areas and settled down in them’ (*Ber.* 54b) (in SBA בהון ‘made for themselves hollowed out areas and settled down in them’ (בהו, להו זקן; לא אית להו זקן); ביומא דלא דיליה ‘on a day not his’ (*B. Qam.* 27b) (in SBA דידיה); הלין תורי ‘these oxen’ (*B. Mes.* 90a) (in SBA הני).

<sup>16</sup> Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, pp. כז–כו. Here are some examples from the Yemenite manuscript J1623 of *Pesahim*: ותוב לילה מניין ‘again, whence do we know that the night is also meant’ (106a; in the printed editions ותו); כולה ערלה בענן ולא איכא ‘we require all [to be] uncircumcised, which is absent’ (62b, twice; in the printed editions וליכא); אקשינן לן ‘we have raised objections from all these verses and answered them’ (23b; in the printed editions ושנינו).

<sup>17</sup> Shamma Friedman, ‘The Manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud: A Typology Based upon Orthographic and Linguistic Features’, in: Moshe Bar-Asher (ed.), *Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages: Presented to Shelomo Morag* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1996), pp. 163–190 (173, 181 and n. 127). The following is an example from the Ashkenazi manuscript F: מי איכ’ מידעם דלישר’ לא מחייב ‘is there anything for which a Jew is not punishable’ (*Sanh.* 58b; in the printed editions מידי).

is unique about the ‘special’ tractates: NBA forms appear everywhere, while most of the forms are of SBA type, in both ‘special’ and ‘regular’ tractates.

It is thus clear that the designation ‘special’ tractates was based on a feeling that such forms are especially abundant in these tractates. Although scholars’ intuitions should not be ignored, they are nothing more than that. To firmly establish the linguistic nature of a tractate, one must measure the proportion of NBA forms and compare it with the figures for other tractates. Only if the proportion is significantly higher can we conclude that this tractate is ‘special’.

By way of example, take the case of מידעם, which is more frequent in Ashkenazi manuscripts than in the printed editions. Should we remove it from the list of NBA forms? It depends on how often it appears. The approach proposed here can easily show that מידעם typifies the ‘special’ tractates:

	מיד	מידעם	Pct. of מידעם
<i>Sanhedrin</i> F	23	4	15
<i>Nedarim</i> V487	0	2	100
<i>Nedarim</i> V110	5	6	55
<i>Karetot</i> O	1	2	67

We see that although מידעם appears in the Ashkenazi manuscript F of Tractate *Sanhedrin*, it is infrequent, whereas it is common in two ‘special’ tractates. This method is the only way to establish their special character.

Below I shall present and discuss the NBA features in O. Then I will determine the proportion of these forms and compare it with other tractates, both ‘special’ and ‘regular’.

### 1.2. NBA forms in O

In this section I will juxtapose NBA and SBA forms in O (for the exact number of occurrences, see Table 1). Sixteen such forms have been noted by previous scholars; I have added another six.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The 16 features described here are listed in the grammars (above, n. 7), and were collected and described according to Tractate *Nedarim* by Rybak, ‘Nedarim’, pp. 17–18; 74–116. (As stated, though, he notes only on the existence of these forms, with no details of their distribution in comparison with SBA forms). T. Harviainen, ‘Diglossia in Jewish Eastern Aramaic’, *StudOr* 55 (1984), pp. 97–113, also lists these features, but it seems that he relies on Rybak; his main purpose is to determine the origin of this language. In my discussion I do not deal with lexical items, since many of them are rare and cannot serve as a clear means for typifying a language. I also do not deal with features that do not appear in *Karetot*.

(1) למה ליה תוב דכת' לא (תו SBA) 'again' תוב (1): In O, only תוב occurs (once): 'wherefore does the Divine Law repeat, You may not eat within your gates' (4b).

(2) מדידי 'something; interrogative particle' (SBA מדידי): מדידי appears once: 'does the passage mention "majority"?' (25b). מידעם appears twice: 'fowl and beast are included but no other thing' (21a); 'perhaps R. Simeon maintains his view only with regard to a thing that is ready to be tossed' (24b). The distribution seems to reflect a difference in function: מדידי introduces a question, whereas מידעם is 'something'; but the evidence is too sparse for a definitive conclusion.

(3) לא איכא 'there is not' (SBA ליכא): ליכא appears once;<sup>19</sup> לא איכא three times.<sup>20</sup> In ליכא the two original words were combined, the glottal stop was elided, and the resulting diphthong was contracted (*la'ika* > *laika* > *leka*).

(4) לא אית 'there is not' (SBA לית): always אית.<sup>21</sup> In לית, as in ליכא, the two original words were combined, the glottal stop was elided, and the resulting diphthong was contracted (*la'it* > *lait* > *let*).

(5) דיל- 'to, of' (SBA דייד-): always דייד-<sup>22</sup> was created by influence of the first *d* on the *l*, or it may be a new construction based on יד 'hand'.<sup>23</sup>

(6) קדמא 'first' (SBA קמא): קמא appears only and always in the phrase תנא קמא 'the first *tanna*' (7 times).<sup>24</sup> Except for this phrase, only קדמא occurs, in all inflections.<sup>25</sup> The frequency of קמא תנא in the BT seems to have influenced

<sup>19</sup> 'or do we require [two] *silver shekels*, which is not the case here?' (27a).

<sup>20</sup> E.g. 'now here [the designation was made] neither at the time of purchase nor at the time of offering' (28a).

<sup>21</sup> E.g. 'bread is not in its natural state' (5a); 'the prohibition of the *gid ha-nashe* is not applicable to them' (21b).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. 'the matter rests with him' (24a); 'according to me who hold it is forbidden in its lifetime, [the meaning] is clear' (25a).

<sup>23</sup> See Levias, *Grammar*, p. 72; Epstein, *Grammar*, p. 27 (with the correction by E.Y. Kutscher, 'Review of: J.N. Epstein, *A Grammar of Babylonian Aramaic* [Hebrew], *Leš* 26 [1962], pp. 149–183 [157]).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. 'the first *tanna* agrees with R. Simeon' (20b).

<sup>25</sup> E.g. 'is not the last generalization different from the first' (21a); 'also the first instance need no longer be expounded' (25b–26a); 'why should you accept the latter and not the former?' (24a); 'in the name of R. Simeon they said, Even in the former?' (19a).

the use of קמא in this phrase in O. קמא was created by assimilation of the *d* to the *m* and elision of the glottal stop.

Given the preservation of the *d* in קדמאה, we would also expect \*קדמי, the original form of קמי 'before'. However, in O we find only קמי (12 times), whether in the temporal sense, e.g. משום דמלך יכניה קמיה 'for Jeconia reigned before him' (5b), or the locative sense, e.g. וכי יתביתון קמיה דרבונכון 'and when you are sitting before your teacher' (6a).

(7) אִינוּן 'they' (SBA אִינְהוּ) and its derivatives:

The independent third-person plural pronoun does not appear in the corpus.

The SBA third-person masculine plural remote demonstrative pronoun is הנהו, derived from אִינְהוּ+הא. In O we have הנון, derived from אִינוּן+הא (only once): ההיא עולת העוף קרבה גדבה והנון מעות דפישין (בי) [מ]ן ביתיה 'that burnt-offering of the bird is sacrificed as a free-will offering, and those coins that remain [he will bring] from his house' (28a).<sup>26</sup>

The SBA third-person masculine plural accusative pronominal suffix is -נהו-, derived from אִינְהוּ. Here it is always -נון-, derived from אִינוּן;<sup>27</sup> אִית 'there is' takes the same suffix: אִיתִינוּן (5a). The SBA pronominal suffix -נהו- does not appear. On the other hand, the third-person feminine plural accusative pronominal suffix derived from SBA, אִינְהי, does appear, twice, but only in the form ורמניה 'and point out the contradiction between them' (21a, 24b). On the basis of the masculine -נון- we would expect the feminine -נין-.<sup>28</sup> It seems that the wide distribution of ורמניה in the BT caused it to appear in O in its SBA form.

<sup>26</sup> אִינוּן appears here also in V120 L; but I have not found it in other manuscripts of the BT. Rybak, 'Nedarim', p. 108, presents הִינּ as an equivalent of SBA אִינְהוּ, as if הִינּ were a pronoun. However, the form adduced by him is a Hebrew one: הִינּ לַפְּנִיךְ אֵלָא כְּדִי שִׁיבָא 'they are before you on the condition that father would come' (*Ned.* 48a); it is derived from the Hebrew הִנֵּה, and it is taken from the Mishna (*Ned.* 5.6): הִינּ according to some readings (in other versions וְאִינּ 'and they are not [unless] ...'). It has nothing to do with אִינְהוּ. The only correct equivalents of אִינְהוּ are the forms adduced here, אִינוּן as a personal pronoun and הנון as a demonstrative pronoun.

<sup>27</sup> אִכְלִינוּן 'he ate them' (18b); נְחָלִינוּן 'let him redeem them' (27b); וְלִיכְתְּבִינוּן 'let him write them' (5a); לִיעֵרְבִינוּן 'let him learn them together' (5a); פְּלִגְנוּן 'he divided them' (5a); דַּאֲפְרִישְׁנוּן 'he set them aside' (26b).

<sup>28</sup> So in Geonic Aramaic; see Matthew Morgenstern, 'Jewish Babylonian Aramaic in Geonic Responsa' (Hebrew), Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 2002, p. 115. This is used in Targumic Aramaic; see Gustaf Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 2nd edn, 1905), pp. 364, 367. It occurs once in a Yemenite manuscript; see Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, p. 190.





changeable.<sup>40</sup> -א was created by the common BA shift '>', with assimilation of the *l*.<sup>41</sup>

(10) הדין 'this' masculine (SBA האי): both forms occur.<sup>42</sup>

(11) הדא 'this' feminine (SBA הא): usually הא<sup>43</sup> and only rarely הדא.<sup>44</sup>

(12) הלין 'these' (SBA הני): usually הני<sup>45</sup> and only rarely הלין.<sup>46</sup> הני was created by a *l*>*n* shift, with elision of the final *n*.

(13) In SBA, the second-person plural participle ends in תו-. O has only תון (three occurrences in the same passage).<sup>47</sup>

(14) In SBA, the second-person plural pronominal suffix ends in כו-. O has only כון (five cases in the same passage).<sup>48</sup>

(15) The SBA third-person plural pronominal suffix הו- is used here alongside NBA הון.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>40</sup> אכולהון 'on all of them' (5a); אדר' יוחנן 'on that of R. Yoḥanan' (18b, 19a [twice]); אדר' שמע' 'on that of R. Simeon' (18b, 19a); אהדא 'on this' (22a); אדעתא 'on the opinion' (24b); as against: על כל חד 'on each one' (5a); על נהרא 'on a river' (6a); על קיקלי 'on the dustheaps' (6a); על אפדני 'in the palaces' (6a); על איסורא 'on a forbidden act' (18b); על ממונא 'on money' (18b); על כוליה שיעורא 'on all of the amount' (18b); על פלגיה דשיעורא 'on half of the amount' (18b); על הדין חטא 'on this sin' (26b); דעל הדין חטא 'because on this sin' (26b); ועל הדא 'and on this' (27a). In the common phrase אף על גב, the preposition על is consistently preserved, for some reason, even in SBA. For this reason it is not counted here.

<sup>41</sup> Epstein, *Grammar*, p. 132.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. כי הדין גונא 'this is not ready to be tossed' (24b), as opposed to הדין גונא 'in this manner' (21a).

<sup>43</sup> E.g. בהא פליגי ר' שמע' ורבנן 'in this R. Simeon and the sages disagree' (25a).

<sup>44</sup> E.g. ועל הדא אמרה 'and he said it about this' (27a). In one sentence both pronouns occur together: איכא דמתני להא דרב ששת אהדא 'some there are who report the statement of Rab Sheshet with reference to that [which has been taught]' (22a). According to Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 120, both pronouns are used in Geonic literature.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. הני מילי בעשה 'this is the case [*lit.* these words] only as regards a positive command' (4b).

<sup>46</sup> E.g. הלין מילי לטומאה 'these words refer to defilement' (4b).

<sup>47</sup> גרסיתון 'you learn' (6a); יתביתון 'you sit' (6a); בעיתון 'you ask' (6a).

<sup>48</sup> דרבנכון 'your teacher' (6a [twice]); רבנכון (6a); ריבנכון (6a); שמועתכון 'your learning' (6a).

<sup>49</sup> בהו 'in them' (22b); ביניהו 'between them' (20a [twice], 20b, 23a); לגופיהו 'themselves' (26b); טעמיהו 'their reason' (4b, 22b [twice]); כולהו 'all of them' (26a); להו 'to them' (19b [4 times], 24a, 26a, 26b, 27a, 27b); עליהו 'on them' (23b [twice]); תרויהו 'the two of them' (20a [twice]); as opposed to: בהון 'in them' (5a, 21a, 21b); אכולהון 'all of them' (5a); דכולהון (5a); לכולהון (5a); להון 'to them' (5a, 6a, 24a, 28b); עליהון 'on them' (27b [3 times]); דתרויהון 'the two of them' (23b, 27b); תרויהון (27b). The following occurrence is not counted: מה לקלי בעיניהון וכרמל שכן איתינון בעיניהון 'parched corn and fresh ears were distinguished in that they are in their natural form' (5a). The spelling is defective, so the final *nun* may be a mistake for *waw*.

## (16) The plural ending:

In verbs (except for ל' verbs), the *n* is usually dropped, as in SBA; e.g. אכלי 'they eat' (24b).<sup>50</sup> But in 20% of the cases the *n* is preserved; e.g. אולין 'they go' (28a).<sup>51</sup> In ל' verbs, on the other hand, the *n* is normally preserved; e.g. אתן 'they come' (24a, 26a [twice]).<sup>52</sup> In nouns, the *n* is always dropped; e.g. אחרני 'others' (24a, 28a).<sup>53</sup>

In 24 cases nouns retain the *n*, but all of them occur in a number, e.g. נילפו 'let them derive one from two' (5a),<sup>54</sup> and usually also in the noun attached to it, e.g. בתרין ומנין 'two times' (5a).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> So also: אמרי 'they say' (18b [3 times], 19b [twice], 24a, 24b); דאמרי (18b, 20a [twice], 25b); ואמרי (24a [twice]); דגמרי 'they learn' (22b); דילפי 'they learn' (26b); ילפי (22b, 25b, 26b); סברי 'they think' (4b, 22b [3 times], 23b, 25a); קסברי (4b); דפטרי 'they exempt' (22b); דהמירי 'they are stringent' (4b); כתיבי 'they are written' (25a); דפליגי 'they differ' (20a); ופליגי (24a); פליגי (19a, 20a [5 times], 23b [twice], 24a, 25a); וצריכי 'they are needed' (4b); צריכי (4b, 26a); מיתבי 'they object' (21b [3 times], 22a [3 times], 24b [twice], 28a [3 times]); מיפלגי 'they differ' (22b).

<sup>51</sup> So also: ילפי 'they learn' (5a); יתבין 'they sit' (28b); דמשכין 'they are drawn out' (6a); נסבין 'they state' (25a); דפישין 'they remain' (28a); דכתיבין 'they are written' (4b [twice]); ומזמין 'they contradict' (24a); דמקבלין 'they accept' (24b); מקבלין (24b); דמיתירין 'they are superfluous' (4b, 5a).

<sup>52</sup> So also: דאמן 'they resemble' (19b); הריין 'they are' (5a, 5b); and only once it is omitted: מטמי 'they defile' (21b). The final numbers (in the tables) include only strong verbs, not ל' verbs. I omit here the forms אהו מיתו, since they were created in a different way, by the analogy of the perfect and the imperfect forms, not by dropping of the final *n*. On the forms of ל' verbs see below, 2.3.1.4.

<sup>53</sup> So also: אחרני 'others' (21b); אפדני 'palaces' (6a); חולי 'unconsecrated foodstuffs' (4b [twice]); יומי 'days' (5b); כיפי 'stones' (6a); בכללי 'rules' (21a); דכיפורי 'atonement' (5b); כרתי 'leeks' (6a); לוגי 'logs' (5b); מילי 'things' (4b [3 times], 21a [twice], 21b, 22b, 23b, 25b [twice], 27b [twice]); ופרטי 'specifications' (21a); קדמאי 'the first' (24a); קיקלי 'dustheaps' (6a); מקראי 'verses' (19a); קראי (4b, 5a); קראי (4b [twice]); ותמרי 'figs' (6a); תנאי 'tannaim' (22a, 23b, 25a); (ת)אי (5b).

<sup>54</sup> So also: דאתו בתרין ואמרי הרג וביתרין אמרי לא הרג ביתרין וביתרין 'two [witnesses] came and said [the ox] killed [a person], and two others [then came and] said, it did not kill, two and two' (24a); מאי טע' אפריש תרין 'for what reason did he separate two [sacrifices]?' (24a); מאי טעמ' דמאן דמוחייב תרתין 'what is the reason of the one who holds him liable to two?' (20a); חדא ידיעה מתרתין 'from its mention [of knowledge] in two instances you might derive the third' (26a).

<sup>55</sup> So also: תרין אלפיין 'two thousands' (5a); תרין לויין 'two prohibitions' (4b [twice]); תלתה לויין 'three prohibitions' (4b); תלתין יומין 'thirty days' (27a). In three cases only the number ends with *n*: תרין קראי 'two verses' (4b); תרין קראי (4b); תרין לאוי 'two prohibitions' (4b). In one case the attribute סניאין 'many' substitutes for the number and behaves similarly: ומנין סניאין 'many times' (25b). תרי occurs only twice: תרי עשר לוגי 'twelve logs' (5b); תרי תנאי 'two tannaim' (23b). The absolute state is used also in Syriac when attached to numbers;

The uniformity in **O** is impressive: almost all numbers and the nouns they modify end with *n*. Note also the distinction between verbs and nouns: whereas in verbs the *n* is retained in 20% of the cases, it never survives in nouns except for the condition described.<sup>56</sup>

Scholars have described these sixteen features as typifying NBA. My investigations have uncovered six more. They are of the same type as the features discussed above: they are also usual in Targumic or Geonic language, and their linguistic character is also more archaic.

(17) מן 'from' (SBA (מ-)): in SBA the *n* of the preposition מן tends to assimilate to the following consonant. Although this also predominates in **O**,<sup>57</sup> in many cases (21%) the *n* is preserved.<sup>58</sup> In one sentence both forms occur: הואיל ואיתמעט דם מטומאה אימא אתמעט נמי מן זרות 'since blood is excluded from the law of sacrilege, it is also excluded from the law concerning the [eating of holy things by a] non-priest' (4b).<sup>59</sup>

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see Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (trans. James A. Crichton; London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), pp. 153–154. Omitted from the count are two cases where I cannot decide whether the word is Hebrew or Aramaic: באכלין 'foodstuffs' (21b); חמשין 'fifty' (27a).

<sup>56</sup> Rybak, 'Nedarim', p. 86, combines the participle with the noun. According to Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 156, in Geonic language there is a clear distinction between the participle, where the *n* ending is frequent, and the noun, where it is almost non-existent (except for numbers). From this he adduces a proof for the claim (advanced previously by Epstein and Morag) that the *-n* endings in the noun and in the participle stems from two different developments: in the participle it results from dropping of the final *n*, while in the noun it results from the shift *-ayya > -ay > -e*.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. לא ילפינן לאו מלאו ילפינן לאו מכרת לא ילפינן 'a law which is a subject of a mere negative command is illuminated by its context which is also the subject of a mere negative command, but a law which is the subject of a mere negative command is not illuminated by its context which is the subject of a negative command involving *karet*' (4b); אנא נמי מהדין קראה; 'I, too, [derived it] from this text' (25b).

<sup>58</sup> E.g. מן הכא נפקא לי מן הדין קרא נפקא לי 'is this law derived from here, is it not rather derived from the following' (4b); So also: מן הקישא 'from a comparison' (4b); מן חד 'from one' (5a); מן תריין 'from two' (5a); מן קלי 'from parched grain' (5a); מן לחם 'from bread' (5a [twice]); מן קמי 'from *bematkunto*' (5a); מן במתכנתו 'from *bematkuntah*' (5a); מן במתכונתה 'from before an old man' (5b); מן כותחא 'from *kutha*' (6a); מן מינא 'from a species' (19b); מן הני מעות 'from these coins' (27b); מן ביתיה 'from his house' (27b, 28a [twice]); (בי)מין ביתיה 'from the sacred' (27b); (בי)מין ביתיה (28a).

<sup>59</sup> In several cases the *n* is preserved even in Hebrew, which seems to be an influence of NBA: למדין לאו מלאו ולא מן כרת 'we learn a negative command from a negative command and a negative command from *karet*' (4b); הואיל ואין דמן חלוק מן בשרן 'since their blood is not distinct from their flesh' (4b); לא נשתנה מן ברייתו 'it was not changed from its original

This feature, not previously identified as NBA, is quite common in Tractate *Nedarim*, even in the printed editions; e.g. (according to the printed editions): **רא** 'from this verse' (38a); **מן רחמי** 'from mercy' (40a); **מן חד** 'from one' (53a); **מן הדא** 'from this' (57b); **מן השתא** 'from now' (72b). The situation in **O** supports the conclusion that it is a feature of NBA.<sup>60</sup>

In SBA, the *n* was assimilated to the following consonant (as in Hebrew). As with all the other differences between them, the SBA form is later than the NBA form.<sup>61</sup>

(18) **הכין** 'so' (SBA **הכי**): the demonstrative pronoun in **O** is usually the SBA **הכי**, without the original final *n*.<sup>62</sup> However, when the pronoun is combined with **-א** to form the expression **אהכין** 'therefore', the *n* is always retained.<sup>63</sup> This is another case influenced by the frequency of the form—in this case **הכי**—in SBA; by the same token, the retention of the *n* in **אהכין** is due to the absence of **הכי** in SBA (see below, § 20). In the printed editions **הכין** appears only once, in Tractate *Nedarim*,<sup>64</sup> but it is widespread in the manuscripts of *Nedarim*<sup>65</sup> and hence should be included in the list of NBA forms. This form also appears in a manuscript of *Me'ila*, another of 'special' tractates.<sup>66</sup>

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character' (5a); **לומדין עליין מן תחתין** 'we may derive the law above from the law below' (22b [twice]); **אין לומדין עליין מן תחתין** 'we may not derive the law above from the law below' (22b). See also: **חוצין מן אשם תלוי** 'except for the suspensive guilt-offering' (25b), in comparison with: **חוצין מאשם תלוי** in the same page. The influence of NBA on the Hebrew of the BT may be a promising topic for research.

<sup>60</sup> I did not list the phrase **משום** 'because', where the *n* is always assimilated. It should also be noted that in the form **מידעם** 'something' the *n* is always assimilated, and the original form **מן דעם** (found in other dialects) does not appear in the BT.

<sup>61</sup> See M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 684, where he states that the *nun* is almost always assimilated in the BT, but rarely in other texts in Babylonian Aramaic.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. **הכי אמרי ליה** 'so they say to him' (19b); **הכי קאמי** 'so he is saying' (28a). The *n* is preserved once: **הכין קאמי** (5a).

<sup>63</sup> **אהכין כתב קרא** 'therefore Scripture stated again' (27b); **אהכין כתב קרא** 'therefore Scripture stated' (27b); **אהכין כתב רחמי** 'therefore Scripture stated' (22b).

<sup>64</sup> **כל דא"ל רבי דהכין הוא תועבה פרכה בר קפרא** 'every explanation that Rabbi offered for *to'eba* [=that he said it was so], Bar-Kappara refuted' (51a).

<sup>65</sup> E.g. **אלא הכין איתמר** 'but so it was said' (5a [VIIIO]).

<sup>66</sup> **איכא לאיפלוגי כי הכין** 'a distinction of this character can be made' (5a [O726]). Outside the special tractates, I have found this form twice in manuscripts, in both cases dealing with writing: **הכין נרשאי דכתבי הכין** 'the tenancy agreements of Narsh that write thus' (*B. Mes.* 68a [Har65]); **הכין כת' בה מתנה דלא כת'** 'a gift in which it is not written thus' (*B. Mes.* 15a [F]). Once it strangely occurs instead of **הכא** 'here': **התם אבל התם**, **הכין דליכא ביטול בית המדרש**, אבל התם.

(19) היכין ‘how’ (SBA היכי): *היכי* appears several times in O,<sup>67</sup> and *היכין* once.<sup>68</sup> *היכין* appears in the printed editions twice, both times in *Nedarim*.<sup>69</sup> It too should be included in the list of NBA forms.<sup>70</sup>

(20) להכי ‘therefore’ is regular in BA<sup>71</sup> but O employs אהכי instead.<sup>72</sup> אהכי (albeit without the final *n*) appears in the printed editions almost exclusively in the ‘special’ tractates<sup>73</sup> and only once in *Horayot*.<sup>74</sup> There are more occurrences in manuscripts of the ‘special’ tractates.<sup>75</sup> Unlike other features, here the connection between the SBA and NBA forms is not obvious, so we cannot decide that one of them is more archaic.

(21) תרי עשר ‘twelve’ (SBA תריסר): In O תריסר does not appear, while תרי עשר appears once.<sup>76</sup> In the printed editions of the BT תרי עשר appears only

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שמדרש בית המדרש ‘here, where there is not the fear of the interruption in the house of learning, but there, where there is the fear of interruption in the house of learning’ (*Beṣ.* 36a [M95]).

<sup>67</sup> E.g. היכי דלא ליהוי דאיני ‘how is it’ (24a); כי היכי דלא ליהוי דאיני ‘so that he will not be worried’ (25a).

<sup>68</sup> דכי היכין דמשכין מיא תמשוך שמועתכון ‘for as the water is drawn out, so your learning may be prolonged’ (6a).

<sup>69</sup> היכין מעלי למיכלה ‘how is it good to eat it’ (49b); היכין משמע ‘how can it be inferred’ (51b).

<sup>70</sup> Once it appears instead of היכא ‘where’: וכל היכין דלא מחייב אד’ הנפש אינו חייב אדם] ‘where ever he is not liable for the life blood, he is not liable for the last blood’ (*Hul.* 74b [V123]).

<sup>71</sup> E.g. להכי קאמר ליה באפי ראובן ושמעון, כי היכי דלא נדחיה ‘therefore he said to him: Before Reuben and Simeon, so that he should not be able to put him off’ (*Sheb.* 41b).

<sup>72</sup> אהכין כתב ‘therefore again Scripture said, From his evil’ (27b); קראה בהדין חטא בעש[יר]ת ודלות מחטאתו מחטאתו ‘therefore Scripture stated the expressions “from his sin-offering” in connection with [the offering brought by a man] when rich and also in connection with [the offering brought by a man] when poor’ (27b); אהכין כתב רחמ’ ‘therefore Scripture said, And if a soul’ (22b).

<sup>73</sup> אהכי בנזירות אין בנדרים לא ‘therefore [he can impose] naziriteship [on his son], but not [ordinary] vows’ (*Naz.* 29a); אהכי כתב קרא כל ‘therefore Scripture says, All his days’ (*Tem.* 5a); אהכי תנא שפחה ‘therefore a woman-slave is mentioned [in the Mishna]’ (*Kar.* 7b).

<sup>74</sup> אהכי תני גבי משיח [חטא ואח”כ עבר] מביא פר ‘therefore he said regarding the anointed, If he sinned and then was removed [from his office] he brings an ox-offering’ (10a).

<sup>75</sup> אהכי מגלח ‘therefore Scripture said, His beard’ (*Naz.* 41b [V110]); אהכי כתב רחמ’ זקנו ‘therefore [the boy] is permitted to poll, although [this means] rounding [the corners of the head]’ (*Naz.* 29a [M95]); אהכי כתב כל ימיו ‘therefore it is said, All his days’ (*Tem.* 5a [V120]).

<sup>76</sup> תרי עשר לוגי ‘twelve logs’ (5b).

once, again in Tractate *Karetot* (in a passage not included in O).<sup>77</sup> It seems, then, that it too is a NBA form.<sup>78</sup>

(22) *הואיל וכן* ‘therefore, consequently’<sup>79</sup> (SBA *הילכך*, also *הולכך*): in contrast to the regular phrase *הילכך*, there are 15 occurrences of the phrase *הואיל וכן* in the BT, at least in one of the variant readings: seven in O (usually together with other manuscripts),<sup>80</sup> five in Tractate *Karetot* according to other manuscripts (in passages missing in O),<sup>81</sup> twice in Tractate *Nedarim*,<sup>82</sup> and once in Tractate *Horayot*.<sup>83</sup> Only six in the printed editions (four in *Karetot*,

<sup>77</sup> *הוּ לְהוּ תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* ‘they are twelve’ (6b). I have found it twice in manuscripts: *הוּ לְהוּ תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* ‘they are twelve’ (*Erub.* 56b [V109]); *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר יְרַחֵי שְׁתַּא* ‘the twelve months of the year’ (*Yom.* 84a [M6]), as against dozens of *תְּרִיסַר*, while in *Karetot*—both the printed editions and O—only *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* occurs. According to manuscripts, *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* appears once more in a Hebrew context: *סֵדֶרֶן שֶׁל נְבִיאִים יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שׁוֹפְטִים שְׁמוּאֵל מַלְכִים יִרְמְיָה יְחֻזְקָא יִשְׁעִיָּה תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* ‘the order of the Prophets is Yehoshua ...’ (*B. Bat.* 14b [O249]; in the printed editions *וּשְׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר*).

<sup>78</sup> Scholars have included as NBA only *תֵּלַת עֶשְׂרֵי* (in SBA *תְּלִיסַר*; not discussed here because it does not appear in *Karetot*), not *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר*, because their main focus was on Tractate *Nedarim*, where neither *תְּרִיסַר* nor *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* appears. It seems obvious that *תְּרֵי עֶשֶׂר* should be added.

<sup>79</sup> In other manuscripts also *הואיל וכן*.

<sup>80</sup> *הוּאֵל וְכֵן הַדֵּם נִחַשׁ וּבִשְׂרֹו מְצַטְרַפִּין זֶה עִם זֶה* ‘consequently the blood of a snake and its flesh combine one with the other’ (4b); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן לֹוּקָה* ‘consequently he is liable to lashes’ (5a [same in V119; in V120 *וְכֵן הוּאֵל*]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן אִמְרִינָן לִיה אִתֵּי אִשָּׁם תְּלוּ* ‘we therefore advise him to bring a suspensive guilt-offering’ (18b [same in V119 V120 F]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן לֹא הוּי* ‘the *הואיל וכן* and *לא הוּי*’ (18b [same in V119 V120 F]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן גַּמֵּר וְהִקְדִּישׁוּ* ‘so he resolved to dedicate it’ (23b); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן הָרִי גַמֵּר וְהִקְדִּישׁוּ* ‘we therefore assume that his dedication was absolute’ (24a [same in F PE; in M95 *וְכֵן הוּאֵל וְכֵן*]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן לֹא מְצִי מִשְׁנֵי* ‘this being so, he obviously cannot use it for something else’ (27b [same in V120 M95 L F PE]).

<sup>81</sup> *הוּאֵל וְכֵן הוּאֵל וְכֵן הַקִּישׁ הוּאֵל* ‘consequently it is a comparison’ (2b [V119; same in PE]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן לֹא מִתִּינ וּמִתֵּן* ‘therefore the offering cannot be brought conditionally’ (7b [V119; same in F; in L *וְכֵן הוּאֵל*]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן יִמְנִיגוּהוּ בְּתִרְהִינָן* ‘why then have they not been enumerated as two separate instances’ (8b [V119; same in V120; in F *וְכֵן הוּאֵל*, in L *וְכֵן הוּאֵל*]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן דְּלִיתֵיהּ דְּמִי* ‘consequently the second birth is not taken into account’ (10a [V120; same in F; in PE *וְכֵן הוּאֵל*]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן אִישׁ יוֹתֵר מִמֵּאָה אִישׁ* ‘therefore regarding himself he is to be believed more than a hundred witnesses’ (12a [V119; same in V120 L F]).

<sup>82</sup> *הוּאֵל וְכֵן לֹא לִיעֲבַר מִשׁוּם בַּל תֵּאָחֵר* ‘I would think that he does not violate, You shall not delay’ (*Ned.* 4a [V110 V487 M95]); *הוּאֵל וְכֵן יִרְטוּר שְׁטִמָּא עֲצֻמוּ עֲצֻמוּ עֲבֻר מִשׁוּם בַּל תֵּאָחֵר* ‘since this is so, [it follows that] if a *nazir* intentionally defiles himself, he transgresses “You shall not delay”’ (*Ned.* 4a [V110; in V487 M95 PE *וְכֵן הוּאֵל וְכֵן*]).

<sup>83</sup> *הוּאֵל וְכֵן אִפִּי הֵם מֵאָה* ‘and since such is the case [it must be concluded that] even if there were a hundred’ (*Hor.* 3b [Ps1337; same in PE]).

one in *Nedarim*, and one in *Horayot*).<sup>84</sup> The abundance of the form in *Karetot*, as well as its appearance in *Nedarim*, indicates that it is a feature of NBA. It should be noted that **O** is the only manuscript that always uses **הואיל וכך**, whereas all other manuscripts contain both **הילכך** and **הואיל וכך**. In this case, as with all the other NBA features, it seems clear that **הואיל וכך** is the original form, which yielded the SBA forms **הילכך** and **הולכך** by elision of the glottal stop.<sup>85</sup>

Table 1: SBA and NBA forms in **O** (absolute number and percent)

SBA	NBA	SBA	NBA	Pct. NBA forms
תו	תוב	0	1	100
מידי	מידעם	1	2	67
ליכא	לא איכא	1	3	75
לית	לא אית	0	7	100
דיד-	דיל-	0	6	100
קמא	קדמאה	0	6	100
נהו	נן	0	8	100
את	אנת	1	1	50
א-	על	8	11	58
האי	הדין	7	8	53
הא	הדא	31	4	11
הני	הלין	15	3	17
תו-	תון-	0	3	100
כו-	כון-	0	5	100
הו-	הון-	23	16	41
י-	ין-	56	13	19
מ-	מן	75	20	21
הכי	הכין	27	4	13
היכי	היכין	5	1	17
להכי	אהכי(ן)	0	3	100
תריסר	תרי עשר	0	1	100
הילכך	הואיל וכך	0	7	100
Total		250	133	35

Thus the overall proportion of NBA forms in **O** is 35%.

<sup>84</sup> See previous notes.

<sup>85</sup> **הואיל וכך** is the original form; see J.N. Epstein, *Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), I, p. 208; idem, *Grammar*, p. 142. It seems that the interchange of *i* and *o* in the common forms **הילכך** and **הולכך** can be explained by the original form: both vowels exist in **הואיל וכך**, but only one could survive after the elision

### 1.3. Comparison with other tractates

As stated at the outset, the mere appearance of NBA traits in a corpus has little significance. In order to determine the uniqueness of the special tractates, one should specify the proportions of these forms and the SBA ones and compare the result with the ‘regular’ tractates. Accordingly I have compared all the features discussed above with the situation in five tractates: *Nedarim* and *Me’ila*, which are ‘special’ tractates, and *Pesahim*, *Shebu’ot*, and *Besa*, which are ‘regular’ tractates. In all tractates the manuscript selected is the one considered to be the best (and which has been selected for investigation by the Historical Dictionary Project of the Hebrew Language Academy).<sup>86</sup> Thus we have a comparison of three ‘special’ tractates with three ‘regular’ ones. The ‘regular’ tractates were selected so to represent three manuscript traditions: Yemenite, Ashkenazi, and Spanish.<sup>87</sup> This allows us to measure the exact rate of NBA traits in both the ‘special’ and the ‘regular’ tractates.<sup>88</sup>

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of the glottal stop; this is the explanation offered by Bacher, ‘Talmudical Fragments’, pp. 147–148. Accordingly, there is no need to see the (Geonic) הילכך as the original form and to assume that הילכך is a result of o>i shift (as Morgenstern, ‘Babylonian Aramaic’, p. 71).

<sup>86</sup> For *Nedarim* V487 (reaches only until f. 20); for *Me’ila* F; for *Pesahim* J1623; for *Shebuot* V140; for *Betza* G. The texts are available at <http://hebrew-treasures.huji.ac.il>. On the principles used to select the manuscripts for this project see Eljakim Wajsberg, ‘Hatza’at ha-‘Eqronot li-Qvi’at Beḥanim Leshoniyim be-Ha’arachat Kitvei-ha-Yad shel ha-Talmud ha-Bavli’, *Zichronot ha-‘Aqademya la-Lashon ha-‘Ivrit* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1988), XXVIII–XXX, pp. 338–345.

<sup>87</sup> J1623 is Yemenite, V140 is Ashkenazi, and G is Spanish. See the classification by Friedman, ‘The Manuscripts’, pp. 183–185.

<sup>88</sup> In the investigation, when possible, I used the site of the Academy of the Hebrew Language (see above, n. 86), and the *Sol and Evelyn Henkind Talmud Text Databank* of The Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research. Most features were checked throughout the whole tractates. However, some features are too widespread for a complete examination, so they were checked only until f. 20: in *Pesahim*, *Shebuot*, and *Betza* על, מן, מן; in *Pesahim*, also אנת, תן. Here are some notes on the investigation: על: אמאי is not included; א-: only phrases opening with א-, ויא-, דא- were checked; ך-: only the participle was checked, and the numbers do not include ל’ verbs; מ-: only phrases starting with מ-, ומ-, דמ- were checked; גון: אנהו, אינו, אנהו were also checked (although the independent pronoun itself does not appear in O), but the numbers do not include the copula גנהו, as this form has no equivalent NBA form ending with גן-.



Table 2. Absolute number of NBA and SBA forms in the Selected Tractates

SBA	NBA	Karetot		Nedarim		Me'ila		Pesaḥim		Shebu'ot		Beša	
תו	תוב	0	1	3	0	0	0	10	4	7	0	0	0
מיד	מידעם	1	2	0	2	2	0	34	0	28	1	21	0
ליכא	לא איכא	1	3	6	1	3	6	37	2	11	0	16	1
לית	לא אית	0	7	5	4	4	6	69	3	39	0	26	0
-דיד-	-דיל-	0	6	0	1	1	1	58	4	27	0	19	0
קמא	קדמאה	0	6	0	0	0	0	11	1	2	0	0	0
גהו	גון	0	8	1	0	1	10	53	8	15	2	34	0
את	אנת	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	7	0
-א-	על	8	11	1	8	11	0	48	0	45	0	23	0
האי	הדין	7	8	3	20	10	1	125	0	55	0	31	0
הא	הדא	31	4	45	0	18	2	45	0	87	0	90	0
הני	הלין	15	3	1	1	8	0	81	2	18	0	42	0
תו-	תון-	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	2	0
כו-	כון-	0	5	0	0	0	2	23	0	5	0	3	0
הו-	הון-	23	16	5	5	19	11	343	2	118	2	125	5
י-	ין-	56	13	17	7	23	8	52	0	61	0	118	4
מ-	מן	75	20	41	17	19	1	101	0	72	0	94	1
הכי	הכין	27	4	27	1	29	1	232	0	98	0	70	0
היכי	היכין	5	1	16	0	5	0	73	0	43	0	22	0
להכי	אהכי(ן)	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
תריסר	תרי עשר	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
הילכך	הואיל וכך	0	7	0	2	0	0	12	0	3	0	2	0
Total		250	133	171	70	153	49	1411	26	744	5	746	11

Table 3. Percentage of NBA Forms (Zero means that only SBA forms occur; a dash means that neither form is represented in the tractate)

SBA	NBA	Karetot	Nedarim	Me'ila	Pesaḥim	Shebu'ot	Beša
תו	תוב	100	0	—	29	0	—
מיד	מידעם	67	100	0	0	3	0
ליכא	לא איכא	75	14	67	5	0	6
לית	לא אית	100	44	60	4	0	0
-דיד-	-דיל-	100	100	50	6	0	0
קמא	קדמאה	100	—	—	8	0	—
גהו	גון	100	0	91	13	12	0
את	אנת	50	—	—	0	0	0
-א-	על	58	89	0	0	0	0
האי	הדין	53	87	9	0	0	0
הא	הדא	11	0	10	0	0	0
הני	הלין	17	50	0	2	0	0
תו-	תון-	100	—	—	0	0	0
כו-	כון-	100	—	100	0	0	0
הו-	הון-	41	50	37	1	2	4
י-	ין-	19	29	26	0	0	3

SBA	NBA	Karetot	Nedarim	Me'ila	Pesaḥim	Shebu'ot	Beša
מ-	מן	21	29	5	0	0	1
הכי	הכין	13	4	3	0	0	0
היכי	היכין	17	0	0	0	0	0
להכי	אהכי(ן)	100	100	—	0	0	—
תריסר	תרי עשר	100	—	—	—	—	0
הילכך	הואיל וכך	100	100	—	0	0	0
Total		35	29	24	1.81	0.67	1.45

In these tables a sharp distinction is discerned: the rate of NBA features in the 'special' tractates is 24%–35%, but only 0.67%–1.81% in the 'regular' tractates. The preference for NBA features in the 'special' tractates is thus solidly established. Also, it is clear that **O** contains more NBA forms than the other MSS examined.

We should stress two more points about **O**: first, ten of the NBA forms are the only form used in **O**: תוב, לא אית, דיל-, גון, קדמאה, דייל-, תון-, כון-, אהכי(ן), תרי, תרי עשר, הואיל וכך, עשר. No other MS has so many NBA forms to the exclusion of the corresponding SBA form (*Nedarim*, four; *Me'ila*, one). Second, only in **O** are all 22 forms represented; *Nedarim* has only 13 of them and *Me'ila* only 11.

As for the difference between the 'special' and the 'regular' tractates, in addition to the final result, we should note that in the 'special' tractates some NBA forms are in the majority, whereas they are always in the minority in the 'regular' tractates.

#### 1.4. The distribution of NBA and SBA forms

Having described NBA forms in **O**, I will now discuss the scope of their use: first, forms that could be expected but do not appear (1.4.1); and second, differences in the distribution of the forms from manuscript to manuscript (1.4.2) and between the various forms (1.4.3).

##### 1.4.1. Expected forms that do not appear in NBA

Certain forms that could be expected, based on the NBA forms that are found in the 'special' tractates, do not appear:

(1) From *קדמאה*, two processes produced the SBA *קמא*: assimilation of the *d* and elision of the glottal stop. The presence of both forms in **O** suggests that these two processes did not always take place. Accordingly, we would expect to meet forms that underwent only one of these processes, i.e., *קדמא*,

קמאה. In fact, we find either the original קדמאה or the late קמא (only in the phrase תנא קמא).<sup>89</sup> In my opinion, this shows that the only form in the spoken language was the late קמא. The archaic קדמאה was directly borrowed from ancient sources, so it could only be borrowed as it was.

(2) Similarly, two changes produced the form הני from הלין: a  $l > n$  shift and elision of the final  $n$ . We could expect to find forms that exhibit only one shift, i.e. הלי, הנין, but these forms do not appear in the ‘special’ tractates. This again shows that the composers of the text could take a form either from archaic sources or from the spoken language, but did not know the intermediate forms.<sup>90</sup>

(3) Based on the appearance of קדמאה, without assimilation of the  $d$ , one could also expect the form \*קדמי, the precursor of קמי ‘before’. However, this form never appears. This also shows that the preservation of the  $d$  is not a natural phonetic feature, but a borrowing from classical sources.

(4) On the basis of על (=SBA -א), we would expect forms like על ליבא\* (אליבא=), על מאי\* (אמאי=), and the like. Nevertheless, על never appears in such fixed collocations. It seems that על was intentionally taken from classical sources, but in common BA expressions, where the original על was no longer evident, they used only the regular forms.

(5) The BA copula גינהו was created by prefixing  $n$  to the pronoun אינהו. Since the classic pronoun אינון and its derivatives are common in NBA, we would also expect a copula in the form \*גינון. This form does not exist, however, and we find only גינהו (derived from SBA אינהו). It seems that the composers of the text borrowed archaic forms from classical sources; because the copula starting with  $n$  does not exist in the classical sources, they were forced to use the SBA גינהו.

These considerations show that NBA was created by borrowing features from classical sources (see 1.5.1).

<sup>89</sup> Since in O קמא is restricted to this phrase, this phrase was not counted among SBA features in the tables presented above.

<sup>90</sup> Regarding the last two paragraphs, in manuscripts we do find several examples of the proposed forms; e.g., קדמא (*Pes.* 18a [J1623]); קמאה (*Naz.* 31a [V110]); הלי (*Pes.* 23b [J1623]); הנין (*Pes.* 35a [J1623]). However, they do not appear in O, are not abundant in the special tractates as we would expect them to be, are not used in Geonic language (according to Morgenstern, ‘Babylonian Aramaic’, p. 121), and are so rare that they may be scribal errors.



NBA	SBA	
אמ' להון רב משרשיה O לבניה	להו M95 V119 V120 L F	'Rab Mesharsheya said to his sons'
וכי יתביתון קמיה O דרבונכון	יתביתו V119 V120 F PE	'and when you are sitting before your teacher'
O תמשוך שמועתכון (שמעתכון F PE)	שמעתיכו M95 L שמעתייכו V119 V120	'your learning may be prolonged'
על קיקלי דמתא מחסיה O תיבו	אקיקלי M95 V119 L F אקילקלי V120 PE	'sit on the dustheaps of Mata Mehasia'
O מידעם אוחרנא לא	מירי M95 V119 V120 L F PE	'but no other thing'
והא לא דמי כללא בתראה לכללא קדמאה O	קמא M95 V119 V120 L PE	'is not the last generalization different from the first'
דלא אית בהון פחות O מכזית נבלא	דלית M95 V119 V120 L F PE	'where [the edibles] have not joined to them less than an olive's bulk of <i>nebela</i> '
דכי היכין דמשכין מיא O תמשוך שמועתכון	היכי M95 V119 V120 L F PE	'for as the water is drawn out, so your learning may be prolonged'
O גיד הנשה דיליה מנ' לן	דידיה V120	'whence that its <i>gid ha-nashe</i> [is forbidden]?'

The following table represents only cases of difference between manuscripts in the sample passages (cases where all the manuscripts agree are not counted in this table, whether the form is NBA or SBA). The result is a clear ranking of the manuscripts with regard to their use of NBA forms:<sup>94</sup>

	SBA	NBA	Pct. NBA forms
O	3	27	90
L	21	7	25
V120	23	7	23
F	22	6	21
PE	20	5	20
V119	23	4	15
M95	24	2	8

<sup>94</sup> The reason for the differences among the manuscripts with regard to the totals is that only readings that are relevant for our discussion are counted, not readings that differ in the phrasing of the sentence.

It is thus obvious that there are various degrees of use of NBA forms and that O exhibits a particular tendency to use them.

#### 1.4.3. The difference in the distribution of NBA forms

Even when NBA forms are used, there is a significant difference in the frequency of the various forms: some are dominant while others are rare. There is no obvious linguistic explanation for these differences. For example, whereas the endings תון-, תון-, תון- appear always with a final *n* in O, the forms היכין, הכין, הלין, הלין, הון-, הון-, הון- are infrequent, even though both groups represent the same phonetic phenomenon—retention of the final *n*.

It seems to me that the clue is the general distribution of the terms (in either the SBA or NBA form) in the BT: the more common a term, the less often it appears in its NBA form. To demonstrate this, I compared the rate of the NBA form in O with the frequency of the term in the BT. To gauge the latter, I used the numbers of occurrences (SBA+NBA) in all six tractates surveyed (Table 2). The result is very clear.<sup>95</sup>

	Occurrences in BT sample	Pct. use in <i>Karetot</i>
תרי עשר	2	100
תון-	8	100
אהכין(ן)	8	100
קדמאה	20	100
תוב	25	100
הואיל וכך	26	100
כון-	38	100
דיל-	117	100
גון-	132	100
לא אית	163	100
היכין	165	17
הלין	171	17
הדא	322	11
ין-	359	19
מן	441	21
הכין	489	13
הון-	674	41

<sup>95</sup> The numbers are not absolutely accurate, since several items were checked only until f. 20 (see above, n. 88). The items that are relevant to this table are: ין-, מן. A full investigation

All the forms that are used in **O** to the exclusion of the SBA form are relatively infrequent in the BT (2–163 in the sample). On the other hand, all the forms that have a rate under 50% are frequent (165–674 occurrences in the sample). It is thus clear that the NBA form is used less for common BT idioms.<sup>96</sup>

This result proves that the linguistic situation represented by **O** is specific to the text of the BT and cannot reflect a natural, spoken language, since in a spoken language it is hard to see why the distribution in the BT should affect the choice of form.

### 1.5. *The background and use of NBA*

The facts adduced in the previous paragraph allow us to discuss some fundamental issues regarding NBA.

#### 1.5.1. NBA and other types of ‘Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic’

In comparison with SBA, all the unique features of NBA are archaic. Many of them are also found in other types of Babylonian Jewish Aramaic: the language of Targum Onqelos,<sup>97</sup> the language of the incantation bowls, and geonic Aramaic. At present, though, it is impossible to conclude that all of these types derive from a single ‘Standard Literary Babylonian Aramaic’.<sup>98</sup> First, NBA has to be fully described before a conclusion can be reached.<sup>99</sup> Second, the description based on **O** makes it obvious that NBA, despite many

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would increase the numbers and strengthen our conclusion; as for תָּן-, the number is so small that a full investigation cannot change the results.

<sup>96</sup> To this we may add the cases of ורמייה and תנא קמא, in which the SBA forms are used in **O** only in expressions which are common in the BT.

<sup>97</sup> As well as Targum Jonathan on the Prophets. I will not go here into the much-discussed matter of the place and date of origin of these Targumim, as the findings presented here do not contribute to this problem.

<sup>98</sup> See Christa Müller-Kessler and Theodore Kwasman, ‘A Unique Talmudic Aramaic Incantation Bowl’, *JOS* 120 (2000), pp. 159–165 (159); Christa Müller-Kessler, ‘The Earliest Evidence for Targum Onqelos from Babylonia and the Question of its Dialect and Origin’, *JAB* 3 (2001), pp. 181–198.

<sup>99</sup> See Hannu Juusola, *Linguistic Peculiarities in the Aramaic Magic Bowl Texts* (Helsinki: The Finnish Oriental Society, 1999), pp. 246, 248, 250. The description given here is based only on Tractate *Karetot*. Previous descriptions are partial or problematic, as is shown by the many corrections offered here.

affinities with these types, is not identical with them.<sup>100</sup> Actually, all these types of Aramaic differ from one other.<sup>101</sup>

### 1.5.2. The origin of this language

The basic question regarding NBA is: do the unique features of this language derive from a different dialect of a spoken Aramaic or do they come directly from archaic sources? The first hypothesis posits that two versions of Babylonian Aramaic were spoken during the amoraic period. One is reflected in SBA; the other, which preserved archaic forms, was used in the composition or editing of the ‘special’ tractates.<sup>102</sup> However, the considerations adduced above (1.4.1) lead to the conclusion that this language has no background in a spoken language. Rather, it was created as a purely literary language, with archaic features borrowed from classical sources in order to give it a classical flavour. This means that only SBA reflects the spoken Aramaic of the Babylonian Jews. This spoken language was used for the BT because the BT was created orally. Various types of literary Aramaic were created, in addition to SBA, by borrowing archaic elements from older sources. This is true for the incantation bowls as well as for the geonic books and responsa, which were written rather than oral. One of these literary types is used extensively in the ‘special’ tractates. Some of its features penetrated the ‘regular’ tractates, too, to a limited extent, presumably during their transmission in the geonic period.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> For example, in Targum Onqelos the prefix of third masculine imperfect is *yod*, while here it is *n* or *l* (2.3.1.2); the usual infinitive of the *pa'el* and *af'el* conjugations are *qattala* and *aqtala*, while here the SBA forms are used, e.g. חסוריי (5b), לאפיקי (21b). The same is true for the incantation bowls: the forms אנהנא (vs. אנן); the third person pronominal suffix for plural nouns ייהי- (vs. יהי-, as in singular nouns); the particle ית (vs. -ל); and the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine imperfect with *yod*: all these are typical of the incantation bowls but do not appear in O.

<sup>101</sup> See Juusola, *Bowl Texts*, pp. 20, 248. This is why I use a specific term for this language, ‘NBA’, without deciding about the exact relationship among these dialects.

<sup>102</sup> This is the view expressed by Harviainen, ‘Diglossia’, pp. 111–113, according to which this dialect is the rural language, while SBA is the urban one.

<sup>103</sup> This is the view of Müller-Kessler and Kwasman, ‘Bowl’, p. 191, regarding Targum Onkelos and the incantation bowls; Juusola, *Bowl Texts*, pp. 248, 250, regarding NBA and geonic language, and p. 252, regarding the incantation bowls; and Morgenstern, ‘Babylonian Aramaic’, pp. 13–15, regarding the geonic language.



### 1.5.3. The use of SBA alongside NBA forms

Another fundamental question is how this hybrid, in which NBA and SBA forms are used side by side, was created. Two conjectures suggest themselves. Perhaps the original text contained only NBA forms, which were replaced by SBA forms during the transmission process; it is only our text which is mixed and corrupted, whereas the original text was uniform and pure.<sup>104</sup> Alternatively, a mixed language was used from the very beginning and the linguistic situation in our text is not far from the original.

At first glance, it seems that our findings support the first suggestion: the many variant readings between manuscripts in this respect (1.4.2) are best explained by the assumption that the original text contained only NBA forms, which were replaced by their SBA equivalents by different copyists in various degrees. If so, in every case of difference among manuscripts the NBA form is the original one, and a manuscript that contains more NBA forms is closer to the original text. Common terms tend to appear in their SBA form (1.4.3) because the copyists were more likely to introduce SBA in such familiar cases.

However, this explanation depends on one of the central issues of talmudic philology: the process that produced so many variant readings among talmudic manuscripts. The explanation offered here assumes that the variant readings were created by corruption of a single original copy. Scholars today offer another view: that many of the variant readings are the result of a certain fluidity in the phrasing of the talmudic discussions in the final stages of its oral transmission. Hence these variant readings do not stem from corruption of the 'correct' text, but survived the crystallization stage of the talmudic text.<sup>105</sup> If we accept this view, we can also accept the second hypothesis: that a mixed language was already in use during the creation and crystallization of the original text. The numerous variant readings reflect variants in the phrasing of the BT, before

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<sup>104</sup> This is the view expressed by some scholars; see Rybak, 'Nedarim', pp. 124–126. Their view, though, that the entire Talmud was initially written in this kind of language cannot be accepted. According to this view, it would be impossible to explain why only tractates which were not studied during the Geonic period (the special tractates) preserved Geonic features, while the rest of the BT, which was studied in the Geonic period, did not preserve such features; See J.N. Epstein, *Introduction to Amoraitic Literature* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Magnes and Dvir, 1962), p. 56. It seems rather that the NBA features in other tractates are late penetrations.

<sup>105</sup> This approach is best introduced in the works of E.S. Rosenthal; see e.g. his 'The History of the Text and Problems of Redaction in the Study of the Babylonian Talmud' (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 57 (1987–1988), pp. 1–36.

it was committed to writing, among the various transmitters, who differed in their affinity for NBA forms. Naturally, for common terms these transmitters tended to use SBA forms more extensively.<sup>106</sup> And if we accept the suggestion expressed above, that the unique features of NBA are borrowed directly from archaic sources and do not reflect a spoken language, it is quite logical to encounter a mixed language in which literary and spoken features are used side by side.<sup>107</sup>

## 2. Description of O

The first part of this article discussed the NBA features in O. Now I will describe all the other features that reflect a type of BA different from that of the printed editions. The situation in O will be compared with other manuscripts of the BT.

Although NBA forms as such will not be discussed below, it must be noted that some of these forms may also reflect NBA. Due to the limited scope of this study, however—tractate *Karetot* alone, with comparison to other tractates—I cannot prove that they are features of NBA. Further research, based on a comprehensive investigation of all the ‘special’ tractates, may add some of them to the list of NBA forms.

### 2.1. Spelling

2.1.1 **לאו** ‘a prohibition; not’: usually **לאו**, once **לווא**.<sup>108</sup> The latter spelling is rare (I have found it only twice in other manuscripts).<sup>109</sup> To the four known spellings of this word, **לאו**, **ליו**, **לאיו**, **לוו**, we should now add this spelling.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>106</sup> The unclear connection between O and the tradition of *Halakhot Gedolot* (see above, n. 91) seems to point to the same direction, according to which the connection with a Geonic tradition also caused the tradition of O to use these traits more extensively.

<sup>107</sup> This is how Juusola, *Bowl Texts*, pp. 250–252, explains the similar mixture of forms in the bowl texts. The first possibility offered here, that the mixture is a result of the transmission process, is of course impossible in the bowl texts.

<sup>108</sup> **לווא** **הבערה ללוא יצאת** ‘kindling was singled out [in Scripture] in order to establish for it a prohibition’ (2ob).

<sup>109</sup> **לווא משום דאמי כבולעו כך פולטו** ‘is it not because we say, as it absorbs, so it exudes?’ (*Pes.* 74b [M95]); **גדולה דבת זבונה אין קטנה לוא** ‘one that is of age, who is eligible to effect a sale, was meant, but not a minor who is ineligible to effect a sale’ (*Ket.* 69b [V113]).

<sup>110</sup> See E.Y. Kutscher, ‘Some Problems of the Lexicography of Mishnaic Hebrew and its Comparison with Biblical Hebrew’, in: E.Y. Kutscher (ed.), *Archive of the New Dictionary*

The spelling of the plural form is always לרין without *aleph*.<sup>111</sup> The spelling לרין is widespread in tannaitic and BT manuscripts.<sup>112</sup>

2.1.2 פום בדיתא (a place name): in the printed editions, this name is always spelled as a single word, פומבדיתא. In manuscripts the separated spelling is widespread, preserving the original components of the word.<sup>113</sup> The separated form appears once in O.<sup>114</sup>

2.1.3 Denoting final vocalic *a* with *aleph* or with *he*: as is usual in the BT, final vocalic *a* is denoted by *aleph*. In the following categories *he* is used in O: (1) When the base form ends with *aleph* (to avoid the spelling אא-), e.g. קדמא 'first' (21a); קרא 'verse' (25b). This is also the regular orthography of the printed editions. (2) Numbers always end with *he*.<sup>115</sup> (3) In the verb, the third-person feminine singular perfect and participle usually end with *aleph* (43 times): e.g. סליקא 'she came up' (28b), מסתברא 'it is probable' (24a); but in seven cases we find *he*.<sup>116</sup> With regard to numbers, this can be a Hebrew influence: since some Hebrew and Aramaic numbers are identical (ארבעה, חמשה, שבעה, תשעה, עשרה), it could be that this group was first spelled as in Hebrew and the practice then spread to all numbers. Because this suggestion does not account for the feminine forms, however, we may suggest that this is a retained ancient feature: because in BA the determinate form of the noun became predominant, the ancient feminine ending almost disappeared; for

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of *Rabbinical Literature* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1972), I, pp. XI–XXVII (XII). It seems that this spelling results from placing the *aleph* in the incorrect position; see Mordechai Mishor, 'Unpronounced 'alef' in an Etymologically Incorrect Position' (Hebrew), *Language Studies* 5–6 (1992), pp. 265–276. This example should be added to his.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. לרין תלתה 'three prohibitions' (4b).

<sup>112</sup> E.g. לרין חמשה 'five prohibitions' t. *B. Meṣ.* 10:3 MS Vienna 46 (see Saul Lieberman [ed.], *The Tosefta: The Order of Nezikin* [New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1988], p. 117); לרין שמונה 'eight prohibitions' (*Pes.* 47a [V125]).

<sup>113</sup> On the origin of this name see Ben-Zion Eshel, *Jewish Settlements in Babylonia during Talmudic Times* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), p. 211.

<sup>114</sup> על קיקלי דמתא מהסיה תיבו ולא על אפדני דפום בדיתא 'sit on the dustheaps of Mata Meḥasya rather than in the palaces of Pumbedita' (6a).

<sup>115</sup> דובן בארבעה 'there [we have] three' (4b); תלתה לרין 'that he bought a ram in four [zuz]' (27a); דישוה ליה תמניה 'that it is worth eight' (27a); איל 'in these ten days' (5b). For the writing of numbers in BA with final *he* see Friedman, 'Early Manuscripts', p. 14.

<sup>116</sup> Perfect: איתסרה 'it was forbidden' (25a); אמרה 'she said' (28b). Participle: הדרה 'it comes again' (24b); והדרה (24b); קרבה 'it is offered [as a sacrifice]' (28a); ידיעה 'it is known' (23a [twice]).

example, in BA the form מלכה ‘queen’ does not exist, but only מלכתא, with final *aleph* (the original spelling of the determinate). These two categories, numbers and feminine verb forms, are the only ones that retain the original feminine ending in BA, therefore they are spelled with *he* (the original spelling of the feminine ending).<sup>117</sup>

2.1.4 אלא ‘but’: this word is always spelled defectively in O,<sup>118</sup> and never אילא as in “Babylonian” manuscripts.<sup>119</sup> Yevin’s conclusion that ‘a manuscript in which this word is spelled always defectively is probably Palestinian’<sup>120</sup> has to be re-examined, because the defective spelling is widespread in ancient and reliable manuscripts of the BT.

2.1.5 אלא = אי לא ‘or not’: two examples show the defective and connected spelling.<sup>121</sup> In other instances the spelling is as usual.<sup>122</sup>

2.1.6 כי (= כד-) ‘as’: when the comparative preposition כי is followed by a phrase that begins with *dalet*, BA usually employs the combined spelling כד; this is also the common spelling in O: לכדתניא ‘as it is said’ (4b).<sup>123</sup> The spelling כי ד- occurs once: ככר גורדו ואוכלו כי ד- ‘as it is said, The blood found on a loaf of bread must be scraped away and the loaf may be eaten’ (22a). Although this spelling is used mainly in Yemenite manuscripts,<sup>124</sup> it is also found in non-Yemenite manuscripts<sup>125</sup> and is regular in the geonic literature.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Although it can be argued that in the verb, too, it is a Hebrew influence, since many Aramaic verb forms resemble their Hebrew equivalents. Bacher, ‘Talmudical Fragments’, p. 148, writes that [in O] “the *status emphaticus* is always written with ה instead of א” and offers two examples, גופה and תלחה. Both cases are not in *status emphaticus*: תלחה is in *status absolutus* (as always for numbers), and the ה of גופה is a pronominal suffix (see below, 2.2.1.2.1). The *status emphaticus* is always written in O with *aleph*, as is usual in the BT.

<sup>118</sup> E.g. אלא לרבנן מאי טעמיהו ‘however, as for the sages, what is their reason’ (4b).

<sup>119</sup> See Israel Yevin, ‘The spelling of אָלָא’ (Hebrew), *Leš* 40 (1976), pp. 254–258.

<sup>120</sup> Yevin, ‘The spelling of אָלָא’, p. 258.

<sup>121</sup> על אחרון מי מ?־חייב אלא ‘for [the blood] which is in the last [vessel] is he liable or not?’ (22a); אדם מתכפר בשבח אלא ‘can a man obtain atonement with the increase of consecrated property or not?’ (27a).

<sup>122</sup> E.g. אי מצלה בעסקיה ואי לא ‘whether he will succeed in his business or not’ (5b). See Epstein, *Studies*, I, p. 165.

<sup>123</sup> So also: כדאמ’ ‘as he says’ (5b); כדכת’ ‘as it is written’ (5b); כדאמרינן ‘as we say’ (27b).

<sup>124</sup> E.g. כי דכת’ (*Yom.* 15b [J218]); כי דתניא’ (*Pes.* 41a [J1623]); כי דאמרינן’ (*Yom.* 24b [J1623]).

<sup>125</sup> E.g. כי דאמ’ (*Pes.* 33b [V125]); כי דתנן’ (*Pes.* 86a [M6]).

<sup>126</sup> See Morgenstern, ‘Babylonian Aramaic’, p. 25. M. Schlesinger, *Satzlehre der Aramäischen Sprache des Babylonischen Talmuds* (Leipzig: Asia Major, 1928), pp. 246–247, does not mention this spelling. Rybak, ‘Nedarim’, p. 100, included the separated spelling among the features of NBA. According to the data presented here, though, it should be removed from

## 2.2. Phonology

### 2.2.1. Weakening of gutturals

#### 2.2.1.1. Dropping of aleph

2.2.1.1.1 In פ'א verbs in the *itpe'il* conjugation, the *aleph* always drops out: e.g., איתמר 'it was said' (22a).<sup>127</sup> In the Yemenite oral tradition, the *aleph* of the root אמר is always pronounced (though not in other verbs in this category).<sup>128</sup> Despite the oral tradition, Yemenite manuscripts show both אתאמר and איתמר.<sup>129</sup> The fact that in O the *aleph* is always dropped casts doubt on the reliability of the Yemenite oral tradition in this respect.<sup>130</sup>

2.2.1.1.2 -a'a>-a shift: this shift is common in BA.<sup>131</sup> O, however, sometimes preserves the original form in three words that usually show this shift: (1) קראה 'verse' is usually written קרא (34 times),<sup>132</sup> but the original form קראה appears twice.<sup>133</sup> In the printed editions, the form קראה, for some reason, appears only in the phrase מאי קראה (46 times);<sup>134</sup> but even this also appears as מאי קרא. Except for this phrase, in the printed editions we find only קרא.<sup>135</sup> (2) קדמאה 'first': קמא appears only in the phrase תנא קמא 'the first *tanna*'. The original

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this list. The separated spelling is common in manuscripts, while the connected spelling is common in the printed editions. Rybak himself offered examples for the separated spelling only from manuscripts (n. 113), and only the phrase כי הא דמר from the printed editions (n. 112). This phrase has nothing to do with the phrase discussed here, since the *dalet* does not follow כי and cannot be attached to it. -כי הא ד- is very widespread in the printed editions everywhere in the BT, e.g. כי הא דתניא (*Ber.* 25a *et passim*), so it certainly cannot be an NBA feature.

<sup>127</sup> So also: דאיתמר (19b); איתסרה 'it was forbidden' (25a); מיתסרא 'it is forbidden' (25a).

<sup>128</sup> Morag, *Babylonian Aramaic*, p. 169.

<sup>129</sup> Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, pp. 229–230.

<sup>130</sup> See also Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', pp. 19–20.

<sup>131</sup> See Yochanan Breuer, 'The Noun in the Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud according to the Yemenite Tradition', *Leš 65* (Hebrew) (2003), pp. 121–141 (127–128).

<sup>132</sup> E.g. מן הדין קרא 'from this verse' (4b).

<sup>133</sup> מהדין קראה 'from this verse' (25b); כתב קראה 'it is written in the verse [lit. the verse wrote]' (27b).

<sup>134</sup> E.g. ייראוך עם שמש, מאי קראה, 'what is the verse, They shall fear You while the sun endures' (*Ber.* 9b).

<sup>135</sup> In manuscripts, too, except for the phrase מאי קראה, the full form occurs very rarely. I have found only the following cases: האי קראה 'this verse' (*Ber.* 50a [F]; *Nid.* 16b [V111]; also *Zeb.* 2b [Co]; *Tem.* 5b [F]).

form קדמאה appears three times.<sup>136</sup> (3) בתראה ‘last’: only the original form בתראה appears: כללא בתראה ‘the last generalization’ (21a) (three times).

2.2.1.1.3 דעתא > אדעתא ‘view, opinion’: the verb סליק with אדעתא appears in the printed editions 12 times in the expression מיעיקרא אדעתין ‘but on our original assumption’ and the like (e.g., Shab 97b), and twice in the phrase אונסא דסליק אדעתא [...] אונסא דלא סליק אדעתא ‘an accident which may be foreseen ... an unforeseeable accident’ (BM 94b). These phrases, where the verb סליק ends with a consonant, prove that the original form has a prefixed *aleph*: אדעתא. When the first component is סלקא, with a final vowel, the printed editions have only סלקא דעתא, with elision of the -א between two *a* vowels (similar to the above-mentioned shift >קראא).<sup>137</sup> In O, too, the original *aleph* has usually vanished (8 times),<sup>138</sup> but it is preserved once.<sup>139</sup>

### 2.2.1.2 Final he in the third-person feminine singular pronominal suffix

2.2.1.2.1 גופה ‘body, self’ with the third-person feminine singular pronominal suffix: in the printed editions the spellings גופא and גופה interchange with the same function and the final *aleph* appears even when the third-person feminine pronominal suffix is expected; e.g., היא גופא גזירה ‘this itself is a prohibition’ (Er 99a).<sup>140</sup> This seems to be a result of the muting of the (originally consonantal) final *he*. O displays final *he* whenever the pronominal suffix is expected: היא גופה טומאה ‘this itself is a defilement’ (21a); מגופה דשדה ‘from the field itself’ (24b), as well as in reference to a previous discussion, e.g. ר’ יוחנן גופה אמר ‘[the] above [text stated]: R. Yoḥanan said’ (27a). Where the pronominal suffix is not required, the word is spelled with final *aleph*: התם ממונא אבל הכא דגופא הוא ‘there [it is] money, but here, since it is the body [which is involved],

<sup>136</sup> כללא קדמאה ‘the first generalization’ (21a); לכללא קדמאה (21a [twice]).

<sup>137</sup> See N. Berggrün, ‘Philological Studies’ (Hebrew), *Leš* 40 (1976), pp. 163–166 (166). Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 346, also states that the full form is the original one.

<sup>138</sup> E.g. סלק’ דעתא אמינא הלין מילי לטומאה ‘I might have thought the law referred to defilement’ (4b).

<sup>139</sup> דסלקא אדעתא אמינא הואיל ואיתמעט דם מטומאה אימא אתמעט נמי מן זרות ‘for I might otherwise have thought, since blood is excluded from the law of sacrifice, it is also excluded from the law concerning the [eating of holy things by a] non-priest’ (4b). I have found in manuscripts only two more instances (both in Yemenite manuscripts): קא סלקא אדעתין (*Pes.* 2a [J1623]; *Suk.* 35a [J218]).

<sup>140</sup> So also: הא גופה קשיא ‘this in itself is a contradiction’ (*Ber.* 8b), as against קשיא (*Shab.* 34b). According to Wajsberg, ‘Hatza’at ha-‘Eqrnot’, p. 341, since the forms גופא and גופה interchange in manuscripts, it is impossible to decide which is correct. However, it is possible to decide which is the original.

I might say [it is] not [so]' (26a), where גופא parallels ממונא. The important point here is not the appearance of both spellings (a feature of the printed editions, too), but the careful use of the correct spelling for each function.

2.2.1.2.2 תסברה: ואנת לא תסברה 'and do you not think it [=this way]' (18b). In the printed editions, this form is written only with final *aleph*.<sup>141</sup> In manuscripts the spelling with final *he* is widespread. Following their oral tradition, Yemenites always pronounce the *he*, despite the *aleph* in the printed editions they use.<sup>142</sup>

### 2.2.1.3 Weakening of 'ayin

One form may reflect weakening of 'ayin: התם לא ידיעה חיטאו הא ידיעה חיטאו 'there his sin is not known, here his sin is known' (23a). The expected form is ידיע, in agreement with the masculine חטא, but weakening of 'ayin may have caused a similar pronunciation of masculine ידיע and feminine ידיעה.

### 2.2.2. Other phenomena

2.2.2.1 Plural ending of words ending in *-ay*: in the printed editions the plural form of קראה/קרא (ground form: *gray*) is always קראי, which appears three times in O.<sup>143</sup> The form קראיי appears twice.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand, the plural of תנא (ground form: *tannay*) is always תנאי.<sup>145</sup> It seems that the original *yod* is preserved in the form קראיי, without the typical eastern shift >א, which is reflected in the forms קראי and תנאי.<sup>146</sup> The forms קראיי, תנאי, אמוראי, עלאי, and the like appear mainly in Yemenite manuscripts and in Geonic literature, and only rarely in other sources.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>141</sup> E.g. ואת לא תסברה (Ber. 38a).

<sup>142</sup> On this spelling see Wajsberg, 'Hatzat'at ha-'Eqrnot', p. 339. On the pronunciation of this form in the Yemenite oral tradition see Shelomo Morag, 'Ktiv u-Qre ba-Sifrut shele-ahar ha-Miqra be-Masorotehen shel 'Edot', in: Jehuda Ratzaby (ed.), *Bo'i Teman (Come Thou South)* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Afiqim, 1967), pp. 26–45 (42–43).

<sup>143</sup> מקראי לא; 'מקראי' (4b); 'תרין קראי' (4b); 'דמיתירין קראי' (4b); 'תרין קראי' (4b); 'אית ליה' (19a).

<sup>144</sup> 'תרין קראיי' (4b); 'דמיתירין קראיי' (4b).

<sup>145</sup> 'תרי תנאי' (22a, 25a); 'תרי תנאי' (23b).

<sup>146</sup> According to Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 73, the spellings א- and אי- reflect the same pronunciation. However, since in O we do not find spellings like מאי, האיי and the like, and the spelling אי- occurs only when the pronunciation *-aye* is possible, it seems that the spelling אי- reflects the latter pronunciation.

<sup>147</sup> For the Yemenite manuscripts and Geonic literature see Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, pp. 130–131. He does not bring קראיי itself, but it is very widespread in Yemenite manuscripts,

2.2.2.2. **א=או=ו**: Once O has **ולאו** instead of **לאו**, found in all the other manuscripts.<sup>148</sup> The *waw* seems to represent **או**, which in turn represents **א**, thus making the shift **ו>או>א**. Both phenomena are known: **ו** for **או** is widespread,<sup>149</sup> and **או** for **א** is typical of Geonic literature, e.g. 'או סלקא דעת'.<sup>150</sup> In Yemenite manuscripts we also find *yod* or *waw* for **א**, i.e. **א = והכי ,יהכי הכי**.<sup>151</sup>

### 2.3. Morphology

#### 2.3.1. The verb

##### 2.3.1.1. Third-person feminine singular perfect

This form shows a clear distinction between strong and ל"י verbs. In strong verbs, the third-person feminine singular perfect ends with a vowel, as in **סליקא** 'it ascended' (28b),<sup>152</sup> and only once with a zero ending: **לא אתעביד מחשבתיא** 'his plan was not performed' (20a).<sup>153</sup> The vowel ending is also typical of Geonic literature. On the other hand, for ל"י verbs the usual ending is *-t*,

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e.g. **תרי קראיי** 'two verses' (*Pes.* 4b [J1623]); **קשו קראיי** 'the verses contradict [each other]' (*Meg.* 12a [Co]). Outside Yemenite manuscripts it occurs very rarely, e.g. **הני קראיי** 'these verses' (*Pes.* 22b [V125]); **קשו קראיי** (*Yeb.* 49b [M141]). In the Yemenite oral tradition, the plural form is **קראיי**; see Morag and Kara, *The Noun*, p. 45.

<sup>148</sup> 'ולאו מן הקישא סלק' דעתא אמינא הלין מילי לטומאה I might have thought the law referred to defilement' (4b).

<sup>149</sup> See J.N. Epstein, *Mavo le-Nusah ha-Mishna* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Magnes and Dvir, 2nd edn, 1964), II, pp. 1062–1064. Although he adduces many cases, not all of them stem from the same reason: some result from a phonetic change, and others from a syntactic one, because *waw* can also connect alternative cases. Here the process is phonetic.

<sup>150</sup> B. Lewin (ed.), *Otzar ha-gaonim* (Haifa: n.p., 1928), I, p. 24. It seems that the original form is **א**; see Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 71. I did not find in O **או** for **א**. On the other hand, there are some cases of **א** for **או** (only in Hebrew): **להתלמד בו אי על מנת** 'to learn from him for the intention to hand it over to the community' (5a); **למוסרו לציבור** 'for experimenting or with the intention to hand it over to the community' (5a); **אדם מתכפר בשבחה הקדש אי לא** 'can a man obtain atonement with the increase of consecrated property or not?' (27a); **לא** 'can living animals be rejected or not?' (27a); **אי בלקיחת בעלים אי** 'bird-offerings are designated only at the time of purchase by the owner or at the time of offering by the priest' (28a).

<sup>151</sup> See Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, p. 45.

<sup>152</sup> So also: **אמרה** 'she said' (28b); **איתסרה** 'it was forbidden' (25a).

<sup>153</sup> On the dropping of the final vowel and the consequent merging of the masculine and the feminine forms, see Kutscher, 'Review', pp. 168–169; Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, p. 121.



the classic form, as in אָתָּת ‘she came’ (4b);<sup>154</sup> only once do we encounter a final vowel: הוּיָא (19a). The ending *-ay*, typical of BA,<sup>155</sup> is not used. The ending *-t*, normal in O, is rare in both the Yemenite manuscripts<sup>156</sup> and Geonic literature;<sup>157</sup> thus its prevalence here seems to be an early feature, not part of NBA or the Geonic language.<sup>158</sup>

The appearance of *-t* only in ל״י verbs is unique: in other Aramaic dialects this ending is preserved in both strong verbs and ל״י verbs. In BA, on the other hand, it usually drops from both strong verbs (the regular ending being *-a*) and from ל״י verbs (the ending being *-ay*).<sup>159</sup> Only in O is there a distinction between the two categories, with the *-t* retained only in ל״י verbs. This can be explained in two ways. The survival of the *-t* may be due to the preceding long vowel, found only in ל״י verbs.<sup>160</sup> There could also be a morphological motivation: dropping the final *t* would have produced forms like *lʷa*, identical to the masculine.<sup>161</sup> To preserve the gender distinction, then, the *-t* was preserved specifically in ל״י verbs.

### 2.3.1.2. *Prefix of the third-person masculine imperfect*

The prefix of the third-person masculine imperfect is usually *n-*, e.g. נִיתִי ‘let him bring’ (5a),<sup>162</sup> and always in the plural forms.<sup>163</sup> Initial *l-* occurs in

<sup>154</sup> So also: דְּהוּת ‘she was’ (6a [twice]); הוּת (18b).

<sup>155</sup> See e.g. Kutscher, ‘Review’, p. 169.

<sup>156</sup> Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, p. 161.

<sup>157</sup> Morgenstern, ‘Babylonian Aramaic’, pp. 171–173.

<sup>158</sup> According to Rybak, ‘Nedarim’, p. 91, in Tractate *Nedarim* the *-t* ending is also found in the strong verbs. Since, however, he does not supply any numbers, it is difficult to know whether this is the typical ending or occurs rarely, as in SBA. He also claims that this is typical of the Geonic language, but this does not seem to be true (according to Morgenstern; see above, n. 157).

<sup>159</sup> The ending *-at* does exist in ל״י verbs, but it is rare as in strong verbs; see e.g. Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, p. 161.

<sup>160</sup> This explanation has been offered by Zeev Ben-Hayyim for Hebrew, in which the *t* is also preserved only in ל״י verbs; see Moshe Bar-Asher, ‘The Historical Unity of Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew Research’ (Hebrew), *Language Studies* 1 (1985), pp. 75–99 (90 and n. 65). The long vowel itself, which appears only in ל״י verbs, according to Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des biblisch-Aramäischen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1927), p. 154, is influenced by the masculine form. However, it can also be a result of the process *-ayat>-aat*; see, e.g., Bar-Asher, ‘Unity’, p. 90.

<sup>161</sup> In the regular form, which ends with *-ay*, this problem is avoided by the *y*, which appears only in the feminine form; i.e. masculine הוּה, feminine הוּאִי.

<sup>162</sup> So also: נִימָא ‘let him say’ (5a); נִכְתּוּב ‘let him write’ (26a).

<sup>163</sup> E.g. נִלְפּוּ ‘let them be learnt’ (5a).



When the first radical is a guttural (including *r*), the *t* is preserved in ten out of twenty cases (50 %); e.g. דמתחזי 'it is seen' (24b).<sup>172</sup> When the first radical is not a guttural, the *t* is preserved in seven out of 21 cases (33 %); e.g. מתבעי 'it is needed' (4b) (twice).<sup>173</sup> There thus seems to be a slightly greater tendency to preserve the *t* before gutturals.<sup>174</sup>

The overall rate of preservation is 41 %, which seems to be higher than usual in the BT. The following may illustrate the difference: in the verb אתבעי/איבעי 'O preserves the *t* in three of its five occurrences, while in the printed editions of the BT it is preserved in only five out of more than 1,000 occurrences.<sup>175</sup> This trait, of course, shows a tendency for archaism.

### 2.3.1.4. Plural participle of ל'י verbs

In the plural participle of ל'י verbs, O displays four different endings: (1) ך-: אתך 'they come' (24a);<sup>176</sup> (2) ו-: אתו 'they come' (23b);<sup>177</sup> (3) יין-: היין 'they are' (5a, 5b); (4) י-: מטמיי 'they defile' (21b). The most common of these is ך- (4 out of 10), which is typical of Targumic Aramaic. Scholars believe that this ending

<sup>172</sup> So also: דאיתהני 'he benefited' (26b); דאתהני (26b); דמתעבד 'it is done' (24b); דמתעבדא (25a); אתעביד 'it was done' (20a); אתרבי 'it was included' (4b [3 times]); דאתרבי (4b); as against: מיהייב 'he is liable' (22a, 26a); להייב 'let him be liable' (18b); ניהייב (5a [4 times]); ומעני 'he becomes poor' (27b); מעני (27b); מירכס 'it is lost' (24a).

<sup>173</sup> So also: דאתבעי 'he was obliged' (24a); מתקיימא 'it is explained' (4b); מתכפר 'it is atoned' (27a); אתמעט 'it was excluded' (4b); ואיתמעט (4b) (note that in five out of the seven cases, the middle radical is a guttural); as against: מיבעי 'it is required' (18b); דאי בעי 'it was asked' (27a); מיפלגי 'they are divided' (22b); איקבע 'it was established' (18a [twice]); נקבע 'let it be established' (18a); מיכוון 'he intends' (20a); איכוון 'he intended' (19b); איכון (19b); דאיכון (19b); מכפרנא 'I am atoned' (24a); דמיכפר 'he is atoned' (26b); מיכפר (27a, 27b).

<sup>174</sup> In the Geonic literature, too, in most cases the *t* is assimilated but tends to survive when the first radical is a guttural; see Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', pp. 134–135.

<sup>175</sup> Even in these cases, four are in proverbs, where a classic style is to be expected: רגלוהי תיה דבר איניש אינון ערבין ביה, לאתר דמיתבעי תמן מובילין תיה 'a person's feet are his surety, they transport him to the place where he is sought' (*Suk.* 53a [twice]); דע אסיא מאי סמא מתבעי 'let the doctor know what drug he needs and how [the patient] is cured' (*Ned.* 50b); עבדא דנהום כרסיה לא שווא, למריה ולמרתיה למאי מיתבעי 'a slave who is not worth the food that he eats, for what is he needed to his master and mistress' (*Git.* 12a). Only one is in a regular sentence: בי רב חסדא סמידא לכלבי ולא מתבעי 'the people of the house of Rab Hisda—bread of the finest grade flour to dogs, and it is not needed' (*M. Qat.* 28a).

<sup>176</sup> So also: אתך (26a [twice]); דאמן 'they resemble' (19b).

<sup>177</sup> So also: מיתו 'they bring' (23a [twice]).

is foreign to BA.<sup>178</sup> Based on O, however, we must conclude that it was used in a certain type of BA, one similar neither to the known type of BA nor to the Geonic type.<sup>179</sup> On the other hand, the typical ending in BA, which is the most common in Yemenite manuscripts and in Geonic literature, is ַ, which is only the second most-common in O.<sup>180</sup>

### 2.3.1.5. Other forms

2.3.1.5.1 עסיקין 'we are dealing': only this form appears.<sup>181</sup> This form is common in manuscripts, whereas the printed editions have only עסקין.<sup>182</sup>

2.3.1.5.2 נהי 'let him be'.<sup>183</sup> Here the prefix *n-* is typical of BA, but the loss of the medial *w* is unique.<sup>184</sup> In the printed editions, נהי is used only as a concessory form, e.g. נתנה מי תקן, נהי דתקן עזרא טבילה, נתנה מי תקן 'granted that Ezra ordained immersion, did he ordain throwing?' (Ber 22b), never in the indicative mood.<sup>185</sup> With regard to the root *hwy*, loss of the medial *w* in the imperfect forms is common in Galilean Aramaic<sup>186</sup> and Mishnaic Hebrew;<sup>187</sup> but it also

<sup>178</sup> Kara, *Yemenite Manuscripts*, pp. 169–170; Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', pp. 176–178.

<sup>179</sup> Because of the dissimilarity with the Geonic language, it is not like that this is a feature of NBA.

<sup>180</sup> The numbers of occurrences are small, so the findings here may be insignificant.

<sup>181</sup> E.g. 'הכא במאי עסיק' 'what are we dealing with in this case' (4b).

<sup>182</sup> According to Kutscher, 'Review', p. 175, עסיקין is common in MS **Ha165** and in *Halakhot Pesuqot*. Actually, it is very common in all BT manuscripts. See also Morag, 'Notes', p. 67.

<sup>183</sup> נהי רגיל למיחזא בריש שתא קרא ורוביא 'he should make it a habit to see on New Year gourd and *rubya*' (6a).

<sup>184</sup> According to the other manuscripts, the form is יהא. It seems that since this form is not known in BA, it was replaced by the Hebrew counterpart, by changing the prefix into *yod*. The fact that the context leads one to expect an Aramaic form here is further evidence of the superiority of O.

<sup>185</sup> Scholars have also noted only this use; see Levias, *Grammar*, p. 197; Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 371. The form יהו, brought by Levias, *Grammar*, p. 198 (from *Mak.* 4b [should be 4a]), according to the context, is a Hebrew word. On other forms, which belong to a special kind of Aramaic, see Morag, *Babylonian Aramaic*, p. 255. However, the forms adduced by him are real western forms, since they also contain the prefix *y* for the 3<sup>rd</sup> masculine imperfect, while the prefix here is eastern.

<sup>186</sup> Dalman, *Grammatik*, p. 352.

<sup>187</sup> M.H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 95.

happens in incantation texts from Babylon<sup>188</sup> and in Syriac,<sup>189</sup> which shows that it is not strange for Eastern Aramaic.

### 2.3.2. Nouns

2.3.2.1 **אֹחְרַנָּא** ‘other’: the form **אֹחְרַיְנָא**, typical of BA, appears once.<sup>190</sup> The feminine form **אֹחְרַיְתִי**, which is derived from this ground form, also appears.<sup>191</sup> The form **אֹחְרַנָּא** also appears three times, however.<sup>192</sup> This form also seems to be behind the defective spelling **אֹחְרַנִּי**<sup>193</sup> (to be read *oh<sup>h</sup>rane*): because it is hard to assume a defective spelling for a *hiriq* (i.e., = **אֹחְרַיְנִי**), a reading with *qametz* (**אֹחְרַנִּי**) is preferable. The form **אֹחְרַנָּא** does not appear in the printed editions and is also very rare in manuscripts.<sup>194</sup> It is, however, the normal

<sup>188</sup> E.g. יהי גויה, גויה יהי; see Juusola, *Bowl Texts*, pp. 189–190. His reference to BA has to be corrected, because he relies on Epstein, who did not mention the unique usage in BA. Juusola ascribes this form to the ancient jussive, but this cannot be the case, since the jussive form is not used in Late Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew. It seems that a phonetic shift was at work here; see Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic Amongst the Samaritans* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1977), V, p. 121 n. 83.

<sup>189</sup> Nöldeke, *Grammar*, p. 134.

<sup>190</sup> **אנא לא חטא אחרנא חטא** ‘even though I did not sin others might have sinned’ (24a).

<sup>191</sup> **ותניא אחריתי** ‘and [in] another *barayta* [it is said]’ (5b, 20b).

<sup>192</sup> **מידעם אחרנא** ‘another thing’ (21a); **דילמ' אתן אחרני** ‘perhaps others might come’ (24a); **מעות אחרני** ‘other coins’ (28a). In the printed editions, in the first case the form is **אחרנא**, in the second it is the Hebrew **אחרים**, and the third is absent.

<sup>193</sup> **אחרני** ‘in other foodstuffs’ (21b); in the printed editions **אחרני**.

<sup>194</sup> Except for the cases cited here, I found only three cases in the Yemenite MS Co: **לישאנא** ‘alternative reading’ (*Pes.* 69b); **לישאנא אחרנא** ‘the other is [considered as] nothing’ (*Zeb.* 42b). Three times a defective spelling of the first syllable occurs: **לאוקומי אחרנא** ‘to appoint another’ (*Meg.* 6b [Co]); **וביומי אחרני** ‘and on other days’ (*M. Qat.* 10b [V108]); **בהדא אחרניתא** ‘in this other’ (*Ned.* 22a [MG; and similarly M95]). A defective spelling is widespread only in the feminine plural, in manuscripts as well as in the printed editions, e.g. **מילי אחרניתא** ‘other things’ (*Ber.* 14b [F]); **זימני אחרניתא** ‘other times’ (*Erub.* 54b [O23]); **מאה אחרניתא** ‘additional hundred [fasts]’ (*B. Mes.* 85a [Ha165]); **לאיגרוי באחרניתא** ‘to have sexual desire for others’ (*Sanh.* 45a [He]). It seems to me that this spelling, although defective, reflects the regular form, denoting the reading *ah<sup>h</sup>rinyātā*. The reason for a defective spelling specifically in this form is that this is the only form in which the *i* vowel is in a syllable closed by a *shwa quiescent* (originally open, but closed by the silencing of the *shwa mobile*; compare Morag, *Babylonian Aramaic*, pp. 93–95). For the tendency to defective spelling of such a syllable in the BT see Yochanan Breuer, *The*

form in other dialects, such as biblical Aramaic, *Onqelos*, Western Aramaic, and the Geonic language.<sup>195</sup>

2.3.2.2 שמועתא ‘learning, legal tradition’: The common שמועתא appears here together with שמועתא.<sup>196</sup> The latter form, which occurs only once in the printed editions<sup>197</sup> and rarely in manuscripts,<sup>198</sup> is the regular form in Western Aramaic and Syriac and also appears in Geonic Aramaic.<sup>199</sup>

### 2.3.3. Prepositions

2.3.3.1 כִּי - , כִּי ‘when’: according to Rybak, the temporal preposition כִּי (separated) is used in NBA, as opposed to SBA -כִּד (connected).<sup>200</sup> As such, it is merely a difference in spelling. I disagree, because in BA the temporal preposition is not כִּד- but כִּי.<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, the connected preposition כִּד- indicates not time but comparison—as in הכא נמי , הכא רבא בכותל משופע, כדאמר רבא בכותל משופע ‘it is as Raba said [elsewhere], It refers to a sloping wall, so

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*Hebrew in the Babylonian Talmud according to the Manuscripts of Tractate Pesahim* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002), p. 39. Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 106, vocalizes the plural feminine form with a *qametz* in the *resh*, apparently because of the defective spelling. According to this, the feminine plural is derived from אֶחְרָנָא, while all the other forms are derived from אֶחְרָיָנָא, which seems strange. It is true that in *Halakhot Pesuquot* the *resh* is vocalized with *patah*, as he adduces there. But it seems that in the Geonic language the form is indeed different, as here.

<sup>195</sup> E.g. שהא אחרנא ‘another witness’ (Robert Brody [ed.], *Teshuvot Rav Natronai Bar Hilai Gaon* [Jerusalem and Cleveland: Ofeq Institute, 1994], p. 494).

<sup>196</sup> וכי גרסיתון שמעתא גרוסו על נהרא דמיא, דכי היכין דמשכין מיא תמשוך שמועתכון ‘and when you study any teaching, do so by the side of water, for as the water is drawn out, so your learning may be prolonged’ (6a).

<sup>197</sup> As a plural form: שמועתא אהדדי איתמר ‘the legal traditions were stated upon each other’ (*Men.* 43a [twice]).

<sup>198</sup> E.g. דלא תימר שמועתא מפומיה ‘so that you should not say the legal tradition according to him’ (*Pes.* 104b [J1623]); תסתים שמועתא ‘the legal tradition will be clarified’ (*Pes.* 88a [Co]); מפתח בשמועתא ‘to start in [stating] a legal tradition’ (*Pes.* 117a [Co]), and several other cases.

<sup>199</sup> E.g. כולה שמועתא ‘the whole legal tradition’; see S. Sassoon (ed.), R. Yehudai Gaon, *Sefer Halachot Pesuquot* (*Codex Sassoon 263*) (Jerusalem: Meqitze Nirdamim, 1951), p. 84:1. Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 1156, introduces the entity שמועתא and suggests that since this form is rare, as compared with the common שמועתא, it may have been borrowed from other Jewish Aramaic dialects.

<sup>200</sup> Rybak, ‘Nedarim’, p. 99.

<sup>201</sup> Compare e.g. (according to the printed editions) כד הוה חזי ליה רבי ‘when Rabbi saw him’ (*Ned.* 41a; cited by Rybak, ‘Nedarim’, p. 99 n. 108) with כי הוה חזי חלמא טבא ‘when he saw a good dream’ (*Ber.* 55b).

here too it refers to a sloping wall' (*Shab.* 5a)—and has no relation with the separated כד.<sup>202</sup> According to this analysis, we have on the one hand כד (rare) and כי (common) as temporal prepositions, and on the other hand כד- as a comparison preposition.<sup>203</sup> The temporal כד seems to have been created by the addition of ד after כי. In O the common כי is used,<sup>204</sup> but once we have כד-<sup>205</sup> evidence of this origin of the temporal כד.<sup>206</sup>

2.3.3.2 אמטו הכי 'therefore': In the printed editions the common form is אמטו -ל<sup>207</sup> and only rarely אמטול.<sup>208</sup> In manuscripts, both spellings are widespread.<sup>209</sup> The difference between them is purely one of spelling. However, in O we have אמטו without ל (only once): אמטו הכי כת' רחמ' לא תוכל לאוקמיה בלא 'it was thus essential that the Divine Law should write, You may not [eat], in order to make it the subject of a negative command' (4b–5a). This form appears in other manuscripts as well.<sup>210</sup> A determination of the original spelling seems to

<sup>202</sup> On this comparison preposition see above, 2.1.6.

<sup>203</sup> Compare also Dalman, *Grammatik*, p. 234 n. 4.

<sup>204</sup> E.g. כי מפטם ליה לחצאין פטור 'when one compounds half the prescribed quantity he is exempted' (5a).

<sup>205</sup> וכי דמיתידע ליה לבתר דמית אשם תלוי לא מיתי חטאת 'when he becomes aware of his sin, after he had offered the suspensive guilt-offering, he need not bring a sin-offering' (26b; printed editions כדכי מתיידע (דכי מתיידע). A similar expression appears three times, and only כי is used: כי מתודע ליה בתר יום הכיפורים נמי לא ניתי חטאת 'when one becomes aware [of the sin] after the Day of Atonement he should not need to bring a sin-offering' (26a, 26b [twice]).

<sup>206</sup> On some other instances see Schlesinger, *Satzlehre*, p. 245. The spelling כד is common when quoting Palestinian sages, or in stories of Palestinian origin, e.g. דאמר רבי יוחנן, נהירנא 'Rav Kahana said, When I was eighteen years old' (*Shab.* 63a); כד הוין בר תמני סרי שנין 'R. Yohanan said, I remember when four *seabs* (of grain) cost a *sela*' (*Ta'an.* 19b); כד הוין בר תמני סרי שנין 'Rav Nahman, whenever he happens to come to Shachnetzib, he announces' (*Yom.* 18b); כד חוייה רב יהודה חיין 'when Rav Yehuda saw him, he laughed' (*M. Qat.* 17a). In any case, of the 52 occurrences in the printed editions, it appears only 8 times in tractates *Nedarim* and *Nazir*, and should not be counted as a feature of NBA features. See also Schlesinger, *Satzlehre*, pp. 242–246.

<sup>207</sup> E.g. אמטו להכי בעי שריפה 'therefore it is right that they require burning' (*Pes.* 83a).

<sup>208</sup> E.g. אמטול דיתבי בארעא חשוכא 'because they dwell in a land of darkness' (*Zeb.* 60b).

<sup>209</sup> E.g. אמטו להכי כתב רחמ' תרתי 'therefore Scripture wrote two' (*B. Mes.* 32a [E]), vs. אמטול הכי מחייבין ליה קרבן שבועה 'therefore we require that he brings an oath-offering' (*B. Qam.* 103b [H165]).

<sup>210</sup> E.g. אמטו הכי קתני תרתין 'so he must reckon two [periods]' (*Naz.* 7a [M95]); אמטו הכי 'מטרא קא אתו 'that the scholars have come on account of rain' (*Ta'an.* 23b [LH]).

depend on the origin of this word: according to Kutscher, it is derived from טל ‘shadow’; if so, the *l* is part of the root.<sup>211</sup> According to Epstein, though, it is derived from -ל אמת = -ל מט = ‘regarding the part which is deserved for’; if so, the *l* is an added preposition.<sup>212</sup> Accordingly, the different spellings may reflect different analyses of whether the *l* is part of the root. In any case, the lack of the *l* seems to support Epstein’s view.<sup>213</sup>

### 2.3.4. Proper nouns

2.3.4.1 רבון, רבון, אבון: the common names רבון and אבון, as always in the printed editions, are not used in O, but only אבון and רבון.<sup>214</sup> These forms are common in manuscripts.<sup>215</sup> רבון and אבון are common in the Palestinian Talmud.<sup>216</sup>

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אמת הכי מחייב ליה קרבן (B. Qam. 71a–b [M95]); אמת הכי מחייב ליה קרבן ‘this is why the sages exempt’ (B. Qam. 71a–b [M95]); אמת הכי מחייב ליה קרבן ‘this is why we obligate him [to bring] an oath-offering’ (B. Qam. 106b [M95]); אמת הכי מחייב ליה קרבן ‘this is why Scripture wrote two [verses]’ (B. Mes. 32a [V115]); אמת דיתבי ‘because they dwell in a land of darkness’ (Zeb. 60b [PA]); תנא סיפא אמת ריש ‘he learnt the latter clause on account of the former one’ (Hul. 68a [V122]); and twice in the printed editions: אמת הכי משילנא לכו ‘this is why I am asking you’ (Tam. 32a); אמת זוזא דידך חרבו שיראי דמלכא ‘because of your zuz, the royal silk garments have been ruined’ (Ber. 56a–b). Friedman, ‘The Manuscripts’, p. 177, mentions this feature as unique to O. Actually, it is not especially rare, appearing even in the printed editions. We should also add cases where אט is used in this function, e.g. אט הכי חזר וגובה מהן ‘this is why he collects from them again’ (Pes. 31a [J1623]); אט הכי מחייבין ליה קרבן ‘this is why we obligate him for an offering’ (B. Qam. 106b [F]). On the connection between אט and אמת see Geiger, in Krauss, *Addimenta*, p. 18.

<sup>211</sup> Kutscher, ‘Review’, p. 160; idem, ‘The Language of the Genesis Apocryphon’, in: Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin (eds.), *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls (Scripta Hierosolymitana)*, 4; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1958), pp. 1–35 (7 n. 30).

<sup>212</sup> Epstein, *Grammar*, p. 138. See also Epstein, *Studies*, I, p. 106, where he interprets the phrase אמת ליתא as a reflection of אמת ליתא, substituting אמת for אמת. This also shows that the ground form was considered to be אמת.

<sup>213</sup> Of course, it can also be claimed that the *l* was omitted by a wrong analysis. Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 140, who adds the *l* when it is missing in the quotation, seems to be of this opinion.

<sup>214</sup> 18b, 21a, 20a, 25b (twice).

<sup>215</sup> E.g. Ket. 53a (P); Pes. 34a (V109); Pes. 8b (J1623).

<sup>216</sup> Aaron Hyman, *Toldoth Tannaim Ve’Amoraim* (Hebrew) (London: Express, 1910), I, p. 89.



2.3.4.2 זירא: In contrast with the common זורא, זירא is widespread in Geonic literature and Yemenite manuscripts.<sup>217</sup> Here we find only זירא.<sup>218</sup> It has been suggested that זורא results from a partial assimilation of the vowel to the *r*.<sup>219</sup> Since, however, it is derived from the adjective זעיר/זעיר 'little' (with omission of the guttural), the name probably depends on the form of the adjective. As Kutscher has pointed out, in various Aramaic dialects there is a shift from the original זעיר to the late זעור.<sup>220</sup> The proper noun would have undergone a parallel shift, from זירא to זורא. In any case, according to both explanations the זורא of the Geonic literature is late, and the form used in O, which is also standard in most manuscripts and the printed editions, is the original form.

2.3.4.3 ר' שמעון בן לקיש / ר' ריש לקיש: in most cases the form is ר' שמעון בן לקיש (13 times);<sup>221</sup> ר' ריש לקיש occurs only three times.<sup>222</sup> The long form, which predominates here, appears in the printed editions in only about 20% of the occurrences.<sup>223</sup>

<sup>217</sup> See Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 76. Except for Yemenite manuscripts, I have found it only in two phrases in eastern manuscripts: אמרוהו (רבנן) קמיה דר' ירמיה ור' אמרוהו (רבנן) קמיה דר' ירמיה ור' זורא, R. Yirmeya and R. Zora, R. Yirmeya accepted it and R. Zora did not accept it, R. Yirmeya said to R. Zora' (*Pes.* 48a [V125]); ר' ירמיה קיבלה ר' זורא לא קיבלה, אמ' ליה ר' ירמיה לר' זורא אמר ר' זורא, who said' (*Yeb.* 104b [M141]).

<sup>218</sup> E.g. בעי מיניה ר' ירמיה 'R. Zera only interpreted Rabbi's view' (18b); מר' זורא 'R. Yirmeya asked R. Zera' (22a).

<sup>219</sup> Morgenstern, 'Babylonian Aramaic', p. 76. The difficulty in this suggestion is that such an assimilation tends to appear only in a closed syllable; see Breuer, *Hebrew*, p. 167.

<sup>220</sup> E.Y. Kutscher, *Studies in Galilean Aramaic* (trans. Michael Sokoloff; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1976), pp. 23–25.

<sup>221</sup> E.g. ר' ריש לקיש 'and point out a contradiction between [one statement] of R. Simeon b. Laqish and [another statement] of R. Simeon b. Laqish' (18b).

<sup>222</sup> E.g. ר' ריש לקיש 'when Rabbun came, he said in the name of Resh Laqish' (25b). In one case the forms interchange in the same passage: קשיא דר' יוחנן אדר' יוחנן וקשיא דר' יוחנן אדר' יוחנן, בשלמ' בן לק', קשיא דר' יוחנן אדר' יוחנן וקשיא דר' יוחנן אדר' יוחנן, אלא לריש לקיש 'there is a contradiction between [one saying] of R. Yoḥanan and [another saying] of R. Yoḥanan, and there is a contradiction between [one saying] of R. Simeon Ben Laqish and [another saying] of R. Simeon Ben Laqish, it will be granted that there is no contradiction between [one saying] of R. Yoḥanan and [another saying] of R. Yoḥanan ... but with Resh Laqish there is a difficulty' (19a).

<sup>223</sup> For a discussion on this interchange, see Eljakim Wajsborg, 'The Contribution of the Forms ר' שמעון בן לקיש and ר' ריש לקיש to the Taxonomy of talmudic Manuscripts' (*Hebrew*), *Leš* 55 (1991), pp. 367–382.

## 2.4. Words and phrases

2.4.1 **ריבונא** ‘master, teacher’: in BA this word refers only to God.<sup>224</sup> In O there is one case where it refers to a human being: **כי בעיתון למיעל קמי רבונכון גרסו מעיקרא מתניתין והדר עילו לקמי ריבונכון, וכי יתביתון קמיה דרבונכון חזו לפומיה דרבונכון** ‘when you wish to come before your teacher [to learn], revise at first your Mishna and then go to your teacher; and when you are sitting before your teacher look at the mouth of your teacher’ (6a). The fourfold repetition proves that it cannot be a scribal error. In all other manuscripts, the form is **רבכון** and the like, derived from the standard term **רב**.<sup>225</sup> In Mishnaic Hebrew, too, **רבון** usually refers to God, as in BA, and rarely to a human being.<sup>226</sup> **ריבונא** is the standard rendering of *Targum Onqelos* for the Hebrew **אדון**.<sup>227</sup> In this case, O displays a typical trait of *Targum Onqelos*.

2.4.2 **לי נפקא** ‘derived [for me]’.<sup>228</sup> This phrase does not exist in the printed editions, but is common in manuscripts. The reading of the printed editions is always different.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>224</sup> E.g. **שלם רב לרב טב מריבונא טבא דמטוביה מטיב לעמיה** ‘Good greetings to the good teacher from the good Lord who from His bounty dispenses good to His people’ (*Ta’an.* 24b [O23]); **ריבוניה דעלמא** ‘Sovereign of the Universe’ (*B. Mes.* 86a [Ha165]).

<sup>225</sup> Sokoloff, *Dictionary*, p. 1073, also cites only this case from the BT, to which he adds two more cases from geonic responsa.

<sup>226</sup> E.g. **אדני משה כלאם, אמר לי, רבוני משה, כלם מן העולם** “My lord Moses, forbid them” [Num 11:28]: He said to him, My lord, Moses, wipe them out of the world’ (H.S. Horovitz [ed.], *Siphre D’be Rab* [Leipzig: Fock, 1917], p. 96). This case may have been influenced by the Aramaic Targum on the verse cited, which translates, as always, **רבוני משה**. See also Eliezer Ben Yehuda, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Hemda and Ehud Benyehuda, 1951), XIII, p. 6373.

<sup>227</sup> E.g. **רבוני אברהם** ‘My master, Abraham’ (= **אדוני אברהם**, Gen 24.12).

<sup>228</sup> **מנ הכא נפקא לי מן הדין קרא נפקא לי** ‘is this law derived from here, is it not rather derived from the following?’ (4b); **לי מוכרת נפקא לי הוא מכל דם דכרת נפקא לי** ‘is not the application of *kalet* rather derived from the term “all blood”?’ (4b).

<sup>229</sup> E.g.: **לי נפקא לי מן הדין קרא לי, לכם למה לי** ‘then now that it is derived from these verses, what is the purpose of “unto you”’ (*Pes.* 22b [J1623]; printed editions **וכי** (דכתיבי) **וכי**); **לי מוכרת נפקא לי הוא מכל דם דכרת נפקא לי** ‘but since it is derived from “you shall take no ransom”, why do I require [the analogy made between] “smiting”, “smiting”?’ (*B. Qam.* 83b [Ha165]; printed editions **וכי** (דכתיבי) **וכי**); **לי מוכרת נפקא לי מן ולמקצה השמים** ‘but now that this is derived from [the expression] “from one end of heaven”’ (*Hag.* 12a [o23]; printed editions **ליה** (דנפקא ליה)).

2.4.3 כולי עלמא / כל עלמא 'all [*lit.* the whole world]': each of these expressions appears once in O.<sup>230</sup> In the BT, כל עלמא appears almost exclusively in Yemenite manuscripts (37 times, vs. 95 times for כולי עלמא).<sup>231</sup>

## 2.5. Summary of O

The first part of this article dealt with NBA forms. The second part discussed the other features of O, which represent a type of BA different from that known from the printed editions. These features can be divided into two kinds:

(1) Features that do not appear in the printed editions but are frequent in manuscripts. For these, O is a good representative of reliable manuscripts. These features include: the separated spelling פום בדיתא; preservation of the original *he* of the third-person feminine singular pronominal suffix in the forms תסברה and גופה; the form עסיקין; the phrase נפקא לי; and the proper nouns רבון and אבון. Especially interesting are features known mainly from Yemenite manuscripts (some also from Geonic literature): the spelling of the comparison expression כּי ד-; preservation of the original *yod* in the plural form קראי; the shift וּ>אוּ>אִי; the prevalence of the *n* prefix for third-person masculine imperfect forms, such as גּיטי; and the phrase כל עלמא. Since O is not Yemenite, the existence of these forms in O proves that they are not late or Yemenite innovations. It should be stressed that O cannot be classified in the same group of the Yemenite manuscripts or the Geonic literature, since many features typical of Yemenite manuscripts and Geonic literature are absent from it; e.g. זורא. The case of זורא is especially instructive; according to the analysis of this name, here the Geonic language displays a late feature, as do the manuscripts that follow it. This means that when a manuscript resembles the Geonic language, each feature must be considered separately in determining whether the form is early or late.

(2) O includes a relatively large number of features that are rare even in manuscripts: the spelling לוא; preservation of the original *aleph* in the forms קראה and קדמאה and in the phrase סלקא אדעתא; the nominal forms אוחרנא and שמועתא; and addition of *d* in the temporal expression כּי ד- (the origin of כד). Four features have not been found in any other manuscripts: retention

<sup>230</sup> דכל עלמא (4b); דכולי עלמא (22b).

<sup>231</sup> E.g. דכל עלמא לא פליגי דשרי. (*Pes.* 27a [J1623]). Except for the Yemenite manuscripts, it appears only here and once more (*Ta'an.* 25a [O23]) and in some Geniza fragments; see Friedman, 'Scroll Fragment', p. 24; idem, 'Early Manuscripts', p. 17; idem, 'The Manuscripts', p. 176.

of the ending *-t* in the third-person feminine singular perfect of ל' verbs, as הוּת;<sup>232</sup> the prevalence of the ending *-an* in the plural participle of ל' verbs; יהי in free use; and ריבונא to denote a human being. Almost all these features do appear in other Aramaic dialects. Their presence in O proves that they are part of a certain type of BA.

### 3. Conclusions

In this article, two aspects of the language of Tractate *Karetot* have been examined according to MS O.

Tractate *Karetot* is one of the tractates which show a unique kind of BA. In the first part of the article, the typical features of this Aramaic dialect were examined. The list of these features has been corrected: some forms have been added<sup>233</sup> and others removed.<sup>234</sup> In addition, a new approach has been proposed for working with this material. To date scholars have been content to show that such forms appear in these tractates. Such an approach is not satisfactory, since these forms appear everywhere in the BT, even in the printed editions, and more extensively in manuscripts. According to the approach proposed here, the exact rate of these forms has to be measured, in comparison with the 'regular' tractates. It was found that the proportion of these forms is between 25 % and 33 %, whereas in the 'regular' tractates it is between 0.67 % and 1.81 %. Another conclusion is that O has a greater tendency to use these features than all other manuscripts examined. The most important finding, made possible only thanks to this approach, is that NBA features tend to appear less often in locutions that are frequent in the BT. Consequently, the current linguistic situation of the 'special' tractates must be unique to the BT and cannot reflect a living, spoken language. In my opinion, such an approach must be adopted in all future research on this topic. Moreover, it should be used in all domains of research into BA. As is well known, one of the problems in the study of BA is that various forms serve in the same function side by side. Exact measurement of the ratio of competing forms is the only way to define the status of every corpus and to enhance our understanding of the situation in BA.

<sup>232</sup>) The form itself, of course, is known in other traditions, too, but the fact that it is used almost exclusively is unique to O.

<sup>233</sup>) 1.2, 17–22.

<sup>234</sup>) See 2.1.6; 2.3.1.1; 2.3.1.4; 2.3.3.1.

In the second part, all the other features were described. These reveal a type of BA different from that known from the printed editions. Some of them are known from manuscripts, while others are unique to O.

When examining differences between manuscripts, one tends to wonder which is the original form and which is the corrupt form created by copyists. For example, it seems that the spelling גופה is the original, whereas גופא was created by copyists who did not pronounce the final *he* and consequently replaced it with the normal BA *mater lectionis* for final vocalic *a*. In most cases, though, both competing forms seem to be original. This conclusion can be reached in two cases: (1) when both forms are very common in manuscripts; (2) when only one is widespread, but linguistic considerations show that the competing form, too, is original. For example, the form קרא is so widespread that it must be authentic, yet the form קראה preserves the original *aleph* and must therefore also be authentic. Because it is implausible that copyists corrected the common קרא to the original קראה, the existence of קראה shows that it too survived in a certain type of BA. Differences of this sort include קראי/קראי, and סלקא אדעתא/סלקא דעתא. In the cases of אחרנא/אחרניא and שמועתא/שמעתא, the authenticity of the irregular forms is confirmed by other dialects.

Special attention should be paid to cases where two competing original forms appear in the BT but a certain manuscript adheres to only one of them. A good example is the use of prefix *n-* or *l-* for the third-person masculine imperfect. Most manuscripts use both, with a preference for *l-*. There is no reason to doubt that a similar situation existed in the spoken BA. In some manuscripts, such as O, though, *n-* is used almost exclusively. It is difficult to imagine that it was the copyists who decided to prefer this prefix. It seems that such sub-groups, reflected in consistent differences between manuscripts, also reflect sub-groups in the spoken language, perhaps in different places. Another example is the ל' third-person feminine singular perfect הווא, dominant in BA, and הוה, dominant in O.

Describing and explaining the inventory of differences within BA is the major challenge of the study of this dialect. Descriptions of various manuscripts and the unique nature of each will provide a clearer picture of the Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>235</sup> An attempt in this direction, though mainly based on orthographic features (which have less significance for the picture of the spoken language), has been introduced by Friedman, 'The Manuscripts'.