Most of the papers in this volume originated as presentations at the conference "Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew: New Perspectives in Philology and Linguistics," which was held at the University of Cambridge, 8–10th July, 2019. The aim of the conference was to build bridges between various strands of research in the field of Hebrew language studies that rarely meet, namely philologists working on Biblical Hebrew, philologists working on Rabbinic Hebrew and theoretical linguists.

The volume is the published outcome of this initiative. It contains peer-reviewed papers in the fields of Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew that advance the field by the philological investigation of primary sources and the application of cutting-edge linguistic theory. These include contributions by established scholars and by students and early career researchers.

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Cover image: Genizah fragment of the Hebrew Bible with Babylonian vocalisation (Num. 18.27-28, Cambridge University Library T-S A38.12; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Genizah fragment of the Mishnah (Ḥallah 1, Cambridge University Library MS Add.470.1; courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library). Linguistic analysis of Ps. 1.1 (Elizabeth Robar). Images selected by Estara Arrant.

Cover design: Anna Gatti
1.0. Introduction

Ever since ancient times, Biblical Hebrew (BH) has been considered the ideal form of Hebrew and the exemplary style for Hebrew writing. Rabbinic Hebrew (RH), on the other hand, has usually been viewed as a secondary, epigonic dialect, less suitable as a source of vocabulary and style for later Hebrew.\(^2\) As is well-

\(^1\) This research was conducted with the support of the Russian Science Foundation (project no. 17-18-01295), Saint Petersburg State University.

\(^2\) One famous expression of this attitude is found in Judah ibn Tibbon’s (Spain and Provence, late 12th–13th centuries) introduction to his translation of Ḥovot ha-Levavot, the well-known Rabbi Bahye ibn Pakuda’s (Spain, 11th century) philosophical work. He finds it necessary to apologise for the use of rabbinic words in his translation even when it might have been possible to find a biblical equivalent; see Halkin (1963, 246); Sarfatti (2003, 31–32).
known, this approach was clearly reflected in the field of traditional Hebrew linguistics, in which only BH enjoyed systematic investigation and description.³

This basic attitude was essentially still prevalent during the Haskalah period.⁴ Indeed, the hierarchy was strengthened by the Maskilic aspiration to restore the Jewish people to its so-called ‘natural’ situation, in which it is involved and active in all fields of productive life and culture. The situation of the Jewish people during the era of the Bible had been perceived as such, while rabbinic literature was widely perceived as representing the limited, faulty situation of the Jewish people in exile.⁵ Yet, scholars in this period differ from one another in their specific attitude towards RH and its use for writing in various fields.⁶

The Maskilic attitudes towards this matter have already been treated by many scholars.⁷ In this paper, I would like to examine an aspect which has not been discussed yet: if and how


⁷ See references in the last three footnotes.
the attitudes towards RH are reflected in grammatical descriptions of Hebrew in this period. I will focus on three Hebrew grammars of the time, each of them representative of a different attitude. Though these three works, like the vast majority of Jewish grammatical works of the time, are devoted to BH, the frequency and nature of incidental references to RH in these works, or their absence, will serve as an indicator for our purpose.

2.0. Chayim Keslin

Let us begin with our first author, Chayim Keslin (1749–1832). Before taking a look into his grammar—*Maslul be-Diqduq Leshon ha-Qodesh* (Berlin, 1788; I used the Vilnius, 1892 edition), which was widely used among the Maskilim as a Hebrew grammar manual, another work of Keslin’s should be mentioned—*Beʾer Reḥovot*. This influential work, initially published in the well-known Maskilic journal *Ha-Meʾasef* (3 [1786]: 51–60) and later as an independent pamphlet (Berlin, 1814), was a contribution to contemporary discussions on the appropriate sources and avenues for expanding the Hebrew language. Here Keslin eagerly espouses the free use of RH vocabulary for this purpose, claiming that rabbinic sources represent an indigenous Hebrew, which maintains the original Hebrew traits as reliably as BH. Essentially, Keslin viewed the two linguistic layers as a single uniform

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8 It was prefaced with a few short articles, entitled *Qeriʾat ha-Torah*.

9 Cf. Yizhaki (1970, 43–54); Barzilay (1979, 6–9).


11 See especially Keslin (1814, 34–40); see also Yizhaki (1970, 45–47); Barzilay (1979, 7); Zemerion (1981, 433–34); Rabin (1986, 23).
language, which shared most of their respective vocabulary, the differences between them being considered exceptions.\footnote{12}{See Keslin (1814a, 35–36).}

Considering this stance, it is hardly surprising that his grammatical work, although devoted to BH, contains a large number of references to RH and many comments regarding similarities or, in a few cases, differences between biblical grammar and rabbinic grammar. As will be demonstrated below, for Keslin, such comments are not taken as comparisons between two dialects or layers, but rather as complementary notes, which draw the picture of the Hebrew language as a whole.\footnote{13}{He also repeats the main argument of Be’er Reḥovot in a few places in Maslul; cf. Maslul (42a–b, 70a).}

This attitude is reflected in many comments dealing with nouns that occur in the Bible only in singular, with their plural form attested in RH, like סֻלָּם – תָּמוֹל ‘ladder’, פְּרִי – פֵּרוֹת ‘fruit’.\footnote{14}{Maslul (77a, 88b). For other comments of this kind, see Maslul (71a, 79a–80a, 88a, 89b). For comments in which Keslin learns from RH the singular forms of nouns documented in BH only in the plural, see Maslul (85b–86b, 87b).}

For Keslin, this additional data enables a better acquaintance with ancient Hebrew, as RH completes the information missing in BH with the highest level of reliability. Even when, in one case, he points to a rabbinic plural form, חֲמִישִׁים ‘fifths’, that differs from its biblical counterpart, i.e., חֲמֵיתִים,\footnote{15}{This form was reconstructed by Keslin on the basis of the form חֲמִישֵׁי ‘fifths of it’ (Lev. 5.24).} it seems that he regards both as equal alternatives.\footnote{16}{Maslul (80a).}
Another striking example that clearly reveals his attitude appears in the chapter on ‘compound verbs’, where he discusses peculiar feminine participle forms, like נְָּּיַלְתָּלָּ ‘giving birth’ (Gen. 16.11) and נְָּּשֹׁכַנְּתָּ ‘dwelling’ (Jer. 51.13). He mentions a former proposal to interpret these forms as a compound of past form and participle, but he prefers another analysis. He suggests that this is a compound of a participle form and a feminine singular personal pronoun: נְָּּיַלְתָּ + אֶתְָּּ, נְָּּשֹׁכַנְּתָּ + אֶתְָּּ. Indeed, he admits that such compounds are not customary in BH, but, he maintains that this is a possible analysis on the basis of its prevalence in RH, such as the oath formulas מַדְּרַנִי (מָדְּר + אֶתְּ + נִי), which means ‘I am forbidden by vow (from your property)’, מְרַח קַנִי (מְָּּרָּח + אֶתְּ + נִי) (M. Nedarim 1.1). For Keslin, this comparison provides him with sufficient grounds to assume a similar construction in BH. According to his belief that BH and RH represent the same language, one may analyse BH phenomena in light of RH grammar.

Similarly, in another case he suggests a new analysis of the peculiar form נְָּּתַּז ‘spring forth’ (Isa. 18.5), which R. David Kimḥi, the authoritative medieval scholar, perceived as derived from the root זָָּה. On the basis of comparison to similar rabbinic forms, like הִתִי זָּ ‘chop off’ (M. Ḥullin 2.3) and מְנַתְּזִין ‘scattering’ (M. Bava Kamma 2.1), Keslin claims that the rabbinic root נֵז is the root

17 Maslul (45a).
18 Cf., for example, Mikhlo (25a).
19 Sefer ha-Shorashim (819).
of biblical הֵּתַז as well—this despite his awareness of the morphological difficulties raised by the suggestion.20

Keslin’s stance, as we shall see, differs significantly from those reflected by later Maskilic authors.

3.0. Judah Leib Ben-Ze’ev

Our next author is Judah Leib Ben-Ze’ev (1764–1811), who should be considered the greatest Jewish linguist of the Maskilic movement. His work, *Talmud Lashon ʿIvri* (TLI; first publication: Breslau, 1796), is the most comprehensive and updated Hebrew grammar that was written in Hebrew of his time. The same could be said of another monumental work by Ben-Ze’ev in this field— ’Ozer ha-Shorashim (OhS; first publication: Vienna 1816). Since our focus here is on comparison of grammar books, the following discussion concentrates on TLI, but it appears that the same approach is reflected in OhS as well, as is demonstrated bellow.

Despite its very comprehensive and detailed nature, TLI includes only sporadic comments comparing biblical to rabbinic phenomena. These comments are very simple comparisons, mostly of lexical rather than grammatical character. For example, in a comment on fractional numerals, Ben-Ze’ev notes that their BH absolute state form is feminine, e.g., שְּלִישִית ‘third’ and רְבִיעַ ‘forth part’, while in RH it is masculine, like לִשְּלִיש and לְרָּבִיע 21 It should be stressed here that lexical comparisons of BH to RH have traditionally been perceived of as more acceptable or natural

20 See *Maslul* (49b). One may find further references to RH in *Maslul* (18a, 39b, 41b, 72a, 78a, 90b).

21 TLI (§136). For more examples of this kind, cf. TLI (§§110, 115, 359).
than grammatical comparisons. Thus, in medieval linguistic writings one finds many more lexical comparisons than grammatical comparisons.\textsuperscript{22} Ben-Ze’ev also adheres to this principle, but the perception behind it, discussed here below, is typical of his era.

Ben-Ze’ev’s attitude on this matter\textsuperscript{23} is more than once explicitly expressed in the introductions to his OhS. The first time comes in his general introduction to the first two volumes of the dictionary, where he enumerates the principles on which his lexical entries are based. The fifth paragraph in this section presents what, on the first glance, seems to be an attitude similar to Keslin’s.\textsuperscript{24} He states that he had made an effort to find words and expressions from the Talmud, which he considered “remnants of the Hebrew language, that accidently did not occur in the Bible, but were orally preserved in national traditions.”\textsuperscript{25} But the reservation that immediately follows this statement reveals a completely different point of view. With regard to all these words, Ben-Ze’ev explains, he presents only the root, not the form, since the language of the Talmud does not preserve the grammatical

\textsuperscript{22} Netzer (1983, 51–52, 171–72, 325); Téné (1995, 27). See also Ben-Ḥayyim (1981, 4–5). Ben-Ḥayyim points out the aforementioned distinction between lexical and grammatical comparisons, but his conclusion, namely, that medieval scholars regarded biblical and rabbinic grammar as homogenous, requires re-examination.

\textsuperscript{23} On some reflections of the priority of biblical grammar over other Hebrew strata in TLI, see Cohen and Goldblum (2018, 390–91).

\textsuperscript{24} Cf. Barzilay (1979, 10).

\textsuperscript{25} אשׁר מִצְאתָ וְרָאִיתָ קְרוֹבִים לְלִיְתָה שֶׁרְיִי לְשׁוֹן עִבְרִי לְשׁוֹנָם והקוֹהִים מַפְרִיאוֹת בַּכְּחוּרִים "שהָלְא דְּנֵמה לְהָיָה מְצְאָתָן בַּכְּחוּרִים". Page numbers are not given for references to the introductions of OhS, since these chapters are unpaginated.
form of the words.\textsuperscript{26} Essentially, Ben-Ze’ev claims here that RH has some significance, but only as a preserver of ‘remnants’ of BH. RH is important for its lexical material, but from the perspective of grammar, it is full of faults and thus should not be considered a source of pure Hebrew.\textsuperscript{27}

Accordingly, Ben-Ze’ev writes that all entries taken from RH are marked with asterisk, in order to distinguish between the ‘certain’ biblical words and rabbinic words, which are always ‘uncertain’ in terms of faithfulness in representing ‘real’ Hebrew.

Another statement of this kind is found in the introduction to the third volume of \textit{OhS}, which is a German-Hebrew lexicon.\textsuperscript{28} Here he makes a distinction between צחותָּלָּעברית literally ‘pure Hebrew’, on the one hand, which appears to denote BH,\textsuperscript{29} and the language of the Talmud and later authors, on the other hand. According to Ben-Ze’ev, only the first type fully represents authentic Hebrew, while the later compilations contain words and expressions that are only “similar” or “close” to Hebrew, as

\begin{quote}
"ובכל מה שמראותינו מלאות העבריות בתלמודים שמראותי רק מהרשブラה התמונות, באשר לא שמרו דקדוק המילה בלשון התלמודים"
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
"לא שמרו דקדוק המילה בלשון התלמודים"
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26} Another question is, to what extent Ben-Ze’ev succeeded in fulfilling his principles of pure Hebrew in his own writings. One may note, for example, the verb נָּזַדֵּמַן ‘occur’ quoted in n. 25 above, which has the characteristically rabbinic \textit{nitpa‘al} pattern.

\textsuperscript{27} It is probably the first lexicon of this kind that was ever published.

\textsuperscript{28} See Barzilay (1979, 10).
well as foreign words. He stresses that the latter type was included only for the sake of ‘the masses’, who are open to using any word that has occurred in a Hebrew book, but do not pay much heed to the purity of their language. But for poets, or people who aspire simply to use pure Hebrew, only צחות לשון עברית, i.e., BH, or its ‘remnants’ in rabbinic literature, is appropriate.

Considering these statements, it is hardly surprising that when Ben-Ze’ev compares elements of BH to those found in RH, most of them are lexical, while grammatical comparisons are very few in TLI. Still, there are a few comments regarding grammatical phenomena, such as, for example, his comment on sequences of prepositions, like the common rabbinic compound Cabrli ‘seemingly’, which is built of two prepositions and a particle form: ביעל + ב + כ.

Obviously, the difference between Ben-Ze’ev and Keslin in this respect is not just quantitative: while Keslin, as we have seen, is ready to propose innovative insights regarding biblical phe-

30 "ואמר כי לא Bekhisti לשון צחות לשון עבריתℓבדה, כי אם נסملת רבוחם הלשון המתחוללו משאר ספרי מובריס קירים, הלשון והלשות הלשון ליצים עבריתיא כרובים אלה, כתובتخלא, כתובتخלאגרביית�וה." 31 Ben-Ze’ev’s approach on this point was noted by Kutscher (1982, 185).

32 One may find a full translation of this paragraph in Barzilay (1979, 10–11).

33 TLI (§§356–59).
nomina on the basis of RH, Ben-Ze’ev’s comments are of a tech-
nical nature only, with no substantial contribution to the under-
standing of BH.

Ben-Ze’ev, therefore, draws a clear hierarchy between BH and RH: only BH’s vocabulary and grammar are considered pure and ‘real’ Hebrew, appropriate for literary use and poetry. RH, on the other hand, is made up of eclectic vocabulary, of which large parts are not original Hebrew, its morphology is faulty, and it may be used only in vulgar texts. It appears that this is the background of the marginal role of comparisons of BH to RH in TLI and of the superficial nature of the comparisons that are in-
cluded.

4.0. Chayim Zvi Lerner

This basic attitude, which was espoused by Ben-Ze’ev and other early Maskilim,34 became more prominent—perhaps even exag-
gerated—in later generations of the Haskalah movement. An ex-
treme expression of it is found in Chayim Zvi Lerner’s grammati-
cal work. Living in Southern Europe, Lerner (1815–1889) was a Maskil and earned his living as a Hebrew teacher in several insti-
tutions. His main work is Moreh ha-Lashon, a popular Hebrew grammar, which appeared in Leipzig in 1859 and in many later editions.35 The striking fact about this grammar is that RH is not mentioned there at all. It was probably the first Hebrew grammar written by a Jewish author since early Middle Ages that com-
pletely ignores RH.

34 Eldar (2014, 120, 125).
35 On this work see Chomsky (1967, 188).
RH is not mentioned even when one might expect it to be, such as, for example, in the discussion of the second-person singular independent subject pronoun אַת ‘you’ used for masculine, rather than standard feminine reference. Lerner’s discussion is based on its use in BH, in which it occurs only a few times, while its much more common usage in RH is not mentioned. Similarly, he presents the relative pronoun שֶּׁ, which in Late Biblical Hebrew is employed alongside its more common counterpart שָׁמָּן, but, of course, is more characteristic to RH—an obvious fact that Lerner ignores. At first glance, this might seem the result of a purely professional decision to concentrate solely on BH. But, if one takes into account Lerner’s cultural environment, it seems more likely to stem from intentional omission of RH, reflecting ideological and cultural motives.

The clearest manifestation of the Maskilic ideology of the time is shown in contemporary Maskilic Hebrew literary style. As is well known, the main development of Maskilic Hebrew prose took place in southern Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Authors of the time, such as Abraham Mapu, Peretz Smolenskin, and others, ultimately adopted BH, creating a pseudo-biblical style, which they took great pains to cleanse of rabbinic elements. These endeavours were an expression of the

36 Lerner (1898, §37).
37 Lerner (1898, §40).
Maskilic preference for BH over other Hebrew layers, which served as an important component of Maskilic ideology.\footnote{See references above in n. 4.}

Even though we lack explicit evidence, it is logical to conclude that Lerner also endorsed this ideology to some extent, or at least was influenced by the cultural atmosphere in which it prevailed. This plausibly accounts for the fact that RH is completely absent from his grammar.\footnote{Yet, it should be stressed that this is not the situation in all Maskilic grammatical works of the time, as other contemporary authors introduced comparisons to RH in their biblical grammars. Cf., for example, Joshua Steinberg’s \textit{Ma’arkhe Leshon ‘Ever} (1891, §§136, 140–41, 152); Moses Reichersohn’s \textit{Ḥelqat ha-Niqud} (1864, 3, 32, 72).}

\section*{5.0. Conclusion}

To sum up, we have seen three different ways in which RH is used in Haskalah-period BH grammars: a large number of comparisons and frequent drawing of evidence from RH in Keslin’s \textit{Maslul}; a few comparisons of technical nature in Ben-Ze’ev’s \textit{Talmud Lashon ʿIvri}; and total disregard of RH in Lerner’s \textit{Moreh ha-Lashon}. According to the analysis proposed above, the status of RH in each work reflects the author’s attitude towards cultural and sociolinguistic questions: Keslin’s endorsement of wide use of RH as a main source for expanding the Hebrew language; Ben-Ze’ev’s view of RH as a grammatically faulty language and, accordingly, as a less-preferable source for useful Hebrew vocabu-
lary; and Lerner’s attitude, which reflects—or at least was affected by—the Maskilic endeavours to introduce a purified biblical Hebrew style.

Our analysis suggests that, although the works in question are scientific books that appear to present an objective linguistic picture, as a matter of fact, they mirror their respective author’s personal cultural viewpoint, and might, to some extent, even serve as a vehicle to promote his ideology.

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