

A RECOVERED PART OF THE ALEPPO CODEX

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I

The rejoicing about the news that the precious Aleppo Codex (A) had been found and saved from destruction¹ was marred by the fact that almost the whole of the Pentateuch had been lost. Under the circumstances one had to be grateful for the exceptionally fortunate circumstance that among the few leaves spared were those which made the identification possible.² Ever since, the search went on to salvage some information about the missing ninety-five percent of the Pentateuch.³ The rediscovery of any additional part of the text is therefore welcome.⁴

The photograph republished here was obviously taken with a view to showing the Decalogue as written in the Aleppo Codex. The fact that it has been overlooked so far in the discussion of the subject is not astonishing, if we bear in mind the place of its original publication.⁵ The photograph was taken about twenty years after the one published by Wickes, apparently more for the sake of antiquarian curiosity than of scholarship. The author does not betray any knowledge of the specific importance of the codex or of the earlier photograph. He described the picture which he had taken during a missionary trip, as

1 Cp. I. Ben-Zvi, *Textus* 1 (1960) 1 f.

2 Cp. "The Authenticity of the Aleppo Codex", *Text and Language in Bible and Qumran* (Jerusalem-Tel-Aviv 1960) 1 f. = *Textus* 1 (1960) 17 f. (quoted *Authenticity*).

3 The text from Deut. 28:17 to the end of Deut. is somewhat less than five per cent. To this should be added the page published by Wickes in 1887 and republished in *Textus* 1, containing Gen. 26:17–27:30, although not all the details are equally visible.

4 For readings from the Sapir Collations cp. *Textus* 2 (1962) 53 f. The rest of that manuscript will be published as soon as possible. Under the circumstances one would be grateful if the photographs allegedly taken from remnants of A and shown to visitors in neighbouring countries were genuine; cp. B. Roberts, *JThSt* (1965) 472.

5 It was published in *Travels through Northern Syria* by the Rev. J. Segall, Missionary in Damascus for over a Quarter of a Century, The London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews (London 1910) 99. I should like to thank Dr. M. Benayahu, Director of the Ben-Zvi Institute, for directing my attention to this publication and for his efforts to detect the original plates from which the printing was prepared (efforts that, unfortunately, proved abortive). I have been able to decipher some details from an enlarged copy of the photograph, prepared for the Institute.

representing the 'Famous Old Testament Manuscript, Aleppo'. As we shall see, there is no reason to doubt that the author was, indeed, shown the Aleppo Codex, and we are left pondering why he was permitted to take a photograph of the treasured manuscript. It would seem that this permission and his boastful story, told in the same breath (*ib.* 98), that he preached the Gospel to the Chief Rabbi of Aleppo are not totally unrelated.⁶ Be it as it may, we must be grateful today that the photograph exists.

Whatever is legible confirms the claim that it does, indeed, represent part of the Aleppo Codex.⁷ The writing, the layout, the number of lines in each column (28), the division into sections — they all combine to uphold the claim, and nothing can be detected that would testify to the contrary. A further sign, obviously secondary, is the shading on the lower-end exterior margins which corresponds to the slight discolouring noticeable in the original.

The text starts at Deut. 4:38 and ends at 6:3. Whereas the photograph is not good enough for allowing us to decipher all the details of vocalization, accentuation and Massora, the letters are clearly discernible throughout.⁸ The importance of the types of sections need not be gone into again.⁹ For this text the sections are as follows:

Opening words	Deut.	Type
או יבדיל	4:41	פ
ויקרא משה	5:1	פ
אנכי	5:6	ס
לא תשא	5:11	ס
שמור	5:12	ס
כבד	5:16	ס
לא תרצח	5:17	ס
ולא תנאף	5:18	ס
ולא תגנב	5:19	ס
ולא תענה	5:20	ס
ולא תחמד	5:21	ס
ולא תתאוה	5:21	ס
את הדברים	5:22(19)	ס

6 It should be remembered that no Jewish scholar ever received such permission. The circumstances of this story lead one to ask whether, perhaps, the photograph published by Wickes was also obtained under some outside pressure (of which Wickes himself may have been ignorant). In any case, there seems to have been nothing clandestine about taking the photographs.

7 To be precise, the *verso* of one leaf and the *recto* of the following one.

8 No differences as to *plene* and defective spellings were found, as compared with the text of L (Leningrad B 19a). Cp. *Authenticity* nn. 31; 114. 9 Cp. *Authenticity* § 14.

This system agrees exactly with the statement of Maimonides, *Code*, Book II, *Ahabah*, *Hilkhot Sefer Torah* VIII, 4 (cp. below II).

Of special interest is a phenomenon visible in the right-hand top part of the photograph. After the word האלהים (4:39) there is a space filled in with dots. Two explanations suggest themselves. The one, the more far-reaching but the less likely, would be that the scribe left the space intentionally (as a 'spacing in the middle of a verse' — פסקא באמצע פסוק), and that it was subsequently deleted (by the Massorete). I am not aware of any reason to recommend this explanation, and there is no evidence in manuscripts or Massora for a *pisqā* in this verse. The other solution would be that the scribe mistakenly wrote a word twice, and that it was subsequently erased and the blank space dotted in order to prevent a misinterpretation of the space as a *pisqā*.¹⁰

Another point of interest is the unusual length of the line at the end of the fifth commandment. The following explanation may be suggested. From other early codices we possess evidence for the custom that in MSS arranged in three columns the scribe spaced the sections in such a way that the word ולא opening the seventh and the ninth commandments stood at the end of the line. In order to achieve this arrangement our scribe overran the end of the previous line in a rather unusual way.

II

It has been stated above that the division into sections in our text is identical with that noted by Maimonides in his *Code*. As regards these sections there is no difference between the text in the common editions and that of the 'autograph' (MS Oxf. Hunt. 80).¹¹ While the whole problem of division into sections is in need of a full-scale study on the basis of MSS,¹² the following preliminary remarks may not be out of place in the present context.

A general investigation of ancient codices of the Pentateuch up to ca. 1200 C.E.¹³ confirms the complaint of Maimonides¹⁴ that the MSS are far from

10 It is not impossible that nine dots were used. In view of the custom of leaving a 'section space' equalling the measure of nine letters (cp. the discussion in *Authenticity* § 40) this detail would be worth noting. The practice in MSS around 1000 C.E. of filling by dotting the space created by an erasure, if this is the correct explanation, needs further investigation. The nearest case I remember is that of the seven dots of fol. 110 (*sic*) of L in Deut. 18:12 in the middle of the line: כל עשה אלה: כי תועבת ה'.

11 For the question cp. *Authenticity* § 26.

12 The relationship between Massoretic MSS and the Judaean Scrolls in this respect is also at present under study.

13 Our investigation is a first 'impressionistic' inquiry, and only a few calculations have been carried out so far. What is said here about the Pentateuch applies with even greater force to the rest of the Bible. Cp. also *Authenticity* n. 34 on Finfer's מסורת התורה והנביאים (Vilna 1906), and see preceding note. 14 For text and translation cp. *Authenticity* n. 1.

agreeing on the system of open and closed sections and that, halakhically speaking, much confusion reigns. Among the codices investigated by me there were not even two that agreed in all the details. I would even go so far as to suggest that as against the textual standardization in 'Massora Codices'¹⁵ from the eleventh century onward, the division into sections remained a major point of difference between manuscripts. It should be at least worth-while to investigate whether this difference would lend itself to be used as a criterion for establishing relationships between MSS.¹⁶

On the other hand, we see full agreement between different codices over limited stretches of text, even much larger than our 'fragment'. Generally speaking,¹⁷ codices tend to agree more in the places of divisions between sections than in their type (*i.e.* 'open' or 'closed'). The following details may offer some illustration:

A sample investigation of the first thirty-two sections of Deut. (up to 10: 12)¹⁸ shows complete agreement between A and L and three differences in type between A and Bu¹⁹:

והיה אם שכח	(8: 19)	A פ	—	Bu ס
שמע ישראל	(9: 1)	A פ	—	Bu ס
ועתה ישראל	(10: 12)	A פ	—	Bu ס

15 For the term cp. *Textus* 2 (1962) 36 f. The 'standardization' mentioned refers to the massoretic details. Cp. my "Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts", scheduled for Suppl. to V.T. 15, esp. § 20.

16 There are, however, signs that the tradition of the text and the tradition of the sections are not necessarily one. In the light of the diverse relationships between scribe and Massorete this result would not cause surprise. At this stage, however, the computer would have to take over, especially if the inquiry should be extended to include later MSS. It is obvious that certain later traditions were secondarily influenced by the *Code*, but the extent of such influence — especially in Yemenite manuscripts — would have to be investigated.

17 In spite of the ratio quoted below for the comparison between the Aleppo and Lenin-grad Codices (A, L).

18 The sample was chosen to include about one third of Deut., containing as much text of the book after our 'fragment' as before it, *i.e.* its total length is about seven times that of our 'fragment'. Its end is marked by the end of the first group of open sections after the Decalogue, according to the *Code*. All quotations from A, apart from those included in our photograph, are taken from the *Code*.

19 This is MS II Firk. 17, described by P. Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens* I (Stuttgart 1927) 58f., and said to be written by the same scribe as A (Ibn Buyā'a). I have reopened the discussion on this MS in *Tarbiz* 33 (1964) 149f. and shall take it up again. Cp. below n. 21. Since that article was written, a microfilm of what is said to be that MS has become available. I should like to thank Dr. D.S. Loewinger for allowing me to use it.

The picture is, however, changed by the introduction of an additional closed section in 7:7 (לא מרבכם) common to L and Bu against the continuous text in A.²⁰ To put our findings differently: Were we to possess and investigate only a stretch of text roughly equivalent in length to what is actually left of A at the end of Deut., we would come to the apparently significant conclusion that the system of these codices is practically identical. On the other hand, a comparison between A and Bu for another part of our sample (7:7—10:12) — slightly more than one third of the text up to 7:7 — would yield a completely different result.²¹ Again, on comparing for the same stretch of text up to Deut. 7:7 the roughly contemporary II Firk. 10²², we find that the differences as against the combined evidence of A Bu L run as high as about one third.²³

If more decisive evidence is needed against coming to any conclusions in matters of open and closed sections on the basis of a limited stretch of text, it is provided by L itself. In the stretch examined above, about one third of Deut., there is only one disagreement between L and A, *i.e.* the added closed section in 7:7. For the whole of Deut., however, differences of pluses and minuses are no less than 18,²⁴ *i.e.* roughly 11 % of the total number of sections in Deut.²⁵ Against this there are only six instances of differences between open

20 Bu seems to have, somewhat amazingly, another closed section before 2:9, but there the microfilm is not absolutely clear.

21 Now that Bu seems to have become available a new investigation of its relationship to A is in order. For the moment I should like to state that the queries raised in this respect by A. Dothan (*Tarbiz* 34 [1965] 136f.) are not borne out by the facts. While the palaeographical investigation can be carried out now on a much broader basis, I have found, as yet, nothing which would compel us to challenge the attribution of that MS to the scribe of A. If I am right—as I think I am—Bu offers a very good illustration of the respective functions of scribe and Massorete, also with regard to the division into sections and—to top it—the Song of Moses. (Part of the Song is lost—at least in the microfilm—but it obviously differs in its arrangement from A and seems to have been composed in seventy lines.) It is already certain that Bu would not be a good substitute for the missing part of A.—After Dr. Loewinger answers certain queries of Dothan (on the basis of the MS at his disposal) I intend to re-enter the discussion. Cp. also *The Book of Isaiah: Sample Edition* (Jerusalem 1965) I, n. 40.

22 Cp. P. Kahle, *Masoreten des Westens* I, 60f. The microfilm was studied in the Department for Hebrew MS photocopies at the National and University Library, Jerusalem.

23 *E.g.*, in the text of the Decalogue MS II Firk. 10 has no section at all before כבוד (5:16) and ולא תתאוו (5:21). By the way, that MS writes the Song of Moses in seventy lines.

24 Not to mention the difference in the layout of the Song of Moses and the preceding and following verses; cp. *Authenticity* §14f.

25 The majority of differences are pluses in L. It may be suggested that L shows a certain tendency to break a given continuous stretch of text containing precepts and prohibitions into additional sections (in one case—23:8—there is a פסקא באמצע פסוק).

and closed sections.²⁶ But this result is in no way typical and must not be used as the basis of any calculation. For the investigation of Genesis shows eleven cases of differences between open and closed sections as against only three cases of pluses or minuses.²⁷

Apart from the comparison of early extant MSS, the variants introduced into the text of the *Code*, as shown in MS Oxf. Hunt. 80, may indicate to some extent which of the traditions different from A were so strong as to penetrate into the text of the *Code* itself. The full apparatus of variants on *Code*, *Ahabah*²⁸ shows a considerable number of variants.²⁹ Most significant, of course, are the marginal notations of MS Hunt. 80. To be sure, not all of them reflect different traditions and they are often corrections of the scribe's mistakes. But some are attempts at harmonization with a conflicting tradition,³⁰ and later MSS of the *Code* as well as printed editions show that the substitute tradition prevailed.³¹ As an illustration: in the beginning of Exodus the original reading of MS Hunt. 80 was: וידבר אל משה (6:2), וידבר ה' אל משה. However, for 6:2 we find the marginal addition 'closed' and another section (6:10 — וידבר ה' אל משה) is introduced on the other margin, so that the final 'both closed' is made to yield sense. It is this substitute tradition which appears in our common printed editions. The total of marginal notations suspected of representing substitute traditions in MS Hunt. 80 is hardly more than one per cent. Even so, any future find of a missing part of A should be checked not against the printed text of the *Code* but against the MSS — first and foremost MS Hunt. 80.³² But again, in this case too an investigation of a limited portion of the text may be misleading. Thus, in the whole Book of Genesis there is apparently not one substitute tradition in MS Hunt. 80, whereas elsewhere we may find one change after the other.

The preceding remarks on the differences in the division into sections are meant to illustrate the problem in evaluating our 'fragment'. But they may be of some interest in their own right as an introduction to the problem as

26 Half of these are in the chapters actually extant in A; cp. *Authenticity* §13.

27 The total number of sections given for A in Genesis is ninety-one.

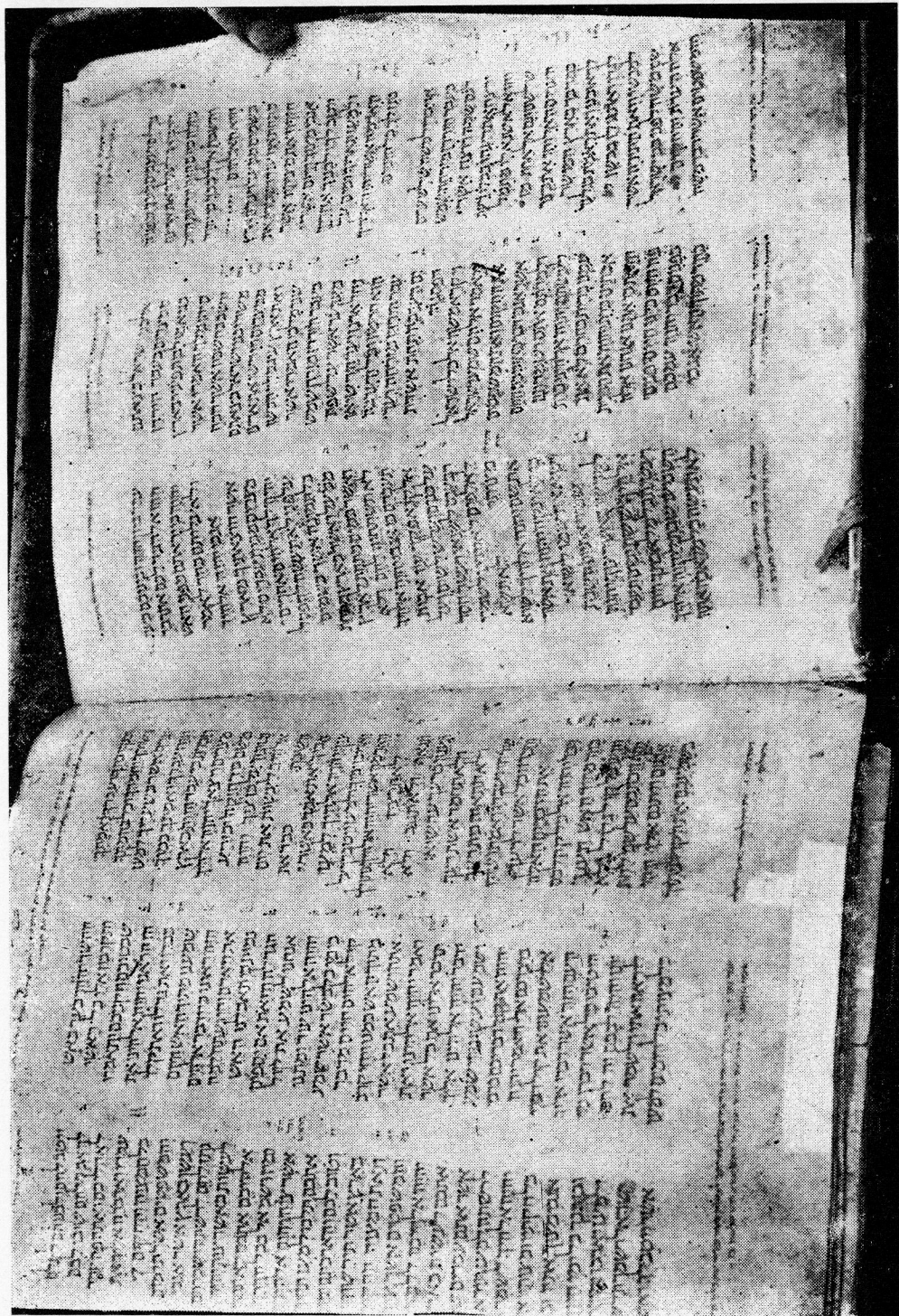
28 This important work is being carried out by Rabbi M. Katzenellenbogen of the Mosad Harav Kook, who kindly let me see his draft.

29 A comparison between that apparatus and existing Bible MSS will have to be carried out.

30 I trust that the example quoted below is one of these; but without more extensive investigation we cannot be sure.

31 For the problem of substitute tradition in the *Code* with regard to the layout of a Torah scroll cp. *Authenticity* §24f.

32 To the MSS mentioned in *Authenticity* §27f. one must add especially MS Casanat. 3153, because it often shows the changes introduced into the *Code*.



The Aleppo Codex
Deut. 4: 38—6: 3
From J. Segall, *Travels through Northern Syria* (London 1910) 99

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A RECOVERED PART OF THE ALEPPO CODEX

PLATE I



The Aleppo Codex

Deut. 4:38—5:14

Enlarged from J. Segall, *Travels through Northern Syria* (London 1910) 99



The Aleppo Codex

Deut. 5:14—6:3

Enlarged from J. Segall, *Travels through Northern Syria* (London 1910) 99

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A RECOVERED PART OF THE ALEPPO-CODEX

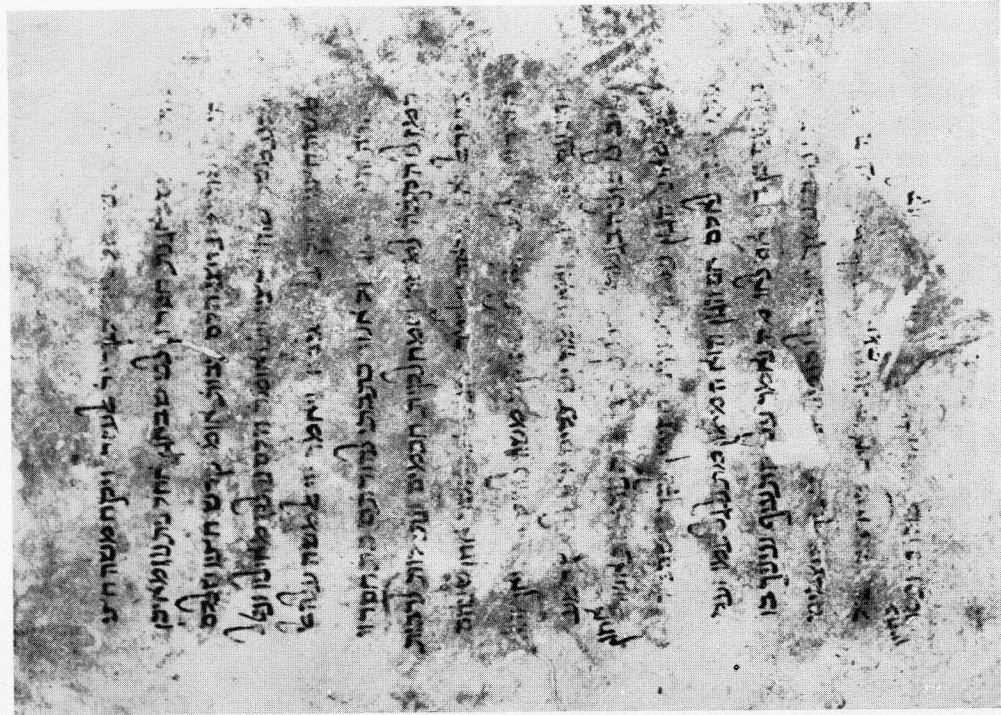
PLATE III

פלג צמח וליב צח למטה לשבע בגמרא כסדר וכל פלג
 אדם אחד בלבד שכן כתוב וכל נעמן במוסר וירבו
 חסר יוד ובסוף כתוב ה' הרחב שבמק חסר חזקמן
 אחד מלה ויתרענו בני ישראל את עיניו מור חורב ולמה לא
 שער שלא חטאו יסרה במעשה העולה ורור חרב לפניהם
 מלכיהם את איביהם וכשחלאו במעשה העולה ורור
 ענין חורב בלשון חרפה ורעואה בסוף וכל יודי למור
 למי שחשבוהו מלך בבואו ושנה קנה מלך כמור
 ענין ש' למור בסוף שאנען יודי שנה קנה מלך
 ה' שבת עונותיהם שנישדא ושלילה למור צמח ויחיה
 ענין ש' בסוף בן כמור לבן כל ענין כתוב בסוף
 יחיה לה ישרא למרענו כל י' שמוח בשמך
 ב' למור מרענו שמוח העולם ה' שמוח ה' למור
 גמ' יחיה ב' למור יחיה יחיה העולם למור
 ענין ש' בסוף בן כמור לבן כל ענין כתוב בסוף

Cambridge T-S D I
Fragment n. 61, 1a

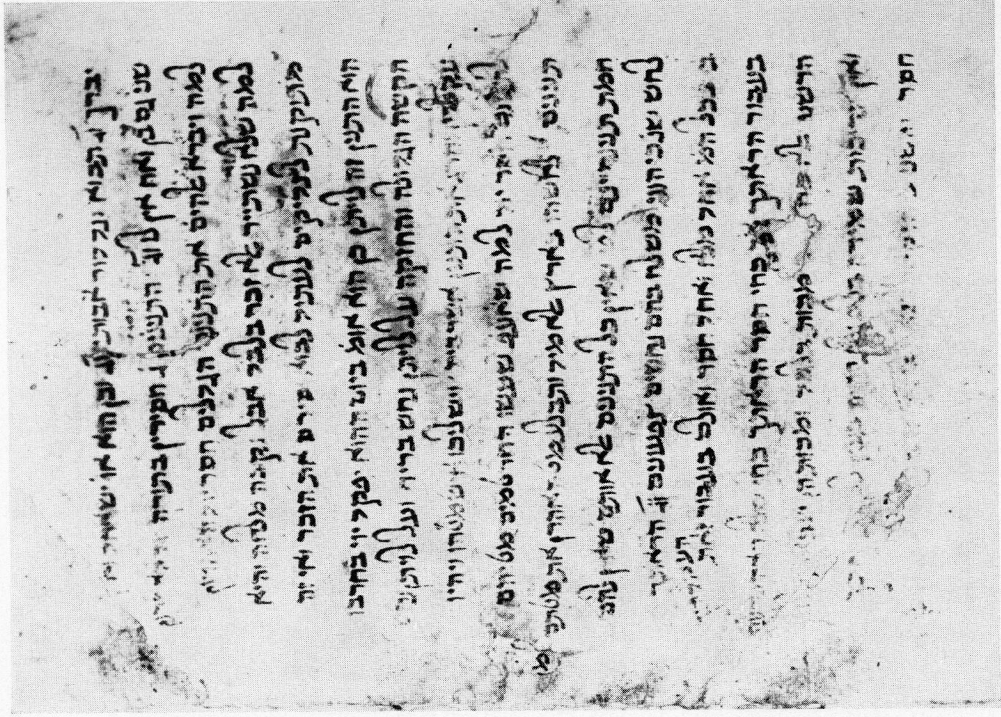
פלג צמח וליב צח למטה לשבע בגמרא כסדר וכל פלג
 אדם אחד בלבד שכן כתוב וכל נעמן במוסר וירבו
 חסר יוד ובסוף כתוב ה' הרחב שבמק חסר חזקמן
 אחד מלה ויתרענו בני ישראל את עיניו מור חורב ולמה לא
 שער שלא חטאו יסרה במעשה העולה ורור חרב לפניהם
 מלכיהם את איביהם וכשחלאו במעשה העולה ורור
 ענין חורב בלשון חרפה ורעואה בסוף וכל יודי למור
 למי שחשבוהו מלך בבואו ושנה קנה מלך כמור
 ענין ש' למור בסוף שאנען יודי שנה קנה מלך
 ה' שבת עונותיהם שנישדא ושלילה למור צמח ויחיה
 ענין ש' בסוף בן כמור לבן כל ענין כתוב בסוף
 יחיה לה ישרא למרענו כל י' שמוח בשמך
 ב' למור מרענו שמוח העולם ה' שמוח ה' למור
 גמ' יחיה ב' למור יחיה יחיה העולם למור
 ענין ש' בסוף בן כמור לבן כל ענין כתוב בסוף

Cambridge T-S D I
Fragment n. 61, 1b



Cambridge T-S D I
Fragment n. 61, 2a

B. KELLER



Cambridge T-S D I
Fragment n. 61, 2b

FRAGMENT D'UN TRAITÉ D'EXÉGÈSE MASSORÉTIQUE

PLATE II

such, even though much further investigation is needed before the complete picture can emerge. In the present context the following conclusions may, perhaps, be suggested: For any limited stretch of text, such as the one published here, it is only *disagreement* between the system of sections of a fragment and that of the *Code* (as presented in MS Hunt. 80) that could become decisive evidence — in that case against identification. An *agreement* for such a limited portion of text could hardly ever be decisive evidence unless corroborated by other facts.³³ The evidence from the system of sections in our case is thus only of limited value, *i.e.* all we can show is that from that point of view the identification is possible. It is, therefore, the combined external and internal evidence—the story told without any apparent knowledge of the special importance of the codex, the writing, the general layout, the number of lines and only then the agreement as to the division into sections — that makes us conclude that we have, indeed, recovered a ‘fragment’ from the lost part of the Aleppo Codex.

33 More cautiously: the acceptability of such evidence would have to be specifically proved, and such proof would be rather difficult. As regards the text published here, on the evidence of the sections alone it could have been taken from all the other manuscripts mentioned above (and many others too), because in this particular part of Deuteronomy there was apparently considerable agreement between early codices.