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DaKH: On One Reference Sign in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts

JOEL BINDER AND MORDECHAI WEINTRAUB

SIGNES DE RENVOI—reference signs (lit. “signs of return”)—appear frequently in medieval manuscript books with marginal notes, and their role is to refer the reader of the text to notes that appear on the margins. In medieval manuscripts, marginal notes may include textual emendations, filling in of omissions in the text, or other information related to the text. A common reference sign in medieval Hebrew manuscripts is the circellus that is already found in masorah notes of eastern biblical codices from the tenth and eleventh centuries. This symbol was also used by Rashi (R. Shlomo b. Isaac; Northern France, 1040–1105) according to the testimony of R. Isaac b. Moshe of Vienna (c. 1180–c. 1250) in his work *Or zarua*.¹ The most widespread reference sign in Hebrew manuscripts is the tailed circle in which the circle appears next to the text whereas the tail points to the note in the margin.² The practice of medieval scribes in complementing omissions in the text by means of reference signs is described

We would like to thank Dr. Yoav Rosenthal, who first turned our attention to the sign that is the subject of the current paper. We also thank Ariel Ephraim Aharonov, Prof. Malachi Beit-Arié, Daniel Cane, Prof. Simcha Emanuel, Dr. Yakov Z. Mayer, and Dr. Pinchas Roth for their references to some DaKH signs in manuscripts and in print.

1. Mordechai Glatzer, “The Aleppo Codex: Codicological and Paleographical Aspects” (Hebrew), *Sefunot* 4 (1989): 224–25; David Lians, “‘Igulit ha-masorah be-keter aram tsovah: ‘Iyun be-tafkidah uve-derekh simunah,” in *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer Festschrift: Collected Papers in Jewish Studies*, ed. M. Bar-Asher (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1991), 265–93. For R. Isaac b. Moshe of Vienna’s testimony, see *Or zarua*, vol. 1, Laws of Handwashing, #61 (Zhytomyr, 1862), 15a. The circle was omitted in Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Library, MS Rosenthaliana 3, fol. 32r, according to which the edition was edited and appears in London, British Library, Or. MS 2860, fol. 161v.

2. Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Historical and Comparative Typology of Medieval Hebrew Codices Based on the Documentation of the Extant Dated Manuscripts until*

by R. Nissim b. Reuben of Gerona (Ran; c. 1310–c. 1375), who writes about “Torah scrolls in which the scribe omitted some words or verses in the middle of the line and emended and added them between the columns and marked dots or circles between the lines at the locus of the omission, as the practice of the scribes in other books.”³ In medieval Hebrew manuscripts one can find various other signs, such as three dots in the shape of a *seghol* (or *trigon*), two dots in the shape of a *tsere* (or *distigme*), a manicule, star, double apostrophe, and a short horizontal line.⁴ This paper deals with an unusual reference sign which rather than being a graphical sign consists of two Hebrew letters: 77.

THE DAKH SIGN AND ITS USE

The DaKH sign is very common in Hebrew manuscripts. It appears in manuscripts from the tenth century up to the eighteenth and can be found in almost every Jewish geographical region, in the Middle East and across Europe.⁵ This sign can be found in nearly every genre of Hebrew

1540 *Using a Quantitative Approach*, trans. I. Goldberg, ed. N. Pasternak (Jerusalem and Hamburg, 2021), 496–7, <http://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.9349>.

3. *Responsa of R. Nissim b. Reuben Gerondi*, #39, ed. L. A. Feldman (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1984), 163. See also *Leket yosher*, vol. 2, ed. Y. Freimann (Berlin, 1904), 59.

4. On some examples see Mauro Perani, “Textual and Paratextual Devices of the Ancient Proto-Sephardic Bologna Torah Scroll,” in *The Ancient Sefer Torah of Bologna: Features and History*, ed. M. Perani (Leiden, 2019), 66; Sinai Turan, “On the History of the ‘Pointing Finger’ in Hebrew Booklore and in the Customs of Torah Reading,” in *Kenishta: Studies of the Synagogue World* 3, ed. J. Tabory (Hebrew; Ramat Gan, 2007), 317–44.

5. The tenth century (according to the estimate of Malachi Beit-Arié) – Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Antonin MS B 36, fol. 4r; the eleventh century – Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 3173, fol. 22r; the twelfth century – London, British Library, Add. MS 27169, fol. 70v; the thirteenth century – Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mich. MS 571, fol. 38r; the fourteenth century – London, British Library, Or. MS 2859, fol. 39r; the fifteenth century – Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 405, fol. 5r; and from the sixteenth century, at the beginning of the print era, in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, MS G-I-3, which is full of DaKH signs. Although this sign did not migrate into the print culture, it did survive in modern manuscript culture and can still be found in the beginning of the eighteenth century in the letter of ordination of R. Tzvi Ashkenazi (Hakham Tzvi). See Avraham Hayim Vagne and Gavriel Falk, *Toldot ya’abets: Kolel korot yeme haye rabenu Ya’akov Yisra’el ben ha-rav mo”b Tzvi Hirsh Ashkenazi z”l* (Amsterdam, 1869), Additions II. As to its geographical distribution, the DaKH sign can be found in the following regions: Middle East – Antonin MS B 36, fol. 4r; Byzantium(?) – Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, L-G Talm. 1.110, fol. 1r; Italy – Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 32, fol. 9r; Germany – BL Or. MS 2859, fol. 39r; France – Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS héb. 44, fol. 16v; Provence – Paris,

literature.⁶ The DaKH sign serves several purposes; according to the examples we have collected, most commonly it marks a lacuna in the text and refers the reader to missing text provided in the upper or lower margins of the manuscript page. In most cases it appears both on the margin next to the line where the omission occurred, or within it, and next to the omitted text on the margin (see fig. 1).⁷

Klagsbald Collection, MS 70, fol. 169r; England—Washington DC, Museum of the Bible, MS 858, fol. 299r (olim: London, Valmadonna Trust Library MS 1. On the English provenance of this manuscript, see Malachi Beit-Arié, *The Only Dated Medieval Hebrew Manuscript Written in England [1189 CE]* [London, 1985]; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Les Manuscrits hébreux dans l'Angleterre médiévale: Étude historique et paléographique* [Paris, 2003], 238); Spain—Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 527, fol. 60r. The only region in which we did not find this sign is Yemen. The sign was particularly prevalent in Ashkenaz. In these examples, the DaKH is from the same hand by which the manuscript itself was written or from the same type of writing. The dates of the manuscripts from the Bodleian, the Palatina, and the Vatican libraries are given according to the updated catalogues: Malachi Beit-Arié, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. I (A. Neubauer's Catalogue)* (Oxford, 1994); Benjamin Richler and Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma: Catalogue* (Jerusalem, 2001); Benjamin Richler, Malachi Beit-Arié, and Nurit Pasternak, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library: Catalogue* (Vatican City, 2008). The dates of the other manuscripts are according to the Ktiv website of the National Library of Israel (<http://web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/manuscript>), unless otherwise noted.

6. Torah scroll—private collection (described by Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, 472n30); biblical codices—Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 212, fol. 110r; Mishnah—Palatina MS 3173, fol. 22r; halakhic midrash—Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 3259, fol. 30v; Talmud Yerushalmi—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 133, fol. 103v; Talmud Bavli—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 122, fol. 94v; aggadic midrash—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 60, fol. 49v+53r; geonic literature—Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, MS Or. Qu. 685, fol. 278v; biblical exegesis—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 94, fol. 8v; talmudic exegesis—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 131, fol. 78r; halakhic literature—Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Evr. I 210, fol. 35v; responsa literature—Guenzburg 527, fol. 60r; *minhag* literature—BSB Cod. hebr. 405, fol. 5r; *muwar* literature—Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 183, fol. 162v; linguistics—Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 625, fol. 7r; masorah—Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, MS Yb Qu. 10, fol. 49v; liturgy—Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS héb. 649, fol. 16v; piyyut—Antonin MS B 36, fol. 4r; piyyut commentary—Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Opp. 172, fol. 11r; mystical literature—Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich. 350, fol. 49r; scientific literature—Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Plut. 88.56, fol. 89v.

7. Usually the DaKH will appear at the beginning of the note, but it is not uncommon that it appears at its end. For instance: Vat. ebr. 32, fol. 51r; Vienna,

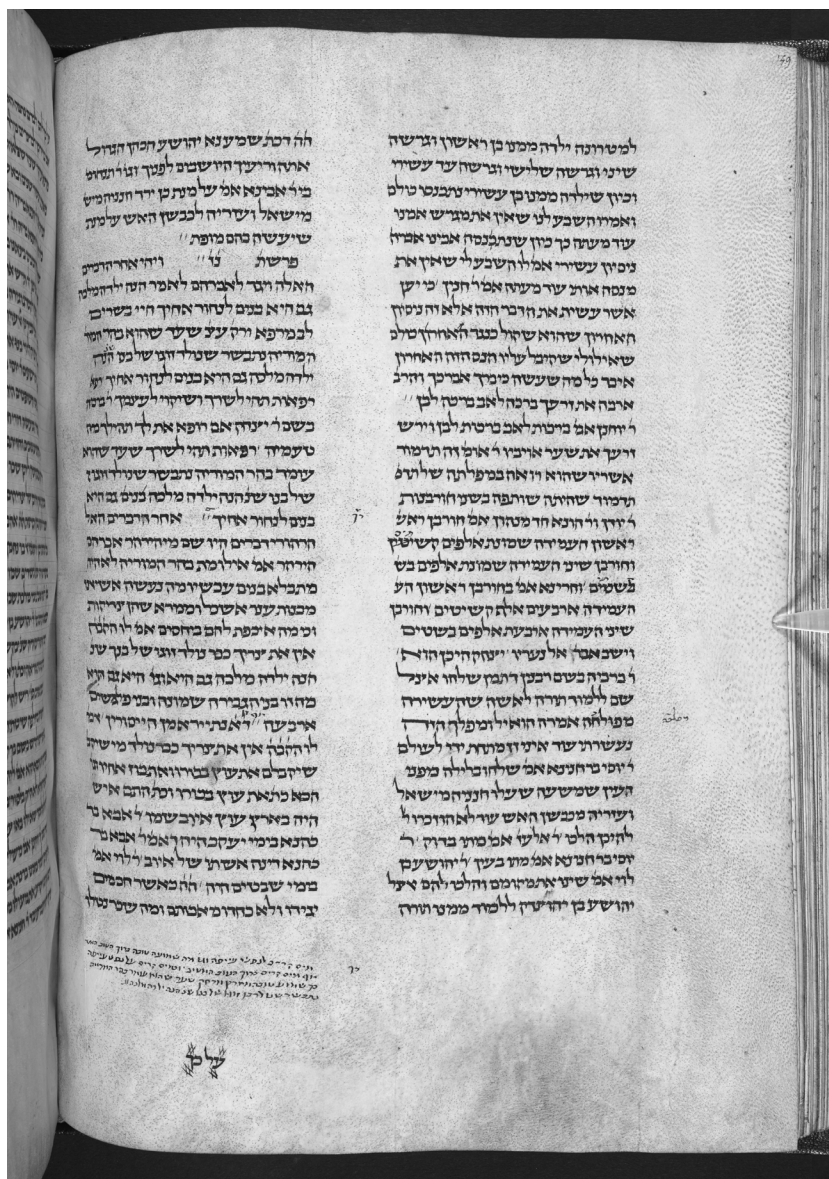


Figure 1. DaKH sign in the center of the page indicating the location of the omission, and again in the lower margin with omitted text. *Sifra* (Ashkenazi script, thirteenth century C.E.). London, British Library, MS Add. 16406, fol. 80v.

On some occasions, the DaKH is used as a reference sign (*signe de renvoi*) to a marginal note which does not address an omission. This kind of use is particularly common in Ashkenazic manuscripts, which abound with notes on their margins with quotations from different sources that are related to the main text of the manuscript.⁸ In two manuscripts we found DaKH signs indicating that one note is a continuation of the other.⁹ Sometimes its role is to mark a lacuna in the text,¹⁰ or point to the correct order of parts within the text.¹¹ Occasionally we will find alongside the DaKH an additional indication as to the location of the note, as “above” or “below” and even a detailed reference to another page in the manuscript where the omission has been complemented.¹² In a similar fashion, we can sometimes find next to the DaKH a tailed circle pointing to the margin where the note is located.¹³ In one instance the scribe distinguished between two DaKH signs in the same page by adding a hint to the nature of the note: $\text{פ} = \text{perush}$ (commentary), and $\text{נ"י} = \text{nusah aḥer}$ (a varia lectio).¹⁴ In another manuscript the scribe differentiated between several DaKH signs

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 12b, fols. 8r, 9r, 14r; Evr. I 210, fol. 35v.

8. For example, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 2902, which contains many additions of this kind accompanied by DaKH signs. On the Ashkenazic glossing culture, see Simcha Emanuel, *Fragments of the Tablets: Lost Books of the Tosephists* (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 2006), 9–12.

9. Evr. I 210, fol. 96r; Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 82, fol. 12v.

10. BL Or. MS 2859, fol. 39r; Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 3152, fol. 7v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich. 9, fol. 31v.

11. Vat. ebr. 60, fols. 49v, 53r; L-G Talm. 1.110, fol. 7r–v; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS 61, fols. 534v, 539v, 565v. On the last example, see Myron Bialik Lerner, “New Light on the Spanish Recension of Deuteronomy Rabba [1]: The Evolution of Ed. Lieberman” (Hebrew), *Te‘udab* 11 (1996): 115–19. This kind of DaKH can also be described as an omission sign since it marks an omission in the correct place in the text.

12. “DaKH above” appears in London, British Library, Add. MS 27169, fol. 70v; El Escorial G-I-3, fol. 42v. “DaKH and it is written below” — BSB Cod. hebr. 212, fol. 110r (the words “and it is written below” were added at a later stage). For a DaKH which refers to a different page in the manuscript, see *Hidushe ha-Rashba*, *Yevamot* 4b (Constantinople, 1720), 89a: “and so is also apparent from the words of Alfasi who wrote in the laws of tsitsit Dakh (and it is written at the end of the tractate)”; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. ebr. 324, fol. 52v: “DaKH turn the page to the white side and you will find what belongs here” (Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel, *Haggadah shel pesah: Shenayim mi yodea’* [Lod, 2005], 139n328, managed to read only the words “DaKH. turn the page to the side”).

13. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. ebr. 146, fol. 159r; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. ebr. 132, fol. 18v.

14. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Heb. c. 17/65, fol. 1v. Also compare Bodleian MS Mich. 350, fol. 49r, where “bagab” was added next to the DaKH signs.

the “word” DaKH. Exception to this rule is the glossarist on Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS 3152, which includes the work *Torat ha-Adam* of Nahmanides (1194–1270). In fol. 7v Nahmanides mentions a question which was asked before R. Abraham b. David of Posquières (Rabad; c. 1125–1198), but his reply is missing. On the right margin someone noted, “DaKH ha-meḥaber ha-tshuvat she’elah,” and the entire question and answer by Rabad follows, copied by a different hand. The sentence “DaKH ha-meḥaber ha-tshuvat she’elah” indicates that the writer perceived the “word” DaKH as a verb meaning “omission,” as though it were written: “The author omitted the answer to the question.” There are a few more instances like this. In London, British Library, Or. MS 2859, fol. 39r, there is a lacuna in the text. The copyist marked this lacuna by leaving one column blank and next to it he noted, “DaKH and in the copy in front of me half a page was left blank.” Here, too, DaKH is used as if its meaning would be “Something is missing here.” In like manner can be seen a note in London, British Library, Add. MS 27169, fol. 70v, which reads, “DaKH what is written above”—that is, “Here is missing what appears above.” This understanding of the DaKH is merely intuitive, and this word is not known in this meaning from any other source.²⁰

The fact that this sign was not known in the last centuries caused its corruption by modern editors or its deletion altogether.²¹ The first who

20. Another possible example of this understanding of the DaKH sign is found in Toronto, University Library, MS FR 5-011, p. 823, which contains the *Sefer ha-Mordekhai*. Next to a quotation from *Sefer Rokeaḥ* are two tailed circles, one at the beginning of the passage and one at its end, facing each other. Alongside each circle a DaKH was marked, and at the end of the passage was commented by the same hand, “this is how it appears in my copy.” It is possible that he who marked this was indicating that this passage was omitted from his copy, and this passage is indeed missing in several manuscripts of the work. See *Mordekhai ha-shalem, Pesahim*, ed. Y. Horowitz (Jerusalem, 2008), 135n19.

21. The DaKH sign in SBB Or. Qu. 685, fol. 278v, was omitted in David Kasel’s edition, *Teshuvot ge’onim kadmonim*, #97 (Berlin, 1848), 33a. See Jacob Nahum Epstein, “Teshuvot ha-ge’onim,” in *Studies in Talmudic Literature and Semitic Languages*, vol. 1, ed. E. Z. Melamed (Hebrew; Jerusalem, 1983), 212. In Vat. ebr. 133, fol. 103v, some words were omitted and added on the margin. The missing words were incorporated in the synoptic edition, but the DaKH was omitted. See *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, 1/3–5, ed. P. Schäfer et al. (Tübingen, 1992), 286. Similarly, the DaKH in Cambridge, University Library, MS T-S F17.35 was omitted in Luis Ginzberg’s edition, *Yerushalmi Fragments: From the Genizah*, vol. 1 (Hebrew; New York, 1909), 66 and corrupted in the recent edition of this manuscript (“KaKH”): Yaacov Sussmann, *Ginze Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem, 2020), 133. In Nicholas de Lange, *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Tübingen, 1996), 111, the DaKH signs found in L-G Talm. 1.110 were omitted. The many DaKH

attempted to decipher this sign was the nineteenth-century scholar R. Raphael Nathan Rabinowitz (1835–1888). In his magnum opus *Dikduke sofrim* Rabinowitz describes the DaKH signs he found in manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud and proposes to interpret them as an abbreviation; in his words, “I do not know how to interpret it. Possibly is it an acronym for *dukhteb kan* [=its place is here]. It was overlooked by the scribe who noticed it only after writing some more lines, and [the scribe] then copied the omitted text at the place in which he noticed it and marked [by a DaKH sign] the margin where it belongs.”²² Rabinowitz’s dubious interpretation was made into a certainty by some later scholars who repeat it with differing degrees of agreement.²³ Rabinowitz offered yet another interpretation: “Perhaps it is an acronym for *ḏavkane katve* [=punctual

signs found in BSB Cod. hebr. 405 were omitted in *Leket Yosher*, ed. A. Kinarti, vols. 1–2 (Jerusalem, 2010–2013). The DaKH, which was unidentifiable by scholars, was sometimes marked in other ways. See Emile G. L. Schrijver, “Some Light on the Amsterdam and London Manuscripts of Isaac ben Moses of Vienna’s *Or Zarua*,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 75 (1993): 68, where the DaKH is replaced by three dots. Instances where editors corrupted the DaKH sign: *Leket Yosher*, vol. 1, ed. J. Freimann, 6n9. Freimann copied the DaKH as ZaKH and interpreted it as referring to a fourteenth-century scholar: “Perhaps it is R. ZaKH (=Zalman Katz) author of *Sefer ha-yeri’ab*.” In the corrigenda section printed in the second part of the edition, on 101, after consulting the manuscript, Freimann corrected his reading and referred to Rabinowitz (see next note). In another instance DaKH was “corrected” to Kakh. See *Hidushe ha-Rashba, Yevamot*, ed. S. Dikman (Jerusalem, 2009), 15n5. Similarly, by Lerner, “New Light on the Spanish Recension,” 117n65 (“Kakh or Bakh or Dakh or something similar”) and next to n. 69 (“here is missing Kakh ve-Kakh [=so and so]”). It might be worthwhile to note two manuscript catalogers who noticed and described DaKH signs they encountered. See Arthur Zacharias Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien* (Vienna, 1925) 5, 16, 29; Senior Sachs in his unpublished catalogue of the Guenzburg collection, Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Evr. IV 141, p. 105, no. 623.

22. Raphael Nathan Rabinowitz, *Dikduke sofrim, Sanbedrin*, vol. 9 (Mainz, 1878), 1 star note. See also Rabinowitz, *Dikduke sofrim, Bava Metsi’a*, vol. 13 (Munich, 1883), fol. 14b, n. 2.

23. Menachem Katz, “Yerushalmi Citations in Manuscripts of the Bavli” (Hebrew), *Sidra* 7 (1991): 38n31; Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel, *Chapters in the History of the Jewish Books: Writing and Transmission* (Hebrew; Ramat Gan, 2005), 74n143; Spiegel, *Haggadah shel pesah*, 139n328; Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel, *Chapters in the History of the Jewish Books: Scholars and Their Annotations* (Hebrew; Ramat Gan, 2005), 158 note 6; Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel, “Ha-shimush be-kitsurim uve-rashe tevot she-’enam shekhihim,” *Yesburun* 10 (2002): 817n14; Kozma, *Ma’aseh rokeah*, 69; Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology*, 533; Vladislav Zeev Slepoy, *Halachische Literatur in Aschkenas in den Jahren 1550–1500* (Heidelberg, 2016), 125–26.

scribes write], i.e., so is it in accurate books.”²⁴ Rabinowitz’s proposals are mere speculation.²⁵

THE ANCORA SIGN AND THE DAKH SIGN

In Greek papyri of literary works from the first centuries B.C.E. are various technical signs which were invented by the Alexandrine grammarians for the purpose of the criticism of the Homeric text.²⁶ Jewish sages in Palestine were familiar with the Homeric corpus, and it was proposed that two of these technical signs, the *obelos* (ὀβελός) and the *antístigma* (ἀντίστιγμα), penetrated into the biblical masoretic text.²⁷ To this family of signs joins in a later period the ancora sign. The role of the ancora—an omission sign in the form of an anchor that appears in Greek papyri and manuscripts (and later in Latin ones as well) since the first century B.C.E.—is to anchor the omitted text, which appears on the margin, to its place within the text (see fig. 2). It appears in two forms—turning downward (⤵; ancora superior) and upward (⤴; ancora inferior). In most of the occurrences of this sign, two parallel ancora signs are turning toward each other, at the locus of the omission in the text and on the upper or lower margins where the omitted text is given, but in some instances both signs, on the margins and in the

24. Rabinowitz, *Dikduke Sofrim, Sanhedrin*, fol. 149a, n. 7. This interpretation assumes that DaKH signs only mark textual variations or additions found in other manuscripts.

25. Epstein, “Teshuvot ha-ge’onim,” 212, who noted on the DaKH sign in SBB Or. Qu. 685, fol. 278v, comments that “its meaning is uncertain.” However, on his personal offprint of this article he noted “Persian رُخ, ‘row’, Talmud: Idakh, Dekh? Similarly, Dakh. Dikdukei Sofrim to Sanhedrin, introduction, note.” This note was published in his collected essays, “Teshuvot ha-ge’onim,” n. 122. These proposals are improbable, and their etymologies are apparently influenced by the fact that they appear in a manuscript of geonica. Another, far-fetched even more, interpretation (*avar kotev*, words of the author) was offered by Marc Saperstein and Ephraim Kanarfogel, “Drashot mi-Bizantyon bi-khtav yad: Te’ur ktav ha-yad u-ktā’im be-’inyane tefilah u-vet ha-kneset,” *Pe’amim* 78 (1999): 180n89.

26. Victor Gardthausen, *Griechische Paläographie*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913), 410–15; Alfred Gudeman, “Kritische Zeichen,” *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 11 (Stuttgart, 1922), 1916–1927; Markus Dubischar, “Typology of Philological Writings,” in *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Greek Scholarship*, ed. F. Montanari, S. Matthaios, and A. Rengakos (Leiden, 2015), 2:551–53.

27. Samuel Krauss, “Der Obelos im masoretischen Texte,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 22 (1902): 57–64; Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs, and Manner of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.–IV Century C.E.* (New York, 1962), 38–46. On the acquaintance of the sages with the Homeric text, see Guy Darshan, “The Twenty-Four Books of the Hebrew Bible and Alexandrian Scribal Methods,” in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. M. R. Niehoff (Leiden, 2012), 229–31.

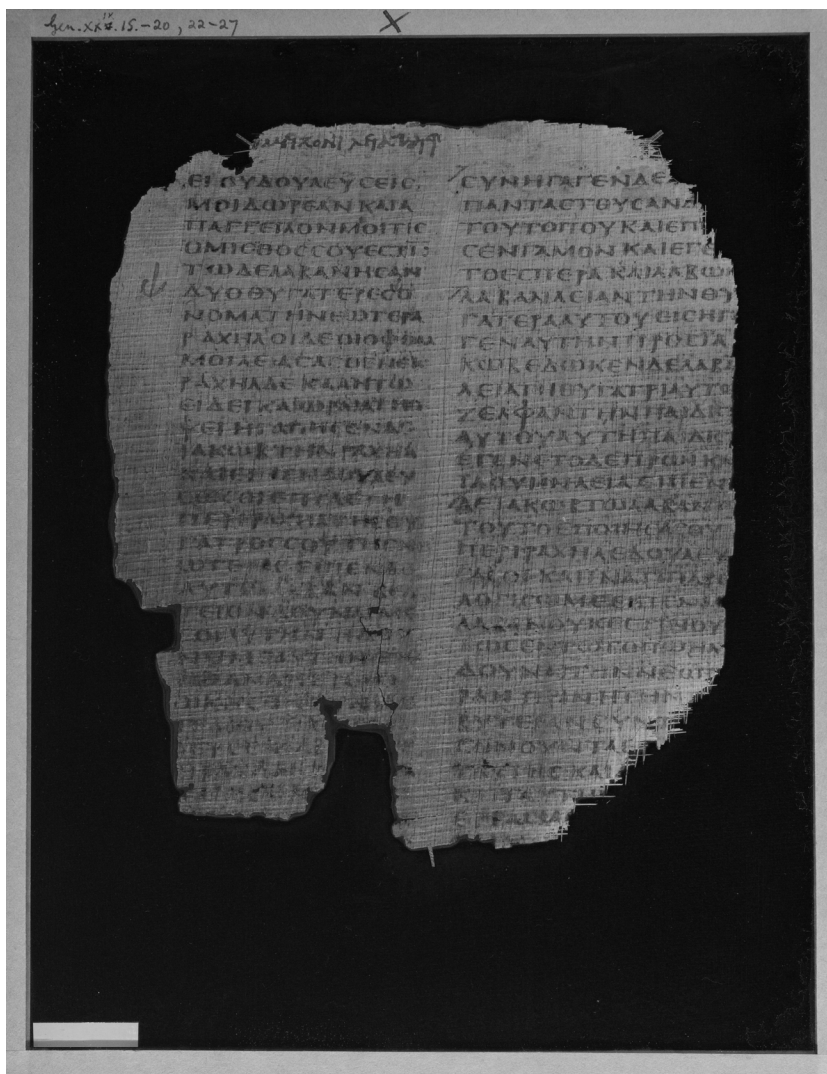


Figure 2. Ancora sign indicating the location of omitted text, and again in the upper margin with omitted text. Septuagint to Genesis (Egypt, fourth century C.E.). Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS BP IV f.24.

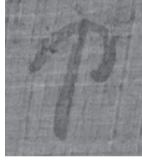


Figure 3. Ancora. Detail, Septuagint to Genesis. Egypt, fourth century C.E. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS BP IV f.24.



Figure 4. DaKH. Detail, *Beresbit Rabbab*. Italian script, eleventh century C.E. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 60, fol. 49v.

text, are turning downwards. We sometimes find the ancora at the place of the omission within the line, or on the margin along the line where the omission occurred. In some cases, inscriptions “below” (κάτω) and “above” (ἄνω) were added next to the ancora signs in order to assist the reader in locating the note. Alongside its use as an omission sign, the ancora can also be used to mark a corrupt text or to note a *varia lectio*.²⁸

The DaKH and ancora signs have identical usages: both mark an omission, or occasionally, to refer the reader to notes on the margins.²⁹ It is worth noting that the graphic form of the ancora is very similar to that of the Hebrew letters *dalet* and final *kaf*—an affinity may be observed between the downward form of the ancora and the DaKH sign (see figs. 3 and 4). However, as mentioned, the ancora first appears in the first century B.C.E. and is attested in Greek and Latin manuscripts in the aforementioned uses up to the fifth century C.E.³⁰ In the late sixth century Isidore of Seville

28. Kathleen McNamee, *Sigla and Selected Marginalia in Greek Literary Papyri* (Brussels, 1992), 11–13; Elias Avery Lowe, “The Oldest Omission Signs in Latin Manuscripts: Their Origin and Significance,” in *Palaeographical Papers: 1907–1965*, ed. L. Bieler (Oxford, 1972), 2:349–58; Eric Gardner Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Princeton, N.J., 1971), 38, 66, 76; H. J. M. Milne and T. C. Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus* (London, 1938), 41–42.

29. On the shift of graphic signs to Hebrew alphabetic letters, compare also the inverted *nunin* in Num 10.35–36, which evolve from the Greek *antisigma*. See Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, 38–46. Similarly, the coronis sign (κορωνίς) found in Greek manuscripts and perhaps in Hebrew ones as well, which turned into a final *nun* in Torah scrolls. See Yakir Paz, “‘Binding Crowns to the Letters’—A Divine Scribal Practice in Its Historical Context” (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 86 (2009): 233–67. Also compare the use of Greek letters when describing shapes. “as a gamma”: mKel 28.7; t’Eruv 4.4. “as a Xi”: mMen 6.3; mKel 20.7; tTer 4.9; tMen 8.8–10. On these descriptions, see also Elias Fink, “Schriftgeschichtliche Beobachtungen an den beiden Griechischen Buchstaben Γ und Χ, deren sich der Talmud zur Bezeichnung von Gestalten bedient,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 10 (1935): 169–83.

30. Lowe, “The Oldest Omission Signs”; McNamee, *Sigla and Selected Marginalia*, table 2; Evina Steinová, *Notam Superponere Studui: The Use of Annotation Symbols*

(c. 560–636) describes the ancora and its uses in his *Etymologiae*, and from his inaccurate description it can possibly be concluded that he did not know this sign through “living” use.³¹ We have, however, a five-hundred-year gap between the decline in the use of the ancora in the Greek and Latin world and the earliest attestation of the DaKH sign in Hebrew manuscripts.³² Nonetheless, one has to bear in mind that the corpus of Hebrew manuscripts from this period of time—fifth to tenth centuries—is considerably meagre, and hence the significance of this gap is limited.³³

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in the Early Middle Ages (Turnhout, 2019), 157. On the ancora in Christian papyri until the fifth century C.E., see Alan Murgidg, *Copying Early Christian Texts: A Study of Scribal Practice* (Tübingen, 2016), 102.

31. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. S. A. Barney et al. (Cambridge, 2006), I.xxi.24–25, p. 51. See McNamee, *Sigla and Selected Marginalia*, 13n20. This description is also being copied in the Carolingian period in the list of signs found in the *Liber Glossarum*. See Evina Steinová, “The List of *Notae* in the *Liber Glossarum*,” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 26 (2016): 357. On the omission signs which replaced the ancora sign in late Latin manuscripts, see Lowe, “The Oldest Omission Signs.” Although the ancora was not in use, it is still described in some sign treatises that were copied in the eighth through the fourteenth century. See Steinová, *Notam Superponere Studui*, 226, 235, 237, 240, 245.

32. Emanuel Tov identified as an ancora a graphic sign found in the Ben Sira scroll from Masada. See his *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden, 2004), 186.

33. On the corpus of Hebrew manuscripts from the period between the Dead Sea scrolls and the ninth century, see Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Tentative Typology of Technical Practices Employed in Hebrew Dated Medieval Manuscripts* (Jerusalem, 1981), 9–10. On the Hebrew papyrological corpus from Egypt from the period between the third and tenth centuries, see Colette Sirat et al., *Les papyrus en caractères hébraïques trouvés en Égypte* (Paris, 1985). For an overview on the Hebrew copying activity between the second and seventh centuries, see Colette Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages*, ed. and trans. N. De Lange (Cambridge, 2002), 26–34.