

New Testament translations from the Cairo Genizah*

[Traducciones del Nuevo Testamento de la Genizah de El Cairo]

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Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es presentar los contenidos y analizar la lengua y el contexto histórico de distintos tipos de traducciones del Nuevo Testamento que se encuentran en la Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection (Cambridge University Library): traducciones impresas en judeo-árabe y árabe, leccionarios coptos y un fragmento siríaco.

Abstract: The goal of this article is to present the contents and to analyse the language and historical context of different types of New Testament translations preserved in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection (Cambridge University Library): printed Judeo-Arabic, and Arabic translations, Coptic lectionaries, and a Syriac fragment.

Palabras clave: Nuevo Testamento. Genizah. Judeo-Arabe. Arabe. Copto. Siríaco.

Key words: New Testament. Genizah. Judeo-Arabic. Arabic. Coptic. Syriac.



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In the winter of 1896/97, Solomon Schechter, then lecturer of rabbinics at Cambridge University, brought what we now know to have been 192,848 manuscripts from the Genizah of the Ben-Ezra synagogue in Old Cairo (Fuṣṭāṭ) to Cambridge. Of course, Schechter was well aware that he had found a priceless treasure since he estimated that “the matters I brought from Cairo contain many valuable things”; however, he admitted with some sadness “that I shall hardly be worthy to see all the results which the Genizah will add to our knowledge of Jews and Judaism”. This statement is not to be restricted to the field of Jewish studies alone, but can be applied to the history of the Eastern Mediterranean in general and for various fields of scholarly research, e.g. Semitic philology when only bearing in mind the importance of Judaeo-Arabic providing the missing link between Classical-Arabic and the modern vernaculars.

What can one expect to find in the Genizah of a synagogue? In the first place, Hebrew Bible manuscripts, Torah scrolls, Bible translations and Bible commentaries, Targumim (Aramaic translations), pages of Talmudim (Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud) and Midrashim, liturgical books (*siddurim* and *mahzorim*), marriage contracts (*ketubbot*) and divorce bills (*giṭṭim*). All these documents range within the framework of religious, theological and liturgical texts; and even the sensational recovery of the Hebrew original of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) by Schechter belongs still in this context. But would you expect to find in a Genizah also medical texts, magical texts and amulets, poems, court records, fables, shopping lists, orders of payment, accounts, documents of book-keeping, travel guides to the Holy Land, private letters and business letters in Arabic, Judaeo-Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish and Ladino, childrens’ exercise books and writing exercises, musical neumatic notations, Arabic legal and administrative documents? Furthermore, would you expect in a Rabbanite synagogue so-called sectarian literature, such as a medieval copy of the Damascus Document (now known under this name after the discoveries in the Judaeen desert in 1948), Karaite exegetical and grammatical works, Qur’ān fragments, Mu’tazzilite theological works and, though only a few, Samaritan texts and New Testament (NT) texts?

It is obvious that we can only list but not cover all these exciting discoveries, and not even all aspects of the New Testament texts. For example, this paper does not include Genizah palimpsests, dating from between the fifth and ninth centuries, with the Greek text of the Gospels, Acts and 1 Peter,¹ or those four NT texts in

¹ See C. TAYLOR, *Hebrew-Greek Genizah Palimpsests from the Taylor-Schechter Collection*,

Syriac edited by Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson,² or Jewish anti-Christian polemical writings with quotations of NT texts, such as *qiṣṣat mujādalat al-usquf* ('The account of the disputation of the priest'), a Christian convert to Judaism (9th century).

The goal of the present paper is to present different types of NT translations: namely printed Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic translations, Coptic lectionaries, and a Syriac fragment.

1. Printed Judaeo-Arabic translations

1.1. T-S NS 267.57: Hebrews 8:5–9:13

The fragment measuring 18.2 cm x 11.6 cm has 25 lines recto and verso. At the lower margin a triangle-shaped piece covering parts of the last 6 lines is torn away. The fragment comprises page 247 and 248 of an edition of the NT, containing the Letter to the Hebrews. The title אלעבראניין אלי רסאלה with the number of the chapter in Hebrew characters heads recto and verso of every page. The number of the verses appear on the left margin on recto and the right margin on verso in Latin numerals with the numbers 5 and 10 indicated in Hebrew letters.

The translation of the Letter to the Hebrews most likely originates from the same edition of the NT as T-S AS 198.152, since both fragments show the identical width of 11.6 cm and the same lay-out of the pages, i.e. the heading of the NT book with chapter, marginal numbers of the verses, and orthographical characteristics.

1.2. T-S AS 198.152: Matthew 19:23–28 and 20:5–10

T-S AS 198.152 is a fragment with 8.5 cm length and 11.6 cm width, including 10 lines. The lower part with probably 15 lines is torn away; there are holes in places and some stains. The fragment includes pages 49 and 50 of a NT edition with parts of the Gospel of Matthew.

The translation starts on recto with Jesus' apophthegma about the great difficulty of a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:23) and the metaphor of the camel going through the eye of a needle (Matthew 19:24). Verso represents parts of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, starting with

Cambridge 1900.

² A. Smith LEWIS and M. Dunlop GIBSON, *Palestinian Syriac Texts from Palimpsest Fragments in the Taylor-Schechter Collection* (London, 1900).

instead of ולכן (Hebrews 9:12).⁶ Furthermore, the Judaeo-Arabic text of both Matthew and Hebrews is *verbatim* identical with the *Biblia Sacra Arabica Sacra Congregationis De Propaganda Fide Iussu Edita* of 1671; this means, that the Harrison edition is merely a transcription of that Arabic translation into Hebrew characters. Apart from the printing errors in the Harrison edition, which are not to be found in the *Biblia Sacra Arabica*, there are also orthographic differences, with the printing error in the *Biblia Sacra Arabica* at Matthew 20:8 (واعطيتهم) [p. 38] instead of (واعطيهم)⁷ not being replicated.

2. Printed Arabic translations

Some Arabic translations of selected NT texts can be found in a booklet of 17.7 cm x 10.3 cm, of which the pages 13–14, and its end 49–70 (last page) are preserved. The booklet with the class-mark T-S Misc.10.247 includes an anthology of texts, e.g. a dialogue between mother and daughter about school affairs (خطاب رجال عزموا عند Sokrates (صبيان), youths in England (امرأة و بنت في شان مدرسة سقراط), the suffering of animals (لا تظلم البهائم), and also religious subjects, such as Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons (بركة يعقوب علي بنى يوسف).

The texts from the NT include:

1) Acts 7:20–22: وفي ذلك الزمان بعيده ولد موسي وكان محبوبا عند الله فربي ثلاثة اشهر في بيت ابيه فلما طرح اخذته ابنة فرعون فربته لها ابنا فتادب موسي بكل حكمة المصريين وكان قادرا في كلامه وفي اعماله (p. 62).

2) Luke 2:39–52 with 2:50 missing: فلما اكملوا كل شيء كناموس الرب رجعوا الي الجليل الي مدينتهم الناصرة فاما الصبي فكان ينشأ ويتقوي ممتليا حكمة ونعمة الله فيه وابواه بمضيان الي اورشليم كل سنة في يوم عيد الحصح فلما كانت له اثنتا عشر سنة صعدوا الي اورشليم الي العيد كالعادة فلما كملت الايام حينما هم راجعون تخلف عنهم الصبي يسوع في اورشليم ولم يعلم ابواه وكانا يظنان انه مع السائرين في الطريق فجاءا مسيرة يوم وكانا يطلبانه بين الاقرباء والمعارف ولم يجداه فرجعا الي اورشليم يطلبانه فكان بعد ثلاثة ايام وجداه في الهيكل جالسا في وسط المعلمين يسمع منهم ويسالهم وكان كل من يسمعه مبهورين من

Ecclesiarum Orientalium. Additis è regione Bibliis Latinis Vulgatis, Tomus Tertius (Rome, 1671), p. 210: وكان. (Henceforth: *Biblia Sacra Arabica*).

⁶ See *Biblia Sacra Arabica*, p. 210: ولكن.

⁷ See T.R. HARRISON, *ארבע כחב*, p. 50: ואעטיהם = T-S AS 198.152 v7.

علمه واجاباته لهم فلما ابصرا بهتا فقالت له امه يا ابني ما هذا الذي صنعت بنا هكذا ها ابوك وانا كنا نطلبك معذيين فقال لهما لم تطلباني اما تعلمان انه ينبغي اكون في الذي لا بي فاما هما فلم يفهما الكلام الذي قاله لهما فتزل معهما وجاء الي الناصرة وكان يختضع لهما فاما امه فكانت تحفظ جميع هذا الكلام في قلبها ويسوع فكان ينشاء في الحكمة والقامة والنعمة عند الله والناس (p. 66-67).

3) 2 Timothy 1:1-5: ممشية الله بموعدة الحياة التي من بولس رسول يسوع المسيح. ممشية الله بموعدة الحياة التي من بولس رسول يسوع المسيح الي طيماتاوس الابن الحبيب النعمة والرحمة والسلام من الله الاب وربنا يسوع المسيح ثم اني اشكر الله الذي اباه اعبد من بين اباي بالنية الصالحة ابي ادمن ذكرك في صلواتي ليلا ونهارا واشتاق الي رويتك واذكر دموعك لامتلي سرورا وانما يحتظر ببالي من الايمان لبدي فيك صحيحا الذي حل اولاً في جدتك لويده ثم في امك اونيقى وانا اعلم انه فيك ايضا (p. 67-68).

4) 2 Timothy 3:14-15: فاثبت انت علي ما تعلمت وايتمنت به فقد علمت ممن تعلمت وانك من صبايك قد تعلمت الاسفار المقدسة التي تقدر علي ان تحكمت الخلاص بالايمان الذي يسوع المسيح (p. 68).

3. Coptic lectionaries

3.1. Arabic (T-S Ar.52.219)

The class-mark T-S Ar.52.219 includes three *bifolia*, measuring 12.6 x 17.2. The pleasant, carefully executed Arabic script is written with black ink. Titles are written in a larger *Nashī* script, compared with the main text in a smaller script of the same cursive writing style. A particular feature of the hand is the limited use of diacritical marks. On the whole, the condition of the three *bifolia* is good although there are some minor holes in places and some letters near the lower margin of page 11 ([1] fol. 2 recto) are torn off.

The three *bifolia* include mainly texts from the NT with some verses from the Psalms, namely: John 4:46b-53 (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 r1-v1), Psalms 23:3-4 (LXX) (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 v3-4), John 3:17-21 (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 v7 - [2] fol. 1 r3), Hebrews 7:1-17 (T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 1 r5 - [3] fol. 1 v2), 3 John (T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 1 v5), Acts 18:9-21a (T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 1 v9 - [3] fol. 2 v3), Psalms 95:7-9 (LXX) (T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 2 v5-7), John 6:5-14 (T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 2 v10 - [2] fol. 2 v1), Psalms 45:8-9 (LXX) (T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 2 v4-5), John 12:35-43 (T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 2 v8 - [1] fol. 2 r9) and 1 Corinthians 8:1-7a (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 2 v1-12).

The translation shows certain distinctive characteristics:⁸

- a) The translator uses the Coptic system of numerating the sections of the NT, e.g. the Coptic number $\bar{\lambda}\bar{\zeta}$ (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 r2) refers to the beginning of the section John 37–39, equivalent to John 4:46–54.⁹
- b) The author refers to the NT books by using technical terms, transcribed from the Greek, e.g. ابسطلس ‘the apostle’ ($\delta\ \acute{\alpha}\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma$) (T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 1 r4) refers to a reading from the letters of Paul.¹⁰
- c) The orthography has characteristic features, e.g. *hamza* is never indicated at the end of a word after long vowels, e.g. جا ‘he went’ (T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 r4) for CA: جاء . *Tanwīn* [-an] is sometimes not represented, e.g. in the case of the indefinite accusative خبز ‘bread’ ([3] fol. 2 r11) for CA: خبزاً . The final *alif* of the vocative particle amalgamates with the *alif* of the article in ايها اليهود ‘oh Jews!’ ([3] fol. 2 r2) for CA: ايها اليهود .
- d) As far as grammar and syntax is concerned, the use of the negative [lam] ‘not’ is not restricted to the negation of the apocopate, but tends to be used for all verbal forms, e.g. لم يقول ‘he does not say’ ([3] fol. 1 r9) for CA: لا يقول .

The texts from NT and Psalms are not a random collection of biblical pericopes, but could be identified as part of a Coptic lectionary (*kitāb qaṭamārus*¹¹ *qibṭī*). There are lectionaries for Sundays which include the readings for forty Sundays – the remaining Sundays of the year can be found in the lectionary for Lent, the Holy Week and Pentecost. These readings are assigned to various services, namely: Vespers (evening service) with readings from Psalms and the Gospels,¹² Matins (morning service), also including readings from Psalms and the

⁸ Since I am preparing the edition of both T-S Ar.52.219 and 220, including transcription, translation, critical notes and a detailed linguistic analysis, I confine myself here to some general remarks.

⁹ See S.C. MALAN, *The Gospels and Versicles for Every Sunday and Other Feast Day in the Year; As Used in the Coptic Church. Translated from a Coptic MS*, «Original Documents of the Coptic Church» 4 (London, 1874), p. 21.

¹⁰ See Georg GRAF, *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini*, «Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium» 147, Subsidia 8 (Louvain, ²1954), p. 3.

¹¹ Possibly derived from the Greek κατὰ μέρους ‘in parts’.

¹² For a description of the Vespers see O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church. A*

Gospels,¹³ and the Liturgy or Mass with five readings: from a Pauline Letter, a Catholic letter, The Acts, Psalms and the Gospel.¹⁴

Since the *bifolia* of T-S Ar.452.219 not only comprise the readings for Sundays, but also for Saturdays, it can be assumed that they originate from a more comprehensive lectionary, including Sundays and Saturdays, though not including all weekdays. The sequence of readings for the month of Amšīr¹⁵ can be seen from the following table.

| Service | Reading | Text | T-S Ar.52.219 |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------------------|---|
| <i>Second Sunday of Amšīr</i> | | | |
| Vespers | ... | | |
| | Gospel | John 4:46b–53 | T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 r1–v1 |
| Matins | Psalms | Psalms 23:3–4 (LXX) | T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 v3–4 |
| | Gospel | John 3:17–21 | T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 1 v7–[2] fol. 1 r3 |
| Liturgy | Paul | Hebrews 7:1–17 | T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 1 r5–[3] fol. 1 v2 |
| | Catholic | 3 John | T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 1 v5 |
| | Acts | Acts 18:9–21a | T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 1 v9–[3] fol. 2 v3 |
| | Psalms | Psalms 95:7–9 (LXX) | T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 2 v5–7 |
| | Gospel | John 6:5–14 | T-S Ar.52.219 [3] fol. 2 v10–[2] fol. 2 v1 |
| <i>Third Saturday Amšīr</i> | | | |
| Matins | Psalms | Psalms 45:8–9 (LXX) | T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 2 v4–5 |
| | Gospel | John 12:35–43 | T-S Ar.52.219 [2] fol. 2 v8 – [1] fol. 2 r9 |
| Liturgy | Paul | 1 Corinthians 8:1–7a | T-S Ar.52.219 [1] fol. 2 v1–12. |
| | ... | | |

The table clearly demonstrates that the three *bifolia* comprise parts of the readings for the evening and morning services, as well as the liturgy of the second

Detailed Description of Her Liturgical Services and The Rites and Ceremonies Observed in The Administration of Her Sacraments, «Publication de la société d'archéologie copte. Textes et documents» (Cairo, 1967), pp. 103–104.

¹³ For a description of the Morning Prayer see O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, pp. 100–101.

¹⁴ For a description of The Divine Liturgy see O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, pp. 46–80, especially 57–59 (on the reading of the Pauline Epistle, the Catholic Epistle, The Acts, the Psalm-Versicle and the Gospel).

¹⁵ *Amšīr* is the sixth month of the Coptic calendar and lies between 8th February and 9th March of the Gregorian calendar.

Sunday and third Saturday of the month Amšīr.

The manuscript can be dated to the 13th/14th centuries.

3.2. Judaeo-Arabic (T-S Ar.52.220)

The manuscript T-S Ar.52.220, a bifolium of 17.8 cm length and 25.8 cm width, comprises between 18 and 20 lines. The oriental square script is written very carefully with sporadic Tiberian vocalisation.

Folio 1 recto comprises the translation of Mark 15:15*–25 (fol. 1 r1–14), the last part of the section Mark 15:6–25,¹⁶ followed by the complete text of the reading from Luke 23:13–25 (fol. 1 r14–v12)¹⁷ and the first verses John 19:1–5* of the reading section John 19:1–12.¹⁸ Folio 2 recto comprises part of a homily/exhortation, based on Amos 8:9–12 (fol. 2 r1–19). On folio 2 verso, the readings continue with Paul's Epistle to the Galatians 6:14–16 (fol. 2 r1–8), verses from Psalms 37 and 21 (LXX) (fol. 2 v8–15) and the first two verses of the reading section Matthew 27:27–45.¹⁹

The orthography of the fragment shows certain characteristic features, some of them similar to T-S Ar.52.219, e.g.

- a) The author indicates the long vowel [ā] in the demonstratives for direct and indirect deixis with *mater lectionis alef* vs. defective orthography in Classical Arabic (= CA), e.g. אֵלֶּה 'this' (fol. 1 r16, r18, v2, v7; fol. 2 v6; fol. 2 margin 1) vs. CA: هنا.
- b) It is noteworthy that the *tanwīn* element to mark indefiniteness, which generally does not appear in the Arabic consonantal writing system,²⁰ is sometimes represented by *nun*, a characteristic of Late Judaeo-Arabic, e.g.

¹⁶ See O.H.E. BURMESTER, "Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte. Texte copte édité avec traduction française d'après le manuscrit Add. 5997 du British Muséum II", *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 358–360.

¹⁷ See O.H.E. BURMESTER, "Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II", *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 360–362.

¹⁸ See O.H.E. BURMESTER, "Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II", *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 362–364.

¹⁹ See O.H.E. BURMESTER, "Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II", *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 371–373.

²⁰ An archaic orthography with the consonant *w* has been preserved only in the proper name عمرو 'Amr^{um}'; see W. Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic* (New Haven and London, ³2002) p. 8.

רגלן 'a man' (fol. 1 r8) vs. CA: رجالاً, though, in some instances, the usual Arabic orthography with *alif* has been retained, especially when [-an] functions as an adverbial morpheme. This reflects the dialectal pronunciation where case endings are not pronounced though the accusative usually remains, e.g. ברפירא 'purpur' (fol. 1 r4), see CA: برفيرا. The fact that both possible spellings occur in this text may indicate that it is to be placed between 'Classical Judaeo-Arabic' and 'Late Judaeo-Arabic', since it is characteristic of the first to have *alef* whereas the latter has *nun*.

- c) The reduplication of a consonant is indicated by two identical letters vs. CA *shadda*, e.g. פצצכרו 'and they compelled' (fol. 1 r8) vs. CA: فسخرُوا.
- d) The orthography of names differs sometimes from the Greek source text considerably, e.g. ברנאבאס 'Barnabas' (fol. 1 r1) for Βαρναβᾶς (Mark 15:15).
- e) As far as differences in grammar/syntax are concerned, the translator uses in one instance perfect 3. singular masculine instead of 3. singular feminine: וכאן להם עאדה 'they had a custom' (fol. 1 v1) for CA: وكانت لهم عادة.

The text is sporadically vocalised with Tiberian vocalisation signs. In most instances, the author adds only the differentiating vowel, e.g. to mark the perfect passive vs. perfect active by adding *qubbuṣ* after the first root letter, e.g. קלע 'he had been uprooted' (fol. 2 r10). Only in exceptional cases has full vocalisation been provided, e.g. קדמתם 'you have brought' (fol. 1 r16). By providing a sporadic Tiberian vocalisation, the author apparently intended to ensure the correct reading of those words he regarded as problematic or difficult.

As often in Genizah documents, *shewah* is used to represent short vowels of different types. It can represent the short vowel [a] as in קדמתם (fol. 1 r16), see CA: قَدَمْتُمْ, and in אגד (fol. 1 r17), see CA: أَجَدُ; but also [u] and [a], e.g. אודבה (fol. 1 r20), see CA: أُوْدِبَهُ.

Whereas the general Coptic lectionary contains the readings for Sundays and weekdays throughout the ecclesiastical year,²¹ there are seasonal lectionaries with the readings for Lent, the Holy Week and Pentecost.

The sequence of NT sections on fol. 1, including Mark 15:15*-25, Luke 23:13-25 and John 19:1-5*, which follow exactly the order of gospel readings as in MS

²¹ See T-S Ar.52.219.

British Museum Add. 5997, folios 231v–234v,²² and the sequence of biblical texts on fol. 2v, including Galatians 6:14–16, Psalms 37:21*–22* (LXX), Psalms 21:17*, 18*, 19, 8*, 9 (LXX) and Matthew 27:27–28*, which can be found in MS British Museum Add. 5997, folios 240v–241v,²³ are readings for the third and sixth hour of Good Friday, i.e. 9 a.m. and 12 noon,²⁴ as can be seen from the following table.

| Reading | Text | Burmester 1943 | T-S Ar.52.220 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i>Third hour</i> | | | |
| Moses | Genesis 48:1–19 | pp. 348–351 | |
| Prophets | Isaiah 50:4–9 | pp. 351–352 | |
| | Isaiah 3:9–15 | pp. 352–353 | |
| | Isaiah 43:1–7 | pp. 353–354 | |
| Job | Job 29:21–30:10 | pp. 354–356 | |
| Psalms | Psalms 37:18, 17* | p. 356 | |
| Gospels | Matthew 27:15–28 | pp. 356–358 | |
| | Mark 15:6–24 | pp. 358–360 | fol. 1 r1–14 |
| | Luke 23:13–25 | pp. 360–362 | fol. 1 r14 – v12 |
| | John 19:1–12 | pp. 362–364 | fol. 1 v12–19 |
| <i>Sixth hour</i> ²⁵ | | | |
| Moses | Numbers 21:1–9 | pp. 364–366 | |
| Prophets | Isaiah 53:7*–12 | pp. 366–367 | |
| | Isaiah 12:2–13:10 | pp. 367–369 | |
| | Amos 8:9–12 | pp. 369–370 | |

²² O.H.E. BURMESTER, “Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II”, *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 359–362.

²³ O.H.E. BURMESTER, “Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II”, *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 370–372.

²⁴ For a description of the service of the Sixth Hour of Good Friday see O.H.E. Burmester, “Rites and Ceremonies of The Coptic Church. Part XI Holy Week Services and Ceremonies”, *The Eastern Churches Quarterly* 9 (1956), pp. 329–332, E. Lanne, “Textes et rites de la liturgie pascale dans l’ancienne église copte”, *L’Orient Syrien* 6 (1961) pp. 293–297 and O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, pp. 281–283.

²⁵ See also O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, pp. 281–283.

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Apostle | Galatians 6:14–16 | pp. 370–371 | fol. 2 v1–8 |
| Psalms | Psalms 37:21*–22* | p. 371 | fol. 2 v8–10 |
| | Psalms 21:17*, 18*, 19, 8*, 9* | p. 371 | fol. 2 v11–15 |
| Gospel | Matthew 27:27–45 | pp. 371–373 | fol. 2 v16–18 |
| | Mark 15:26–33 | p. 374 | |
| | Luke 23:26–44 | pp. 375–377 | |
| | John 19:13–27 | pp. 377–379 | |

Before the reading from Galatians 6:14–16 (fol. 2 v1–8), a homily (fol. 2 r1–19) has been preserved.²⁶ Since this homily is inserted after the reading from Amos 8:9–12, the last of the readings from the prophets that precede it, and includes a quotation formula referring to ‘Amos, the prophet,’ (fol. 2r 15–16) as well as several allusions to these verses, it can be assumed that Amos 8:9–12 was the basic text of this homily – possibly the homily of Dionysius of Alexandria which, according to Burmester, was read at the end of the service.²⁷

The sequence of Bible translations in the Genizah fragment suggests that presumably one *bifolium*, comprising the readings from Numbers 21:1–9 to Amos 8:9–12 and the first part of the homily, is missing between T-S Ar.52.220 fol. 1 and fol. 2.

From the type of handwriting, it can be concluded that it dates from the 13th/14th centuries.²⁸

The question remains to be answered why an Arabic lectionary for Good Friday that obviously was in use in the Coptic church, including a homily/exhortation with anti-Jewish tendencies, had been transcribed into Hebrew characters. Whereas bilingual lectionaries in Coptic and Arabic or in Arabic only, written in Arabic characters, are quite usual, a Judaeo-Arabic version is an extraordinary discovery.

Szilágy assumes that Jewish familiarity with NT texts and especially with texts to be read as part of the liturgy has to be seen in the context of ‘polemical

²⁶ The homily has no equivalent in O.H.E. BURMESTER, “Le lectionnaire de la semaine sainte... II”, *Patrologia Orientalis* 25 (1943), pp. 175–485, pp. 359–362, 370–372 and is not included in the homilies of the Holy Week in O.H.E. BURMESTER, “The Homilies or Exhortations of The Holy Week Lectionary”, *Le Muséon* (1932), pp. 21–70.

²⁷ ‘The text of this homily was once printed in a pamphlet, but, apart from this, it is found only in manuscripts’ (O.H.E. KHS-BURMESTER, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church*, p. 283 note 7). Unfortunately, I was not able to identify this homily so far.

²⁸ See K. SZILÁGY, “Christian Books...”, *Ginzei Qedem: Genizah Research Annual* 2 (2006), p. 130.

purposes', since 'criticism or mockery of the liturgy was part of the standard repertoire of ... anti-Christian polemical literature' (2006:132–133). Of course, it cannot be disputed that the homily, which uses Amos' prophecy *ex eventu* to demonstrate the darkness which covers Judaism and the Jewish festivals because of the loss of the Temple, has anti-Jewish tendencies which could have provoked anti-Christian sentiments. However, the reason for a Judaeo-Arabic transcription of a Coptic-Christian lectionary has not necessarily to be found in a polemical context as if its only purpose was to provide the source or raw-material for possible Jewish anti-Christian polemics. Ruling out the merely academic interest in comparative liturgical studies, the careful handwriting of the fragment suggests that it belonged to a book or booklet used for the services on Good Friday. The reason for the existence of a Judaeo-Arabic lectionary may be found in the fact that a Jewish convert to Coptic Christianity relied on a Judaeo-Arabic version of the biblical readings for the Holy Week. The Hebrew characters with which he was more familiar, would have enabled him to follow the readings more easily than a text written in Arabic characters.

It is puzzling that this *bifolium* was discovered among the Genizah documents from the Ben-Ezra Synagogue in Old Cairo (Fusṭāṭ). Though an explanation is highly speculative because of the lack of verifiable evidence, it is possible that the pages of the lectionary may have been handed over to the synagogue officials together with some other Hebrew and/or Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts to be stored in the Genizah without their contents or origin being checked.

4. A Syriac translation

In 1980, S. D. Goitein was able to join the two fragments T-S 13J7.8 (27.4 cm x 6.5 cm) and T-S NS J390 (23.5 cm x 11.7 cm) to form one complete trousseau-list.²⁹ A trousseau-list or dowry-list was normally included in a *ketubba* (marriage contract) or attached to it and therefore bore only the names of the bride and the groom with or without date and often lacked even these details of information. Luckily in this case, the names of the groom and bride are mentioned: Yesu'ah b. Abraham and Mubāraka bat Ṭuvia (T-S 13J7.8 v1 and T-S NS J390 v1).

The trousseau list is divided in main sections, itemising the objects within those sections:

²⁹ S.D. GOITEIN, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983), IV, p. 467, n. 286.

- a) the jewellery, listed first, including anklets, bracelets, rings;
- b) the clothing of the bride, i.e. robes, headbands, wimples;
- c) the beddings and hangings, including sofas, canopies, curtains, cushions;
- d) the copper ware and household goods, such as lamp, basin and ewer, bucket and bowl, containers, bridal trunks.

The dowry grand total of 480 dinars (T-S 13J7.8 v23 and T-S NS J390 v23) suggests the conclusion that the bride belonged to the lower middle class.³⁰

However, the trousseau list tells only half the story of these two fragments, since it was written on the verso of an earlier document of very different origin. Surprisingly T-S NS J390 recto comprises several verses from the NT in a Syriac-Aramaic translation. The text is written in a distinctive western Syriac hand with most letters of the Estrangela-type and some reading signs, such as *linea occultans* (e.g. ܚܚܚܚ) and *seyame* (e.g. ܫܫܫܫ).

The presumably Christian scribe did not take special care when writing those verses, for the lines are not ruled and their spacing varies, having being done ‘by eye’. The central crease, which can still be seen, shows that the page was folded at some stage.

The verses are taken from the Syriac (Peshiṭta) version of two Pauline epistles. The right column comprises the concluding sentences of the epistle to the Romans (Romans 16:26-27):

- ܠܗ ܕܘܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [1]
- ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [2]
- ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [3]
- ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [4]
- ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [5]
- ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ [6]

³⁰ The list is apt to provide an interesting insight into the economic circumstances of Mubāraka’s marriage and into her household, showing the diverse sources of goods and the international trade links.

Translation:

- [1] [(²⁶) But no]w [it is revealed] thr[ough]
 [2] [the writings of the prophets] and by the commandments of God
 [3] [of eternity. Made know]n to all nations
 [4] [for obeying to the fa]ith. (²⁷) And He is wise
 [5] [alone. Gl]ory through Jesus the Messiah
 [6] [...] for ever and ever. Amen.

The left column contains parts of the last two verses from the 13 chapter of the Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:12b–13):

- [1] ܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ
 [2] ܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ
 [3] ܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ
 [4] ܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ ܕܝܥܘܢܐ

Translation:

- [1] (¹²) Then I shall know, as I am known.
 [2] (¹³) These three remain: faith,
 [3] hope and love. But the greatest of these is
 [4] love.

It is possible that the quotations from the Romans and 1 Corinthians are merely selections, chosen to highlight particular thoughts which might have been important to the writer, e.g. in both sections occurs the catchword 'faith' (Romans 16:26; 1 Corinthians 13:13). The assumption that the fragment was originally part of a codex with the intermediate folios being lost is less likely because of the type of handwriting and the fragmentary character of the verses.

Be that as it may, the circumstances in which this folio, containing NT verses, was recycled to record a Jewish bride's trousseau list are perplexing. Perhaps the scribe of the trousseau-list bought this leaf second-hand and was not able to read the Syriac script which cites the name of Jesus the Messiah or it simply did not matter to him, since he had obviously no hesitation or aversion either to using the Muslim *basmala* formula in Arabic script at the beginning of the trousseau list (T-S 13J7.8 v1).

The contents of the Judaeo-Arabic trousseau-list and the Syriac NT verses are

diverse and unrelated. However, their mutual appearance is testimony not only for the richness of life in medieval Fustāṭ, but for the coexistence of the Christian and Jewish communities during the Fatimid period.

Conclusion

NT translations are an extremely rare discovery among the documents of the T-S Collection.³¹ So far three types of translations have been discovered: (1) two pages of a Judaeo-Arabic edition of the NT, printed in 1847 by T.R. Harrison in London; (2) two Coptic lectionaries in Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic from the 13th/14th centuries; (3) a Syriac-Aramaic translation of some verses of two Pauline Letters from the 11th century. Though rare, the existence of these NT translations can demonstrate the variety of material still to be discovered in the Cairo Genizah. They furthermore add a further stone to the wider mosaic: the religious communities did not live in seclusion, but there existed inter-religious Jewish-Christian contacts and/or relations³² in the vibrant Egyptian capital in medieval and modern times.

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³¹ Less than 0.003 %.

³² We know about joint businesses between Jews and Muslims (see S.D. GOITEIN, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, Volume I: Economic Foundations* [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967], pp. 72, 85, 124); and it can be assumed that the same was the case between Jews and Christians.

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T-S Ar. 52220r



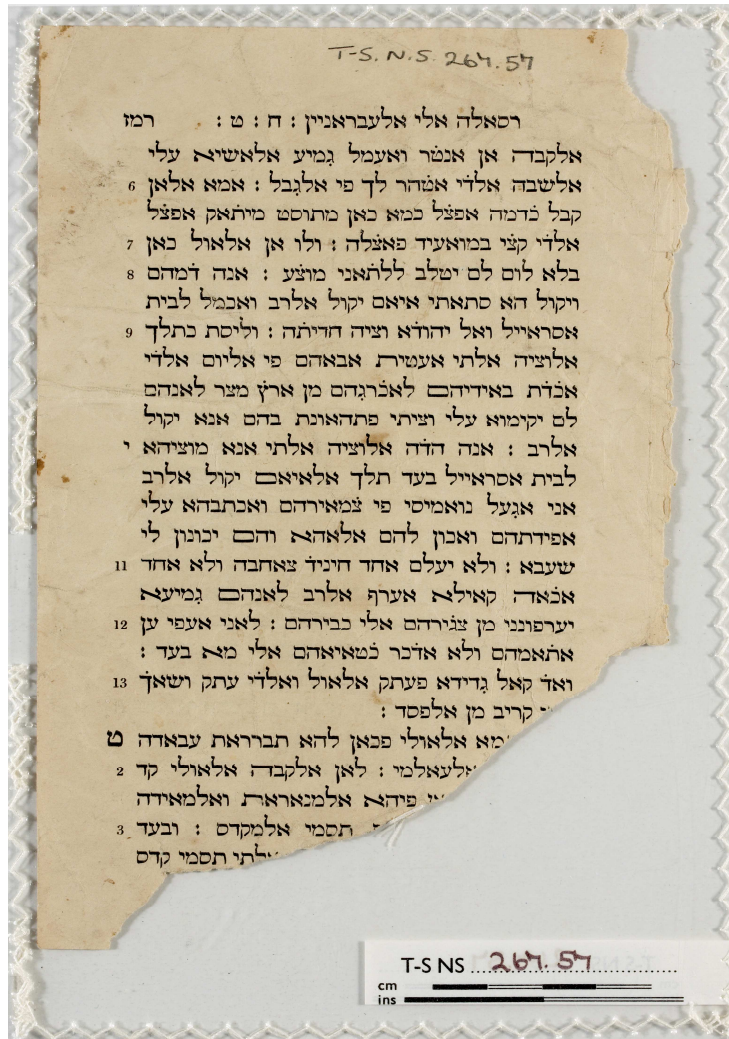
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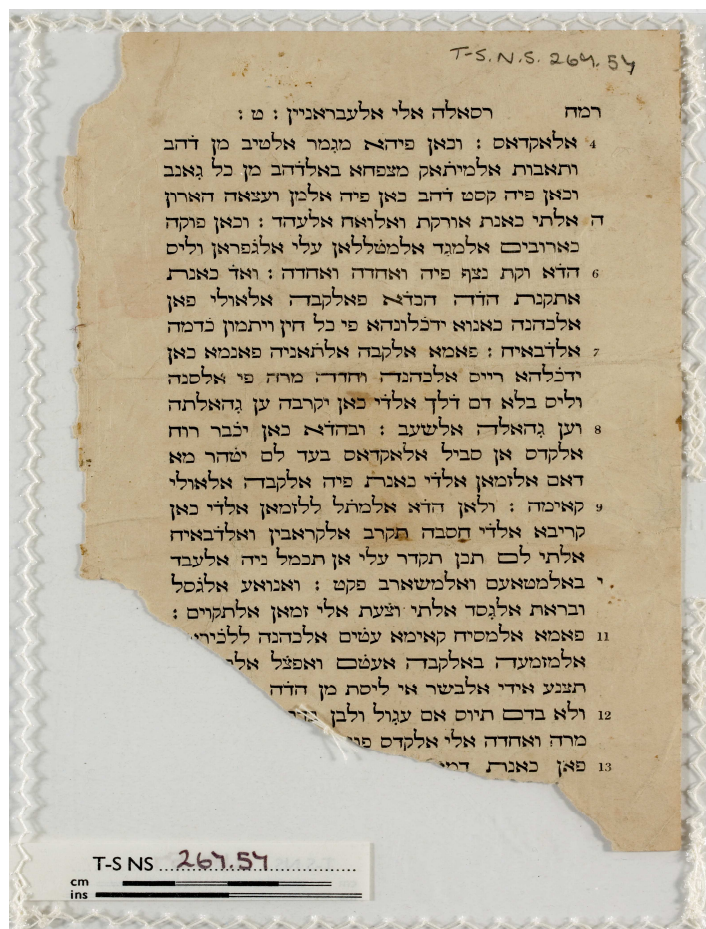
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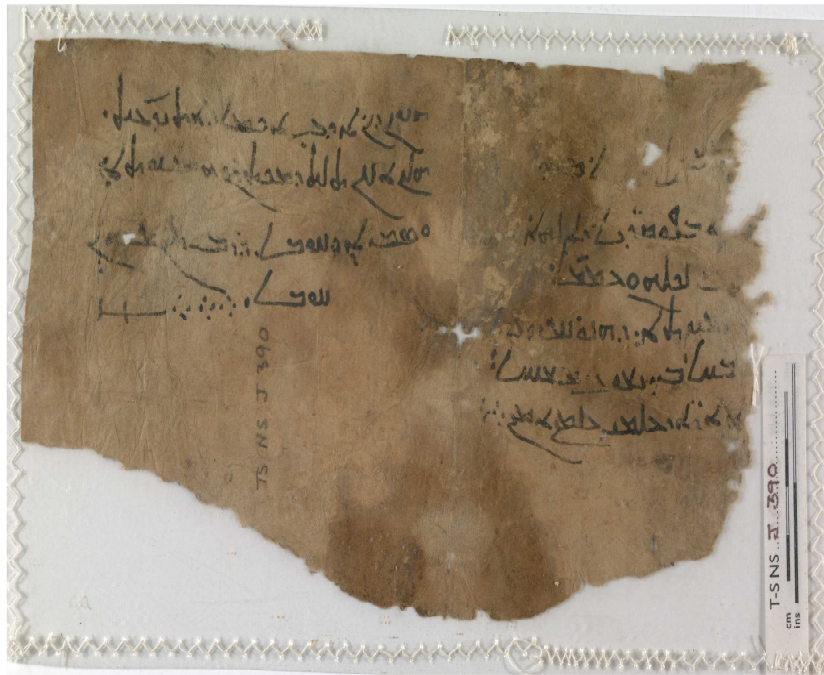
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T-S NS 267.57r



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