



# FROM THE BATTLEFIELD OF BOOKS

*Essays Celebrating 50 Years of the  
Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit*

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CAMBRIDGE GENIZAH STUDIES SERIES, VOLUME 16

*Edited by*  
NICK POSEGAY,  
MAGDALEN M. CONNOLLY  
*and*  
BEN OUTHWAITE

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From the Battlefield of Books: Essays Celebrating 50 Years of the  
Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit

# Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval

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# Cambridge Genizah Studies

*Edited by*

Ben Outhwaite

Geoffrey Khan

Nadia Vidro

Eve Krakowski

VOLUME 16



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*Edited by*

Nick Posegay  
Magdalen M. Connolly  
Ben Outhwaite



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For Michael and Jim







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All the authors who contributed to this book have worked for the GRU at some point since 1974. Over five decades, they helped foster an environment of collegiate support and collaboration, with scholars from around the world contributing to new discoveries in Cambridge every day. We are also indebted to the many other staff and volunteers who have been part of the GRU throughout its storied history, but who did not author any chapters in this book, including: Colin Baker, Eileen Bentham, Menachem Ben-Sasson, Samuel Blapp, Sumayyah Bostan, Karen Collis, Vasile Condrea, Daniel Davies, Malcolm Davis, Mrs. Stewart Deane, Emily Downes, Gabriele Ferrario, Alex Green, Viktor Golinet, Haim Gottschalk, Ludmila Ginsbursky, Joshua Granat, Eleazur Gutwirth, Nicola Hays, Simon Hopkins, Erica Hunter, Haskell Isaacs, Oded Irsay, Daniel Isenberg, Penelope Johnstone, Michael Klein, Douglas de Lacey, Brendel Lang, Shirley Lund, Sandra McGivern, Shelomo Morag, Hagay Nahmias, Friedrich Niessen, Hector Patmore, Debbie Patterson-Jones, Shulie Reif, Ben Richardson, Mark Scarlata, Amitai Spitzer, Zvi Stampfer, David Tene, Esther-Miriam Wagner, Ellis Weinberger, Ernest Wiesenberg, and Dalia Wolfson.

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*Nick Posegay*

*Magdalen M. Connolly*

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# The Genizah Research Unit at 50

*Melanie Schmierer-Lee*

Solomon Schechter generously donated his Cairo Genizah manuscript collection to Cambridge University Library in 1898, where it was named for him and his friend (and funder), Charles Taylor, as the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection. The terms of the donation required the University to make provisions for preserving the manuscripts and drawing up a catalogue or list within ten years. This proved to be a rather ambitious commitment. Schechter had immediately set to sorting the fragments with a team of assistants, but after a few short years of productive work, he left Cambridge for America, heeding a spiritual call to revive Conservative Judaism in the United States. Schechter's successor, Ernest Worman, continued in a similarly productive vein, only to pass away after a sudden illness in 1909. The unclassified fragments—the bulk of the collection—survived the threats of war and librarians inclined towards decluttering, but festered away in crates until the 1950s, when the historian Shelomo Dov Goitein arrived in Cambridge seeking manuscripts relating to the economy of Islamic lands in the Middle Ages. Finding an unloved trove of manuscripts that Schechter left behind, Goitein pushed the University Library to invest in the collection. A curator, Henry Knopf, was reassigned from working on Hebrew printed material to have special responsibility for the Genizah fragments, and work slowly restarted. In 1973, Stefan Reif took over from Knopf as Assistant Under-Librarian “responsible for the cataloguing and arrangement” of the collection. In February of the following year, Reif succeeded in establishing a Genizah Research Unit (GRU), and a comprehensive programme to improve access to the manuscripts and facilitate research began.

The Genizah Research Unit is now 50 years old. To commemorate this milestone, this volume offers contributions from three generations of researchers who have worked in the Unit over the years. It is also a moment to remember those who once served amidst Schechter's “battlefield of books” but who are no longer with us. The scope of the articles—from Maimonides to medical science, Talmud to overland trekking, and Bibles to buried treasure—celebrate the scope of research on the collection and the achievements of the Unit's alumni.

The first article is co-written by a former GRU researcher, Amir Ashur (University of Haifa), and our good colleague from across the pond, Alan Elbaum



(Princeton Geniza Project). They share the fruits of Ashur's efforts to search Cambridge Genizah collections for manuscripts written by Moses Maimonides and his circle during his twelfth-century tenure as Head of the Jews in Egypt. Around 60 fragments in the hand of the Rambam have been discovered in the Genizah collections, including letters, responsa, and drafts of his works on philosophy, medicine, and Jewish law. It is no exaggeration to say that the Maimonides' autographs draw some of Cambridge University Library's biggest crowds, and we are honoured to be the custodians of manuscripts that are deeply moving to so many. During our 2017 exhibition, *Discarded History: The Genizah of Medieval Cairo*, the display case for T-S 12.192—a signed Maimonides letter—needed much more frequent cleaning for the fingers and occasional lips pressed to the glass! Some autograph discoveries even become international news. In 2022, visiting researcher José Martínez Delgado and Amir Ashur identified pages of a Judaeo-Romance glossary as Maimonides' handwriting, and the news about Maimonides studying or collecting Romance vocabulary made headlines in Spain, Israel, and across South America. This discovery led to the 2023–2024 exhibition *La Edad de Oro de los Judíos de Alandalús—The Golden Age of the Jews of al-Andalus*—at the Centro Sefarad Israel in Madrid.

The fragments which Ashur and Elbaum publish in this volume deal with Maimonides' personal involvement in distributing communal charitable funds to those in need. They are from three different Genizah collections (Taylor-Schechter, Mosseri, and Jewish Theological Seminary) and the authors are from two different continents. Although researchers have always collaborated and worked on manuscripts at a distance, the digitisation of Genizah manuscripts in collections around the world—through the generosity of Dov Friedberg and the Friedberg Genizah Project—has transformed Genizah research. Digitisation of the entire T-S collection took place between 2009 and 2012.

Bible fragments attracted the first generations of Genizah scholars. When the Genizah Research Unit was established, the first cataloguing endeavours focused on the biblical fragments, eventually producing a four-volume set of catalogues edited by Malcolm Davis and Ben Outhwaite. Despite (or rather, because of!) these undertakings, the Genizah Bible manuscripts are a goldmine for researchers: approximately 25,000 fragments, comprising leaves of grand Masoretic Bibles and ancient Torah scrolls, as well as pages copied by laypeople for personal use. Tracing the work of Samuel ben Jacob, GRU research associate Kim Phillips pieces together small biblical fragments copied by the scribe of the Leningrad Codex ('the scribe who wrote the Bible'). He reconstructs not only pages of prestigious biblical codices but also the working practices of this consequential scribe. Phillips' painstaking analysis of the Masoretic notes in the fragments sees him wrestle with one of the most fundamental and challen-

ging laws of Genizah research: the likelihood of a lacuna in a particular place on a page is directly proportional to the significance of what was once written there.

Since 2007, GRU researchers have published short, online articles on fragments of interest, a series known as the ‘Fragment of the Month’. This series has grown into a key peer-reviewed source for disseminating new discoveries in Genizah Studies, soliciting contributions from Genizah scholars around the world. To accompany Kim Phillips’ article about Samuel ben Jacob, Ronny Vollandt, former GRU research assistant and now Professor of Judaic Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich, has allowed us to print his ‘Fragment of the Month’ from November 2009 on fragments of Saadya Gaon’s *Tafsīr* copied by Samuel ben Jacob. Vollandt catalogued many such Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations during his time in Cambridge.

Siam Bhayro (University of Exeter), former GRU researcher and founding series editor of Brill’s Cambridge Genizah Studies Series (the very series that this volume appears in), offers editions of two fragments from a copy of an early rabbinic work known as the *Scroll of Antiochus*. The fragments are from different Genizah collections: the Taylor-Schechter collection and the Mosseri collection. Jacques Mosseri collected around 7000 fragments in Cairo in the early twentieth century, and since 2006 his collection has been in Cambridge on long-term loan (the 20-year loan period will end in January 2026). Bhayro’s article highlights the close relationship between these two collections, evidently gathered from the same source, as well as the fascinating preservation of works of ancient Judaism in the Genizah.

Paul Fenton (Université Paris-Sorbonne), a research associate from the early years of the GRU, offers the text and translation of a sole fragment of philosophical commentary on Talmudic aggadot, found many years ago but still awaiting the discovery of other pages that might confirm its authorship. Its exegesis being pietistic, he discusses the arguments for and against attributing the text to Abraham Maimonides. During his years at the Unit, Fenton assisted with the cataloguing of fragments and worked on the long-running Genizah Bibliography Project.

From the GRU’s earliest days, it was recognized that a bibliography of all publications on Genizah manuscripts would be extremely useful to researchers. This project migrated from a card index to printed catalogues.<sup>1</sup> Over the years,

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<sup>1</sup> First in S.C. Reif (ed.), *Published Material from the Genizah Collections: A Bibliography 1896–1980* [1988] and then R.J.W. Jefferson and E. Hunter (eds.), *Published Material from the Genizah Collections: A Bibliography 1880–1997* [2004].

many researchers have contributed to the compilation of entries. After Fenton, Simon Hopkins, Geoffrey Khan, Eleazer Gutwirth, Amitai Spitzer, and Avihai Shvitiel all worked on the project. Deborah Patterson and then Shulamit Reif helped to migrate the project from index cards to computer. The entries now form a searchable online resource, currently maintained by Julia Krivoruchko.<sup>2</sup> In addition to her work on the Genizah Bibliography Project, Julia is the GRU's Greek specialist. For this volume, she has allowed us to reproduce one of the longest 'Fragment of the Month' articles ever written—her April 2021 analysis of a medieval Talmud with Greek glosses found in the Taylor-Schechter collection.

The Hebrew word 'Genizah' is borrowed from a Persian term 'ganza' meaning 'treasury'—a repository for valuables. There are, of course, many literary treasures among the Genizah manuscripts, but Avihai Shvitiel's contribution offers more than just historical value. Preserved on the back of a Hebrew poem are directions to the location of a buried treasure (a hoard of Roman coins!) in a village of the Fayyum district. Shvitiel worked for many years in the Genizah Research Unit, and edited, along with our late colleague Friedrich Niessen, the catalogue *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter New Series* (2006).

During her time as a GRU researcher, Leigh Chipman edited, with Efraim Lev, *Medical Prescriptions in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Practical Medicine and Pharmacology in Medieval Egypt* (Leiden, 2012). In the present volume, she presents two Judaeo-Arabic fragments of a pharmacopoeia by an East Syriac Christian Baghdadi physician, Ibn al-Tilmīd. It contains recipes for a range of ailments, including coughing and vomiting in children (the treatment is a pill to be placed in the mouth at bedtime, which sounds like a recipe for choking instead!). The work was not previously known to be part of the medical 'library' of Jewish physicians in Cairo, but Chipman's proof of Jewish readership of this text is further evidence for the multi-confessional character of medical knowledge.

Geoffrey Khan, former GRU researcher and current Regius Professor of Hebrew in Cambridge, describes two Arabic-language documents from the Second Firkovitch collection of the National Library of Russia. The documents are contemporaneous with Genizah documents that Khan previously published in his catalogue, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (1993), and they allow the Karaite and Rabbanite Jewish ownership of properties in Cairo to be traced over multiple genera-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/bibliographies/genizah>.

tions. These documents have not been seen outside of Russia since Abraham Firkovitch collected them in the 1860s, but Khan has kindly allowed us to reproduce photographs that he acquired during his research trip to St. Petersburg in 1993.

Arabic-script material in the Genizah has attracted increasing attention in the last decade. Alongside legal deeds and administrative documents, there are numerous Arabic narratives and folk tales. Former GRU researcher Magdalen Connolly (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich) presents an example of the many Arabic-script texts in the Cairo Genizah collections that have yet to be properly identified and examined. It is an early Arabic version of ‘The Story of the Skull,’ a popular narrative in the pre-modern Islamic world, in which Jesus converses with a talking skull on themes of life and death.

Arabic poetry has been another fruitful area of research. Mohamed Ahmed, former GRU researcher, now leads a project at Trinity College Dublin called ‘Arabic Poetry in the Cairo Genizah,’ which sent two exhibitions (*Geniza in the Gulf* and *Hidden Literature*) of Arabic Genizah fragments to Abu Dhabi and Dubai in 2023. For this volume, Ahmed has permitted us to reproduce his ‘Fragment of the Month’ from February 2021, where he outlined his discovery of six Hebrew-script folios from the most famous book of Arabic fables, *Kalila wa-Dimna*.

Thanks to yet another former GRU researcher, Nadia Vidro (University College London), Saadya Gaon now has one fewer polemic to his name. In her contribution to this volume, Vidro shows that what were previously thought to be two separate polemics against the Karaite scholar Ibn Sāqawayh are in fact only one. While two different titles had been in circulation, she demonstrates that one was a descriptive moniker to ‘tone down’ the Saadyanic belligerence of the polemic’s actual title. During her time in the Genizah Research Unit, Vidro published two critical editions of Karaite grammatical works in the Cambridge Genizah Studies Series and developed a digital timeline tool to use dated calendrical fragments as a means of palaeographical analysis.

In contact with a highly literate Islamic society that grappled with questions of the reliability of the transmission of the biblical text, Karaites engaged with the issue and developed new techniques for understanding the historical narratives in the Bible. Meira Polliack, former GRU researcher and now Professor of Bible at Tel Aviv University, explores the Karaite conception of ‘mental time’. She argues that a shift in the idea of time away from traditional rabbinic-midrashic readings of the Bible influenced the development of Karaite understanding of Scripture. In her time at the GRU, Polliack edited, with Colin Baker, the catalogue *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Arabic Old Series (T-S Ar.1a–54)* (Cambridge, 2001).

It is not often these days that new Genizah fragments arrive at Cambridge University Library, but that is exactly what happened in 2013 when the UL purchased, jointly with the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford, the manuscripts collected by Agnes Lewis and Margaret Gibson in the 1890s. The first-ever fundraising collaboration between the former (?) rivals raised £1.2 million from a successful public appeal. The manuscripts then made a short, half-mile journey along Queen's Road from Westminster College (a member of the Cambridge Theological Federation) to the University Library, where they were conserved and digitised. In 2018, Oxford's share of the collection was transferred to the Bodleian, housed in new, purpose-built bindings constructed by CUL's conservation department. Public interest in the colourful lives of the intrepid sister-scholars was stimulated by Janet Soskice's 2009 biography, *The Sisters of Sinai: How Two Lady Adventurers Discovered the Hidden Gospels*. To commemorate and celebrate the twins and their role in bringing the Cairo Genizah to the attention of Western scholars, the former Westminster Collection was renamed the 'Lewis-Gibson Collection'. Agnes Lewis published an account of their travels and discoveries in the late nineteenth century, but in her contribution to this volume, Catherine Anson (emeritus Head of the Near Eastern Collection at CUL) presents two unpublished travelogues by the more reticent sister, Margaret. Her narratives were preserved in the sisters' archive at Westminster College, along with photographic records of their travels in Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula.

Nick Posegay—GRU researcher and Genizah Instagram influencer—offers an account of another figure from the early years of Genizah research, Ernest James Worman. Worman worked as Schechter's assistant and was employed in his stead to complete the cataloguing of the collection after Schechter left Cambridge for New York. Worman threw himself into his responsibilities as curator, teaching himself Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew, and began handlists of the documentary materials in the collection. Decades before Goitein would arrive in Cambridge in search of data for his research on the medieval economy, Worman was already building a collection of merchant traders' letters. His carefully written handlists and notes, some of which became mixed up in Genizah papers and have since been accidentally accessioned into the collection, began a task that is still ongoing today: to create a catalogue record for every Genizah fragment. Had Worman lived longer—he died of tuberculosis in 1909—the work may well have been finished in the early twentieth century and the story of the Genizah Research Unit would look quite different today.

Rebecca Jefferson, former GRU researcher and current Curator of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica at the University of Florida, continues the

theme of the early history of Genizah research. Solomon Schechter's skill in recognising and conveying his astonishing finds have somewhat overshadowed his contemporaries and predecessors, but as Rebecca has shown in her 2022 book, *The Cairo Genizah and the Age of Discovery in Egypt: The History and Provenance of a Jewish Archive*, the race to secure the fragments was populated with a murky cast of librarians, dealers, collectors, and agents. The early scholarship on Genizah manuscripts is equally complex. Until the Cambridge manuscripts were all systematically assigned classification numbers—an achievement of Stefan Reif's Genizah Research Unit—fragments were published with awkward descriptors ("Cambridge University Library, drawer 34") that must first be unraveled to identify the fragment in question. Jefferson's contribution to this volume traces the manuscript provenance for a group of Haggadah fragments in an early publication by Israel Abrahams, demonstrating the extraordinary detective work that must be done to locate fragments without a complete classmark to hand.

In the final contribution to this volume, Stefan Reif, the founder of the Genizah Research Unit, reflects on his memories and experiences working with the grandfather of modern Genizah studies, Shelomo Dov Goitein. The GRU would not exist were it not for the efforts of both men. Goitein revived Cambridge's interest in a forgotten collection that was, for the most part, languishing in crates marked 'Rubbish'. His work led to a programme of conservation and classification, and to the hiring of curators to care for the collection. Reif, appointed in 1973 at the tender age of 29, sought advice from Goitein on the first challenges to be addressed (conserving the remaining 32 crates' worth of manuscripts!). When the Genizah Research Unit was founded the following year, Goitein and his protégés began to mine the newly-available manuscripts for their research, alongside Reif's team of GRU researchers (for almost a quarter of a century these included his beloved late wife, Shulie Reif). Reif recollects the advice and constructive guidance offered by Goitein, as well as their occasional clashes, in a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the Unit's early years.

Ben Outhwaite took the helm as the GRU's second director upon Reif's retirement in 2006. In October 2024, Outhwaite was appointed Professor of Genizah Studies at the University of Cambridge. After a quarter century of Genizah scholarship, leadership, and teaching, it is an honour well deserved. During his tenure, work on the fragments has been transformed by the digitisation of all Cambridge Genizah manuscripts, an effort sponsored by Dov Friedberg. Now, much of the work on the manuscripts takes place online rather than by consulting large, unwieldy folders, and cataloguing metadata is mounted digitally rather than in printed catalogues that are out of date by the time they are pub-

lished.<sup>3</sup> New discoveries are now announced in the long-running ‘Fragment of the Month’ series and on the GRU’s ‘Genizah Fragments’ blog, an evolution of the *Genizah Fragments* printed newsletter started by Reif in 1981.<sup>4</sup> The GRU can—for the moment, anyway—also be found on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads (@CambridgeGRU).

With the GRU’s more public-facing role, and greater public awareness of the collection and its significance, each year brings a new crop of exhibitions around the world requesting to borrow Genizah manuscripts. Genizah fragments find themselves flying back and forth across seas and continents, carefully packed by Cambridge University Library’s devoted conservation team. 2011 saw the publication of two books about the Cairo Genizah aimed at a public audience: *Sacred Treasure. The Cairo Genizah: The Amazing Discoveries of Forgotten Jewish History in an Egyptian Synagogue Attic*, by Rabbi Mark Glickman, and *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza*, by Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole (in 2007 Cole, a MacArthur-awarded poet, was the GRU’s first poet-in-residence). In 2013, BBC Radio 3 broadcast a series of five episodes about the Genizah in their documentary series *The Essay*. The episodes, by Esther-Miriam Wagner, Ben Outhwaite, Melonie Schmierer-Lee, Dan Davies, and Gabriele Ferrario, can be found on the Audio and Video page of the GRU’s website.<sup>5</sup> This experience of writing for a general public audience proved useful a few years later, and the major public exhibition *Discarded History: The Genizah of Medieval Cairo* brought over 40,000 visitors to Cambridge University Library in 2017. It kept the Unit staff busy with daily curator tours and events (including a Genizah-inspired stand-up comedy evening). In 2018, the Canadian filmmaker Michelle Paymar released her documentary film, ‘From Cairo to the Cloud’, featuring interviews with dozens of Genizah researchers around the world. In 2019, the Littman Genizah Educational Programme was established to support guided show-and-tell visits to see Genizah fragments in Cambridge (today the Genizah manuscripts attract more visitors than any other single collection at the University Library). In addition to this collection of essays, 2024 will also see the publication of *The Illustrated Cairo Genizah*—a glossy, full-colour introduction to the collection accompanied by hundreds of manuscript images.<sup>6</sup> Since 2001, Sarah Sykes has managed the essential tasks of wrangling

3 Cambridge University Digital Library (CUDL): <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/genizah>.

4 Fragment of the Month: <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month>. Genizah Fragments Blog: <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/genizah-fragments>.

5 <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/audio-and-video>.

6 Nick Posegay and Melonie Schmierer-Lee, *The Illustrated Cairo Genizah* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2024).

the GRU's researchers, fielding visitor enquiries, keeping records, and generally providing research support for all these projects. She is now the third longest-serving member in the history of the Unit, trailing only its two heads, Stefan Reif (33 years) and Ben Outhwaite (25 years).

As we in the Genizah Research Unit look over the horizon to the next 50 years, we can only imagine a landscape shaped by advancements in text recognition and machine learning technologies that will transform Genizah research for generations to come. However, in this moment in 2024, we only have people to thank. Thank you to those who created the Unit, those who have served it since 1974, and those who have supported our work now for five decades. Thank you to all who have been part of the GRU story.



# New Maimonidean Documents

*Amir Ashur and Alan Elbaum*

## 1 Introduction

Finding a document related to Moses Maimonides, especially one of his autographs, has always been one of the gems of Genizah research. The goal of this article is to publish several exciting new discoveries made by Amir Ashur in his focused search in the Cambridge Cairo Genizah collections. We also present a Hebrew letter from the circle of Maimonides which was found by Alan Elbaum in the course of his work for the Princeton Geniza Project. The documents edited here are all connected with Maimonides as a leader of the community. They have nothing to do with his religious work, but rather with the daunting day-to-day activities expected to be performed by a communal leader. The first two documents are Maimonides' autographs, while the other two are from his wider circle and involve him as a central participant.

## 2 CULT-S AS 202.396

This manuscript (paper; 16.1×4.8 cm) is a list of contributors written by Maimonides in his own hand, containing names of twelve esteemed persons who donated a total of 10 ¾ dinars. Although there is no concrete evidence, based on the large sums of money mentioned, it is likely that this list relates to other evidence of Maimonides' active action for ransoming captives. At least three instances in which Maimonides was responsible for collecting donations for ransoming captives are known. The earliest event took place around the year 1170 CE. The following eight documents are all thought to relate to this event:<sup>1</sup>

1. JTS MS 8254.7: An open call for collecting funds written by Mevorak b. Natan and signed by Maimonides. Published by Friedman, "Maimonidean Research", sec. D.

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<sup>1</sup> For nos. 1–5, see Maimonides, *Epistles*, pp. 61–68, and Friedman, "Maimonidean Research", pp. 155–168.

2. CUL T-S 16.9: An open call, also written by Mevoraḳ b. Natan, but not signed by Maimonides, which probably was sent to multiple communities. See Friedman, *ibid.* and n. 305. Edited and translated in Maimonides, *Epistles*, pp. 66–68.
3. CUL T-S 12.238: A few opening lines in Hebrew from an epistle sent to the villages of the Rif sent by Maimonides and written by Mevoraḳ b. Natan. Edited and translated in Maimonides, *Epistles*, pp. 68–69.
4. BL Or. 5533.1: A few opening lines in Hebrew from an epistle sent to Damīrah, Jūjar, Sammanūd, Damsīs, and Sunbāt.<sup>2</sup> Edited and translated in Maimonides, *Epistles*, pp. 69–70.
5. CUL T-S NS 309.12: On recto, there is a note approving the sending of nine dinars to Maimonides for the ransom of captives in July 1170 CE. The sum is to be given to a carrier in al-Maḥalla. On verso there is a receipt written by Maimonides himself, confirming that he received the money. Edited and translated in Maimonides, *Epistles*, pp. 70–71.
6. CUL T-S AS 145.277: A new discovery not published or mentioned elsewhere. This is the opening of a Hebrew letter written by Mevoraḳ b. Natan to Peraḥyahu ha-Dayyan (b. Yosef ben Yijū)<sup>3</sup> who was the judge in al-Maḥalla. The letter is addressed to the wealthy members of the community. For other letters addressed to communities, rather than individuals, see nos. 2 and 4 above.
7. CUL T-S NS 338.12: Fragment of a letter, probably written in Alexandria by Peraḥyahu ha-Dayyan, in which he mentions a collection made for the ransom of captive women. He also travelled to Minyat Ziftah and asked the recipient to inform “our Rabbi”, most likely Maimonides himself, about his actions. Published by Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, pp. 164–166.
8. CUL T-S AS 149.134: A small fragment of a letter referring to Maimonides’ involvement in ransoming a captive woman. Published by Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, pp. 167–168.<sup>4</sup>

A second event related to the redemption of captives took place in the year 1179/80 CE, in Alexandria, and is mentioned in Maimonides, *Responsa*, II, no. 452. A third event took place in the year 1186 CE or later. This is attested in a letter by Yehudah ha-Kohen b. Ṭuviahu in which he

2 For the places mentioned here, see Golb, “Topography”.

3 On Peraḥya b. Yosef see Goitein and Friedman, *India Traders*, p. 885 (index).

4 The upper part of this letter is in CUL T-S AS 149.130.

reports about a collection he made, probably also for ransoming captives, among the Ashqelonian community in Bilbays.<sup>5</sup>

To sum up, we have ten documents connected with three different instances of fundraising for the ransom of captives, all led by Maimonides.

The newest discovery, CUL T-S AS 202.396, is now an eleventh Maimonidean document relating to the ransom of captives. Some of the people mentioned here appear also in other Genizah documents from the period 1172–1193 CE. It is unknown whether the new document is connected with any of the above-mentioned episodes or if it represents a new one. In either case, it proves that Maimonides dealt personally with the management of the funds collected. Another document, a list of contributions of bread, similarly shows that Maimonides was personally involved in supporting the poor and the needy.<sup>6</sup>

Maimonides wrote this list on the verso of a letter written in Arabic script that was sent to him from a poor woman probably asking for financial assistance. As found in other letters, Maimonides cut the paper to a narrow strip to write this list.<sup>7</sup>

## 2.1 *Edition and Translation*

### 2.1.1 Verso<sup>8</sup>

- |  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
|  | אלשיך אבו אלטא[הר מסתעמל (?)] <sup>9</sup> | .1  |
|  | אלכתאן ד[ינאר]                             | .2  |
|  | ברכאת בן עמאר בקיה                         | .3  |
|  | דינאר                                      | .4  |
|  | ברכאת בן טיב                               | .5  |
|  | דינאר                                      | .6  |
|  | בקא אלעטאר נצף                             | .7  |
|  | אבו אלמני אלמסתעמל                         | .8  |
|  | דינאר                                      | .9  |
|  | מכארם שריך בקא                             | .10 |
|  | דינאר                                      | .11 |
|  | אבו אלפצל אלמסתעמל                         | .12 |

5 CUL T-S NSJ 477. See Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, p. 158, n. 301. Amir Ashur identified the sender as Yehudah b. Ṭuviah.

6 CUL T-S Misc. 8.19, published by Ashur, “Autograph Instructions”.

7 For other examples of letters sent to him which he cut, see Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, p. 193, n. 468. His son Abraham also did the same; see Friedman, “Pietistic Criticism”, p. 277.

8 Conserved as recto. In this transcription, Hebrew letters with a sublinear dot indicate a reading that is partially preserved or uncertain, as per the Leiden conventions.

9 The possible reading was suggested by Prof. M.A. Friedman.

דינאר	.13
אבו מנצור בן נציר	.14
דינארין	.15
אבו סהל בן איוב נצף	.16
אלחמדת נצף ורבע	.17
סאלם אלביאע נצף	.18
הבה אלצבאג ואולאדה נצף	.19

(1) Al-šayḵ Abū al-Ṭā[hir the government agent charged with the sale of] (2) flax<sup>10</sup>—one d[inar]. (3) Barakāt b. ‘Ammār<sup>11</sup>—the rest<sup>12</sup> of (4) one dinar. (5) Barakāt b. Ṭayyib<sup>13</sup>—(6) one dinar. (7) Baqā the perfumer<sup>14</sup>—one half. (8) Abū al-Munā the government official<sup>15</sup>—(9) one dinar. (10) Makārim, Baqā’s partner<sup>16</sup>—(11) one dinar. Abū al-Faḍl the government official—(13) one dinar. (14) Abū Manšūr b. Nušayr—(15) two dinars. (16) Abū Sahl b. Ayyūb<sup>17</sup>—one half. (17) The ‘delight’<sup>18</sup>—one half and one quarter. (18) Sālim the seller<sup>19</sup>—one half. (19) Hibah the dyer and his children—one half.<sup>20</sup>

- 
- 10 If a flax seller was intended, we would expect to find the title כְּתָאנִי, see Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 589. For the translation, see *ibid.* p. 461 (citing Goitein, *Med. Soc.* 1, p. 243). Goitein’s index cards mention a few people bearing this title, but not Abū al-Ṭāhir.
- 11 Might be identical with b. ‘Ammār mentioned in another list of contributors, CUL T-S 10 J 26.13, written by Samuel b. Sa’adyah ha-Levi. On the verso of this list a court record from 1172 CE written under Maimonides’ authority.
- 12 It seems that the person contributed one dinar, but only paid part of it, and now added the rest of the amount.
- 13 Barakāt b. Ṭayyib and his partner donated a sum of money in CUL T-S K 15.6 from 1178 CE.
- 14 He donated a *wayba* of flour in CUL T-S K 15.6, a list of donors written by Mevorak b. Natan from 1178 CE. A *wayba* is a measure of 10 *manns*, weighing 12.618 kg.
- 15 A man bearing this name is mentioned in a list of names, CUL T-S K 6.177, probably from the end of the 12th century, side by side with three other officials. See Goitein, *Med. Soc.* II, pp. 482–483.
- 16 Abū Makārim and his anonymous partner are mentioned in CUL T-S 10 J 26.13 (see, n. 11 above).
- 17 He might be identical with Abū Sahl b. Yosef b. Ayyūb ha-Levi; see, *India Book* IV/b, pp. 68–69, n. 17.
- 18 This is an abbreviated form of the title *hemdat ha-yešivā* (Heb. ‘delight of the Academy’). He is also mentioned in CUL T-S 10 J 26.13 (see, n. 11, above). He might be identical with ‘al-kohen *al-hemdat*’ mentioned in CUL T-S 8 J 5.14, dated 1183 CE, and Bodl. ms Heb. f.56/48, from 1186 CE (See Gil, *Foundations*, no. 96).
- 19 A preparer and seller of delicacies (Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 59).
- 20 A man bearing the same name is mentioned in CUL T-S K 6.54, a list of revenue of the pious foundations dated 1191–1193 CE (Gil, *Foundations*, no. 97).

2.1.2 Recto<sup>21</sup>

- .1 .تقبل الارض بين يديها وتتهي بساميتها دامت [نعمتها  
 .2 .وهلكت اعاديتها<sup>22</sup> انها امرأة منقطعة صعلوكة فقيرة ليس  
 .3 لها ..... الا

(1) [The slave] kisses the ground before him<sup>23</sup> and reports to his loftiness—may his favour endure (2) and his enemies perish—that she is a cut-off woman,<sup>24</sup> indigent, poor, who has no (3) [one but God and him ....].

3 CUL T-S 6 J 11.3 recto<sup>25</sup>

This document is also in the handwriting of Maimonides himself. Here he is giving an order to a certain Abū al-Mufaḍḍal to pay to the bearer of this letter, named Ya‘aqov, who serves as a proxy for two notables—al-šayḵ al-As‘ad and al-šayḵ al-Ṭiqah—whatever amount of money he requires. Maimonides will compensate the addressee.

Who was this al-šayḵ al-Ṭiqah? During Maimonides’ lifetime, two people bearing this title are known. One was Maimonides’ father-in-law Miša‘el b. Yiša‘yahu *he-Ḥasid*. The other one, probably the one intended here, was Yehudah ha-Kohen b. El‘azar, a government secretary (*kātib*) in Minyat Zifta.<sup>26</sup>

3.1 *Edition and Translation*

- .1 .אמת  
 .2 .אלשיך אבי אלמפצל  
 .3 .התלמיד שי' יוצל  
 .4 .למוצלהא אלזקן אלגליל  
 .5 .מ' יעקוב וכיל אלמואלי  
 .6 .אלאגלא אלשיך אלגל  
 .7 .אלאסעד ואלשיך אלזקנה

21 Our thanks to Naïm Vanthieghem for assistance with the edition and identification of this text.

22 The reading of the last two words was suggested by Prof. M.A. Friedman.

23 As is customary, the writer refers to the recipient with the third-person feminine pronominal suffix, because *ḥaḍra*, the Arabic for ‘excellency’, is a feminine noun.

24 See Zinger, “The Use of Social Isolation,” pp. 820–852.

25 On verso there is a draft of the opening lines of a letter addressed to R. Zakkai. It is most likely secondary to the note on recto.

26 See Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, p. 98, n. 195.

יֵשׁ צֹ מֵהֵמָּא טִלְבָּה	.8
מִן אֲלִמּוּלָא מִן אֲלִפְצָה <sup>27</sup>	.9
וּיְזוּלָה עֲלֵי וַיְטָאֲלֵעֵנִי	.10
בְּדִלְךָ חֲתִי אֲנֻלְהֵם לְךָ	.11
וְהוּ תַעַ יּוֹפְקָה	.12
וּשְׁלוֹם	.13

(1) Truth.<sup>28</sup> (2) May al-šayk Abī al-Mufaḍḍal<sup>29</sup> (3) the scholar—*may his Rock protect him!*—deliver to the bearer (of this letter), the esteemed elder (5) m[ister] Ya‘aqov, the representative of the (6) masters—the most esteemed šayk (7) al-As‘ad and al-šayk al-Tiqah (8–9)—*may their Rock protect them!*—whatever sum of money he asks for from my master (10) and debit me, and inform me (11) so that I will pay it back to you.<sup>30</sup> (12) May God the exalted bring you success. (13) And peace.

#### 4 Mosseri VII.6.1<sup>31</sup>

The following document is a court record in which a certain Abū al-Faraj acknowledges receipt from Maimonides himself (“our master Mošeh, may he be elevated”) a sum of 10 dinars. The case is related to a testimony about the demise of Abū Zikrī, probably the brother of Abū al-Faraj. The court record is signed by Samuel ha-Levi b. Sa‘adyah,<sup>32</sup> and it is written by his son Yosef.

Yosef ha-Levi b. Samuel was a judge and a court clerk in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and was active from 1181 CE until ca. 1210 CE.<sup>33</sup> He bore the titles *ha-dayyan ha-maskil* (like his father) and also *nezer ha-maskilim*. He wrote several documents

<sup>27</sup> See Friedman, *Dictionary*, p. 710.

<sup>28</sup> The Hebrew word *’emet* (‘truth’) often was written on the head of an order of payment, as used by Maimonides here. For this use, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, p. 241; Goitein and Friedman, *India Traders*, p. 15, n. 35.

<sup>29</sup> The *kunya* Abū al-Mufaḍḍal is very common. A certain Abū al-Mufaḍḍal the scholar is mentioned in CUL T-S 12.126, a legal document from 1229 CE, but we cannot identify him with the same person mentioned here. Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, pp. 194–197, published JTS MS 8254.12, a letter sent by R. Me’ir (b. Hillel?) to Maimonides in which the writer informed that he took an oath from Abū al-Mufaḍḍal in regard to a sum of money left from the payment of the poll tax.

<sup>30</sup> The translation is uncertain and was suggested by Prof. M.A. Friedman.

<sup>31</sup> Verso is blank. Words in the original texts that are written in Hebrew or Aramaic, rather than Arabic, have been printed in italics in translation.

<sup>32</sup> A well-known judge in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, p. 514. no. 23.

<sup>33</sup> See CUL T-S 13 J 3.21, which he wrote and signed.

related to Maimonides and his son Abraham, including a legal deed signed by Maimonides himself<sup>34</sup> and a legal query on which Maimonides wrote an autograph response.<sup>35</sup> He also copied some of Maimonides' works such as *The Commentary to the Mishnah* and *Mishneh Torah*. A legal query sent to him with his autograph reply is found in DK M8.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.1 *Edition and Translation*

1. ולמא [ ... אבו ] זכרי אלמד[ כור ... ]
2. שקיקי [....] הם אבו אלפ[ רג ... ]
3. אבו [ ... ] אלמדכור [ ... ] פי אן פ[ ד ] פע לה נאי[ ... ]
4. פל[ם] יתהיא [דא] לך ל[אנה ל]ם יתבת מות אבו ז[כרי ... ]
5. עלי אן תסלם אבו אלפרג אלמדכור מן הדרת [אדונינו משה ירום הודו]<sup>37</sup>
6. עשרה דנאניר מצרייה פי דמתה חיני[ ד ... ]
7. עלי ואקנו מני אנני מעתרף ענדכם אע[ ... ]
8. מן הדרת אדונינו משה ירום הודו הנזכר ע[שרה דנאניר ... ]
9. פי דמת' לה בתורת חוב והודאה גמורה מע [ ... ]
10. בב'ינה תתבת פי בית דין אן אבו זכר' [אלמ] דכ[ור ... ]
11. הדרת אדונינו משה הנזכר ירום הודו ואקנו [מני ... קנין]
12. גמור חמור בכלי הכשר לקנות בו בלשון מעכשיו [ ... ]
13. [וכ] ל מודעין ותנאין על כל מה דכתיב ומפרש לעילא מן [ ... ]
14. שריר ובריר ומוחזק [וקיים]
15. שמואל הלוי ביר' סעדיה נ'ע'

(1) Whereas [... the aforementioned Abū Zikrī [...]] (2) my brother [...] Abū al-Fa[raj ...] (3) Abū [...] the aforementioned [...] that he should pay him [...] (4) And that was not possible, because the death of Abū Z[ikrī] had not been confirmed [...] (5) that the aforementioned Abū al-Faraj had received from his honour [*our master Mošeh, may (God) raise up his glory and enhance his honour*], (6) ten Egyptian dinars to his possession after [... testify] (7) upon me and perform a *legal acquisition* from me that I acknowledge to you [... that I have received] (8) *from the aforementioned, his glory, our master Mošeh, may (God) raise up his glory and enhance his honour, t[en dinars ...]* (9) in my possession for him, *by way of debt and a complete and definitive declaration* [...] (10) with a proof to be approved *in court*, that the aforementioned Abū Zikrī [...] (11)

34 JTS MS 8254.11.

35 JTS MS 8254.10, published in Maimonides, *Responsa*, II, no. 273, pp. 521–524.

36 The manuscript is now missing. It was published by Kandel, *Genizai kéziratok*, p. vi. For the identification of his hand see CUL T-S AS 147.29, which he wrote and signed.

37 For this reconstruction, see l. 8.

*his glory, our master, the aforementioned Mošeh, may (God) raise up his glory and enhance his honour, and perform a legal acquisition [from me ...] a complete and weighty legal acquisition with an implement fit for doing so, effective immediately [...] (13) nullifying all secret dispositions and conditions, regarding everything that is written above from [...] (14) [All this] is strong, firm [and valid]. (15) Samuel ha-Levi b. Sa'adyah (may his) r(est be in) E(den).*

## 5 JTS ENA 3768.2 recto<sup>38</sup>

We conclude with a letter written by Yehudah ha-Kohen b. Ṭuviah, who served as the *muqaddam* of Bilbays from 1170s CE until his death around 1218 CE.<sup>39</sup>

Yehudah was a prolific scribe and dozens of documents written by him—letters,<sup>40</sup> *piyyuṭim*,<sup>41</sup> legal documents,<sup>42</sup> and copies of halakhic and other compositions<sup>43</sup>—are found in the Cairo Genizah.<sup>44</sup>

The letter edited below is written in Hebrew and is addressed to Pinḥas b. Mešullam, who served as a judge in Alexandria.<sup>45</sup> It is not surprising to see that the letter is written in Hebrew, for this Pinḥas was of French origin and most likely knew Hebrew better than Arabic. As far as we know this is the only Hebrew letter identified till now that was written by Yehudah. As often in the Cairo Genizah the letter is damaged and is not complete, and the preserved text contains mostly regards and blessings. But it is of interest here due to its mention of Maimonides in the margin.

38 On verso there is a collection of titles and attributes of God, in Judaeo-Arabic. At the bottom, written upside down, there are the openings of verses from Ecclesiastes 11:8–12:7. The Arabic script at the top is a paraphrase of an aphorism from the *Canon* of Avicenna: “For this reason, healers are directed not to rely on a single remedy for changing a temperament if it proves ineffective” (ولهاذا قد يومر المعالجون ان لا يقيموا على دوا واحد في تبديل المزاج) (إذا لم ينفع

39 Friedman, “Pietistic Criticism”, p. 277.

40 E.g., JTS ENA NS 2.18.

41 E.g., CUL T-S NS 203.30.

42 E.g., CUL T-S 8J 9.13, an engagement contract (edited by Ashur, “Engagement”, no. 12).

43 JTS ENA 3471.7, Mishnah, *Shabbat* 14:2–15:1.

44 His handwriting has tricked scholars: CUL T-S G 1.22, which he wrote and signed ‘Yehudah ha-Kohen’ was attributed erroneously by Goitein, “Ha-Rav”, p. 65, n. 5, to Yehudah ha-Kohen b. El'azar. Yehudah ha-Kohen b. Ṭuviah copied CUL T-S Cl.52, and the script was identified as Spanish, 13th–14th century (see Mandel, *Lamentations Rabbati*, p. 63). Other fragments copied by him are CUL T-S AS 83.200, T-S NS 329.723 and T-S F 1(2).101, cited by Ahrend, *Rashi's commentary*, pp. 26–27, and identified as 15th century Spanish. As far as we know, neither Yehudah nor any of his forefathers were of a Spanish origin.

45 Active 1191–1199 CE, see Friedman, “Maimonidean Research”, p. 103, n. 202.



Yehudah had long and close relations with Maimonides, as we learn from a greeting card he wrote for Maimonides' marriage<sup>46</sup> and from his signatures on various enactments issued by Maimonides. Yehudah is also mentioned explicitly in Maimonides' famous enactment from 1187 CE as the only person permitted to perform marriage and divorce in his town Billbays.<sup>47</sup>

## 5.1 *Edition and Translation*

1. [כבוד הדר] ת [י] קרת צפירת תפארת כבוד
2. גדולת קדושת מרנא ורבנא פִּינחס הרב המבהק
3. המעוז והמגדול יברכהו שומרו ויצילו מיד ר'וֹפּוֹ ומבקש
4. רעתו<sup>48</sup> כי יפול לא יוטל כי ייִ סומך ידו<sup>49</sup> ביר' רבנא
5. הרב ר' משולם ז"ל ירוחם הנפטר ויוחנן הנשאר
6. וכן יהי רצון אם לחוות עוצם האהבה
7. והתשוקה אל הדרת הרב ור[...]. אה[...]. מחול [...]
8. תרבה ואף לא משכה עט סופר<sup>50</sup> כי הוא מקור החכמה
9. ענוותן וממולא עלוב ואהוב<sup>51</sup> [...] הן עלובין ואינן עולבין<sup>52</sup>
10. ואמ' ר' פינחס בן יאיר זהירות מביאה לידי זריזות<sup>53</sup> וכול'
11. ובשמעו כי הוא חונה שלום ויגל כבוד<sup>54</sup> אך בשרי
12. נהפכה תוגתו לשמחה ובמה אקלסך כדאמ' על ר' יצחק
13. ורב נחמן כי הוּוּ מיפטרי מהדדי אמר ליה ליברכן מר אמ'
14. ליה אילן אילן במה אברכך<sup>55</sup> וכול' וכעת שהגיע ר'
15. שמריה<sup>56</sup> חזן סיפר לעבדו כי הדרתו שיגרה על ידו
16. פיטקא לעבדו וטבעה ממנ[...]. ים ו[...]. סוֹדְרָה
17. [...]

### Margin:

אשר / הפר / א[ת] / לתש[...]. / המך[...]. / שעל / אִכְיָה / פכיר בן / מוסי / וישגר  
אדוננו / רבנו / משה / הרב / הגדול / יחיד / הדור / ופלאו / ממזרח

46 JTS MS 8254.16, published by Friedman, "Maimonidean Letters", pp. 209–211.

47 Maimonides, *Responsa*, no. 348, pp. 624–625.

48 Numbers, 35:23.

49 Psalms, 37:24.

50 Psalms, 45:2.

51 See Tractate *Derek Ereṣ Zuṭa*.1.1.

52 BT *Shabbat* 88b.

53 BT *Avodah Zarah*, 20b.

54 Psalms 16:9.

55 BT *Ta'anit* 5b.

56 Šemaryah might be the cantor who is mentioned in Maimonides, *Responsa*, no. 258, p. 483.

(1) [(To) the honour, the glor]y, the grandeur, the diadem, the splendour, the honour, (2) the greatness, and the holiness of our teacher and rabbi Pinḥas the outstanding Rav, (3) the fortress and the tower, may his Guardian bless him and save him from his enemies (4) and ill-wishers, though he stumbles, he does not fall down, for the Lord gives him support, the son of our rabbi, (5) the Rav, R. Mešullam (may his) m(emory) be for a b(lessing), may the deceased receive mercy and the surviving receive grace, (6) so may it be (God's) will. If (I were) to express the greatness of the love (7) and longing for the glory of the Rav ... it would be too much for [...] (8) and would exhaust(?) the pen of a scribe, for he is the source of wisdom, (9) the modest, the full(?), the humble, the beloved [...], they are “those who are humbled but do not humble.” (10) As R. Pinḥas b. Ya'ir said, “Carefulness leads to zeal,” etc. (11) When I heard that you were well, my glory rejoiced along with my flesh (12), and its sorrow turned to joy. With what shall I praise you? As they say about R. Yiṣḥaq (13) and R. Naḥman, “When they were taking leave of one another, one would say to the other, ‘Master, give me a blessing.’ He said, (14) ‘Tree, tree, with what shall I bless you?’” etc. When R. (15) Šemaryah the cantor arrived, he told me (lit. “his slave”) that you (lit. “your glory”) sent me (16) a note with him and requested<sup>57</sup> of him ... [...] [margins] who annulled the [...] that is upon his brother Faḳīr(?) b. Mūsā. Our master and rabbi Mošeh, the great Rav, the unique one of the generation and its wonder, from the rising [of the sun to its setting], sent [...].

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57 The writer may have intended תבעה ('requested') even though he wrote טבעה ('its nature').

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# More Genizah Bible Fragments Written by Samuel b. Jacob

*Kim Phillips*

## 1 Introduction

The scribe responsible for the production of the justly-famous Leningrad Codex—Samuel b. Jacob—lived and worked in Fuṣṭaṭ around the beginning of the 11th century, the height of the classical Genizah period.<sup>1</sup> It was always highly probable, therefore, that among the 25,000 Bible fragments recovered from the Genizah, there would be further examples of his œuvre, if only they could be identified. Sure enough, the last decade has seen several such manuscripts emerge.<sup>2</sup>

In previous articles I argued that two fragmentary folios preserved in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah collection, apparently originally from a parchment Torah codex, are the handiwork of Samuel b. Jacob: T-s A2.46 and T-s A3.35.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the masora magna (Mm) found on these folios is functionally identical to the Mm of yet another Samuel b. Jacob Torah manuscript: L<sup>m</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

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- 1 See Benjamin M. Outhwaite, “Beyond the Leningrad Codex: Samuel b. Jacob in the Cairo Genizah,” in *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan*, edited by Nadia Vidro et al., *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 30 (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2018), 320–340.
  - 2 To the best of my knowledge, this began with Ronny Vollandt, “Two fragments (T-s AS 72.79 and T-s Ar.1a.38) of Saadya’s *Tafsīr* by Samuel ben Jacob,” *Fragment of the Month* (November 2009). Cited 29th June 2023. Online: <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fragment-month-12-4> (Editor’s note: The following chapter in the present volume includes the full text of this *Fragment of the Month* article). Note, too, a recent reconsideration of these fragments: Vince Beiler, “Genizah Fragments of Saadya’s *Tafsīr* by Samuel ben Jacob: T-s AS 72.79 and T-s Ar.1a.38 Revisited,” *Fragment of the Month* (October 2022). Cited 29th June 2023. Online: <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2022/fragment-9>. This latter article also contains a handy up-to-date list of the various other codices thought to have been produced by Samuel.
  - 3 Kim Phillips, “Two New Fragments from the Scribe behind the Leningrad Codex (B19a),” in *The Hebrew Bible Manuscripts: A Millennium*, ed. Élodie Attia and Antony Perrot (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 199–217.
  - 4 L<sup>m</sup> is the label for the manuscript suggested by Breuer in the study referenced below. In Got-

Over the past few years, I have stumbled across further fragments that belong with T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35. In this brief study, I describe five such fragments and suggest some ways in which they advance our pursuit of the scribe-who-wrote-the-Bible.

## 2 The New Fragments

First, the additional fragments will be briefly presented. The presentation is intentionally rather uneven; material that serves only to confirm previous claims is treated briefly, while material that advances the discussion more substantially is introduced in more depth.

### 2.1 T-S AS 12.142 and T-S AS 139.106

T-S AS 12.142 and T-S AS 139.106 can be shown to be part of the same folio as T-S A3.35.<sup>5</sup> Gratifyingly, these fragments confirm the original calculations

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theil's list it was number fourteen, and hence this manuscript is often referred to as Gott. 14. Kim Phillips, "The Masora Magna of Two Biblical Fragments from the Cairo Genizah, and the Unusual Practice of the Scribe behind the Leningrad Codex", *Tyndale Bulletin* 67.2 (2016): 287–307. The Mm of L<sup>m</sup> has a very particular significance: even though the manuscript is Tiberian in text and layout, the Mm contains a very substantial proportion of notes from the *Babylonian* masoretic tradition. See Mordechai Breuer, ed., *The Masorah Magna to the Pentateuch by Shemuel ben Ya'akov (Ms. L<sup>m</sup>)*, 2 vols., The Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation Series 16 (New York: Manfred and Anne Lehmann Foundation, 1992).

5 T-S AS 139.106 bears several of Samuel b. Jacob's traits: (i) the ubiquitous :o: symbol, repeated as a line filler as required; (ii) the centre-justification of the third part-line of Mm; (iii) one of his stylised forms of tetragrammaton substitution. (For an extended discussion of all these features, and those discussed below, see Kim Phillips, "A New Codex from the Scribe behind the Leningrad Codex: L17", *Tyndale Bulletin* 68.1 (2017): 1–29.) Since the fragment preserves scarcely any biblical text, it is difficult to make definitive judgements regarding the placement of the fragment. Nonetheless, two important observations can be made. First: the second column of the reconstructed recto ends with ׀אִהָּ, the first word of Lev 26:44. Accordingly, the first line of the third column should consist of the words גַּם׀זֹאת בְּהִי׀וֹתָם. Sure enough, at the very bottom of T-S AS 139.106r the topmost parts of the letters ׀וֹתָם are visible, together with the *holem* dot and the *gershayim* accent. Likewise, the third column of the reconstructed recto ends with ׀תָּן וְהַתּוֹרָת׀ אֲשֶׁר ׀תָּן. Thus, the first line of the first column of the reconstructed verso should contain the words ׀הָיָה בֵּינוּ וּבֵין. The *holem* dot and *zaqef qaton* of ׀הָיָה are extant on the very bottom of T-S AS 139.106v. Thus, even without consideration of the content of the Mm notes, we can be relatively confident that T-S AS 139.106 is the work of Samuel b. Jacob, and that it has been correctly placed in the reconstruction above. T-S AS 12.142 bears relatively little independent attestation (besides the distinctive script) that it is the work of Samuel b. Jacob. Nonetheless, the evidences that can be adduced are uniformly consistent with his scribal practice. These include: (i) the tetragrammaton substitution; (ii)

concerning the page layout of T-S A3.35.<sup>6</sup> More substantively, these additional fragments provide sufficient evidence of the Mm from the top of T-S A3.35 to reconstruct those Mm notes in full. In turn, this reconstruction fully supports our previous claim that the Mm of T-S A3.35 is identical to the relevant section of Mm found in codex L<sup>m</sup>. The fragments T-S AS 12.142 and T-S AS 139.106 join to T-S A3.35 per the reconstruction below:

With the folio thus reconstructed, it is possible to piece together the Mm notes on both sides. In terms of layout, the reconstructed leaf reveals that, as expected, the Mm is laid out on the page according to Samuel b. Jacob's idiosyncratic format.<sup>7</sup> More significantly, reading these notes from top-right to bottom-left of the page, recto-verso, yields the following list:<sup>8</sup>

הפר להפר, מנסת חרב,<sup>9</sup> איביהם, יען וביען, והארץ, ראשנים, יעקוב, קרבן ליי, ואם  
ואם,<sup>10</sup> י"ז יחידין ואם, והיה ערכך

Comparing this list with the relevant part of the Mm in codex L<sup>m</sup> reveals that precisely the same set of notes are presented, in precisely the same order.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the wording of each of the notes is functionally identical.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the evidence provided by T-S AS 12.142 and T-S AS 139.106 further supports our previous claim that the Mm of this particular Genizah codex (if indeed the folios represented by T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35 do derive from a once-complete Torah codex—see *infra*) is identical with the Mm of the well-known codex L<sup>m</sup>.

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the dilatation of certain letters (ם, ה) at end of the lines of Mm; (iii) the use of the dotted half-*shin* as a line filler in the biblical text itself; (iv) the very limited use of *rafe* over non-consonantal final *heh*. In terms of the placement of the fragment, the reconstructed verso provides the clearest evidence. The end of the second column contains part of Lev 27:7, which is directly continued at the top of the third column, when T-S AS 12.142 is placed according to the reconstruction above. Again, therefore, it is likely, even apart from considerations of the content of the Mm, that T-S AS 12.142 belongs to the same folio as T-S A3.36 and T-S AS 139.106.

6 Phillips, "Two New Fragments", n. 16.

7 See Yosef Ofer, *The Babylonian Masora of the Pentateuch: Its Principles and Methods*, The Academy of the Hebrew Language: Sources and Studies VI—A New Series (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001), 14.

8 Only the key lemma or first citation of each note is provided here, rather than full transcriptions.

9 Of this note, only the last few letters are extant on T-S AS 139.106r: אחד [אלין ח] ס.

10 Of this note, only remnants of three of the lemmata are preserved on T-S AS 12.142.

11 Breuer, *L<sup>m</sup>*, 533–536.

12 Differences are no more significant than slightly different use of abbreviations, and slightly different lemmata-length on a few occasions.



FIGURE 3.1 T-s A2.46 verso (Exodus 25:39-26:8a)



FIGURE 3.2 T-S A3,35+ recto (Leviticus 26:36-46)



## 2.2 T-S NS 10.3, with T-S NS 10.45

These two fragments derive from a single leaf. T-S NS 10.3 is the larger fragment, containing the biblical text. T-S NS 10.45 consists of the lower margin of the same leaf. Both are badly damaged. Nevertheless, when reunited, it is possible to reconstruct the contents of all three columns of the biblical text, as well as most of the Mm from the lower margin. Thus reconstructed, the leaf (containing Exodus 14:7–21) consists of three columns of biblical text, 17 lines per column, as well as four blocks of Mm, laid out in Samuel b. Jacob's characteristic pattern. The written area and column width are consistent with those of T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+. Similarly, in both T-S A2.46 and T-S NS 10.3, the distance from the lowest line of upper-margin Mm to the topmost line of lower-margin Mm is approximately 30 cm. In short, the physical dimensions of this new leaf, as far as they can be determined, are consistent with those of T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+.

The paratextual elements on these leaves are all consistent with Samuel b. Jacob's scribal habits.<sup>13</sup> However, as with T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+, the most definitive demonstration that this is indeed his work comes from the Mm content. The great majority of the extant Mm notes of the leaf are contained in T-S NS 10.45, though some small lacunae can be filled with the text from T-S NS 10.3 (text from this fragment is in bold in the transcriptions below). When combined in this way, several of the notes reveal traces of their Babylonian origin, as the following transcription, translation, and discussion demonstrate.

13 These include (i) Samuel's distinctive :o: Mm tag. (ii) For left-justification of the biblical text itself, the letters שׁמאל are used. Compression, but not dilation, of letters is also used. (iii) The remaining Mm blocks are consistent with Samuel's classic 1–2–2–1 or 2–1–1–2 Mm layout. (iv) The abbreviations of the Tetragrammaton in the Mm notes match Samuel's practice. (v) The distribution of *rafe* in the biblical text is consistent with Samuel's practice: in particular, his rather marked tendency *not* to use *rafe* on word-final *mater* ך. For further detail and justification of all the above, see Phillips, "A New Codex." (vi) The placement of the masora circles in the main biblical text are all consistent with Samuel's practice. In particular: circles pertaining to spelling are *not* intentionally marked over the relevant letter to which they refer; when a masoretic note pertains to a pair of words, and those two words cross from one line to the next, the Mp note appears on the same side of the column as the masora circle itself. On the surprisingly probative nature of masora circle placement for 'fingerprinting' individual scribal habits, see Kim Phillips, "Is the Masora Circule, Too, among the Scribal Habits?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 71.1 (2020): 19–42.



FIGURE 3.3 T-S NS 10.3+ recto (left: Exodus 14:7-13)

## 2.2.1 Mm Notes on Recto (Exodus 14:7–13)

The form <b>ישועת</b> occurs five times, as follows:	<b>ישועת ה וסימנהו</b>
Exodus 14:13	<b>התיצבו וראו</b>
Isaiah 52:10	<b>חשף ייי</b>
Psalms 14:7	<b>מי יתן מציון קדמ'</b>
Psalms 98:3	<b>זכר חסדו ואמונתו</b>
2 Chronicles 20:17	<b>ל[א] לכם [להלחם בזאת :0:</b>
The form <b>ויצעקו</b> occurs seven times, as follows:	<b>ויצעקו ז' [וסי]מנ[הו]</b>
Exodus 5:15	<b>ש[טרי בני ישראל] ל</b>
Exodus 14:10	<b>נסע</b>
Joshua 24:7	<b>מאפל</b>
Judges 4:3	<b>רכב ברזל</b>
2 Chronicles 13:14	<b>ויפנו</b>
Psalms 107:6	<b>יציל[ם]</b>
Psalms 107:28	<b>יוציאם :0:</b> <sup>14</sup>
Likewise, the form <b>ויצעקו</b> occurs thrice:	<b>וג' ויצעקו</b>
Judges 10:17	<b>בני עמון</b>
1 Samuel 13:4	<b>העם אחרי שאול</b>
2 Kings 3:21	<b>מכל חגר חגרה</b>
And the similar form <b>ויזעקו</b> occurs once:	<b>וחד ויזעקו</b>
Joshua 8:16	<b>כל העם אש[ר בעיר] :0:</b>

## 2.2.2 Mm Notes on Verso (Exodus 14:13–21): Block 1

The form <b>ויאר</b> occurs twice: <sup>a</sup>	<b>[ויאר]<sup>a</sup> ב'</b>
Exodus 14:20	<b>ולא קרב זה</b>
Isaiah 6:3	<b>וקרא זה אל :0:</b>
The form <b>תחרישון</b> occurs twice: once plene, and once defective:	<b>תחרישון ב' חד מל' וחד חס</b>
Exodus 14:14	<b>ייי ילחם לכ'</b>
Job 13:5	<b>מי יתן החרש תחרישון :0:</b>

- a. There seems to be an error here. As it stands, the extant lemmata give the two loci in the biblical text where the phrase **זה אל זה** appears. A hole in the parchment has obliterated the anchor word at the beginning of the note. Nonetheless, there is insufficient room for the phrase **זה אל זה** to be

<sup>14</sup> The final lemma has been reconstructed according to the form of the same note in L.

written. Moreover, the phrase זה אל זה is fully extant in the biblical text itself (in T-S NS 10.3), and there are no circules between the words, as one would expect if this were the phrase on which the note were commenting. There is, by contrast, the perfect amount of space for the anchor word ויאר to be written. Also, there is an apparently original masora circule over ויאר in the biblical text itself, as well as the Mp note ב (though the ב itself may be a later addition). It seems very likely, therefore, that the *masran* intended to write the Mm note listing the two occurrences of ויאר. He correctly wrote the first lemma, referring to Exodus 14:20. However, this verse contains both ויאר and זה אל זה, and the *masran* was thus led astray, accidentally finishing the note with the second lemma pertaining to זה אל זה rather than ויאר.<sup>15</sup>

2.2.3 Mm notes on Verso (Exodus 14:13–21): Block 2

The form ויִלְךָ appears [...] times, as follows: <sup>b</sup>	ויולך [ו]סימנהוֹי
Exodus 14:21	הים
2 Kings 6:19	שומרונה
2 Kings 25:20	מלך בבל
Jeremiah 52:26	וחבירו
Lamentations 3:2	חשך :0:
[The form ויבאו occurs seven times, as follows:] <sup>c</sup>	[ויבאו ז' וסימנהוֹי
Exodus 14:16	ואתה] הרם
Exodus 14:17	ו[ש]לאח <sup>d</sup>
Deuteronomy 10:11	קום לך למסע
Joshua 18:4	ואשלחם
Jeremiah 3:18	מארץ עפון
Ezekiel 33:31	[כמבוא עם
Isaiah 13:2 <sup>e</sup>	על הר נשפה :0:
The form הָרַם appears thrice, as follows:	הרם] ג' וסימנהוֹן
Exodus 14:16	את מטך
2 Kings 6:7	הרם לך
Isaiah 58:1	כשופר הרם קולך

15 Table 4 below shows that in L, Samuel b. Jacob wrote *both* the Mm note on ויאר *and* the note on זה אל זה. He clearly knew both notes, therefore. Possibly, he even had a written set of Mm notes from which he worked (see discussion *infra*), in which case the error found in T-S NS 10.45 could be a classic case of *parablepsis*.

- b. In full accord with the Genizah Law,<sup>16</sup> the count following the anchor word is no longer extant. In the Tiberian recension of this Mm note, four instances of ויולך are counted. In the Babylonian recension, where the Tiberian distinction between *pataḥ* and *segol* is not maintained, a fifth instance can be added: ויולך (Lamentations 3:2). As can be seen above, this instance in Lamentations is referred to (using the lemma חשך). The corresponding Mp note is extant, but—frustratingly—unclear, such that either ד or ה could be read. Possibly, the Mp note itself has been tampered with. Thus, we do not know whether this note (in its Mp and Mm forms) is fully Babylonian, or whether an imperfect attempt has been made to Tiberianise the note, by changing the numbers (from ה to ד), but accidentally omitting to remove the Lamentations reference. At any rate, the Babylonian influence on the note remains clear in the form of the reference to Lamentations 3:2.
- c. This common note, in its present form, also hints at its Babylonian origin. When listing the lemmata from the Latter Prophets, the reference to Jeremiah precedes the references to Ezekiel and Isaiah, in keeping with the Babylonian arrangement of these books.<sup>17</sup>
- d. An abbreviation of ושלחחריו. This is a typical Babylonian masoretic term—the equivalent of the Tiberian ובתרא.

#### 2.2.4 Comparing the Mm Notes in T-S NS 10.3+ to the Mm Notes in Other Codices

When we consider the order and arrangement of the Mm notes in T-S NS 10.3+, further puzzles arise. The table below first lists the Mm notes as they occur in the Genizah leaf (left hand column). The notes are numbered consecutively, (1)–(7). Then the Mm notes from L<sup>m</sup> and five other Torah codices are listed, over the same stretch of biblical text, and in the order in which they appear in their respective codices.<sup>18</sup>

16 Namely: the likelihood of a lacuna in a particular place on a page is directly proportional to the significance of what was once written there.

17 Admittedly, both the Ezekiel and the Isaiah reference have been swallowed up by a lacuna. Nonetheless, the Jeremiah lemma appears clearly after the Joshua reference.

18 L<sup>m</sup>, also known as Gottheil 14, is a Torah codex currently hidden away in private hands, and inaccessible to those who would dearly love to examine it. Written, vocalised, cantillated, and annotated by Samuel b. Jacob. L = Codex Leningradensis: RNL EVR I B 19a. Written, vocalised, cantillated and annotated by Samuel b. Jacob. On RNL EVR II B 60, see Vincent Beiler, “Another Codex by Samuel ben Jacob? The Ten Classmarks of St Petersburg EVR II B 60+,” forthcoming. Written, vocalised, cantillated and annotated by Samuel b. Jacob. DP

T-S NS 10.3+	L <sup>m</sup>	L	RNL EVR II B 60	DP	S <sup>1</sup>	RNL EVR II B 80
(1) ישועת ה'	(2) ויצעקו ז'	ישועת ה'	כלו	(4) תחרישון ב'	ישועת ה' פת'	(6) ויבאו ז'
		(1)			(1)	
'וג' ויצעקו ז' וחד ויצעקו (2)	'יה' עיניהם י'ה' ויצעקו ז' וחד ויצעקו (2)	תחרישון ב' (4)	ויצעקו ז' וג' ויצעקו וחד (2)		ואכבדה	דבר אל בני ישראל
(3) [ויאר] ב'	(1) ישועת ה'	(2) ויצעקו ג'	(1) ישועת ה'		(2) ויצעקו ז'	וישוב ח
תחרישון ב' חד מל' וחד חס (4)	(7) הרס ג'	(5) ויולך ד'	?		המבלי ד'	(6) ויבאו ז'
ויולך [?] וסימנהון (5)	(6) ויבאו ז'	'ויבאו ז' רפ' (6)	תספו ב' חס'		(7) הרס ג'	מלאך האלהים ח'
(6) [ויבאו ז'] ויולך ה ווד' ואולך (5)	(3) ויאר ב'	(7) הרס ג'	(7) הרס ג'		'נסע ב'	(7) הרס ג'
(7) הרס ג' [ויבאו ז'] ויאר ב' (4)	ברוח קדים ויאר ב' (3)	זה אל זה	(5) ויולך ד'		תוסיפו ד'	צפן ב' חס'
			ויסע ויט ויבא		(3) ויאר ב'	
					ארבע הערות מסורה נוספות בלי שום קשר ל T-S NS 10.3 ויולך ד' (5)	

The most immediately striking feature of these lists is just how closely L<sup>m</sup>, L, EVR II B 60 and the Genizah leaf match in terms of their Mm content, in contrast to the other codices examined. This is to be expected if each of these is indeed the work of the same *masran*. On closer inspection of the *order* of the notes, though, an even more surprising feature emerges in terms of the relationship between the Genizah leaf and L<sup>m</sup> in particular:

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= Damascus Pentateuch. Also known as Sassoon 507 or the Damascus Crown. It is now kept by the National Library of Israel: NLI Heb. 24° 5702. S<sup>1</sup> is the common label for codex Sassoon 1053, a 10th century codex of the entire Hebrew Bible. It is also frequently referred to simply as the Sassoon Codex, and occasionally as Safra JUD 002. Recently purchased by the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, one hopes it will soon be given a more up to date, and permanent, classmark. On RNL EVR II B 80, see Kim Phillips, "The Masoretic Notes in RNL EVR II B 80+: An Initial Report," in *Studies in the Masoretic Tradition of the Hebrew Bible*, Cambridge Semitic Languages and Cultures (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2022), 23–74.

L <sup>m</sup>	T-S NS 10.3+ Recto
2	1
1 (ענייהם+)	2
L <sup>m</sup>	T-S NS 10.3+ Verso
7	3
6	4
5	5
4	6
3 (ברוח קדים+)	7

Leaving aside, for the moment, the two extra notes found in L<sup>m</sup> but not the Genizah leaf, the set of notes in both cases is otherwise identical. Moreover, the pairwise order of the notes is identical, *but their arrangement is reversed*. Recall that in both T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+ the Mm notes are identical, in content, order, and arrangement, to the notes in L<sup>m</sup>. In this new leaf, the Mm content shows a little more variation, and, while the pairwise order of the notes is the same, their arrangement is reversed. Nonetheless, none of the other manuscripts in the table above are anywhere near as close to T-S NS 10.3+ in terms of content, order, and arrangement of their Mm notes as L<sup>m</sup>—including the other comparanda written by Samuel himself.<sup>19</sup>

We cannot deduce *who* reversed the order of the Mm notes (Samuel b. Jacob in the original copying, or Breuer in his listing of the notes in L<sup>m</sup>), but we can use the reversal to deduce further information about how L<sup>m</sup> and T-S NS 10.3+ relate to one another. In particular, we can deduce that, in both the Genizah leaf and L<sup>m</sup>, Mm notes 1 and 2 are found on one page, and notes 3–7 are found on the next page.<sup>20</sup> Since Mm notes almost always appear on the same page as the biblical text to which they refer, this implies that the *biblical text itself*, and not ‘just’ its Mm, is arranged identically, or near-identically, between L<sup>m</sup> and T-S NS 10.3+.<sup>21</sup>

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- 19 The absence of the note on the two occurrences of ברוח קדים is not particularly troubling: these ‘ב’ notes are frequently written in the form of Mp notes only, with the second catchword written in the margin adjacent to the first. The remains of T-S NS 10.3 show that there is indeed a ב count ad loc., though no catchword is visible. The absence of the long note on ענייהם is more difficult to explain. It is, of course, quite possible that the note appears elsewhere on the page: only one of the four Mm blocks is extant. This, admittedly, would mean that the pairwise ordering of the notes in T-S NS 10.3+ was not quite identical with L<sup>m</sup>.
- 20 Considering an alternative arrangement will help demonstrate this. Imagine that, in L<sup>m</sup>, notes 1–4 were on one page, and 5–7 on the next. When the order of the notes was reversed, this would yield: 4, 3, 2, 1, 7, 6, 5, which would not match the Genizah leaf.
- 21 Of course, this is not quite so surprising a result as it may initially seem. The biblical text

### 2.3 JTS KE.15

This fragment consists of the upper two thirds of a single parchment leaf. Between 9–11 lines of all three columns are extant (though the gutter margin has been mutilated to such an extent that half of the gutter columns' text has been obliterated). By reconstruction it is possible to determine to a high degree of probability that the leaf originally contained 17 lines per column.<sup>22</sup> The biblical text is fully vocalised and cantillated, but there are no masoretic notes, magna or parva. The recto contains Exodus 26:26–34; the verso contains Exodus 26:35–27:5.

Despite the lack of masoretic notes, there are several indications that this leaf derives from the same source as T-S A2.46, T-S A3.35+, and T-S NS 10.3+, in addition to the similarity of the script in each case. The column widths are comparable: ~7 cm; the total width of the written area is approximately 27 cm in each case; the height of 10 lines is approximately 15 cm in each case. This leaf shares the unusually ample margins also found in T-S A2.46+. The height of the upper margin is approximately 7.5 cm in each case. The width of the leading-edge margin is approximately 8 cm in both cases.<sup>23</sup> The same means are employed for the management of the left-hand margin: letter compression (but *not* dilation); line-end or line-medial raised dots; end of line part letters (ל מ א ש), sometimes combined with raised dots.<sup>24</sup> The use of *rafe* is broadly

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contained in this leaf covers much of Exodus 14, and so by this point Samuel would have been carefully preparing the layout of the biblical text in readiness for the Song of the Sea. This entailed ensuring that the word הַבְּאִים in Exodus 14:28a occurred as the first word of a new page. Thus, whether Samuel was intentionally imitating the precise layout of L<sup>m</sup> when producing the Genizah leaf (or vice versa), or whether he was simply 'aiming' to land הַבְּאִים as the first word of a new page, the result in terms of the layout of the biblical text of Exodus 14 as a whole would have been approximately the same.

- 22 For example: the average number of letters per line (counting ך, ם, ן, ף, ץ as half-letters) is 9.3. Between the last extant word of column 1 recto (וְהַיִּתְּכֶן Exodus 26:28—end of line 9) to the first word of column 2 (וְהַקְּמַת Exodus 26:30) stand 77.5 letters. When divided by the average line length by letters (9.3), this yields the estimated number of missing lines as 8, and the total number of lines in the column as 17. Similar calculations for the other columns produce comparable results.
- 23 This last measurement is particularly significant. In each of T-S A2.46, T-S A3.35+, and JTS KE.15 the column width is approximately 7 cm, while the width of the leading-edge margin is more than 8 cm—i.e. wider than the column width. Such a ratio is very unusual: “margin:column >1.” As a micro-demonstration of this: out of seven high quality, three-column Eastern Bible codices from the RNL EVR II B collection, five had a margin:column ratio of approximately 0.7–0.8; two had a margin:column ratio of approximately 0.9–1.0.
- 24 For this latter—the combination of part-letter with line filling dots, see Vincent Beiler, “The Small Masorah: Genealogical Relationships in 112 Early Hebrew Bible Codices Based on the Masorah Parva” (PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2023).



comparable in all the fragments, too, including the tendency not to mark *rafe* on final *he* *matres lectionis*.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, one can go further. Apparently, this folio was originally separated from the T-S A2.46 folio by precisely one intervening folio. Consider the following data:

Classmark	Side	Number of words
T-S A2.46	Recto	116
	Verso	108
T-S A3.35	Recto	118
	Verso	120
T-S NS 10.3 + 10.45	Recto	106
	Verso	91 <sup>26</sup>
JTS KE.15	Recto	100
	Verso	113* <sup>27</sup>

These figures yield an average of 218 words per folio. There are precisely 210 words between the final words of T-S A2.46 ורחב ארבע (Exodus 26:8a) and the opening words of JTS KE.15 צלע המשכן (Exodus 26:26b). These 210 words are therefore a perfect fit for one intervening folio.

### 3 Discussion

So far, we have presented four individual leaves. Three leaves (T-S A2.46, T-S A3.35+, and T-S NS 10.3+) each display the textual and paratextual features

25 A rather troubling fly in the ointment comes in the form of the *seder* marker on the recto. Its shape is quite atypical of the authentic *seder* markers found in Samuel's other productions. Given the limited finger-printing evidence provided by this leaf, this non-match counts for rather a lot, and places something of a question mark over the attribution of this leaf to Samuel b. Jacob.

26 This leaf contains part of Exodus 14. The rather low number of words on the verso is a result of Samuel's efforts to line up the biblical text in such a way as to meet the stipulations for the layout of the Song of the Sea—and in particular, the five lines preceding this Song.

27 This figure was estimated using the number of words contained between the beginning of the side and the end of the last full line of the third column: 93 words over 42 lines. This is equivalent to  $93^*(51/42) = 113$  words over the entire page.

expected from a Samuel b. Jacob codex. Moreover, their Mm notes are either identical, or near-identical, to those from L<sup>m</sup>. The fourth leaf (JTS KE.15) contains no masoretic notes at all. However, the unusual format of the leaf, as well as the textual and (almost) all the paratextual details, suggest that this leaf, too, belongs with the previous three. These leaves raise a flurry of questions: Do they originate from a separate codex, or are they related in some way to codex L<sup>m</sup> itself (e.g., as replacement leaves)? If the leaves do derive from a codex distinct from L<sup>m</sup>, then where is that codex? Why are the Mm notes in T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+ identical to those of L<sup>m</sup>? Even more puzzling: why are the notes in T-S NS 10.3+ so close to those of L<sup>m</sup>, yet in the reverse order? More broadly: can we learn anything about Samuel's practice as a *naqdan-masran* from these leaves? Some of these issues were initially addressed when publishing T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35; the notes below return to the questions in light of the fresh evidence.

### 3.1 *Replacement Leaves or Separate Codex?*

*Prima facie*, the simplest explanation for the origin and format of these Genizah leaves (excluding JTS KE.15 for now) would seem to be that they were originally part of L<sup>m</sup> itself but were replaced at some point in the codex's history and—rendered obsolete—were placed in the Genizah.<sup>28</sup> This would explain the remarkable similarity between the Mm notes: the leaves now in the Genizah are the *original* leaves from L<sup>m</sup>. The leaves currently in L<sup>m</sup> are replacements, intended to be carbon copies of the originals.

Is there codicological support for such a hypothesis? One notes that, so far, only fragments of single leaves have been recovered, rather than fragments of bifolia. This is consistent with known scribal practice in codex-repair. When a leaf required replacement, the damaged leaf was cut from the codex, leaving a stub to ensure that the conjugate folio would remain bound into the quire. Then, the replacement leaf with produced, also containing a stub to ensure that it, too, would be held in the quire.<sup>29</sup> Beit-Arié reports that there are sev-

28 In the initial consideration of the question of the relationship between the Genizah 'codex' and L<sup>m</sup>, the possibility was mooted—and subsequently rejected—that the two codices relate as twin sisters. I remain convinced of the logic behind this rejection, and hence do not reopen that possibility here. See Phillips, "Unusual," 303–304.

29 For an example of a quire with replacement leaves, see diagram produced by Malachi Beit-Arié in "Hebrew Codicology: Historical and Comparative Typology of Medieval Hebrew Codices based on the Documentation of the Extant Dated Manuscripts until 1540 using a Quantitative Approach", ed. Zofia Lasman, Publications of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2021), 219.

eral pairs of leaf+stub in Samuel's best-known work, the Leningrad Codex, so it is quite possible that he performed the same codicological surgery on L<sup>m</sup>.<sup>30</sup>

Additional support for this explanation might come from T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar.1a.38—fragments of Torah, with Saadya's *tafsīr*, written by Samuel b. Jacob.<sup>31</sup> Originally these were thought to derive from a different codex to Samuel's well-known Torah-*tafsīr* codex: EVR II C 1. However, based on aberrations in the textual density of the relevant pages in EVR II C 1, Beiler has cogently argued that in fact the *tafsīr* leaves found in the Taylor-Schechter collection were the original pages from EVR II C 1.<sup>32</sup> At some point, those leaves were removed and replaced with their current leaves. The aberrations in textual density in the replacement leaves arose from Samuel's apparent decision to spread one original side of text (that of T-S AS 72.79) over a full replacement leaf (EVR II C 1d fol. 172), and to condense three original sides of text (including T-S Ar.1a.38) into a single leaf (EVR II C 1d fol. 201).

However, there are at least two difficulties with the idea that the Taylor-Schechter leaves were the original leaves from L<sup>m</sup>, subsequently replaced. First, as far as can be determined from the extant text itself (i.e., virtually all the biblical text in the case of T-S A2.46, but far less in the cases of T-S A3.35+ and T-S NS 10.3+) there is no obvious need to replace these leaves. T-S A2.46, in particular, is in astonishingly fine fettle. This sort of reasoning alone, however, is inconclusive, as we have no way of telling how much of the obvious physical damage to each leaf was present before the leaf entered the Genizah, and how much was inflicted over the course of a millennium spent therein.

There is a more compelling reason to question whether T-S A2.46, at least, was ever an original part of L<sup>m</sup>, but subsequently replaced.<sup>33</sup> On the verso of T-S A2.46, the text of the lower part of the middle column is noticeably condensed; line length is increased, and an extra line was added to the bottom of the column. These signs suggest that Samuel was struggling to fit a predetermined amount of text onto this page, rather than writing an original page

30 Malachi Beit-Arié, Colette Sirat, and Mordechai Glatzer, *Codices hebraicis litteris exarati quo tempore scripti fuerint exhibentes*, vol. 1 of *Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi, Series hebraica 1* (Belgium: Brepols, 1997), 114.

31 Vollandt, "Saadya's *Tafsīr*".

32 Beiler, "Saadya's *Tafsīr* Revisited".

33 The following observations were originally made by Yosef Ofer in a conference presentation in 2018. Yosef Ofer, "Hebrew Bible Manuscripts Written by Shmuel ben Yaakov," conference presentation, 11th Congress of the European Association of Jewish Studies, Kraków, Poland, 16 July 2018.

*tabula rasa*.<sup>34</sup> Compared to the situation with EVR II C 1, then, these signs point to T-S A2.46 being created as a *replacement* leaf, rather than an original leaf.

In light of these rather intractable difficulties, we might suggest, instead, that the four genizah leaves discussed in this study (this time including JTS KE.15) were indeed created to be *replacement* leaves for L<sup>m</sup>, but—for some reason—were never inserted into that manuscript. As a theory, this would at least have the advantage of covering all four of the leaves presented here. Again, though, this idea is not without difficulties. First, since these replacement leaves have all the signs of being Samuel's own handiwork, we must assume that within just a few decades of its production, sufficient damage was incurred to L<sup>m</sup>, at at least four different points in the codex, to require Samuel to replace those leaves. We would then need to hypothesise that after Samuel went to the trouble of producing these replacements—taking care to match the layout, text-content, and masoretic content to the original leaves—they were never, in fact, inserted into L<sup>m</sup>. Additionally, one might have hoped, had these leaves indeed been prepared as replacements, but never used, that at least part of their stubs would have remained attached. Yet in the two instances where it can be checked (T-S A2.46 and T-S A3.35+), the gutter margin of the leaves appears to have disintegrated along the fold line of the bifolium.

In sum, these fragments remain a mystery. The coming-to-light of JTS KE.15—lacking masora—may give us more cause than before to question the idea that these four leaves derive from a once-complete independent codex modelled on L<sup>m</sup>. Yet, *per* the discussion above, no obviously preferable alternative presents itself. Of course, the difficulty of the situation is compounded by the fact that L<sup>m</sup> itself remains inaccessible to scholars and so we are, as it were, attempting to reconstruct the whole conversation based on only one side thereof.

All this uncertainty notwithstanding, comparing the Mm notes of different Samuel b. Jacob productions can still be a profitable exercise. The material presented in this paper helps us better to understand Samuel's scribal practice in at least the following two ways.

### 3.2 *Samuel b. Jacob Had His Own Personal Set of Mm Notes, from Which He Worked*

The data above suggest that, even when attempting to produce a carbon copy of (some leaves of) L<sup>m</sup>, Samuel b. Jacob nonetheless referred back to his own

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34 There are no songs or other texts with scribally-mandated textual layouts in the vicinity of Exodus 26 which could explain these features.

personal set of Mm notes, rather than copying the Mm notes directly from the pages of L<sup>m</sup>. This makes good sense at a practical level: presumably his own handwritten lists were contained in small-format quires, and hence easier to read than attempting to manipulate the bulky codex L<sup>m</sup> to squint at the micro-graphic Mm notes therein.

The hypothesis that Samuel b. Jacob was copying from his own Mm lists explains why, even when identical notes are being copied, the precise lemmata sometimes vary, or vary in length. It also explains why the Mm notes in the Genizah leaves, L<sup>m</sup>, and L itself cluster so tightly together in content, in such marked distinction to the other codices examined above.

Various folios containing Mm lists have been preserved in the Genizah, so the claim that Samuel might have had his own list is hardly daring. It does raise the enticing possibility, though, that some of Samuel's private masoretic lists have survived in the Genizah, and await rediscovery.

### 3.3 *L<sup>m</sup>, the Genizah Leaves, and L, Allow Us to Glimpse the Gradual Tiberianisation of Samuel's Personal Mm Lists*

Outhwaite has argued that before Samuel b. Jacob arrived in Fustaṭ, he was part of the Maghrebi Jewish community, with strong links to the Babylonian yeshivot.<sup>35</sup> On this basis, it seems logical to surmise that his masoretic knowledge originally contained a substantial Babylonian element, but gradually became more and more Tiberianised over time.<sup>36</sup> L<sup>m</sup>, the Genizah leaves, and L may allow us to glimpse that process in action.

Consider, for example, his Mm note on ויולך (Exodus 14:21; § 2.2.3. above). In both L<sup>m</sup> and the Genizah leaves that all-important fifth lemma is included: ךשח, referring to Lamentations 3:2. As explained above, this lemma only 'fits' within the Babylonian pronunciation tradition. By the time the same note appears in L (also at Exodus 14:21), Samuel has Tiberianised the note by separating off the Lamentations reference from the others:

35 Outhwaite, "Beyond the Leningrad Codex."

36 Tiberianisation involved at least three elements. At the surface level, it means that terminology used in the Babylonian masoretic oeuvre was replaced with the equivalent Tiberian terminology. At the structural level, the very mode of counting and description distinctive of the Babylonian masora was reframed according to the Tiberian mode. At the deepest level: counts and tallies that fitted the Babylonian Bible text did not always match the Tiberian text. At this level, Tiberianisation meant adding or subtracting various lemmata according to the Tiberian text, tweaking the counts and tallies accordingly. For in-depth discussion, see Ofer, *The Babylonian Masora*.

The form ויולך occurs four times (thrice defective and once plene) ...

And the form ויולך occurs once: Lamentations 3:2. וחד אותי נהג

Or consider his note on ויבאו (Exodus 14:16; § 2.2.3. above). In both L<sup>m</sup> and the Genizah leaves this note betrays its Babylonian influence by listing the Jeremiah lemma before the Isaiah lemma.<sup>37</sup> By the time the note appears in L, however (in full at Exodus 14:16; Deuteronomy 10:11; Isaiah 13:2) the Isaiah lemma has been repositioned to appear before the Jeremiah and Ezekiel references.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion

This brief article continues the “Samuel-in-the-Genizah” theme of earlier publications. Five additional classmarks have been added to the previously published T-s A2.46 and T-s A3.35. Collectively, these classmarks belong to four separate leaves. The additional fragments consolidate the claims made in previous studies, as well as furnishing us with valuable information regarding the actual processes involved in Samuel’s work as scribe and *masran*. Nonetheless, for as many answers as these additional fragments provide, there are as many remaining questions. Especially, the question of why these Genizah leaves were produced remains obscure.

37 As is well-known, the order of the biblical books differs between the Tiberian and Babylonian traditions. In the Babylonian tradition, the order of the Latter Prophets is Jeremiah-Ezekiel-Isaiah-The Twelve (see *b.Baba Bathra* 14.b–15a). Accordingly, when lemmata are cited in the Babylonian masoretic tradition, the order of the citations follows this arrangement.

38 This process was likely rather piecemeal and sporadic, with much confusion *en route*. In the case just cited, for example, in L<sup>m</sup>, the Isaiah lemma perplexingly appears between Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

## Two Fragments of Saadya's *Tafsīr* by Samuel b. Jacob

*Ronny Vollandt*

T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar.1a.38 contain the text of Saadya Gaon's translation (*tafsīr*) on Exodus 32:2 and 25:3–5.<sup>1</sup> The *tafsīr* constitutes the main Judaeo-Arabic translation tradition in the Genizah corpus and so 'another two fragments' are admittedly not a great source of astonishment. And yet, despite the fact that the text is so frequently found, the two leaves caught my eye immediately: they are virtually identical to the recently discovered manuscript St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1, which contains the earliest known copy of the complete Pentateuch translation of Saadya. This copy was completed about sixty years after the demise of the Gaon and it preserves his translation in the most precise and accurate way, both in wording and language.

The two Genizah fragments originate without any doubt from the same hand. They are identical, but only cover the book of Exodus, apparently attesting that the scribe produced a separate copy of that book for an unknown purchaser. The Hebrew text is presented in large, calligraphic, oriental square letters with full Tiberian vocalisation; beneath it, Saadya's translation is found in smaller semi-cursive letters. The St Petersburg manuscript embraces 720 folio pages; nevertheless, rather large parts are missing. It was copied by Samuel ben Jacob, who is known as an expert producer of Masoretic model codices.<sup>2</sup> Likewise the magnificent Leningrad Codex (RNL Yevr. B 19a) was written and vocalised by him in the year 1008–1009 CE in Fustāṭ. Although no date is given in the former manuscript it may be assumed that it was copied around the same time as the latter.

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- 1 This article was originally published as the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit's *Fragment of the Month* for November 2009, where it appeared with the title: 'Two fragments (T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar.1a.38) of Saadiah's *tafsīr* by Samuel ben Jacob' (<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fragment-month-12-4>). It is reproduced here, slightly modified by the editors, with permission from Ronny Vollandt.
  - 2 Editor's note: For more recent discoveries of manuscripts copied by Samuel ben Jacob, see in the present volume, 'More Genizah Bible Fragments Written by Samuel b. Jacob' by Kim Phillips.

MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C 1 opens with an ownership note, which is repeated at the beginning of every book, stating that this codex was commissioned by Solomon ben Abraham. Two Genizah fragments indicate that he was involved in trading with the Levantine coast, particularly with Tyre. His engagement in commerce and his consequent prestigious status—as indicated by the honorary title *ha-Paqid* in the manuscript—permitted him to commission such a splendid codex. A second ownership note leads directly to Tyre, for it appears that Solomon ha-Kohen, brother of—and *Av Bet Din* under—Gaon Evyatar (Abiathar) ha-Kohen, acquired the codex. Under his father, Elijah ha-Kohen Gaon, the Palestinian academy moved to Tyre as a result of the Seljuk conquest of Palestine. The date of purchase is given as 1084, thus the transfer of ownership must have taken place immediately after the appointment of Evyatar ha-Kohen as Gaon.

The Genizah fragments and the St Petersburg manuscript resemble each other in another feature. Foreign to Saadya's practice—and even antipodal to his own concept of scriptural translation—they exhibit innumerable alternative renderings, which are introduced by the Arabic terms *wa-qīl* or *wa-yuqāl*. It is noteworthy that they only occur in the book of Exodus, mainly after *Parashat Mishpatim*, where they are at times found in every verse, or even twice in one verse.

Hitherto, alternative renderings were considered an exclusive and distinctive hallmark of the pre-Saadianic and Karaite translation traditions. The total absence of that feature in the bulk of the Genizah material, as well in later manuscripts, allows no other assumption than that the alternative renderings were introduced as a kind of internal gloss by the scribe Samuel ben Jacob himself (as already pointed out by Ben-Shammai 2000). The additional Genizah fragments stemming from his hand, in which they are incorporated in the very same manner, prove this. Internal evidence may also be found in the translation of Exodus 29:9. In the first half of the verse, *וַאֲשַׁדְּדֵהֶם וְקִיל בְּזַנְאִינִר*, the copyist apparently forgot to enter the gloss. In the second half, *פְּתַצִּיר לֵהֶם פְּתִכּוֹן*, he mistakenly omitted *וְקִיל*, which was consequently added over the line. Both instances suggest that the glosses were appended in the actual course of copying.

Certain tendencies may be detected: the glosses typically occur when Saadya's translation is difficult for the reader to comprehend. On those occasions when the Gaon commits himself to translate the Hebrew into idiosyncratic, high-standard Classical Arabic, an alternative rendering in Middle Arabic is frequently found. Equally, highly synthetic translations are annotated by an explanatory gloss. Further, a need was felt to append a gloss to Saadya's usages of homophonous cognates in Arabic.



A close scrutiny of later manuscripts—whether of early oriental or relatively late Yemenite provenance—reveals, however, that these also occasionally feature readings akin to the glosses of MS St Petersburg RNL Yevr. 11 C 1. This fact evokes the crucial question: on which traditions did Samuel ben Jacob rely? Could it be that the glosses in fact draw upon genuine Saadianic material that resurfaced in the margins of the standardised transmission of the short *tafsīr*? Considering the Genizah fragments' readings at Exodus 23:1 and 29:20, this might very likely be the case. In one of the fragments of his commentary on Exodus (published by Y. Rastaby 1998), Saadya informs us of his difficulties in translating the Hebrew *אל תשת ירך עם רשע להיות עד חמס*. He proposes two options in Arabic, similar to the two variants of the St Petersburg manuscript. One is given as the standard translation, the other, as an alternative rendering that goes on to re-occur in the Yemenite tradition. In Exodus 29:20 the Hebrew term *גצ'רוף אד'ן הרון* is translated *שחמה אד'ן הרון*, yet it appears as *הרון תנוך און* in the gloss, as documented in Saadya's commentary and the Yemenite tradition.

In summary, it stands to reason that the glosses were introduced by the scribe Samuel ben Jacob by incorporating material of Saadya's commentary on Exodus. The additional Genizah fragments stemming from his hand, into which that material is interwoven in the very same manner, prove this. The glosses, thus, have to be seen in the light of intentional scribal editorial activity.

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# Two Hitherto Unpublished Bilingual (Jewish Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic) Genizah Fragments from the *Scroll of Antiochus*

*Siam Bhayro*

## 1 Introduction: Some Personal Remarks

Given the commemorative nature of the present volume, I would like to begin with some brief personal remarks. I worked at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit for barely a year (2006–2007), but it was a fruitful year. I suggested that we host a major international conference to mark the retirement of Professor Stefan C. Reif and to celebrate the thirty-three years he served as Director of the Unit; this was held in August 2007. I also established a new sub-series with Brill, Cambridge Genizah Studies, and co-edited the proceedings of the conference as the first volume of this series (Outhwaite and Bhayro, 2010). For personal reasons, my association with the Unit, and hence my research on the Cairo Genizah and editorial role with the series, ended in 2016, but it is gratifying to see that the series continues to prosper.

My year at the Unit coincided with Cambridge University Library's acquisition of the Jacques Mosseri Collection, which gave me a brief opportunity to delve into its contents. While perusing the contents of the Mosseri Collection, one seemingly insignificant fragment, which preserves barely five lines on each side, caught my attention. The fragment in question, Mosseri I.84.1, contains part of a bilingual Jewish Aramaic/Judaeo-Arabic edition of the *Scroll of Antiochus* (Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, 1990, 8). The existence of this fragment reminded me of another bilingual Genizah fragment of the same work, CUL T-S A45.14a, photographs of which were included by Simon Hopkins in his *Miscellany* (Hopkins, 1978, 44–45). Upon closer inspection, it would appear that the two fragments come from the same copy of a bilingual text of the *Scroll of Antiochus*, so it makes sense to publish them together.

The editors' kind invitation to contribute to this fiftieth-anniversary volume affords the perfect opportunity for me to present an *editio princeps* of both CUL T-S A45.14a and Mosseri I.84.1, along with some brief remarks on the Jewish Aramaic text and how the fragments fit in with the textual traditions of the *Scroll of Antiochus*. I am grateful, therefore, for this opportunity to resume, albeit in a very modest way, my engagement with Genizah Studies.

## 2 The Jewish Aramaic Versions and the Genizah Fragments

When he published his edition of the *Scroll of Antiochus*, Moses Gaster divided the known manuscripts into two groups, Group I (manuscripts A–C and F) and Group II (manuscripts D and E; Gaster's verse divisions and numbers are used in this paper). He asserted that Group I represents an eastern (especially Yemenite) recension that is superior to the Group II recension, which he defined as western (Gaster, 1893, 13–14). Gaster based this, in part, on the Arabic translation that accompanies the Aramaic text, on a verse-by-verse basis, in the Group I manuscripts (Gaster, 1893, 9). Half a century later, with more evidence to hand, Franz Rosenthal disputed Gaster's assertion, arguing that the existence of several Arabic translations corresponding to Group II confirms the oriental provenance of that recension (Rosenthal, 1946, 298). A few years later, Leon Nemoy published a facsimile of another Group II manuscript from Yale University Library, Yale Codex Hebrew +51 (Nemoy, 1952).

The two Genizah fragments that are published here correspond to Gaster's Group II. Indeed, in three respects, they accord most closely with Yale Codex Hebrew +51. First, in terms of the verse divisions, the Yale manuscript and the Genizah fragments appear to agree in dividing both verse 36 (T-S A45.14a v 9–13) and verse 65 (Mosseri I.84.1 r) into two separate verses. Furthermore, they also agree in joining verses 32 and 33 into one verse (T-S A45.14a r 3–6). Second, the syntax of the Judaeo-Arabic translation in Mosseri I.84.1 r 10 accords with that which is (so far) only attested in the Yale manuscript. Third, the following readings from the Genizah fragments only otherwise accord with readings attested in the Yale manuscript:

גברא (T-S A45.14a r 9)  
 מיתות (T-S A45.14a v 2)  
 דירושלם (T-S A45.14a v 3)  
 בגריס (T-S A45.14a v 9)  
 [חי] יבא (Mosseri I.84.1 v 9)  
 להפרכי (Mosseri I.84.1 v 11)  
 והזה (Mosseri I.84.1 v 11)  
 די הוה עליל (Mosseri I.84.1 v 12)

Despite the limited amount of text preserved on the two Genizah fragments, therefore, we are still able to assign them with confidence to Gaster's Group II, and to place them alongside Yale Codex Hebrew +51.

### 2.1 *The Aramaic of the Genizah Fragments*

Another reason to reject Gaster's notion of a western recension is the occurrence of (forms of) words that are unique to Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), or at least eastern and distinct from their Jewish Palestinian Aramaic forms (JPA). There are two examples in each of the Genizah fragments. In CUL T-S A45.14a r 1, we have the form שבתא, which accords better with the JBA rather than the JPA form (compare Sokoloff, 2020, 1086 with Sokoloff, 2017, 620–621). More significantly, the noun מהילותא, which occurs in CUL T-S A45.14a r 2 and v 13, is unique to JBA (Sokoloff, 2020, 604). In Mosseri I.84.1 v 13, the noun ערוקא is eastern, with equivalents in both Syriac and Mandaic, and is not attested in the western dialects (Sokoloff, 2020, 851). Finally, the noun הפרכי in Mosseri I.84.1 v 11 is of particular interest. The form with initial *heh* makes it clearly eastern (Sokoloff, 2020, 337), as opposed to the western forms that have initial *alep* (Sokoloff, 2017, 27). The typically western form occurs in Gaster's supposedly eastern Group I manuscripts, which may reflect where they were copied. Within the Group II recension, the lack of vocalic *yod* in the Genizah fragment, in contrast to היפרכי in Gaster's manuscripts D and E, again accords with the Yale manuscript.

In general, the Aramaic of the *Scroll of Antiochus* seems to be attempting to mimic an archaic form of Aramaic, probably the Biblical Aramaic of Daniel. This is suggested by the following points that, once again, being drawn from the limited data contained in the Genizah fragments, represent a significant body of evidence:

- the attempt to quote Dan 3:22 in CUL T-S A45.14a r 7–8;
- the use of the historical spelling of the pronoun אנתון in CUL T-S A45.14a v 10, for which compare Dan 2:8 (Moscati, 1980, 104; Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 88);
- the use of the Biblical Aramaic first person plural pronominal suffix נא— in CUL T-S A45.14a v 11 and v 12, for which compare Dan 3:17, as opposed to the standard JBA form ך— (Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 101–105);
- the use of a comparatively large number of nouns in the construct state: גזירת in CUL T-S A45.14a r 1, מלת in CUL T-S A45.14a r 7, מיתות in CUL T-S A45.14a v 2, בני in CUL T-S A45.14a v 13, and הפרכי in Mosseri I.84.1 v 11; the use of the construct state is preponderant in Biblical Aramaic (Rosenthal, 1995, 29) but comparatively rare in JBA, occurring mostly in fixed expressions (Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 69–70);
- the use of the Biblical Aramaic relative pronoun די in CUL T-S A45.14a r 7 and r 8, CUL T-S A45.14a v 1 and v 11, and Mosseri I.84.1 v 10 and v 12 (Rosenthal, 1995, 25);
- the retention of historic final *taw* in the third person feminine singular perfect verbs (Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 125–127): ילידת in CUL T-S A45.14a v 1, גזרתיה

- in CUL T-S A45.14a v 2, and סליקה in CUL T-S A45.14a v 3; note especially ענת ואמרת in CUL T-S A45.14a v 9, which recalls Dan 5:10;
- the use of the Biblical Aramaic Pa'el infinitive בטלא in CUL T-S A45:14a v 10 (Juusola, 1999, 221);
  - the use of the forms אנתתא in T-S A45.14a v 1 and אנתהיך in CUL T-S A45.14a r 9, which preserve the historic *nun* (Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 28–29);
  - the use of archaic יְתִהוֹן for the direct object in CUL T-S A45.14a r 10, for which compare Dan 3:12 (Bar-Asher Siegal, 2016, 226).

Some of these elements are also common in the Aramaic of Targum Onqelos. Indeed, it has been generally accepted that the Aramaic of the *Scroll of Antiochus* is attempting to imitate that of Targum Onqelos (TO; e.g. Stemberger, 1996, 331). This should be reconsidered, however, as the data culled from even this small sample contains four points that would appear to preclude the dialect of TO:

- אנתון as opposed to TO אתון (Juusola, 1999, 76);
- אנתתא as opposed to TO איתתא (Sokoloff, 2020, 61);
- די as opposed to TO ד (Juusola, 1999, 129–130);
- כַּל קַבְּלֵי דְּנָה, which is almost completely absent from the various Targums (Wesselius, 1988, 195).

It seems, therefore, that the Aramaic of the *Scroll of Antiochus* is trying to imitate that of the book of Daniel, which, given that it concerns the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus spoken of in Dan 8 and 11, is not at all surprising.

### 3 The Judaeo-Arabic Versions and the Genizah Fragments

Several Judaeo-Arabic translations have been published, notably by Qafih (1980/1981, 226–233) and Hirschfeld (1892, 1–6), and significant fragments were published by Abrahams (1900, 117–120) and Atlas and Perlmann (1944, 1–23). As stated above, the Jewish Aramaic text of the Genizah fragments accords most closely with Yale Codex Hebrew +51. Given that the Yale manuscript does not have an accompanying Judaeo-Arabic translation, it is not surprising that the Genizah fragments preserve a hitherto unknown Judaeo-Arabic translation.

#### 4 CUL T-S A45.14a *recto*

Contents by line:

- 1–2 Jewish Aramaic text of the second half of verse 33
- 3–6 Judaeo-Arabic translation of verses 32–33

7–10 Jewish Aramaic text of verse 34

11–13 Judaeo-Arabic translation of verse 34

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>גזירת גמירא על שבתא ועל<br/>מהילותא:<br/>פסאר בגריס בגמ[י] ע גישה אלי אן</p>   | <p>1 a decree of extermination concern-<br/>ing the Sabbath and concerning<br/>2 circumcision.<br/>3 Then Bagres marched with all his<br/>army until</p>   |
| <p>אקבל אלי ארושלם וקתל פיהא מקתלה<br/>עטימה ואמר אמרא קאטעא גאזמא<br/>פי מעני אלסבת ואלכתאנה:<br/>כל קבל דנה די מן מלת מלכא<br/>מחצפא גברא דייגור בריה<br/>איתון גברא ואף אנתתיה<br/>וצליבו יתהון לקבל ינקא:<br/>ובחסב מא כאן דלך אלאמר אכידא<br/>פאתי ברגל ומרה לה אולדו ולדא פכתנה<br/>פצלב[ו] כלאהמא בין ידי אלצבי:</p> | <p>4 he came to Jerusalem, and he slew<br/>in it a great<br/>5 slaughter, and he issued a definitive<br/>firm command<br/>6 concerning the Sabbath and cir-<br/>cumcision.<br/>7 Because of this, since the word of<br/>the king<br/>8 was urgent, a (certain) man who<br/>would circumcise his son –<br/>9 they brought the man and also his<br/>wife<br/>10 and they crucified them opposite<br/>the child.<br/>11 And because the command was<br/>urgent,<br/>12 then were brought to him a man<br/>and wife who had a son and cir-<br/>cumcised him,<br/>13 and they crucified both of them in<br/>front of the boy.</p> |

Lines 3–6

Verses 32–33 are joined into one verse, in accordance with Yale Codex Hebrew +51.

Lines 7–8

The phrase *כל קבל דנה די מן מלת מלכא מחצפא* is an attempt to quote from Dan 3:22, but, at some point, the *די* and *מן* have become inverted, with the resulting text making little sense. The correct reading is given in the manuscripts used by Gaster and in the Yale manuscript, so this is reflected in the given translation. Note also the use of *מחצפא* for biblical *מחצפה*.

## 5 CUL T-S A45.14a verso

## Contents by line:

- 1–4 Jewish Aramaic text of verse 35  
 5–8 Judaeo-Arabic translation of verse 35  
 9–13 Jewish Aramaic text of the first half of verse 36

ואף אנתתא די ילידת בר בתר	1	And (there was) also a woman who bore a son after
מיתות בעלה וגזרתיה לתמניא	2	the death of her husband, and she circumcised him on the eighth
יומין וסליקת על שורא דירושלם	3	day, and she went up upon the wall of Jerusalem
וברה גזירא בידה:	4	and her circumcised son was in her hand.
ואן בעץ אלנסא אולדת ולדא בעד מות	5	And one of the women bore a son after the death of
זוגהא וכתנתה לתמאן איאם וטלעת	6	her husband, and she circumcised him on the eighth day, and she went up
עלי סור ירושלם וולדהא אלתי כתנתה	7	upon the wall of Jerusalem and her son whom she had circumcised
פי ידהא:	8	was in her hand.
ענת ואמרת לך אמרין בגריס	9	She answered and said, "To you they say, Bagres
חייבא אנתון סברין לבטלא	10	the guilty one, 'You think to abolish
מיננא קיימא די אבהתנא	11	from us the covenant of our forefathers!
לא פסיק מננא ושבתא ומא	12	It is not cut off from us! And the Sabbath
ומהילותא מבני בניה[ון] לא עדין:	13	and circumcision from the sons of their sons are not passing away!"

## Line 4

A subsequent scribe has corrected *וברח* to *וברה* in the margin.

## Lines 10–13

Gaster's manuscripts A and E, as well as Yale Codex Hebrew +51, clearly indicate that the phrase *די אבהתנא* should be the subject of the verb *פסק*. This would make the final two clauses parallel with each other:



קיימא די אבהתנא לא פסיק מננא	The covenant of our forefathers is not cut off from us!
ושבתא ומהילותא מבני בניהון לא עדין	And the Sabbath and circumcision from the sons of their sons are not passing away!

Of course, this leaves us with an incomplete clause:

... אנתון סברין לבטלא מיננא ...    You think to abolish from us ...

The Yale manuscript omits this clause altogether, thus avoiding the problem. The proper solution to this, however, is probably to be found in Gaster's manuscript E, which completes this clause with the phrase קיימא דיגור עימנא 'the covenant that was established with us'. It appears that, at some point in the transmission of the recension represented by Yale Codex Hebrew +51 and the Genizah fragment, a scribe was thrown by the recurrence of קיימא. It should be noted, however, that Gaster's manuscript E is itself imperfect, having מסרבין 'refuse, rebel' instead of the more sensible סברין of the Genizah fragment. It seems, therefore, that we are left with the curious situation in which the Genizah fragment is the only textual witness to the correct verb for the longer reading that is attested in E, whilst itself not preserving the longer reading through haplography. Thus, I would reconstruct this verse as follows:

ענת ואמרת לך אמרין בגריס חייבא	She answered and said, "To you they say, Bagres the guilty one,
אנתון סברין לבטלא מיננא קיימא דיגור עימנא	'You think to abolish from us the covenant that was established with us.
קיימא די אבהתנא לא פסיק מננא	The covenant of our forefathers is not cut off from us!
ושבתא ומהילותא מבני בניהון לא עדין:	And the Sabbath and circumcision from the sons of their sons are not passing away!"

Line 13

The use of a verse divider accords with the verse division in Yale Codex Hebrew +51.

6 Mosseri I.84.1 *recto*

Contents by line:

9–13 Judaeo-Arabic translation of the first half of verse 65

למא אסלם אללה [...]	9	[And the children of Israel rejoiced] when God delivered
באידיה]ם עדאהם מנהם מן	10	[into their hands] their enemies; some of them
א]חרקוה באלנאר ומנהם מן	11	they burned with fire, and others
קתלוה באלסיף ומנהם מן צלבוה	12	they killed with the sword, and others they crucified
עלי אלכשב:	13	on the cross.

Lines 9–13

The preserved Judaeo-Arabic text very much corresponds to the Aramaic text as attested in the Yale manuscript: וחדו בית ישראל די אתמסרו בידיהון סנאיהון מנהון (see also the notes on lines 10 and 13 below).

Line 9

From the already published Judaeo-Arabic texts, the missing opening clause could be restored as either ופרחו בני אסראיל (Hirschfeld, 1892, 5) or ואוסרו בני אסראיל (Abrahams, 1900, 120).

Line 10

The probable restoration of באידיהם עדאהם agrees with the word order in Yale Codex Hebrew +51 (בידיהון סנאיהון) rather than Gaster's manuscripts D and E (סנאיהון בידיהון), again confirming the close relationship between the Yale manuscript and the Genizah fragments.

Line 13

The use of a verse divider suggests that the Genizah fragment divided verse 65 into two separate verses, just as in Yale Codex Hebrew +51.

7 Mosseri I.84.1 *verso*

Contents by line:

9–13 Jewish Aramaic text of most of verse 66

		<i>Missing:</i> Then Antiochus the king, when he heard that
בגר[יס] חי[יבא וכל רברבי]	9	Bagr[es the] guil[ty one was killed, and all the nobles of]
חילא די עמי[ה יתיב בספינתא]	10	the army who were with hi[m, he embarked onto a ship]
וערק להפרכי ימא והוה כ[ל]	11	and fled to the colonies of the sea. And wherever
אתר די הוה עליל מרדין ביה	12	he entered rebelled against him
ואמרין ליה ערוקא:	13	and said to him “Fugitive!”

### Lines 1–8

Given how the *recto* ends, it is likely that lines 1–3 contained the Jewish Aramaic text of the second half of verse 65, with the corresponding Judaeo-Arabic translation following on lines 4–6. Lines 7–8 probably contained the Jewish Aramaic text of the start of verse 66, along the lines of באדין אנטיוכס מלכא כדי ש.מ.ע די אתקטל. Yale Codex Hebrew +51 omits the opening באדין, but, judging from the number of letters needed to fill two complete lines, the Genizah fragment probably accorded with either Gaster’s manuscript E (באדין) or CUL T-S A45.15 2 r 17 (אדין; photograph in Hopkins, 1978, 51). In all other respects, the suggested restoration conforms to the Yale manuscript and CUL T-S A45.15 2 r 17–18.

### Line 9

The visible חי suggests that the Genizah fragment read חייבא with Yale Codex Hebrew +51 and CUL T-S A45.15 2 r 18, rather than תניניה with Gaster’s manuscripts A–C and F. Gaster’s manuscripts D and E both omit the adjective altogether, suggesting that, within the Group II recension, the Genizah fragment is closest to the Yale manuscript.

### Line 11

Sokoloff glosses הפרכא as ‘governor’ (Sokoloff, 2020, 337), which works well in other contexts. In this context, however, Jastrow’s secondary definition ‘subject (land), colony’ (Jastrow, 1903, 363), is much better suited.

## 8 Images

I would like to thank the Syndics of Cambridge University Library for granting permission to publish these images.

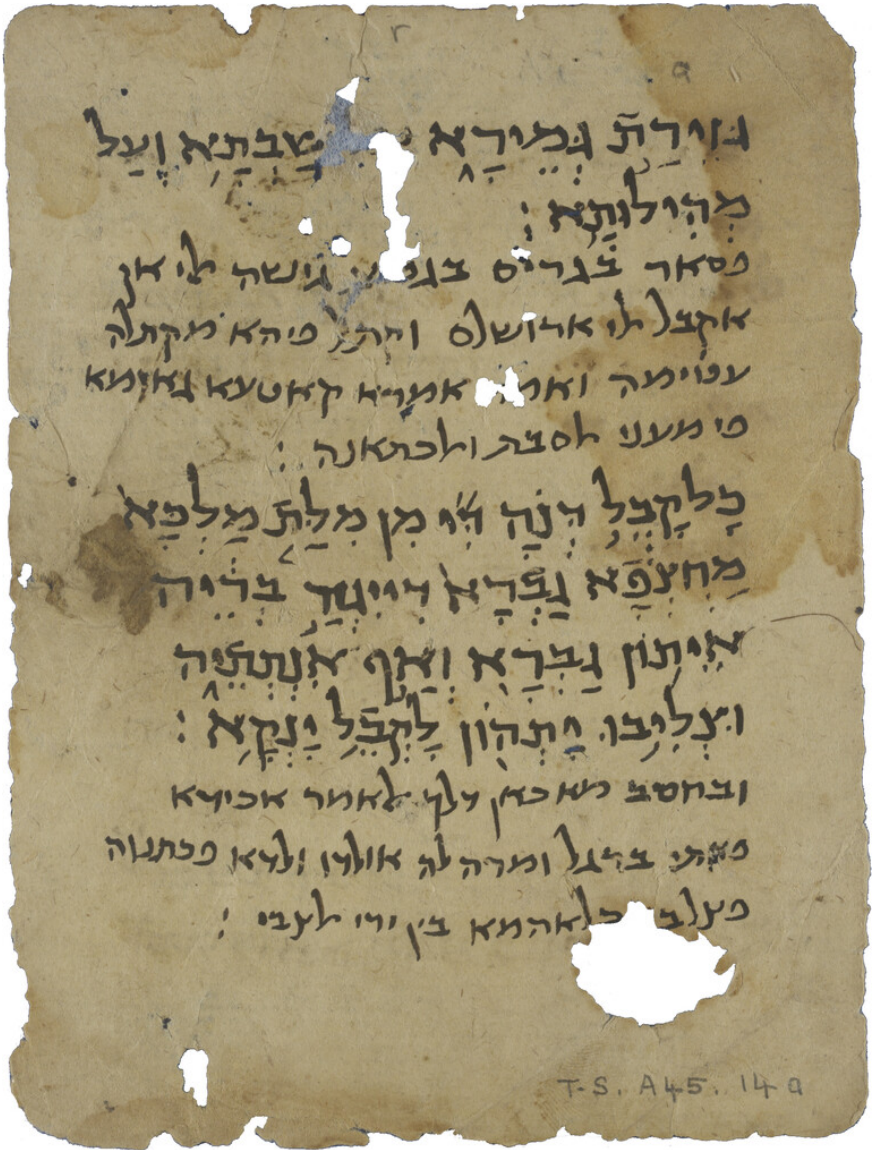


FIGURE 5.1 T-S A45.14a recto

ויאמר ה' אלהי ישראל יולדות בר בור  
 מותות בעלה וגזרתיה לתמצא  
 וזמין וסליקת על שורא דירושלם  
 וצרה וברח ויורא צרה  
 ואן בעץ הנסא אולת וקא בער מוח  
 זוגה וכותה למאן אואס וטלע  
 לוסור ירושלם וולדה אנו כמע  
 זיהא :  
 עת ואמרת לך אמרון בן יוס  
 חובה אנתון סברין לבטלה  
 מיננא קווסא דו אבהוננא  
 לא נסוק מענא ושבתא וכו' וכו'  
 ומחילונתא מבני בער  
 T.S. A45.149.

FIGURE 5.2 T-S A45.14a verso

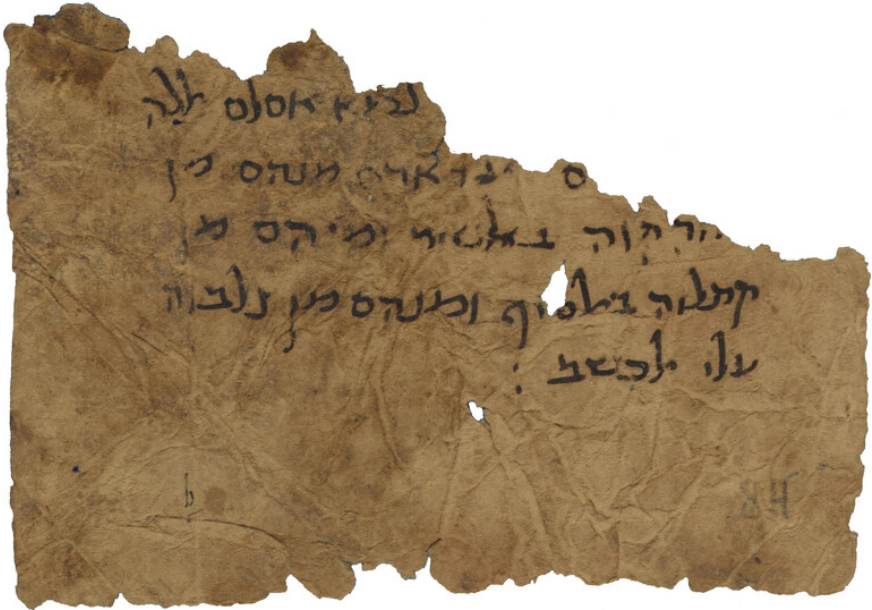


FIGURE 5.3 Mosseri I.84.1 recto



FIGURE 5.4 Mosseri I.84.1 verso

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# A Fragment of a Mystical-Philosophical Judaeo-Arabic Commentary on the Talmudic *ʿAggadot* from the Pietist Circle

*Paul Fenton*

## 1 Introduction

Many years ago, when still a Research Assistant at the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit at the Cambridge University Library, I happened upon a Genizah fragment of an unknown commentary on the talmudic *ʿAggadot* to be found in the tractate *Beraḳot*. Like so many partial texts uncovered in that treasure trove, its contents were highly tantalising but I withheld its publication, convinced at the time that I would eventually unearth additional pages of the same commentary and possibly discover its author’s identity. The years that have rolled by have not seen the fulfilment of that wish and so I have taken the decision to publish this text in the hope that it will enable future researchers to perhaps identify in time further pieces of this interesting work in the Cairo Genizah holdings.

For all its brevity, our fragment is extremely valuable on more than one count. Besides its recognition of an allegorical meaning to the *ʿAggadot*, albeit a relatively moderate one in comparison to the radical philosophical interpretations of later periods, it touches on some important issues. Some are brought up by the talmudic text itself, such as the problem of suffering, Divine providence, and angelology, while others are introduced by the author, such as the mystical-philosophical meaning of the precepts, metaphorical interpretation, Divine transcendence, and anti-Sabeian polemics.

It illustrates an exegetical approach to the *ʿAggadot* which had been initiated at the time of the Geonim partly in response to the Qaraites, who had targeted the hyperbolic language of the midrash, especially its anthropomorphic aspects, in their anti-Rabbanite polemics. Indeed, our author draws on Geonic sources and even in the few preserved folios we find him invoking the authority of both R. Hayya Gaon’s (939–1038 CE) commentary on *Beraḳot* as well as a passage from the *Megillat setarim* of R. Nissim Gaon of Qayrawan (990–1062 CE).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, n. 119.

In a famous *responsum*, precisely on an anthropomorphic passage from TB *Beraḳot* 59a, R. Hayya Gaon taught that:

this is an Aggadic statement concerning the like of which the rabbis declared that authority is not to be afforded to the words of *ʿAggadot*. By way of explanation, it should be first made clear that according to both rational analysis and the opinion of the Sages, it is certain that no comparison can be drawn between the Holy One blessed be He and any created being [...]. Having clarified this principle, you will become aware that all similar expressions employed by the rabbis were not meant literally but rather as a metaphor and a comparison to phenomena that we can perceive [by the senses], since ‘the Torah expresses itself in human language’ (TB *Beraḳot* 31b). Indeed, the Prophets used parables when [speaking of God] such as ‘the eyes of God’ (Gen. 38, 7), ‘the hand of God’ (Ex. 9, 3) as metaphors used in human speech.<sup>2</sup>

In their commentaries and responsa, the Geonim such as Sa’adyah, Hayya, Ḥanan’el and Nissim Gaon, provided rational explanations for many random passages, but none compiled a systematic treatise on the rabbinical homilies. The first to envisage such a work was Moses Maimonides (1135–1204 CE) who considered the talmudic *ʿAggadot* as a repository of ancient Hebrew thought and science. In his youth, Maimonides had intended to write an exhaustive allegorical interpretation (*taʿwīl*) of the *ʿAggadot*:

I intend to compose a work in which I will gather all of the homilies to be found in the Talmud and other [sources]. I will explain and interpret (*taʿwīl*) such that they be in accordance with their true meanings and will also provide proof of this from the [rabbis’] very statements. I will clarify which of the homilies are to be understood in their literal meaning, which are parables, and which are dreams [even though] they are expressed in straightforward language as if they had occurred in a wakeful state. I will expound to you in that composition numerous principles and provide examples to serve as analogies. May I not be criticised for the liberty my

2 J. Musafia, ed., *Tešūbōt ha-Geʿōnīm* (Lyck: Meqizey Nirdamim, 1864), par. 98; B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries, following the order of the Talmudic Tractates* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Press Association, 1931), *Berāḳōt*, Hayya Gaon, *Tešūbōt*, no. 357, 130–131. A Hebrew translation of the Aramaic original is to be found in A.Y. Brumberg, ed., *Peṽrūšey rišʿōnīm l-ʿaggādōt Ḥazal* (Jerusalem: Committee for the Publication of the Works of Rabbi Brumberg, 1981), 22; see also S. Immanuel, ed., *Tešūbōt ha-Geʿōnīm ha-ḥadašōt* (Jerusalem: Meḳon Ofeq, 1995), 155.

exposition has taken in regard to certain terms and notions, of which the philosophers might disapprove. I did so in order to provide comprehension to those who possess no prior understanding of this exalted matter which all are not [capable of] grasping.<sup>3</sup>

Having begun this work which he called *Kitāb al-muṭābaqah*, the *Book of Concordance*, i.e. the agreement between the teachings of the rabbinical legends and those of philosophy, he later renounced its composition on the grounds that he would have to reveal that which the Sages had chosen to conceal. If, on the other hand, he ‘explained what ought to be explained, it would be unsuitable for the vulgar among the people’ and he would therefore be defeating his primary purpose.<sup>4</sup> As we shall see anon, Maimonides’ only son and heir, R. Abraham Maymūnī (a.k.a. Abraham Maimonides) (1186–1247 CE) did compile such a work along the lines set out by his father.

On palaeographical grounds, we can safely assume that the present fragment originates from Egypt and probably dates from the thirteenth century CE, whereas its doctrinal content points to the post-Maimonidean period. Thus, we have to give consideration to the possibility that R. Abraham may be its author.

A first likely source may be this commentary on the Talmud mentioned in his famous letter preserved in the Bodleian Library, MS Pococke 186. Abraham speaks there of a *diqduq peruš ha-talmūd*,<sup>5</sup> a title which might suggest an

3 Y. Qāfīh, ed., *Maimonides’ Commentary on the Mišnah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1963–1969), III (of VIII), Introduction to Sanhedrin (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1965), 209.

*Introduction to Sanhedrin* (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1965), 209. In his attitude to the *Aggadat*, Maimonides took his cue from the Geonim as when he states in *Hilḳōt yesōdey ha-tōrāh*, I, 8: ‘The Torah and Prophets clearly affirm that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not possess a body [...] for if He possessed one, He would resemble other bodies. If this be the case what does the Torah imply when it uses expressions such as ‘under His feet’ (Ex. 24, 10), ‘the finger of God’ (*ib.* 31, 18), ‘the hand of God’ (*ib.* 9, 3), ‘the eyes of God’ (Gen. 38, 7) [...]?’ All are employed in relation to human understanding, which can only conceive of [physical] bodies for ‘the Torah expresses itself in human language’ (TB *Beraḳot* 31b) and all these [expressions] are metaphorical.’

4 See the introduction to his *Guide for the Perplexed* (see, Y. Qāfīh, ed., *Maimonides’ Guide for the Perplexed* (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, I (of III), 9); see also S. Pines, transl., *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963 I (of II), 9)). Let us recall that Daniel b. al-Māšīṭah says critically of Maimonides that he considered ‘that for an individual proficient in the words of the Rabbis with proper reasoning, no statement of theirs could preclude allegorical interpretation’. See P. Fenton, ‘Maimonides—Father and Son,’ in *Traditions of Maimonideanism*, ed. C. Fraenkel (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 133.

5 See A.H. Freimann and S.D. Goitein, eds., *The Responsa of Abraham Maimonides* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1937), no. 124, 210. It is possible that this letter, like the preceding item in the Pococke ms., was addressed by Abraham Maimonides to R. Isaac Ibn Šuwayḳ, Gaon of Baghdad from 1221–1247 CE.

examination (*tanqīh*) of selected passages. In a recent article, A. Breuer endeavoured to demonstrate that Abraham Maimonides' commentary on the tractate *Berākot* is to be identified with a Hebrew commentary, hitherto ascribed to Hayya Gaon.<sup>6</sup> The arguments he adduces are mainly based on the claim that the script of one of the fragments of this commentary, Oxford, Bodl. Ms Heb. d. 64 fol. 89, apparently the author's draft (ms A), is identical with that of a Cairo Genizah fragment of a Judaeo-Arabic work CUL T-S Ar. 44. 266 (ms B), which he claims is an autograph excerpt from the *Kifāyat al-'ābidīn*.<sup>7</sup>

These arguments are totally fallacious. Firstly, a cursory examination of the two manuscripts clearly shows that not only were they not written by the same scribe<sup>8</sup> but they are definitely not in R. Abraham's hand. Secondly, although I do not entirely rule out the possibility that ms B is from the *Kifāyah*, there is a detail which argues against this ascription. The fragment seems to be a discussion on reward and punishment, which is indeed a theme R. Abraham considered in section 8 of Book IV:1 of the *Kifāyah*.<sup>9</sup> However, the second folio is devoted to the exegesis of Ps. 8 in which we read that according to the anonymous author, *kavōd* in the verse 'honour and glory' (v. 6) refers to man's 'inner form' (*šūrah bāṭinah*), which is the source of his nobleness. On the other hand, in the *Kifāyah*, *kavōd* is a synonym for the soul which is the source of 'human perfection' (*al-kamāl al-'insānī*).<sup>10</sup> Consequently, we are still justified

6 A. Breuer, "Two Observations on the Identification of Fragments as R. Hayya Ga'on's *Commentary on Berākot* and the Identification of A. Maimonides' *Commentary on Berākot* and the *Sefer ha-Maspīq*," *Hitzei Gibborim* 8 (2015): 1107–109.

7 With one exception (see immediately below), none of the fragments of the *Kifāyah* listed in my article, P. Fenton, "Dana's Edition of Abraham Maimuni's *Kifāyat al-'ābidīn*," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 82 (1991): 194–206, seem to be an autograph. We do have numerous specimens of A. Maimonides' hand, which, as I have characterised elsewhere, tends towards an Andalusian cursive script, despite his having been born and bred in Egypt. Autograph specimens are to be found in JTS MS 8254.17e (*olim* ENA 3313.9), a commentary of the Passover Haggadah extracted from the *Kifāyah*, JTS ENA 18.36, a letter to his brother-in-law, published in P. Fenton, "A Judeo-Arabic Commentary on the *Haftarot* by Ḥanan'el ben Šemu'el," *Maimonidean Studies* 1 (1990): 27–56, see 49–54, and Bodl. Heb. c 28, 45–46, a tract in defence of the pietists, translated in P. Fenton, *Deux Traités de mystique juive: 'Obadyah b. Abraham b. Moïse Maïmonide, Le Traité du puits, al-Maqāla al-ḥawḍiyya: David b. Josué, dernier des Maïmonide: Le Guide du détachement, al-Muršid ilā t-tafarrud* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1985), 82–83.

8 The forming of the *'ayin*, which differs in A and B, is decisive. Compare also the *qōf* and final *nūn* (both slope to the right in A, whereas they are straight in B) and the elongated foot of final *tav* in A, which has no equivalent in B.

9 P. Fenton, "Dana's Edition of Abraham Maimuni's *Kifāyat al-'ābidīn*," 199.

10 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), II, 10. However, see *ibid.* II, 224.

in envisaging as a likely source of the present text R. Abraham Maimonides' commentary on the Talmud.

Alternatively, we could assume that the present fragment may derive from his discourse on the interpretation of rabbinical *'Aggadot* which formed one particular chapter of his *Kifāyat al-ʿābidīn*, *Compendium for the Servants of the Lord*, completed *circa* 1232 CE. In my tentative reconstruction of this work, I suggested that the chapter in question probably figured in the first part of Book II,<sup>11</sup> where it may have been followed by a fully-fledged, systematic treatise on the subject. A short description of the discourse on rabbinical homilies in what follows will not be unwarranted.

Like his *magnum opus* itself, this section has been incompletely preserved and only its introduction has come down to us. Nonetheless, this introduction came to be considered as a separate treatise and between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century CE it was even translated three times into Hebrew with the title *Maʿamar ʿal ʿodot derašot Ḥazal*, “Discourse on the Rabbinical Homilies”. This partial translation achieved a relatively wide diffusion as it was published upfront of most editions of *ʿEyn Yaʿaqob*, a popular compilation of the Aggadic passages of the Talmud.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the Hebrew translation, fragments from the original Arabic have come to light in the Cairo Genizah in recent times.<sup>13</sup>

It is quite clear from the following passage taken from the foreword, that R. Abraham considered this chapter to be a realisation and revival of Maimonides' undertaking as he closely adheres to the outline of his father's project. However, perceiving in the allegorical interpretations of *'Aggadot* a means to bolster and legitimise his own pietistic doctrine, his chapter follows a new

11 P. Fenton, “Dana's Edition of Abraham Maimuni's *Kifāyat al-ʿābidīn*,” 198.

12 An anonymous translation is preserved in JTS Misc. 2324, a miscellany compiled by Eliezer Eilenburg, and in Oxford Bodl. ms. Neubauer 1649.4, copied in Poland in 1465 CE. The *Discourse* was printed several times from this latter manuscript, for example in *Kerem Ḥemed* 2 (1836): 7–61; A. Lichtenberg, ed., *Qovetz teshuvot ha-Rambam v' Igrot Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon* (Leipzig: HL Shnoys; 1859), II 40–43; and, more recently, in R. Margalio, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Milḥamot ha-šem* (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1953), 81–98. A second translation was made in the East in the 16th century CE by Abraham Ibn Miḡaš (see A. Harkavy, “Notes and Additions to H. Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. v,” *Ḥadāšīm gam yešānūm* 10 (1896): 7), and a third in the Maghreb in the same century by Vidal Sarfati (ca. 1545–1619 CE) of Fez, published in the introduction to his commentary on the *Midraš rabbah*, *Imrei yōšer*, (Warsaw: Y. Kalinberg, 1874).

13 See E. Hurvitz, “*Maʿamar ʿal ʿodot derašot Ḥazal*,” *Joshua Finkel Memorial Volume* (New York: Yeshivah University Press, 1974), 139–168. The missing word on p. 147, l. 9 reads: *taqšīr*, translated in the Hebrew as *be-qazrūt lāšōn*. See the appendix to the present article, where I publish an additional fragment to those discovered by Hurvitz.

personal agenda. Indeed, already in the ethical section of the *Kifāyah* in the exposition of his pietist principles he often refers to the Aggadic passages of the Talmud and likewise in his commentary on the Pentateuch.

My father and teacher, of blessed memory, had the intention of composing a work on the interpretation [of the *Aggadot*] as he mentioned at the beginning of his *Commentary on the Mishnah* [*Sanhedrin*]. He eventually relinquished the project ‘and Moses feared drawing nigh to it’,<sup>14</sup> as he stated at the beginning of the *Guide*.<sup>15</sup> After his demise, I commented upon a small number of homilies<sup>16</sup> but could not devote more to the subject for I turned to the composition of the present work [the *Kifāyah*], since I saw it would be of more substantial utility than the undertaking of the former work. Nonetheless, I call upon thine attention and reflexion to open thine eyes to the way in which the Sages expressed themselves in the homilies they produced. Heed their intention and it will be for thee a judge whereas thou shalt be their mouthpiece. Consequently, thou wilt preserve thyself from belittling the words of the Sages and denying the truthfulness of their sayings. Nor wilt thou consider them as miraculous occurrences as were wrought for prophets and every wise and pious individual as if there were no difference between the parting of the Red Sea for the sake of Moses and those that came forth from Egypt and that of the Jordan for Elijah and Eliša’ or other such miracles. All this follows if thou takest the homilies (*derašot*) in a literal sense, or according to what initially appears at first sight. It would have sufficed that we show that there are homilies and parables that have an inner, esoteric meaning beyond the exoteric and apparent meaning—especially [in light of] what my father and teacher expounded on these matters in his compositions—, were it not for my will and desire to add for thee an elucidation and to reveal to thee the different categories of these homilies in accordance with their different subject matters.<sup>17</sup>

Though Abraham Maimonides’ usage of homilies would warrant a full study, this would exceed the scope of the present article. Beyond the postulation that the Aggadic homilies contain an exoteric and an esoteric meaning, which is the very basis of any mystical system, Abraham Maimonides aims at classify-

14 Wordplay on Ex. 34, 30.

15 See *supra*, n. 3.

16 Is this possibly the present fragment?

17 R. Margalioṭ, ed., “*Ma’amar ‘al ‘odot derašot Ḥazal*,” in *Abraham Maimonides’ Milḥamōt ha-šem* (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1953), 83.

ing the diverse types of *ʿAggadot* and determining the exegetical attitude that is appropriate for each. Unlike his father, he does not use allegories for philosophical ends but in support of his own pietistic principles. Interestingly, this is notably one of the ways in which he uses his father’s methodology to further his own Judaeo-Sufi ideas. For example, in stark contrast to his father’s views on miracles, Abraham Maimonides has no problem subscribing to the reality of miracles (*karāmāt*) and accepting that God changes the laws of nature. In true Sufi spirit, he claims that these are vouchsafed to the possessors of virtuousness and saintliness (*al-ṣalāh wa-l-wilāyah*) and he gives as an example the story of Nahum of Gimzo as reported in TB *Ta’anit* 21a–b.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, it may be noted that the tendency to perceive in the *ʿAggadot* mystical parables, parallels the way in which Sufis use *ḥadīṣ* for their anecdotes and hagiographical tales. Just by way of illustration here are a few examples culled from the *Kifāyah*, which, by virtue of the nature of the preserved proportions of this work, mainly concern his use of talmudic homilies to illustrate his pietistic ethics. In his chapter on generosity, he sees Hillel as a paragon of this virtue on the basis of the talmudic account.<sup>19</sup> In his chapter on reliance (*ʿittikāl*), he draws on examples from the Talmud of rabbinical figures who exercised common trades to gain their sustenance,<sup>20</sup> and in that on solitude, he claims that the talmudic Sages practised spiritual retreats.<sup>21</sup>

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- 18 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927), I, 16; see also *idem*, pp. 138, 298, 414 (quoting from TB *Šabbat* 33b) and in his *Commentary on the Pentateuch* (see *infra* n. 22), 479. God shows grace by changing the natural order for those who rely upon Him, especially prophets and saints (*awlīyāʿ*). In other instances, e.g., p. 457, on Ex. 32, 15, he is more sceptical, accepting the miracles reported in the *midraš* only if they ‘are law’, according to the expression used in *Mišnah*, *Yebamot* 5, 3. On the Sufi concept of *wilāyah*, which Abraham uses in *The High Ways* (see S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, I, 184, 202, and II, 416; see also M. Chodkiewicz, *The Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ʿArabi* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993)).
- 19 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 198 on Hillel as reported in TB *Šabbat* 30b.
- 20 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 120 referring to TB *Ber.* 8a, 28a, *Ket.* 105a and *Ta’anit* 23a. Cf. Y. Qāfiḥ, ed., *Maimonides’ Commentary on the Mišnah*, *Abōt*, 4, 7, 441–446. For further examples, see S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 206 (‘reliance’) (*Mišnah Ber.* 5, 5); *idem*, 234 (‘frugality’) (TB *Ta’anit* 23a–b), *idem*, 264 (‘celibacy’) (TB *Qidd.* 29b, *Yeb.* 63b). For Talmudic examples of abstinence, see S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 234, 298 and P. Fenton, “Asceticism among the Judeo-Sufis of Egypt: The Cases of R. Abraham Maimonides and R. David II Maimonides,” *Asceticism in Judaism and the Abrahamic Religions = Jewish Thought* 3 (2021): 67–97.
- 21 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 417; see also

His conviction that the rabbinical homilies contained ‘mysteries’ is also to be found in his commentary on the Pentateuch. An interesting example is his discussion of death by ‘a divine kiss’ referred to in TB *Mo’ed Qaṭan* 28a, an expression in which the commentator perceives ‘a supernal mystery’ referring to an exalted degree of prophecy.<sup>22</sup>

We see then that the Nagid accepts his father’s principle of allegorization of the rabbinical homilies which he perceives as containing spiritual rather than philosophical mysteries. I will now proceed to examine more closely whether the present extracts could have been part of the lost chapter of the *Kifāyah* dealing with rabbinical homilies.

### 1.2 *Discussion of Authorship*

Certain characteristics, both external and internal, argue strongly in favour of their ascription to R. Abraham b. Moses Maimonides or his school. Firstly, the dating of the manuscript, for, as already stated, its palaeographical features are typical of thirteenth-century CE Egypt. Secondly, its language, Judaeo-Arabic being R. Abraham’s preferred literary medium. Thirdly, its content, which seems to be part of a running, allegorical commentary on the rabbinical homilies—a clear fulfilment of the Maimonidean project. By the way, this is the first systematic commentary of this type known to us in Jewish literature. Fourthly, the anonymous author quotes both from R. Hayya Gaon’s commentaries and R. Nissim Gaon’s *Megillat setarim*, authors who are also cited in the *Kifāyah*.<sup>23</sup> Fifthly and most importantly, not only are our anonymous author’s philosophical ideas of a decidedly Neoplatonic and Sufi nature but he employs a technical vocabulary of a Sufi character, certain terms of which are common to Abraham Maimonides, such as *maqāmāt* (‘spiritual stations’),<sup>24</sup> *riyāḍah* (‘spiritual training’),<sup>25</sup> and *’ittiṣāl* (‘communion’).<sup>26</sup>

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our article, P. Fenton, “La Pratique de la retraite spirituelle (*khalwa*) chez les judéo-soufis d’Égypte,” in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l’Égypte médiévale*, eds. G. Cecere, M. Loubet and S. Pagani (Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2013), 211–252.

22 E. Wiesenberg, ed., *Abraham Maimonides’ Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* (London: S.D. Sasson, 1958), 189 on Gen. 48, 8 and *idem*, p. 276 on Ex. 15, 20. Here Abraham took his cue from his father. Cf. Y. Qāfīh, ed., *Maimonides’ Guide for the Perplexed*, II, 51, 684; see also S. Pines, transl., *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*, 627–628.

23 R. Dana, ed., *Sefer ha-maspik le’ovdey ha-šem* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1989).

24 See S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 410 *et passim*.

25 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, I, 190, l. 3.

26 S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 392, l. 20 and 416, l. 1.



On the other hand, certain discrepancies between the concepts expressed in the present text and what is known of Abraham's doctrine cast doubt on his authorship. Firstly, the allegorical interpretation of the phylacteries given in this text has no parallel to what we read in the chapter devoted to *tefillin* in the *Kifāyah*.<sup>27</sup> However, this is not in itself conclusive. Secondly, in his *Discourse* Abraham actually refers to one of the *'Aggadot* which is also interpreted in the present text. In the second category of legends, those that occur in a dream or in a *state of sleep*, Abraham cites as an example the vision of R. Yiśma'el in the Temple.<sup>28</sup> In our text, however, the same account seems to be presented as a *wakeful vision*.<sup>29</sup> This contrast notwithstanding, to my mind the two interpretations are not mutually exclusive and still leave room for the ascription of our fragment to the author of the *Kifāyah*.

With the exception of a reference to one of his explanations given elsewhere, presumably in the same commentary, our author does not quote his other writings or those of Maimonides, as was Abraham's wont, but then again, we are only dealing with a small excerpt. Whatever the case may be, it is clear from its pietistic character and its mystical vocabulary that the present text emanated from an author close to the Judaeo-Sufi circle in Egypt. Indeed, the anonymous scribe of this fragment is known to us from other pietistic writings in his hand.<sup>30</sup>

27 R. Dana, ed., *Sefer ha-maspiq le'ovdey ha-šem*, 177, 260–266. Much like Abraham Maimonides, the author of the *Treatise on Prayer*, who I surmise is R. Abraham *he-ḥāsīd*, considers that the phylacteries and the Divine names they contain, constitute a reminder of the spiritual world (*al-'ālam al-rūḥānī*); see P. Fenton, "A Mystical Treatise on Prayer and the Spiritual Quest from the Pietist Circle," *JSAI* 16 (1993): 137–175, esp. 147. Nor does our fragment bear any resemblance with the long development on the mysteries of the phylacteries proposed by David II Maimonides in his *Epistle on Esoteric Matters*. See P. Fenton, "An Epistle on Esoteric Matters by David II Maimonides from the Genizah," in *Pesher Nahum, Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature from Antiquity through the Middle Ages presented to Norman Golb*, eds. J. Kraemer and M. Wechsler (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012), 62 (Arabic text) and 69–70 (English transl.).

28 R. Margalioṭ, ed., "Ma'amar 'al 'odot derašot Ḥazal," in *Abraham Maimonides' Miḥamōt ha-šem*, 84 on TB *Beraḳot* 7a.

29 CUL T-S Ar. 46.213.

30 Notably, St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, II Firk. Yevr.-Arab. NS 2706. The latter is a fragment of the *al-Risālah al-muntakabah*, a work I am inclined to ascribe to Abraham Maimonides' companion R. Abraham *he-ḥāsīd*. I discussed this 'Epistle' in my study, P. Fenton, "A Mystical Treatise on Perfection, Providence and Prophecy from the Jewish Sufi Circle," in *The Jews in Medieval Islam: Community, Society, and Identity*, ed. D. Frank (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 301–334. On the similarity between R. Abraham *he-ḥāsīd*'s terminology and that of the present text, see *infra* n. 40.

## 2 Two Exegetical Samples

### 2.1 *Sample One*

I would like to give two outstanding examples of his allegorical interpretation which are of singular interest. The first is our author's interpretation of the talmudic text TB *Beraḳot* 6a: 'And how do we know that even if one man sits and studies the Torah the Divine Presence is with him? For it is said: 'In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee' (Ex. 20, 21).'<sup>31</sup> This becomes:

And how do we know that even if *a single individual remains alone with his soul and engages in the pursuits of the intellect*,<sup>32</sup> *his soul will become limpid and will unite with the realm of Light* and the Divine Presence, and a personal Divine Providence will accompany him? For it is said: 'In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee' (Ex. 20, 21).<sup>33</sup>

Now the expression 'remains alone with his soul and engages in the pursuits of the intellect' is reminiscent of the famous description of the ecstatic state occurring in the *Theology of Aristotle*, ultimately derived from Plotinus' *Enneads*:

I was, as it were, alone with my soul ... I rose in my essence ... to the divine world and I was, as it were, placed there ... above the whole intelligible world.

Now among the Judaeo-Arabic authors who were conversant with this passage was Abraham Maimonides himself, who provides an echo of the Plotinian description in his *Commentary on Genesis*:

'Jacob remained alone' (Gen. 32, 25). When Jacob remained alone with his soul (*kalā bi-naḳṣi-hi*), separated from his suite and his possessions, he journeyed (*salaka*) in the mode of external solitude towards that

31 The lesson is derived from the use of the singular 'thee'.

32 TB *Beraḳot* 6b. Vilnius' edition reads: 'and sits and studies the Torah'.

33 Cf. E. Wiesenbergh, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*, 327. Contrary to his father, who says this verse refers to the sanctuaries, Abraham Maimonides says that this verse refers to 'true worship, worship of the heart'.

of internal solitude (*kalwah bāṭinah*). As a result of the latter, he was inspired with a prophetic vision in the form of a man wrestling with him.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, R. Abraham's son 'Ovadyah Maimonides (1228–1265 CE) provides an echo of the Plotinian description in his *Treatise of the Pool*:

When thou remainest alone with thy soul (*wa-idā kalawta bi-naḥsi-ka*) after having subdued thy passions, a Gate will open before thee through which thou wilt contemplate wonders. When thy five external senses come to rest, thine internal senses will awaken which will reveal to thee a resplendent light emanating from the light of the Intellect.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.2 Sample Two

The second passage to which I would like to draw special attention occurs in Extract 1, fol. 1b in the commentary on TB *Beraḳot* 6b:

R. Abin son of R. Assi in the name of R. Isaac stated: “How do we know that in his supernal stations and sacred contemplations (*maqāmāti-hi al-rabbāniyyah wa-mušāhadāti-hi al-qudsiyyah*), Moses grasped the mystery of the phylacteries (*tefillin*), to a point where, so to speak, he perceived them with his senses in the Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*)? From the verse: ‘The Lord hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength’ (Is. 62, 8).

Firstly, this interpretation may have been prompted by the allegorical explanation of this same passage by R. Ḥanan'el b. Ḥuši'el (ca. 950–1085 CE), preserved in a fragment of his commentary on *Beraḳot*:

34 *Loc. cit.*, p. 109. On the notion of *kalwah*, and in particular ‘external solitude’ and ‘internal solitude’, see P. Fenton, “La pratique de la retraite spirituelle (*khalwa*) chez les judéo-soufis d'Égypte,” 211–252.

35 P. Fenton, *The Treatise of the Pool by 'Ovadyah Maimonides* (London: Octagon Press, 1981), 90, Arabic text fol. 12a. I have discussed elsewhere the many Jewish authors who referred directly or indirectly to this passage of the *Theology*; see P. Fenton, *Philosophie et Exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 79, 218; and P. Fenton, “Rémanences néoplatoniciennes dans un commentaire judéo-arabe sur le *Cantique des cantiques*,” in *L'Influence de la religion néoplatonicienne dans les monothéismes au Moyen Age, Studia Graeco-Arabica* 12 (2022): 113–133.

The Holy One blessed be He manifests His Glory to His pious and saintly followers through the speculative vision (*ʿobanta*) of the heart in the form of a seated man [...]. As it is known that He reveals Himself to the prophets in this manner, it is clear to us that the vision referred to is that of the heart and not that of the eye for it is impossible to say that the Holy One blessed be He has a form perceptible by optical vision [...] but rather a vision of the heart (*re'iyat ha-lev*). Hence it is possible that an individual can perceive through the vision of the heart a manifestation of His Glory as a head crowned with phylacteries.<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, the expressions 'supernal stations and sacred contemplations' (*maqāmāti-hi al-rabbāniyyah wa-mušāhadāti-hi al-qudsiyyah*) have a distinctive Sufi ring to them. Later in Extract 2, fol. 3a, he refers to the 'spiritual and angelic stations' (*al-maqāmāt al-rūhāniyyah al-malakūtiyyah*).

Now Moses Maimonides, in his *Introduction to Sanhedrin x*, uses the adjective *malakūtī* as in *al-rutbah al-malakūtiyyah*, the 'angelic degree',<sup>37</sup> whereas Abraham Maimonides in his *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* employs the adjective *rabbānī*, as in *ʿasrār rabbāniyyah* ('Divine mysteries').<sup>38</sup> However, I do not recall Abraham using the adjectives *rūhāniyyah*, *malakūtiyyah*, or *qudsiyyah* to describe ontological degrees. They do, however, occur in his *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus* as qualifications of the metaphysical worlds but in actual fact within a quote from his companion R. Abraham *he-ḥasid* (d. ca. 1223 CE).<sup>39</sup> Indeed, these terms are typical of R. Abraham *he-ḥasid's* lexicon and are recurrent in the surviving specimens of the latter's writings.<sup>40</sup> It can

36 B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries, berākōt*, Annex *Peyrūšey R. Ḥanan'el*, 3. The ultimate source of this passage is: D. Kaufmann, ed., *Judah b. Barzilays Commentar zum Sepher Jezira* (Berlin: Mekize Nirdamim, 1885), 32. Let it be noted in passing that the notion 'vision of the heart' is a metaphor frequently employed in Sufi mystical literature, but is already to be found in the Talmud *ṭB Meg.* 24b.

37 Y. Qāfiḥ, ed., *Maimonides' Commentary on the Mišnah, Introduction to Sanhedrin*, 111, 212.

38 E. Wiesenber, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*, 111.

39 Loc. cit., 379–381.

40 See P. Fenton, "Some Judaeo-Arabic Fragments by Rabbi Abraham ha-Ḥasid, the Jewish Sufi," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 26 (1981): 50–51 (Arabic text, l. 6, 20: *bi-l-ʿālam al-malakūtī, li-l-ʿālam al-rūhānī*), 52 (Ar. l. 7: *wa-ʿālam al-rūhāniyyīn*), and 63 (Ar. l. 17: *al-ʿawālim al-malakūtiyyah*). See also in his passage on the *Unveiling of Mysteries* preserved in Oxford, Bodl. Heb. e. 74 and published by N. Wieder, *Islamic Influences on the Jewish Worship* (Oxford: East and West Library, 1947), 34 (Ar. l. 11: *al-ʿālam al-rūhānī*; l. 12: *ʿālam al-malakūt al-rabbānī*), 35 (Ar. l. 3: *ʿālam al-rūhāniyyīn*), and n. 118. See also P. Fenton, "A Mystical Treatise on Prayer and the Spiritual Quest," *JSAI*, 16 (1993), which I am inclined to attrib-

be pointed out that the anonymous author of *De Beatitudine*, ascribed to Maimonides, but which definitely originates from the Egyptian pietists' circle, also speaks of *al-'anwār al-rabbāniyyah wa-manāzil al-malakūtiyyah*.<sup>41</sup>

As for the term Absolute Being (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), it is a philosophical and mystical concept and a very specific Sufi technical term. Somewhat reminiscent of the Pure or True Being (*al-wujūd al-mahḍ*) of the Longer Version of the *Theology of Aristotle*, it signifies according to the Sufis Absolute Being devoid of all qualities and relations, as opposed to manifested Being. The concept is dealt with by Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1242 CE) in his *'Inšā' al-dawā'ir*,<sup>42</sup> and his spiritual disciple 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1409 CE) uses it to designate the second ontological level of devolution, after Absolute occultation.<sup>43</sup> Šabistārī also discusses this concept in Question 3 of his *Mystic Rose Garden*, composed in 1317 CE. His commentator, al-Lahajī (d. 1506 CE) defines it thus: 'Absolute Being in regard of its remoteness from relations and attributes is not indicated in any phenomenon, but in regard of its accidental connexion with the visible universe it is indicated by the phenomenon 'man's self''.<sup>44</sup> However, it is difficult to see how this ties in with the *locus probans*, Is 62, 8, where 'strength' refers to the *tefillin*, unless read together with the following verse: 'and those who gather the grapes will drink in the courts of my sanctuary'. On the other hand, the reference could just be to the spiritual *tefillin*, worn, as it were, by God.

Notwithstanding the limited extent of the present fragments, it is nonetheless possible to draw from them certain traits which characterise the commentary and its exegetical method. Since the comments are made on the Aggadic passages which follow each other in the talmudic text, it is plausible that the author composed a running commentary on the *'Aggadot*. The terminology

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ute also to Abraham *he-hāsīd*, 151 (l. 6: *'ālamī-hā al-quḍī*) and 152 (l. 22–23: *al-ḥaḍrah al-malakūtiyyah al-rabbāniyyah*).

41 H. Davidowitz and D. Baneth, eds., [*Pseudo-*] *Maimonides' De Beatitudine* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1939), 3. See also p. 11, where he mentions *sulūk al-maqāmāt*, and p. 14 (*rabbānī, malakūti*).

42 See P. Fenton and M. Gloton, transl., *Ibn 'Arabī, La Production des cercles* (Paris: Ed. de Peclat, 1996), 16, 21–22.

43 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, "*Marātib al-wujūd*," in *Das Buch der vierzig Stufen*, ed. E. Bannerth (Vienna: R. Rohrer, 1956), 33. See also 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *Al-'insān al-kāmil* (Cairo: M. al-Halabi, 1970), I (of II), 37, 108–109. See thereon R.A. Nicholson, *Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 95. One is tempted to equate this second degree with the *sefirah ḥokmah* in Qabbalistic parlance, also called 'the first section of the head phylactery'. Cf. P. Fenton, ed., *Joseph Ibn Waqār, Principles of the Qabbalah* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004), 177.

44 E.H. Whinefield, ed. and transl., *Mahmūd Šabistārī, Gulshān i Raz: The Mystic Rose Garden* (London: Trubner, 1880), 29–30; see also pp. xiv, 40, 50, and 63.

used by him demonstrates a philosophical approach with a tendency to employ a mystical vocabulary typical of Judaeo-Sufi texts. This commentary could be seen as an attempt to fulfil Maimonides' wish to compose an esoteric commentary on the rabbinical legends. The author's mystical and philosophical interpretations provide an interesting glimpse into the intellectual and religious world of the Jewish pietists in the Middle Ages. We can observe that the tendency to interpret the *'Aggadot* in a philosophical light, a genre which will be extensively developed in a slightly later period and in a different geographical region, had already become an accepted discipline in the Egyptian milieu which produced this commentary. In the wake of Maimonidean philosophical speculation in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Spain the allegorical interpretation of the talmudic *'Aggadot* became a central issue and the object of Qabbalistic and philosophical commentaries, such as those of 'Azri'el of Gerona (ca. 1160–1238 CE) and Yeda'yah Penini (ca. 1270–1340 CE). The latter saw them as a tool to legitimise or delegitimise philosophy in the context of the Maimonidean controversy. Hopefully, more pages of the present commentary will eventually turn up.

### 3 Description of the Manuscript and Its Content

Transcribed here are two Genizah fragments CUL T-S Ar. 47, fol. 170, one bi-folio comprised of four pages, and CUL T-S Ar. 46, fol. 213, two bi-folios comprised of eight pages, which, though to be found in two separate boxes hundreds of fragments apart, actually derive from the same manuscript and virtually form an entire gathering. The latter was probably composed of five/six folios of which twelve nigh consecutive pages have been preserved, lacking only a small passage representing one folio between 3b and 4a. The pages measure 19.5/20 × 14 cm (text 15 × 10 cm), bearing 22–23 lines of writing per page. The text is written in brown ink in a neat and fairly elegant thirteenth-century Egyptian square Hebrew script with sparse Hebrew and Arabic vocalisation including the *tanwīn* in Arabic script. Judging from the several corrections and marginal additions, it is quite possible that we have in hand the author's original holograph (in which case this would rule out Abraham's authorship for this is not his hand). Together the three folios form what we may assume to have been the beginning of a running commentary on the *'Aggadot* appearing on folios 5b–7a of the talmudic tractate *Beraḳot* according to the Vilnius printed edition (referred to henceforth as 'V'). That this may have been a systematic commentary is further indicated by the author's reference to one of his explanations given elsewhere, presumably in the same work.

The commentary consists firstly of an Arabic translation or paraphrase of the Hebrew and Aramaic passages of the talmudic text. Curiously, the work of translation is not consistent for sometimes the Hebrew passages are left untranslated and merely quoted in the original. The translation is in no way literal and often deviates quite widely from the original. It is noteworthy that the order of the dicta commented upon is not always that of the *textus receptus* of the Vilnius edition. Indeed, the commentator does not consistently follow the text but omits certain passages and biblical verses. He may have intentionally selected those passages best suited to his doctrine and omitted others as inappropriate. The translation employs a philosophical vocabulary and is usually followed by a few comments. The possibility that our fragment is a first draft may account for these irregularities. Despite its shortness, our text nonetheless conveys an idea of the commentator's tendency which is generally of a mystical-philosophical leaning. Indeed, as already stated, its pietistic character and its mystical lexicon suggest that it emanated from an author close to the Judaeo-Sufi movement in Egypt. It is in fact this connection that initially sparked my interest all those years ago!

The language is an admixture of Hebrew and Middle Arabic, and, at one point, the author or the scribe slips into the Egyptian dialect. In order to facilitate its comprehension, we have added diacritical points and punctuation to our edition of the Judaeo-Arabic text and divided it into paragraphs all of which did not of course exist in the original.

## 4 The Arabic Original

### 4.1 *Transcription*

#### 4.1.1 Extract One

CUL T-S Ar. 46.213 and CUL T-S Ar. 47.170

[א1] <sup>45</sup> אלצעוד אלי אלמצ'אג'ע פי אלליל, פלם יתסגרקו פי ד'לך בל תלא קרית שמע ואפכר פי אלאנתקאל ואלעודה. פד'לך אלשכ'ץ לא שך כאנה קד תסלח בסלאח יקאתל בה מואדה אד' יבקי לה ד'לך באלמלכה, פלא יעוד עדוה יג'סר עליה.  
וקאל ר' יצחק אן הד'א אלשכ'ץ יאמן שר כל מודי' פלא יתערץ אליה אלמויקין.  
וקאל ר' שמעון בן ל[קיש] אן כל מן ישתגל בתדרים אלתורה יאמן שר כל עקאב וכל וארד סו, וכל מן ימכנה אלאשתגאל וצייע אוקאתה, פאן אללה תע' יעאקבה במא יקטעה ען אלתטלע אלי ג'נאבה.

45 CUL T-S Ar. 46.213.

קאל ר' זירא<sup>46</sup> אענתבר אלפרק בין אלמור אלעקליה אלרבאניה ואלמור אלחסיה אלשהואניה פאן הד'ה יקע אלתיקאטל ואלתיחאסד ואלכלב ואלשח עליה, לאן באנתקאלהא אלי אלתי'אני יעדמהא אלאול. ואמא אלעקליאת פתרי אלעאלס כף יסר בתעלימהא לגירה לאנה יסתפיד באלתעלים, ולו למן הו דונה.

קאל רבא מתי ראי אלאנסאן וארדאת ועקאבאת תרד עליה יעלם אן ד'לך באסתחקאק בסבב אכ'ראם פי [...], תה, פינט'ר פי אצל'אח אעמאלה. פאן לס יט'הר לה [...] עמר מא יוג'ב ד'לך, פלא ינסב ללוג'וד ג'ור, בל לעל ד'לך בסבב תקצירה פי תלמוד תורה ותכאסלה פי טלב לעלום אלחקיקיה אלתי הי [וב] ג'דיא אלנפס אלנאטקה, ובאלעלום יט'הר ג'והר אלנפס, ותעוד כאלמראה אלצקילה אלמנטבע פיהא חקאי'ק אל'אשיא עלי מא הי עליה.

פאן ט'הר לה אנה גיר מקצר פי ד'לך פליעלם אן תלך אלוארדאת אדאב מחבה לתעתאד אלנפס מלכה אלתי'באת, פלא תהלע ענד ורוד אלוארד.

קאל רב סחורא פלמן כאן מרצי'א בין ידיה תע', פאנה תכת'ר אלוארדאת עליה ליעט'ם תעויצ'ה, ובשרט אן יקבלהא במחבה ות'באת לא בקנוט וצ'ג'ר. ומן ג'מלה ג'זאה אן עלומה תבקא ת'אבתה עליה, לאן אד'א כאנת אלנפס ת'אבתה מטאלעה מא חצלתה וקת אנקבאצ'הא פכ'יף וקת אלפרח ואלבסטה.

קאל ומן עלאמה אנהא יסורי'ן שלאהבה כל מא לא תמנע אלאנסאן מן תעלם אלתיורה. קאל אכ'ר מא לא תמנע מן אלצלאה פי אוקאתהא. קל אכ'ר ולו הד'אן אלצנפי'ן יסורי'ן שלאהבה לאן בחצול מלכה אלריאצ'ה יצל אלי כל כ'יר.

קאל ר' שמעון בן יוסי ת'לת' עטאיא ג'לילה עטאהא אללה תע' לישראל ולם תחצל להם ולא תקררת פי ד'זאתהם אלא בעד ריאצ'יאת ותקטעאת.

אלאולי: אלתיורה לס תחצל<sup>47</sup> אלא בעד ריאצ'יהם פי מרה באלעטש, ופי תם<sup>48</sup> באלג'וע אלי אן נול אלמן. ת'ם באלאנעזאל [2א] ען אלנסא וכל חאלה מאדיה פי מדבר סיני: ואלב': ארץ ישראל וחסבך מא טרא פי אלמדבר טול אלמ' שנה:

ואלג': העולם הבא לא יחצל אלא בעד ריאצ'יה אלנפס במצוות עשה ותג'נבהא אלמחרמאת אלשרעיה וכרוג'הא ען אל'אסתגראק פי אלשהואת ולו אלחלאל.

קיל בין ידי ר' יחנן כל מן ישתגל באלפצ'איל אלנטקיה<sup>49</sup> ואלפצ'איל אלכ'לקיה ותרד עליה אמור פאדחה מת'ל מות אל'אולאד ושבהא אלא יקנט בל יעלם אן ד'לך לתמחיץ זלאתה וגפלאתה חתי לא תבקי לנפסה עלאקה ענד אל'אנתקאל באלתטלע ואלתיחסר עלי מפארקה אלמאל ואלולד, פתבקא פיהא את'אר תעוקהא ען אל'אתצאל לוקתהא.

קאל ר' יוחנן: אן מן יבתלי באלנגעים ואלעקם, פליס ד'לך אלא עקאבה באסתחקאק וליס המא אדאב מחבה בל הדא רזק אולאד ופקדהם צגארא. פרבמא כאן ד'לך לתעויצ'ה. וג'לבווא פי ד'לך כ'בר והו אן ר' אלעזר מרץ' פדכ'ל אליה ר' יוחנן ליעודה, פוג'דה נאימא פי בית מט'לם. פכשף ר' יוחנן ע'ס ד'ראעה פאצ'א ד'לך אלבית מן נוראניה נפסה וצפא מאדתה. פלמא ראי ד'לך ר' אלעזר בכא. קאל לה ר' יוחנן עלי מא ד'א אנת באכיא? אן כאן תאספך מן ג'יה כ'וף

46 In the original: בא וראה שלא כמדת הקב"ה מדת בשר ודם וכו'.

47 in the margin. לס תחצל.

48 אלים.

49 in margin. באלפצ'איל אלנטקיה.



אלאנתקאל, ואנת לם תסתכמל ג'מיע אלעלום ואלמעארף. פקד דרסנא אן סוי מן כתר' [ב2] ומן קלל מנד' תכון נייטה פי טלב אלעלם תכמיל נפסה אלנטאקה לא טלב אלתינא ואלריאסה. ואן כנת באכיא מן ג'הה כונג פקדת אולאד לך, פתרי קד פקדת אנא עשרה אולאד והד'א עט'ם כ'נצר אלעאשר אתכ'ד'תה פצא אתכ'תם בה, פיקנעד אלתאסי ואלתעזי במצאבי. ואן כאן בכאך מן ג'הה תקתר אלאחואל עליך פי אלדניא, פאעלם אן אלאנסאן קל מא ינאל חאלתיך וקד חצלת עלי אלאכ'רה פלא תאסף עלי סעה אלרוזק פי אלדניא. קאל לה ר' אלעזר אנמא יבכיני למא ראית מן בהג'ה ג'מאל צורתך אלטיאהרה ואלבאטנה כיף תבלי פי אלתיאב הד'ה אלמאדה אלצאפיה ויעוד כל ענצר לענצרה. קאל לה: לקד בכית בחק.

### כ'בר אכ'ר

ר' הונא כאן לה ארבעה מאיה כ'אביה כ'מר ופסדת, פדכ'ל אליה ר' יהודה אחוה דרב סלא חסידא וג'מאעה מן אלחכמים ליתוג'עו לה פי ד'לך. פלמא חצ'רוא ענדה קאלו לה: לעל סידנא יפתש פי אעמאלה ויצלח אלמנתקד מנהא. קאל להם: והל אנא מתהם ענדכם בשי ינתקד עלי פיה. קאלו לה: והל פי אלוג'וד ג'ור אן יעאקב אלשכיך בגיר אסתחקאק? קאל להם: פאי שי בלגכם עני? [גא] 50 קאלו לה: בלגנא אן סידנא לא ינצף אלכ'זלי 51 אלד'י לה פי אעטאה מא יחצה מן קשה חטב אלכ'רם. קאל להם: והל ביחצ'ר 52 אלי אלא פצ'לה מא יסרקה ויביעה מן גיר עלמי. קאלו לה: הד'א ישיבה קול אלמת'ל: אסרק בעד אלסארק ולו חצלת עלי פצ'לה אלמאבל.

קאלו: אן מן ד'לך אלוקת 53 קבל עלי נפסה אנה ינצפה פי ד'לך. פבעץ קאל אן תלך אלת' כ'אביה אלת' כאנת פסדת אלי אלכלייה עאדת כ'מרא ג'יידא. ובעץ קאל אן תלך בל גלא סער אלכל' חתי אביע ד'לך אלכל' בת'מן אלכ'מר.

קאל רב אדא נקל ען ר' יצחק: מן אין לנא אן ענאיה אללה באלג'מאעה אכת'ר מן ענאיתה באלפראד ואן אלשכינה חאלה פי בית הכנסת בחית' יג'ד אלאנסאן פי נפסה בסטה ת'ם באלנסבה לצ'לאתה כ'ארג' ענהא? מן קו' אלהים נצב בעדת אל. וכד'לך אד'א אג'תמע עשרה פצ'לא, ולו פי גיר בית הכנסת, אן אלשכינה מעהם? מן קו' אלהים נצב וגו'. וכד'לך ת'לת'ה אד'א ג'לסו ליחכמו בין אלנאס ויט'הרו עדל אללה תע' פי וג'ודה אלענאיה ואלשכינה מעהם? מן קו' פיהא תמאם אלנץ: בקרב אלהים ישפט. וכד'לך אד'א ג'לס את'נין משתגלין באלתורה אלשכינה מעהם? מן קו': אז נדברו יראי יוי איש אל רעהו וגו'. ומן קו' זולחושי שמו' דליל אן עזם עלי עמל מצוה, ועלי אנה [ב1] אלי אלאן לם יקום בהא באלפעל פלה אג'ר אלעזימה איצ'א. ומן אין לנא אן ולו אלפראד אד'א כ'לא בנפסה ואשתגל בעקלה, אן נפסה תצפי ותתצל בעאלם אלנור ואלשכינה, ותצחבה ענאיה רבאניה שכי'ה, מן קו' בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך וברכתיך.

50 CUL T-s Ar. 47.170, fol. 1a.

51 Cf. J. Blau, *Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts* (Jerusalem: Academy of Hebrew Language, Israel Academy of Science and Humanities, 2006), 200b: 'gardener'.

52 Note colloquial form.

53 ת'לך אלוקת in the margin.

קאל רבין בר רב אדא נקל ען ר' יצחק: מן אין לנא אן משה עא"ס אדרך פי מקאמאתה אלרבאניה ומשאהדאתה אלקדסיה סר אלתפילין חתי כאנה שאהד ד'לך חסא פי אלוג'וד אלמטלק? מן קו' נשבע יוי בימינו ובורוע עזו. פכמא אן אלד'ראע ג'עלת ללד'ב ואלמחאמאה ען ג'מלה אלבדן, כד'לך ענאיתה תע' מוקיה למן ידרך סר הד'ה אלמצוה וית'בתהא עלי חקיקתהא. אלי תרי מחאורתהם ע"ס פי אי שי מכתוב פי ביות הד'ה אלתפלין אלדי אדרך סרהא משה פי עאלם אלעקל. וד'כרוא אנהא נצוץ תדל עלי אלענאיה בהד'ה אלמלה אלדי שרעו בהד'ה אלפראיין לתכון מוצלה להם אלי אלמלא אלעלי, לא אן ת'ס חאלה ג'סמאניה תעאלי אללה ען ד'לך. והד'א אלמעני קד אשאר רבינו האי גאון פי פירוש ברכות פלינט'ר מן ת'ס. וקד אשאר ע"ס אלי הד'א אלמעני פי אכ'ר אלכלאם בקו': וכלהו כתיבי [באדרעיה].

## 4.1.2 Extract Two

CUL T-S Ar. 47.170 and CUL T-S Ar. 46.213

[א2] <sup>54</sup>אלאלפאט' אלתי יורדהא אעתבאר הד'ה אלמור אלעקליה אלתי אנמא חת'זא ע"ס עלי חצ'ור אלעראס מן אג'ל למחיתהא ואלאסתגראק פי לד'ה אדראכהא. פתראהם קד ד'כרוא פי חקה מא ד'כרוא.

אמ' <sup>55</sup>ר' חלבו אמ' רב הונא: כל אדם שיש בו יראת שמים לסוף דבריו נשמעים, שנ' סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלהים ירא ואת מצוותיו שמר כי זה כל האדם. מאי כי זה כל האדם? אמ' ר' אלעזר: אמר הקב"ה כל העולם לא נברא אלא בשביל זה. ר' אבה בר כהנא אמ': שקול זה כנגד כל העולם כולו. [ר'] שמעון בן עזאי, ואמ' לה שמעון בן זומא אומ': לא נברא כל העולם אלא לצוות לזה. מעני ד'לך אן כל מן יכון קצדה פי כלאמה וועט'ה ללנאס ואמרה ונהיה להם ד'את אללה תע', ואלתחפט' מן אלריא פאן יג'על אללה לכלאמה צולה והיבה ותאת'יר פי קלוב סאמעיה ובאלעכס.

ומעני קו': 'לצוות לזה', יעני כאן בקיה ג'מהור אלנאס אנמא הם ליאנסוה ויתכלפוא אשגאלה וכ'דמה לאן [ב2] אלנאסאן אלפאצ'ל הו אלגאיה מן וג'וד אלנוע אלנאסאני.

ואמ' ר' חלבו אמ' ר' הונא: כל היודע בחבירו שהוא רגיל ליתן לו שלום, חייב להקדים לו שלום, שנ': בקש שלום ורדפו. [ו]אם נתן לו שלום ולא החזיר לו נקרא גולן, שנ': גולת העני בבתיכם. אמ' <sup>56</sup>ר' יוחנן משום ר' יוסי: מניין שהקב"ה מתפלל? שנ' והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלת. ומאי מצלי? יהי רצון מלפני שיכבשו רחמי את כעסי, ויגולו רחמי על מדותי, ואתנהג עם בני במדת רחמים, ואכנס להם לפנים משורת הדין.

מעני ד'לך אנה למא כאן אלמשהור ענד אלצאבה אן אלאלאה ג'ל ועלא מסתחיל אתצאלה בהד'ה אלחמאה אלקד'רה, אעני אלמרכב אלנאסאני, פארשדו ע"ס בהד'ה אלאלגאז אלי אלראי אלחק, והו אנה תע' מע עט'מתה אלמהולה קד שא פי אצל אלוג'וד אן תג[לב] רחמתה לג'מלה אלנוע. ומעאני מנה וארשאדאת ללאנביא, לאן אלמעני אלמקצוד מן <sup>57</sup>אלתפלה הו

54 CUL T-S Ar. 47.170.

55 TB Ber. 6b.

56 TB Ber. 7a.

57 אלמקצוד in margin.

אלצלה בג'נאב קדסה, ת'ם באלאמכאן. אלי תרי אלגאזהם בקו' מאי מצל? אן אלגרץ' אנמא  
 הו אלארשאד לכונה תע' מעתני בעאלם אלספל, מדבר לאהלה, ראחם משפק עלי [א3] 58  
 כ'ואצה, וליס כקול מן קאל: עזב יו' את הארץ. וקד ביינוא פי מואצ'ע אכ'רי אן מעני אלצלאה  
 רחמה קאלו: דצלותא גואל יש'. מאי טעמא, רחמי אנון. 59

תניא אמ' ר' ישמעאל בן אלישע: פעם אחת נכנסתי להקטיר קטרת 60 וראיתי אכתריאל  
 יה צבאות על כסא רם ונשא. אמר לי: ישמעאל בני ברכני. אמרתי לפניו: רבונו שלעולם יהי  
 רצון מלפניך שיבשבו רחמיד את כעסך, וטובך הגדול ישיב חרון אפך, ויגלו רחמיד על מדותיך,  
 ותתנהג עם בניך במדת רחמים ותכנס להם לפנים משורת הדין. ונענע לי ראש. מאי קא משמע  
 לן? הא קמשמע לן לעולם אל תהי ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך.

הד'א מן ג'מלה מקאמאת הד'א אלסייד אלווחאניה אלמלכותיה למא אתצל עמוד דכ'אן  
 אלקטרת אלעקלי אלד'י לה 61 במא אתצל, ואדרך מן סר אלקטרת אלחסיה מא אדרך, פכאנה  
 אתצל פי מקאמה ד'אך 62 במראתב אלעקול אלפעאלה אלד'י רייסהם וג'לילהם אכתריאל,  
 והו אלמסמי פי חגיגה סנדלפון ופי מוצ'ע אכ'ר מיטטרון. והו אלד'י קאלו [ב3] ענה אנה קושר  
 כתרים לקונו. פלא פרק בין קו' אכתריאל ובין קו' קושר כתרים לקונו ענד מן יפהם אלסמא  
 אלמשתקה. פלמא אתצל בהד'א אלמלאך ווצל בספארחה אלי אדראך אלכסא ועט'מה מן הו  
 מנסוב לה לם יסעה אלא אלתסביח ואלתעט'ים ואלתמגי'ד ואלטרב במא אדרך.

ת'ם אנה ע'ס פי מקאמה תטלע אלי אנפס אלמלה פוג'דהא מחתאג'ה אלי אלסעאף,  
 וטלב רחמה להם מן אלרחום אלראווף בג'מלה אלכ'לק, פדעא במא דעי, לא אן ת'ם חאלה  
 ג'סמאניה כמא ישנע אלג'האל.

וקד ד'כר צאחב מגלת סתרים אנה סאל ען ד'לך פכאן ג'ואבה באן צפח בעד ד'לך באוראק  
 ען קו' הני חמשה ברכי כנגד מי? כנגד הקב"ה. מה הקב"ה רואה ואינו נראה אף הנפש רואה  
 ואינו נראית וג' קאל תרא קד צרחו באן אללה תע' לים מן קביל מא ירא. ואנמא הד'א אלכלאם  
 מג'אז ואסתעארה כמא אסתעאר אלאנביא עלי מנואל קו' דברה תו' כלשון בני אדם. [א4] 63  
 ולא יצעב קו' אכתריאל יה צבאות פאן ד'לך כאנה יקול מלאך יה צבאות בחדף אלמצ'אף,  
 ומת'ל ד'לך כתי'ר. וקו' ונענע לי ראש, יעני אנה אנכשף לה פי ד'לך אלמקאם מן אסראר  
 מבאדי אלוג'וד מא לם יכן ידרכה קבל ד'לך. והד'א כאף פי ד'לך.

אמ' ר' יוחנן משום ר' יוסי: מאי דכת': פני ילכו והניחתי לך. אמר לו הקב"ה למשה: המתן  
 עד שילכו פנים שלזעם מיד והניחתי לך. ומי איכא ריתחא קמי קודשא ב"ה? אין. דככת': ואל  
 זועם בכל יום. וכמה זעמו? רגע. ואין כל בריה יכולה לכוון אותה שעה חוץ מבלעם דכת' ביה:  
 יודע דעת עליון, שהיה יודע שעה שהקב"ה כועס בה והינו דקאמ' להו נביא ליש': עמי זכר נא  
 וג'. ומה ענה אותו בלעם בן בעור וג': דעו כמה צדקות עשיתי עמכם שלא כעסתי עליכם בימי  
 בלעם שאלמלא כעסתי לא נשתירי מכם שריד ופליט.

58 CUL T-s Ar. 46.213.

59 TB Pes. 117b.

60 V adds: צבאות שהוא יושב ביה? אין. דככת': ואל

61 אלד'י לה in margin.

62 פי דאך מקאמה in margin.

63 TB Ned. 3a.

אמ'ר<sup>64</sup> מאיר: בשעה שהחמה זורחת, וכל מלכי מזרח ומערב מניחין כתרין על גבי קרקע<sup>65</sup> ומשתחויים לחמה מיד כועס.

הדי'א כלה ארשאד אן עלי קדר תוג'ה אלבשר נחו [ב4] ג'נאבה תע' יכון קדר שדה אלענאיה בהם ואלחמאיה ואלוקאיה להם, ומתי חצל אלנחג'אב, ולו איסר אלמקאדיר אלזמאניה, צעפ'ת תלך אלעלאקה אלמוג'בה ללענאיה אלשדירה אלג'זיאה, ובקיו מע—אלרחמה ואלענאיה אלכליה אלשאמלה לג'מלה אלמוג'ודאת פי מערץ' אלתקיאת. ואלי הדי'א אשאר באן בלעם כאן מתרקב גפלאת ישראל לכי יקדר עלי אלתאת'יר פיהם. וכאנו הם ע"ס פי גאיה אלתיקין' ואלתנבה ואלתפטן למקצדה פלם תאכ'דהם גפלה ולא אנחג'אב ולו טרפה עין, בל כאנו כאלכ'צם אלמתיקין' אלחד'יר מן כ'צמה, פלם יתם לה פיהם מקצד. ומא כפא הדי'א אלא קסרה סייד אלנביין באנפ'אסה, ובמא אמרה אלחק בה אלי אן כאן ינטק בצ'ד מא קצד. והדי'ה הי אלמנה אלעט'מי כון אללה תע' רפע ענהם אלעואיק אלמוג'בה ללאנחג'אב אלתי לו לם תרתפע ווקעת אלג'פלה וקע אלתאת'יר מן בלעם פיהם. וקד צרח ר' מאיר ע"ס פי אכ'ר אלקול אן ליס יחצל אלסכ'ט עלי עאלם אלספל אלא פי וקת מא יכונו מלוכה ומדבריה מסתדברין באבה תע'. פהדי'א כאף למן פהם.

אמ'ר' יוחנן משום ר' יוסי טובה מרדות אחת [בלבו של אדם יותר מכמה מלקויות

#### 4.2 Translation

CUL T-S Ar. 47.170 folio 1a begins in the middle of an explanation of an *Aggadah* to be found in TB *Beraḳot*, ed. Vilnius, fol. 5a. The beginning of the passage commented upon has been supplied in brackets in order to restore the context.

##### 4.2.1 Extract One Translation

[R. Levi b. Ḥama says in the name of R. Šim'on b. Laqīš: A man should always incite the good impulse [in his soul] to fight against the evil impulse, as it is written: 'Tremble and sin not'.<sup>66</sup> If he subdues it, all well and good, but if not, let him study the Torah, as expressed in the continuation of the verse: 'Commune with your own heart'. If he subdues it, all well and good, but if not, let him recite the *šema*, as the same verse states: 'Upon your bed'. If he subdues it, all well and good, but if not, let him call to mind the day of death, as the verse [concludes]: 'And be still, everlastingly'.]

[fol. 1a] retiring to one's couch at night. But whosoever does not (immediately) sink into (sleep) but recites the *šema* and meditates upon passing away and the return (of the soul), has, assuredly, availed himself of the weapons with which to combat his matter, since (when) this becomes a *habitus*, the hand (of the evil impulse) no longer dares (to rise up against him).

64 V: תנא משמיה דרבי מאיר.

65 בראשיהם.

66 'Tremble and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still, Selah' (Ps. 4, 5).

R. Isaac states that this person would be preserved from the evil of any harmful thing and not be exposed to adverse circumstances.<sup>67</sup> R. Šim'on b. Laqīš states that all who engage in the teaching of the Torah will be protected from punishment and any adversity. However, whoever has the possibility to study the Torah and wastes the opportunity to do so, then God [visits him with sufferings]<sup>68</sup> and punishes him with that which dissevers him from meditating upon the Divinity.

R. Zera states: 'Consider the difference between intellectual and divine matters and sensual and concupiscent ones. For whenever a (precious) object passes to the buyer [and is lost to the seller], evil, jealousy, pursuit, avariciousness, are aroused. However, in the case of intellectual matters, observe how the scholar rejoices in imparting his knowledge of them to another, for he derives a benefit therefrom, even to one other than himself.'

Rabba states: 'If an individual sees that tribulations and punishments visit him, on account of his neglect of (Torah), let him examine how he may improve his conduct'. If their cause is not apparent to him from his acts, let him not attribute injustice to existence but perhaps the cause is his deficiency in the study of the Torah and his neglect in the pursuit of true knowledge. The latter constitute [1b] the nourishment of the rational soul, for through knowledge the soul's essence becomes manifest in the same way as the realities of things as they truly are imprinted in a polished mirror.<sup>69</sup>

If it is clear to him that he was not neglectful in these (pursuits), then he will be aware that these tribulations came about through chastisements (ʿādāb)<sup>70</sup> of love in order to inure in the soul the habit of constancy, so let him not fret when misfortune visits him.

R. Sehorah stated that if the Almighty is pleased with a man, he intensifies his afflictions in order to increase his reward i.e. on condition that he

67 *Mazziqim*, lit. 'demons'. The author makes no comment but from the continuation of the passage it seems he interprets the word as 'punishment'. He refers to the *mazziqim* which inhabit ruins mentioned in טב *Beraḳot* 3a; R. Abraham translates this word as *dabīb* 'reptiles', thus defusing the superstitious import (see R. Dana, ed., *Sefer ha-maspik le'ovdey ha-šem*, 66).

68 In brackets here and throughout = v.

69 The simile of the pure soul and the polished mirror is widespread in Sufism. See T. Burckhardt, "Die Symbolik des Spiegels in der islamischen Mystik," *Symbolon* 1 (1960), 12–16. See also H. Davidowitz and D. Baneth, eds., [*pseudo-*] *Maimonides, De Beatitudine*, 18–19, 33–34; and the work studied in P. Fenton, "A Mystical Treatise on Prayer and the Spiritual Quest from the Pietist Circle," 151–152, 164.

70 See P. Fenton, "A Mystical Treatise on Prayer and the Spiritual Quest from the Pietist Circle," 160–161. The Sufis and Judaeo-Sufis refer to their discipline as *'adab*, lit. 'instruction'.

accepts them with love and constancy and not with despair and irritation.<sup>71</sup> Part of his reward is that his knowledge will be established within him, for if the soul remains constant and meditates that which befalls it at times of distress, how much more (will its knowledge be established) at times of delight and ease!<sup>72</sup>

[Ya'qov b. Idi and R. Aḥa b. Ḥaninah differ with regard to the following:] The one<sup>73</sup> says: Chastisements of love are such as do not involve the intermission of study of the Torah. [For it is said: 'Happy is the man whom Thou chastisest, O Lord, and teachest out of Thy law' (Ps. 94, 12).] And the other one says: Chastisements of love are such as do not involve the intermission of prayer at its appointed time. [For it is said: 'Blessed be God, Who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me' (Ps. 66, 20).] A third<sup>74</sup> said: Both of these cases are chastisements of love for whosoever obtains *habitus* and spiritual preparation<sup>75</sup> will attain every goodness.

It has been taught: R. Šim'on b. Yosi<sup>76</sup> says: The Almighty, exalted be He, gave Israel three precious gifts, all of which were bestowed solely through discipline (*riyāḏah*) and deprivation.<sup>77</sup>

The first is the Torah, which was only revealed after they had undergone spiritual preparation at Mara through thirst,<sup>78</sup> and at Elim through hunger until the Mannah descended,<sup>79</sup> and through chastity [2a] as well as through the physical conditions (suffered) in the Sinai desert.<sup>80</sup>

The second is the Land of Israel (as for preparation for it) suffice it to recall that which transpired in the wilderness during the forty years.

The third is the world to come. The latter can only be gained through the training of the soul through the observance of the positive commandments, the avoidance of prohibitions, and abstention from indulging in (corporeal) passions, even in the case of that which is permitted.

71 Cf. S. Pines, transl., *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*, III, 17, 470–471.

72 The terms 'distress' or 'retraction' and 'ease' recall the Sufi states of *qabḏ* and *bast*. Cf. A.H. Maḥmūd and M. b. al-Šarīf, eds., *Al-Quṣayrī, al-Risālah al-Quṣayrīyah* (Cairo, 1966), I, 196.

73 V: 'the study of Torah and acts of charity'.

74 V: R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya b. Abba.

75 *Riyāḏāt*, lit. 'spiritual exercises', a name Sufis give to their discipline.

76 V: Yoḥay.

77 The Hebrew carries *yissurim* 'sufferings'.

78 Cf. Ex. 15, 23–26. Cf. *Treatise of the Pool*, p. 105.

79 Cf. Ex. 16, 1–36 and Numb. 11, 1–9.

80 On the sojourn in the wilderness as a means of perfection, see *Treatise of the Pool*, p. 112 and n. 157.

The (following) was recited before R. Yoḥanan: Whosoever engages in rational and moral virtues and is assailed by calamities such as the death of his children and similar (tragedies) let him grieve not. But let him know that this is in order to expiate his errors and failings and so that his soul is not fettered at the hour of death, pining after his wealth and offspring and regretting having to abandon them, such that vestiges cling to his soul that will impede it from uniting with its source.<sup>81</sup>

R. Yoḥanan stated that to be afflicted with disease and barrenness is a punishment of which one was deserving and not a chastisement through love. (This is unlike) one who rears children and loses them in their childhood, which sometimes occurs as an atonement for one's (sins).

In this connection, a tradition was brought up according to which R. El'azar once fell ill and R. Yoḥanan came to visit him. As he found him lying in a dark room,<sup>82</sup> he bared his arm and illumined the room through the luminosity (*nūr-āniyyat nafsi-hi*) of his soul and the limpidity of his matter.<sup>83</sup> Upon beholding this, R. El'azar wept<sup>84</sup> and R. Yoḥanan enquired: "Wherefore dost thou weep? If it be because thou art saddened through fear of death since thou didst not perfect thyself in all of (the branches) of science and knowledge,<sup>85</sup> have we not learnt: ['One who studies] much [2b] and one who studies little are equal (in merit) provided that one's intention in the pursuit of knowledge is the perfection of one's rational soul and not the pursuit of praise and lordship'. If thou weepst on account of the loss of thy children, behold I have lost ten children and this is the finger-bone of my tenth son whom I have taken as a bezel which

81 Leg. *lī-watani-hā*.

82 R. El'azar was a pauper and lived in a windowless room.

83 According to ТВ *Bābā Meẓī'a*, 84a, R. Yoḥanan was of radiant beauty. In his *Commentary* on Exodus 35, 29, Abraham Maimonides mentions the 'luminosity (*nūr-āniyyah*) of the body' in connection with Moses' radiance in virtue of the subtlety of his matter after having contemplated the 'lights of the Divine Presence' (see E. Wiesenber, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*, 487). However, this term could well be borrowed from Sufism. Indeed, according to pseudo-Ibn 'Arabī (= al-Kašānī), *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-karīm*, (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1978), 39 on Qur'ān 20, 22, the whiteness of Moses' hand was not due to leprosy but: 'his hand was illumined (*munawwarah*) with the light of true guidance and the rays of holy light' (cf. LXX, Onqelos, and Sa'adya on Ex. 3, 6). It is a frequent leitmotiv in Persian poetry; see J. Stephenson, transl., *Abū l-Majd al-Sanā'ī, The Enclosed Garden* (Lahore, 1908), 25, 44 (Persian text p. 28, l. 20): 'the hand of Moses became a moon'.

84 V: Thereupon, he noticed that R. El'azar was weeping. But our text makes more sense in view of the conclusion.

85 V: Did not study enough Torah?

I use as a signet. May my own affliction console thy grief and bereavement!<sup>86</sup> Or perhaps thy weeping is on account of the meagerness of your sustenance in this world? Know then that few are the mortals that have the privilege to enjoy two states.<sup>87</sup> Thou hast obtained the world to come, grieve not over the measure of sustenance in this world! R. El'azar replied: "I am weeping on account of the gleam of the beauty of thine outward and inward form<sup>88</sup> and how this limpid matter will decay in the earth, each element returning to its source!"

He said to him: "Thou hast rightfully wept!"

#### A Further Tradition

R. Huna possessed four hundred jars of wine which turned sour. R. Yudah, the brother of R. Sala the Pious, and a company of scholars went in to visit him in order to comfort him. When they were present, they said to him: "The master ought to examine his actions and put right that which is reprehensible".

"Am I then suspect in your eyes of something reprehensible?" he retorted.

"Does there then exist injustice that punishes a person without desert?"<sup>89</sup> they replied.

He asked them: "Has any of you heard of anything held against me?"

[1a]<sup>90</sup> They replied: "We have heard that the master does not give his hireling his lawful share of the vine twigs."

He replied: "Does he bring me any besides what is left from what he steals and sells without my knowledge?"

They said to him: "This resembles the proverbial saying: Steal from a thief, if only to obtain the leftovers!"

It is said that henceforth he pledged himself to give (him) his fair share. Some report that thereupon the four hundred jars that had turned to vinegar became fine wine again, whereas others reported that the (price of) vinegar rose so high that it sold for the same price as wine.

[TB *Beraḳot* 6a]

86 The Talmud deduces from this saying that he regarded juvenile death as a chastisement of love. Traditional commentaries understand the bone to have been a tooth of the last of his sons which he would show to the bereaved in order to induce in them his own attitude of resignation (see B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries, 'Ozar ha-Ge'onim, Berāḳōt*, Section II, *Peyrūšim*, 6).

87 V: 'two tables' i.e., learning and wealth, or perhaps, this world and the next.

88 See *supra*, n. 10.

89 V: Is the Holy One, blessed be He, suspect of punishing without justice?

90 CUL T-S Ar. 47.170.



R. Adda<sup>91</sup> says in the name of R. Isaac: “How do we know that Divine Providence<sup>92</sup> rests upon the community<sup>93</sup> rather than upon the individual? [From the verse: “God standeth in the congregation of God” (Ps. 82, 1).]

And [how do we know that] the Divine presence descends to the synagogue so that the individual feels an uplifting within his soul and (experiences) transcendence in his prayer? From the verse: ‘God standeth in the congregation of judges’ (*Ib.*). Likewise, [how do we know that] if ten virtuous individuals assemble, even though not within a synagogue, then the Divine Presence accompanies them? From the verse: ‘God standeth in the congregation of judges’ (*Ib.*). And how do you know that if three are sitting to judge the people and they apply God’s justice in which is to be found His providence that the Divine Presence is among them? From the conclusion of the verse: ‘In the midst of the judges He judgeth’ (*Ib.*). Similarly, [how do we know that] if two are sitting and studying the Torah, the Divine Presence is with them? From the verse: “Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; [and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name]” (Mal 3, 16). From the expression: ‘And that thought upon His name’ there is an indication that if [a man] had the intention of fulfilling a commandment and [1b] yet he did not actually perform it, he nonetheless also has a reward for his intention.

And how do we know that even if one man remains alone with his soul and engages in the pursuits of the intellect,<sup>94</sup> his soul becomes limpid and unites with the realm of Light and the Divine Presence, and he enjoys individual divine providence? From the verse: ‘In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless *thee*’ (Ex. 20, 21).<sup>95</sup>

[TB *Berākhōt* 6b]

R. Abin son of R. Assa<sup>96</sup> in the name of R. Isaac (further) stated: “How do we know that in his supernal stations and sacred contemplations,<sup>97</sup> Moses grasped the mystery of the phylacteries (*tefillin*),<sup>98</sup> to a point where, so to speak, he perceived them with his senses in the Absolute Being?<sup>99</sup> From the verse: ‘The Lord

91 V: Rabin b. R. Adda.

92 V: the Holy One, blessed be He.

93 V: House of Assembly, i.e., Synagogue.

94 V: ‘and sits and studies the Torah’.

95 The lesson is derived from the use of the singular ‘*thee*’.

96 V: Adda.

97 See *supra*, n. 40.

98 V: ‘the Holy One, blessed be He, dons *tefillin*’.

99 See *supra*, n. 44.

hath sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength' (Is. 62, 8). Just as the purpose of one's arm is to repel and defend the whole of the body, similarly Divine Providence protects the individual who has apprehended the mystery of this commandment and has established it according to its reality.

Dost thou not perceive the discussion of the Sages concerning that which is written in the compartments of the phylacteries whose mystery Moses grasped in the world of the Intellect? They mentioned that the texts therein allude to the Divine Providence attached to this nation which was commanded to perform these precepts in order that they be conducive to the level of the supernatural realm. (The allusion to God's donning the phylacteries is) not to the existence of a physical object, for God transcends such things.<sup>100</sup> This interpretation has already been alluded to by R. Hayya Gaon in his commentary on the tractate *Beraḳot* where the (reader) can find it.<sup>101</sup> The Sages too referred to the notion (of Providence) at the end of their discussion with the words 'and all these verses (referring to the unique relationship between God and Israel)<sup>102</sup> are written on [the *tefillin* of] his arm'.<sup>103</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Extract Two Translation<sup>104</sup> [TB *Berākhōt* 6b]<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> I.e., the divine phylacteries are not physical but a metaphor for spiritual concepts, alluding here to providence.

<sup>101</sup> No doubt a reference to Hayya's commentary cited in B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries, Beraḳot*, section 1 (*tešūbōt*), 12, where he explains that this means God showed Moses how to make *tefillin*; see A.Y. Brumberg, ed., *Peyrūšey riš'ōnīm L-aggādōt Hazal*, 39; cf. also the quote in Hayya's name *apud* S. b. Adret, *Ḥiddūšey ha-Rašba* (Warsaw: P. Lebensohn, 1859), fol. 4c; see also B. Aškenazi, *Šit-ṭāh mequbezzet* (New York: s. n., 1956), fol. 2c, which is a literal interpretation. Further fragments of R. Hayya's Talmudic commentary on *Beraḳot* have been listed by Y.M. Dubovick, "The First Folio of Rav Hayya Gaon's Commentary on Tractate *Beraḳot*," *Netū'im* 19 (2014): 143–154, especially pp. 143–144 (Hebrew), which do not deal with our passage. See also U. Fuks, "R. Hayya's Strictures on the Talmud," in *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Ta-Shema*, A. Reiner, J.R. Hacker, M. Halbertal, M. Idel, E. Kanarfogel and E. Reiner, eds. (Alon Shvut: Tevunot Press, 2012), 11 (of 11), 143–154 (Hebrew).

<sup>102</sup> Enumerated in TB *Beraḳot* 6a, ult.

<sup>103</sup> TB *Beraḳot* 6b, top.

<sup>104</sup> After a small gap of about one missing page, the commentary resumes with the sayings of R. Ḥelbō to be found in TB *Beraḳot* 6b. It begins with a commentary his words: 'R. Ḥelbō further said in the name of R. Huna: "Whosoever partakes of a bridegroom's wedding feast and does not felicitate him does violence to 'the five voices' mentioned in the verse Jer. 33, 2."'

<sup>105</sup> Curiously, the quotations from the Talmud are reported henceforth in the original Hebrew and are left untranslated.

[2a]<sup>106</sup> the words which were quoted (are conducive to) the meditation of these intellectual matters insofar as the Sages encouraged (people) to attend weddings in order to obtain the illumination (of the Torah) and the engrossment in the delight in its apprehension, as you can perceive from what they mentioned thereof.<sup>107</sup>

R. Ḥelbo further said in the name of R. Huna: If one is filled with the fear of God, one's words are eventually hearkened to, for it is said: 'The end of the matter, all having been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole man' (Eccl. 12, 13).<sup>108</sup> What is meant by the expression: 'For this is the whole man'?—R. El'azar says: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, says: The whole world was created for his sake only'. R. Abba b. Kahana says: 'He is equal in value to the whole world'. R. Šim'on b. 'Azzay says [some say it was R. Šim'on b. Zoma]: 'The whole world was created to be his auxiliaries'.

The meaning of (this statement) is that whosoever has in mind God's sake in his speech and admonition to his listeners, in commanding them to observe the (religious) injunctions and prohibitions, while keeping himself from hypocrisy, then God will strengthen his words (and strike) reverence and inspiration into the hearts of his listeners. (If this is not the case) then the opposite (will occur).

As for the expression 'as his auxiliaries', it signifies that the rest of mankind is there to accompany him and undertake his chores and tasks, for [2b] the virtuous man is the purpose of the existence of the human species.<sup>109</sup>

R. Ḥelbo further said in the name of R. Huna: If one knows that his friend is used to greeting him, let him greet him first, for it is said: 'Seek peace and pursue it' (Ps. 34, 15).<sup>110</sup> And if his friend greets him and he does not return the greeting he is called a robber, for it is said: 'It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses' (Is. 3, 14).

106 CUL T-S Ar. 47.170.

107 Allusion to the Torah which is the reward of those who rejoice with the bride and groom, according to R. Joshua b. Levi in the following passage.

108 He interprets: 'Everything is heard, if you fear God'.

109 This statement has a Maimonidean ring to it. In his Commentary, Maimonides, expounding a rabbinical homily taken from TB *Ber.* 58a, states that all creatures serve the Perfect Man (*raḡul kāmīl*) (see Y. Qāfiḡ, ed., *Maimonides' Commentary on the Mišnah*, 45). Since the subject is in the singular—the virtuous Man—and not in the plural, one can also perhaps detect here a reminiscence of the Sufi concept of the Perfect Man (*al-'insān al-kāmīl*). See further in P. Fenton, "Le Symbolisme du nombre quarante et la doctrine de l'Homme Parfait dans la mystique juive et musulmane," in *Mélanges Michel Chodkiewicz*, ed. D. Gril (Aix-en-Provence, *forthcoming*).

110 If one is used to greeting his neighbour and fails to do so a single day, he transgresses the injunction 'seek peace'.

[*Berākhōt* 7a]

R. Yoḥanan says in the name of R. Yose: How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, recites prayers? Because it says: ‘Even them will I bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in the house of *My prayer*’ (Is. 56, 7).<sup>111</sup> It is not said, ‘their prayer’, but ‘My prayer’; hence (you learn) that the Holy One, blessed be He, says prayers.

What then does He pray?—R. Zutra b. Tovi said in the name of Rab: ‘May it be My will that My mercy may suppress My anger and that My mercy may prevail over My (other) attributes, so that I may deal with My children in the attribute of mercy and, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice’.

The meaning of this passage is (as follows): It is well known that according to the Sabaeans, it is impossible for God, by virtue of His transcendence, to commune with this impure temperament i.e. human beings.<sup>112</sup> Our Sages guided us by means of these mysteries to the truthful opinion, i.e. that despite His awesome transcendence, God willed that in the principle of existence, His compassion extends to the whole of (human) kind. The meaning aimed at is [...] and guidance of the prophets, for the purpose of prayer is to connect with His sacredness and furthermore with (its) possibility. Dost thou not see the allusion in their expression “What then does He pray?” The intention is to indicate God’s concern with the lower world, His governance of its inhabitants and His compassionate mercy for [3a] His elect, contrary to those that claim: ‘the Lord hath forsaken the land’ (Ezech. 8, 12).<sup>113</sup> Elsewhere (TB *Pesaḥim* 117b) they have explained that the meaning of prayer is a petition, as they stated: [The ending of the benediction preceding] the (*amidah*) prayer is ‘He who redeems Israel’. What is the reason (the verb is in the present tense)? Because it is a petition.

It was taught: R. Yišma’el b. Eliša’ says: I once entered [into the innermost part of the Sanctuary] to offer incense and saw Akatri’el Yah, the Lord of Hosts, seated upon a high and exalted throne.<sup>114</sup> He said to me: Yišma’el, My son, bless

111 See on this passage the *responsum* of Sa’adyah Gaon (see B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries*, section 1, *tešūbōt*, 14–15); i.e., God teaches Israel how to pray and enjoins them to perform prayers. The ultimate source of this passage is Judah b. Barzilay (see D. Kaufmann, ed., *Judah b. Barzilays Commentar zum Sepher Jezira*, 34).

112 I do not recall having seen this doctrine quoted elsewhere in the name of the Sabaeans, but as is known this name is used as a generic term for all sorts of heretics. In *The High Ways*, the denial of God’s knowledge of particulars in respect of Providence is ascribed by Abraham Maimonides to ‘the naturalist scholars’ and ‘Greek philosophers’ (see S. Rosenblatt, ed., *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides*, II, 129–130).

113 Cf. Y. Qāfiḥ, ed., *Maimonides’ Commentary on the Mišnah*, III, 19, 523; see also S. Pines, transl., *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*, 480.

114 See also on this passage the *responsum* of Sa’adyah Gaon (see B.M. Levin, *Otzar ha-Geonim*,

Me! I replied: 'Master of the World, may it be Thy will that Thy mercy may suppress Thy anger and Thy mercy may prevail over Thine other attributes, so that Thou mayest deal with Thy children according to the attribute of mercy and mayest, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice!' Thereupon He nodded to me with His head.

What does this come to teach us? Here we learn (incidentally) that the blessing of an ordinary man must not be considered lightly in thine eyes.

This is part of the spiritual and angelic degrees (*maqāmāt*) of this master when the column of his spiritual (lit. 'intellectual') cloud of incense communed with the ineffable and he grasped the ultimate through the mystery of the physical incense.<sup>115</sup> He became, as it were, united with his degree (*maqām*) (situated) in the levels of the active intellects, the principal and noblest of whom is Akatri'el.<sup>116</sup> It is said of the latter, called Sandalfon in the treatise *Ḥagigah* (TB *Ḥagigah* 13b), and elsewhere Maṭaṭron, [3b] that he 'tresses crowns for his Creator' (Ibid.). Now there is no difference between Akatri'el and 'he who tresses crowns for his Creator' for him who understands derived proper nouns. Having communed with this archangel and reached through his mediation the apprehension of the Throne and the grandeur of Him to whom it is assigned, (R. Yiśma'el) could but burst into praise, exaltation, glorification, and emotion at that which he had grasped. Thereupon, in this station he considered the souls of his people (*al-millah*), and since he found them to be in need of assistance, he asked for mercy on their behalf from the Merciful who is compassionate towards all creatures, and he formulated his petition.<sup>117</sup> (Now this does not transpire) in a state of any physical reality as the ignorant [i.e., the Qaraites] odiously (claim).

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*Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries*, section 1, *tešūbōt*, 15–18; see also D. Kaufmann, ed., *Judah b. Barzilays Commentar zum Sepher Jezira*, 20–22).

115 Lit. 'communed with that which he communed and grasped that which he grasped'.

116 Strangely, the Qabbalists similarly consider Akatri'el to allude to *keter*, first *sefirāh*. Cf. T. Abū l-'Afiya, *'Otsar ha-kābōd* (Warsaw: P. Lebonson and D. Fridman, 1879), fol. 4c. On the polemics relative to this passage, see B.M. Levin, *Otsar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries*, 15–18.

117 This passage is highly reminiscent of A. Maimonides' interpretation of Exod. 34, 10 (which he says differs from that of his father) according to which Moses, having attained the ultimate level, made a plea in favour of the community of Israel: 'when Moses' apprehension increased and he reached a fuller attainment (*wuṣūl*) in this level (*maqām*), intensifying his bond and his desire, he prayed for continuance and communion (*'ittiṣāl*) not only for himself but for the entire people (*al-millah*), that every one of them may reach the ultimate perfection it is possible to attain' (see also B.M. Levin, *Otsar ha-Geonim, Thesaurus of the Gaonic Responsa and Commentaries, Beraḳot*, Annex Peyrūsey R. Ḥanan'el, p. 5).

The author of *Megillat Setarim*<sup>118</sup> has already reported that he was questioned on the subject (of God's metaphysical nature) and he replied: Turn a few pages to a later passage: To whom did (David) refer in these five verses beginning with 'Bless the Lord, O my soul' (Ps. 104)? He was alluding only to the Holy One, blessed be He, [and to the soul. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, fills the whole world, so the soul fills the body.] Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, sees, but is not seen, so the soul sees but is not itself seen. [Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, feeds the whole world, so the soul feeds the whole body. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is pure, so the soul is pure. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, abides in the innermost precincts, so the soul abides in the innermost precincts. Let that which has these five qualities come and praise Him who has these five qualities],<sup>119</sup> See that it is explicitly stated here that God, may He be exalted, does not belong to the category of things visible. Indeed, this passage is an allegory and a metaphor just as the prophets were wont to use metaphors in the spirit of the statement that 'the Torah employs human speech' (TB *Nedarim* 3a).

Do not be baffled by the expression 'Akatri'el Yah, the Lord of Hosts', for it is as if it were written 'the angel of the Lord of Hosts', the first element having been eluded and there are numerous examples of (such elisions).<sup>120</sup> As for the expression 'Thereupon He nodded to me with His head', it signifies that he revealed to him in this station some of the mysteries of the principles of existence which hitherto he had not seized. May this suffice on this subject!

[TB *Beraḳot* 7a]

R. Yoḥanan further said in the name of R. Yose: [How do you know that we must not try to placate a man in the time of his anger?] What is the meaning of the verse: 'My face will go and I will give thee rest' (Ex. 33, 14)? The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: 'Wait till My countenance of wrath shall have passed away and then I shall give thee rest'. Is anger then a mood of the Holy One, blessed be He?—Yes, for it has been taught: 'A God that hath indignation every day' (Ps. 7, 12)?

And what is the duration of this indignation?—An instant. [And how long is an instant? One fifty-eight thousand eight hundred and eighty-eighth part of

118 This work is by R. Nissim Gaon of Qayrawan (990–1062 CE) and the passage in our manuscript (quoted erroneously as CUL T-S Ar. 47/213) has already been discussed by S. Abramson, *R. Nissim Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1965), 281–282, 332, n. 7.

119 TB *Ber.* 10a. I have supplied the whole passage in order to understand the context.

120 The literature relative to this debate in mediaeval sources has been summarised by R. Margoliot, *Mal'aḳey 'elyōn*, (Jerusalem: Rav Kook Institute, 1945), 12–15.

an hour.] And no creature has ever been able to fix precisely this instant except the wicked Balām, of whom it is written: ‘He knoweth the knowledge of the Most High’ (Nu. 24, 16)? [Now, he did not even know the mind of his beast; how then could he know the mind of the Most High? The meaning is, therefore, only] that he knew how to fix precisely this moment in which the Holy One, blessed be He, is angry. And this is just what the prophet said to Israel: ‘O my people, remember now [what Balak king of Moab devised,] and what Balām the son of Beor answered him ... that ye may know the righteous acts of the Lord’ (Mich. 6, 5). [What means ‘That ye may know the righteous acts of the Lord’?—R. El‘azar says: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel]: See now, how many righteous acts I performed for you in not being angry in the days of the wicked Balām. For had I been angry, not one remnant would have been left of the enemies of Israel.<sup>121</sup>

[TB *Beraḳot* 7a]

It was taught in the name of R. Me’ir: At the time when the sun rises and all the kings of the East and West place their crowns upon the soil<sup>122</sup> and bow down to the sun, the Holy One, blessed be He, becomes at once angry.

This entire passage alludes to the fact that the intensity of His providence towards mankind and His protection and safeguard of them is proportional to their turning towards [4b] His presence. Whenever obliviousness occurs, even for the briefest moment, this bond that brings about a strong, personal providence, is weakened, whereupon they become tributary to universal providence which englobes all creatures in terms of protection. This is alluded to by the fact that Balām looked out for a (moment) of inattention on the part of Israel in order to be able to gain sway over them. The Israelites remained in an extreme state of attentiveness, alertness, and awareness of his intention. They were not overcome by inadvertence or unwariness<sup>123</sup> even for the twinkling of an eye but remained like an attentive contender on the alert for his opponent and thus Balām was unable to carry out his aim against them. Even this was insufficient were it not for the Master of prophets who opposed his intentions with his breath and with what God enjoined him to recite following [Balām’s] imprecations.<sup>124</sup> This was the supernal gift i.e. that God had repelled the obstacles

121 V: ‘of the enemies of Israel’, a euphemism for ‘the Jews’.

122 V: ‘upon their heads’.

123 *’Inhijāb*, lit. ‘concealment’ from *hijāb*, which is also a Sufi technical term. Cf. A. al-Razzāq, *Dictionary of the Technical Terms of the Sufis* (Calcutta: s.n., 1845), 35, no. 116.

124 Obviously based on a *midraš*, the source of which has escaped me.

conducive to concealment which had they not been removed then inattention would have taken place and the Balām's (curse) would have taken effect upon them.

R. Yoḥanan further said in the name of R. Yose: Better is one [self-reproach in the heart of a man than many stripes].

## 5 Appendix: Supplementary Pages from Abraham Maimonides' *Discourse on Rabbinical Homilies*

The present occasion affords me the opportunity to publish two additional pages from the Judaeo-Arabic original of Abraham Maimonides' *Discourse on Rabbinical Homilies* together with an English translation. It turns out that these pages, which I had the good fortune to identify several years ago in the Paris AIU Geniza collection, are not only part of the Cambridge Judaeo-Arabic manuscript published by Dr E. Hurvitz in 1974, but they belong to the very same gathering, forming its outer folios.<sup>125</sup> Hence, they add to the beginning and end of Hurvitz's text since Lewis-Gibson Arabic II.39, fol. 2 (Hurvitz's text, p. 1), is the direct continuation of the present Arabic manuscript folio 1a–b,<sup>126</sup> while its folio 2a–b is the immediate continuation of Lewis-Gibson Arabic II.39, fol. 5 (Hurvitz's text p. 12, end).<sup>127</sup> In order to facilitate its reading diacritical points and punctuation have been added to the text.

### 5.1 *Edition of Paris, AIU Arabe II.1*

[א1]

ופי גירה תנקסם אלי כ'מסה אקסאם. אלמעשיות  
אלתי ד'כרוהא תנקסם עלי ארבעה אקסאם .

אמא אקסאם אלדרשות

אלכ'מסה פאן

אלקסם אלאל

מנהא דרשות אלמקצוד בהא ט'אהרה, ודלאה ט'אהרתהא

125 E. Hurvitz, "Ma'amar 'al 'odot derašot Ḥazal," 139–168, where he published part of the original Judaeo-Arabic based on Cambridge, Westminster College, Lewis-Gibson Arabic II.39, fols. 2r and 5v. See *supra*, n. 13.

126 Corresponding to R. Margaliot, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Milḥamōt ha-šem*, 89, lines 6–24.

127 Corresponding to R. Margaliot, ed., *Abraham Maimonides' Milḥamōt ha-šem*, 93, lines 22–30, where the Hebrew translation is much abridged.



בינה לאכת'ר אלמשתגלין לסהולתהא. והד'א אלקסם  
 מע כונה אבין מן אן יפתקר למת'אל, פמת'אלה  
 מאדה אלביאן קולהם פי גמר ברכות: אמ' ר'  
 יוחנן משום ר' שמעון בן יוחאי אסור לאדם  
 שימלא פיו שחוק בעולם הזה, שנ': אז ימלא  
 שחוק פינו ולשונינו רנה. אז יאמרו בגוים  
 הגדיל ייי לעשות עם אלה. אימתי ימלא שחוק  
 פינו ולשונינו רנה? בזמן שיאמרו בגוים הגדיל  
 ייי לעשות עם אלה. **ואלקסם אלת'אני**  
 מנהא דרשות להא ט'אהר ובאטן, ואלקצד בהד'א

[ג1]

אלקסם הו אלמעני אלבאטן פיה לא אלמעני אל  
 ט'אהר מנה. ואנמא ג'על לה ט'אהר כ'לאף  
 באטנה לפואיד קד בין אכת'רהא בל כלה  
 פי אלדלאלה ושרח אלמשנה. ומת'אל הד'א  
 אלקסם קולהם פי גמר תעניות: אמ' ר' חלבו,  
 אמ' עולא ביראה, אמ' ר' אלעזר: עתיד הקב"ה  
 לעשות מחול לצדיקים בגן עדן והוא עומד  
 ביניהן וכל אחד ואחד מראה לו באצבעו,  
 שנ': והיה ביום ההוא הנה אלהינו זה קוינו  
 לו ויושיענו זה ייי קוינו לו נגילה ונשמחה  
 בישועתו. פט'אהר הד'א אלדרש יחאשא  
 מן אעתקאדה כל מתשרע, בל וכל עאקל.  
 ובאטנה אלד'י קצדה קאילה לא שך אנה  
 אלמקצוד אעתקאדה מן כל מתשרע לאנה  
 אלחק. וד'לך אן אג'ר אלצדיקים אלמד'כר לחיי  
 העולם הבא הו אדראכהם מנה תע' מא לא  
 ימכן אדראכה פי דאר אלדניא, וד'לך הו גאיה

[א2]

פי אלחלם ואלאמסאך ען אלחרג', ולו ממא יחרג'  
 אשד חרג' מת'ל הד'ה אלקציה אלתי חכיהא  
 ומת'ל הד'א אלצנף פי אלתלמוד כת'יר  
**ואל'צנף אלת'אלת'**  
 הו אלד'י יתעלם מנה אעתקאד צחית. ומת'אלה  
 קולהם פי משנת תעניות: מעשה שאמרו לו  
 לחוני המעגל שירדו גשמים. אמר להן: צאו  
 והכניסו תנורי פסחים בשביל שלא ימקו.  
 התפלל ולא ירדו. עג עוגה ועמד בתוכה. אמר:

רבנו של עולם בניך שמו פניהם עלי שאני כבן  
 בית לפניך. נשבע אני בשמך הגדול שאיני  
 זו מיכאן עד שתרחם על בניך. התחילו הגשמים  
 מנטפין. אמר: לא כך שאלתי. ירדו בזעף. אמר:  
 לא כך שאלתי אלא גשמי רצון ברכה ונדבה. ירדו  
 כתקנן. פהדי'א אלמעשה יתעלם מנה אעתקאד  
 צחיה, והו אן אללה תבארך ותעאלי אסמה יגיב  
 דעא עבידה אלצאלחין, כמה תצ'מן כתאבה:

[ב2]

כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלהים קרובים אליו כיי אלהנו  
 בכל קראינו אליו. וקאל עלי יד נביה: אז תקרא וייי  
 יענה תשוע ויאמר הנני. ופי מא תצ'מנתה  
 תפלה למשה: יקראיני ואענהו. ונט'יר ד'לך  
 פי אלתלמוד קולהם פי גמר תעניות: פעם אחת  
 עלו כל ישראל לרגל ולא היה להם מים לשתות.  
 הלך נקדימון בן גוריון אצל הגמון אחד שהיה  
 שם. אמר לו: הלויני שתים עשרה מעלות מים  
 ואני נותן לך שנים עשר ככרי כסף. קצץ לו  
 כסף וקבע לו זמן. כשהגיע זמנו שלח לו:  
 שגר לי או מים או מעות. שלח לו: עד אן יש  
 לי רוח. בצהרים שלח לו: שגר לי מים או מעות.  
 שלח לו: עד אן יש לי שהות ביום. במנחה  
 שלח לו: שגר לי מים או מעות. שלח לו עד  
 אן יש לי שהות ביום. אמר אותו הגמון כל  
 השנה כולה לא ירדו גשמים עכשיו ירדו.  
 נכנס בשמחה לבית המרחץ. מה עשה

## 5.2 *Translation of Paris, AIU Arabe II.1*

[all those homilies which are to be found in the sayings of the rabbis in the Talmud] and elsewhere are divided into five categories, whereas the tales to which they relate are divided into four types.

As for the **five categories of homilies**:

**The First Category** is comprised of homilies the intention of which is literal and, on account of their simplicity, their literal meaning is obvious to the majority of those that consider them. Even though this category is so clear that it does not require an illustration, I will nonetheless provide an example by way of explanation, namely the following passage from the treatise *Berakot* (31a): R. Yoḥanan said in the name of R. Šim'on b. Yoḥay It is forbidden for a man to fill his mouth with laughter in this world, as it is written:

‘Then will our mouth be filled with laughter and our tongue with singing’ (Ps 126, 2). When will that be? At the time when ‘they shall say among the nations it is proclaimed “The Lord hath wrought great things with these”’ (ibid. 3).

**The Second Category** is comprised of homilies that have both a literal and a metaphorical meaning. The intended meaning of this [1b] category is its metaphorical and not its literal sense but it was allocated a literal sense in contradiction to its metaphorical sense for beneficial reasons. Most or all of the latter have been expounded [by Maimonides] in the *Guide* and the *Commentary on the Mishnah*. An example of this category is their statement in the treatise *Ta’anit* (31a): R. Ḥelbo said in the name of ‘Ulla of Bira, R. El’azar said: In the days to come, the Holy One blessed be He will hold a chorus for the righteous in the Garden of Eden and He will sit in their midst in the Garden of Eden and each will designate Him with his finger, as it is said ‘And it shall be said in that day: Lo this is our God whom we awaited, that He might save us; this is the Lord for whom we waited, let us rejoice and be glad at His salvation’ (Is. 25, 9).

God forbid that any student of the Torah, nay any intelligent person, should believe the literal meaning of this homily. The inner meaning its transmitter had in mind is certainly the intended belief on the part of every student of the Torah for it is the truth. This is that what is mentioned here about the reward of the righteous in the life of the next world consists of their perceiving of God that which was imperceptible in the lower world. This is the utmost [beatitude of which there is nothing higher].”

## 2a

In regard to longanimity and forbearance in the face of importunity even from that which causes the greatest annoyance as illustrated by the tale related here. Of this type, there are numerous examples in the Talmud.

**The Third Type** is one from which one learns a correct opinion, an example of which is reported in the tractate *Ta’anit* (23a): Once it happened that the people sent a message to Honi the Circle Drawer: ‘Pray that rain may fall’. He said to them: ‘Go and gather in the ovens of the Pascal lambs so that they may not crumble’. He prayed but the rain did not fall. He thereupon drew a circle and stood within it and exclaimed [before God]: ‘Master of the Universe, Thy children have turned to me because [they believe] me to be a member of Thy house. I swear by Thy Great Name that I will not move from here until Thou hast mercy upon Thy children!’ Rain began to drip, whereupon he exclaimed: ‘It is not for this that I have prayed’. The rain then began to come down with

great force. Thereupon he exclaimed before [God]: 'It is not for this that I have prayed but for the rain of benevolence, blessing and bounty'. Then the rain fell normally.

From this tale, one learns a correct opinion i.e. that God, blessed and exalted be His Name, responds to the petition of His pious servants, as is written in His book: 'For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things for which that we call upon him?' (Deut. 4, 7) And He said through His prophet: 'Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say "Here am I"' (Is 58, 9). And Moses' prayer contains the verse: 'He will call on me, and I will answer him; [I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him]' (Ps 91, 15).

Similarly, it is related in the tractate *Ta'anit* (19b–20a): Once it happened when all Israel came up on pilgrimage [to Jerusalem] that there was no water available for drinking. Thereupon Naqdimon b. Gurion approached a certain local [heathen] lord and said to him: 'Loan me twelve wells of water [for the Pilgrims] and I will repay you twelve talents of silver'. He fixed the sum and a time limit [for repayment]. When the time came [for repayment and no rain had yet fallen] the lord sent a message to him [in the morning]: 'Return to me either the water or the money'. Naqdimon replied: 'I have still time'. At midday he [again] sent to him a message: 'Return to me either the water or the money'. Naqdimon replied: 'I still have time today'. In the afternoon, he [again] sent to him a message: 'Return to me either the water or the money'. Naqdimon replied: 'I still have time today'. Thereupon the lord [sneeringly] said: 'Seeing that no rain has fallen throughout the whole year will it then rain now?' Thereupon he repaired in a happy mood to the baths. Meanwhile, what did [Naqdimon] do?

# Five Greek Glosses to Talmud Tractate *Bava Mešia*

*Julia G. Krivoruchko*

## 1 Introduction

T-S F2(1).164 is a parchment folio containing a fragment of *Bava Mešia* 93a–b.<sup>1</sup> Morag (1988, vii, 26) sampled the vocalised passages of the folio in his catalogue of vocalised Talmudic manuscripts in Cambridge; it was further mentioned by Etz-Chaim (1999–2000, *non vidi*), Shweka (2007–2008, 319) and Sussman (2012, no. 2319). De Lange and Tchernetska (2014) concentrated on the palaeographic aspects of the Greek glosses but did not deal with their translation or interpretation. De Lange dated the main text to the eleventh century and remarked that the glosses “must be later, but not necessarily much later” (2014, 260). Below I attempt to place Greek interlinear and marginal glosses in their Byzantine and Talmudic context.

The correct order of the images of the text is back-front. A hand using blackish ink added minor corrections to the main text, such as inserting or overwriting a couple of characters, e.g. נק in line 7 or נס in line 20. The vocalisation applied is of Palestino-Tiberian type with its characteristic extended use of *rafe* and *dagesh*. It is unclear whether the same scribe produced all the vocalisation of the *recto*: the angle of strokes and relative position of dots to the body of the letters look similar throughout the page, and while the shade of ink does not always look identical, it may be due to the vicissitudes of preservation or working in different sessions. A hand responsible for the vocalisation must have also added the Greek and Hebrew glosses. Being ‘difficult’, the glossed words are vocalised.

The preserved folio starts with the gemara immediately following the seventh mishna of 93a. Four kinds of bailees (a gratuitous bailee, a borrower, a paid bailee, and a hirer) are distinguished; further discussion deals with the rights of employees and circumstances that release the paid custodian from liability

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1 This article was originally published as the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit’s *Fragment of the Month* for April 2021, where it appeared with the title: ‘Five Greek Glosses to Bava Metzia 93b: T-S F2(1).164’ (<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2021/fragment-2>). It is reproduced here, slightly modified by the editors, with permission from Julia G. Krivoruchko.

(93b). The transcription of the fragment (but not the glosses) can be found on the Freidberg Genizah Project (<https://fjms.genizah.org>).

## 2 The Glosses

### 2.1 ΒΙΓΛΑΤΟΡΑΣ

The first Greek gloss is located on the outer margin near line 14, divided according to its syllabification into ΒΙΓΛΑ|ΤΟΡΑΣ to fit the margin. Marking the glossed item ⲓⲃⲓⲛⲁ in the main text the scribe placed a small circle above its *bet*.<sup>2</sup> The Greek form (acc.pl.) implies the presence of a preposition before it, which may indicate translation of the whole sentence rather than the individual word.

The Greek βιγλάτωρ originates through syncope from Lat. *vigilator*, an agent noun of classical *vigilare* ‘to stay awake at night’. It is not amply witnessed prior to our fragment, but develops an array of morphological by-forms and derivatives in later periods: βιγλάτορος, βιγλάτορης, βιγλάτορας, βιγλιστής (Kriaras, s.vv.).

What made βιγλάτωρ the translation of choice instead of far commoner terms for custodians, such as φρουρός, φύλαξ/φύλακας, etc.? An absolute majority of thirty occurrences of the lexeme in TLG come from military manuals, such as *Tactica* of Leo VI the Wise (r. 886—912 CE), the most extensive Byzantine compilation in the field of military art, published by his son Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus; *Tactica* of Nikephoros Ouranos (fl. ca. 980—c. 1010 CE), a successful general and confidant of the Emperor Basil II (r. 976—1025); *De velitatione bellica* ascribed to Nicephorus II Phocas (r. 963—969 CE); the anonymous *De re military* (6–10 CE), etc. All these texts uniformly present the meaning ‘watchman, guard, sentinel functioning as a part of military unit / in the framework of an organised military operation’, e.g.:

[δέον] τοὺς δὲ βιγλάτορας πιστοὺς εἶναι καὶ εἶδει σώματος ἀνδρείῳ καὶ ψυχῇ εὐτόλμῳ καὶ ὀπίσει λαμπροὺς καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν στρατιωτῶν διαφέρειν, ὥστε ἢ ποιήσαντάς τι γενναῖον ἔργον καὶ ἀνδρεῖον ἐπανελθεῖν ἢ ζωγρηθέντας παρὰ τοῖς πολεμίοις θαυμάζεσθαι.

[T]he *viglatores* should be trustworthy and excel among other soldiers through manly body-build, brave soul and excellent weaponry, so that

<sup>2</sup> As is common in some Extended Tiberian manuscripts, the two dots of the *hatef* vowel are placed inside the body of the *het*.

upon accomplishing a daring mission they could return, and if caught alive by the adversaries, be admired by them.<sup>3</sup>

LEO SAPIENS, *Tactica*, constitution 17, section 77, line 5.

Similarly positive contexts with *viglatores* can be found in other texts. Slightly apart in terms of genre, but not semantics, stands the scholium to Aristophanes's *Clouds*: ... ἄδων ἐπὶ φρουρᾶς ὥσπερ οἱ βιγλάτορες 'singing / chanting while guarding, as βιγλάτορες [do]' (*Commentarium in Nubes, Scholia Recentiora Tzetzae*, sch. verse-column 721b, lines 4–5), where the immediately preceding scholium mentions 'approaching enemy'.

From the viewpoint of TLG evidence, the word can function as a translational equivalent of the Aramaic term in as far as βιγλάτωρες are (a) fit and brave men and (b) mercenaries, i.e., in gemara terms, paid bailees. Yet it becomes the best option only when Job 1:15<sup>4</sup> is read as univocal reference to war, when the town would be guarded by elite units rather than ordinary night guards. Consequently, from the viewpoint of halachic interpretation the Greek gloss limits acceptable force majeure to military conflicts. This interpretation is somewhat different from Rashi's בחזני מתא שומרי העיר בלילה שכל סמך אנשי העיר עליהם לשמור גופם וממונם הנהו ודאי בעו נטירותא יתירתא, which allows for common guards and therefore a larger range of acceptable force majeure, such as robbery and milder forms of violence. Rashi's understanding could have been based on glossing בחזני מתא as *\*vigiles*, sc. *vigiles urbani*, an urban military unit combining the functions of firefighters and police, that was in charge of nocturnal public order and patrolling.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.2 KANON

On the inner margin near line 17 we find the glyphs that de Lange and Tchernetska (2014, 260) read as OKANONO. I believe that the first and the last characters of this sequence are in fact not letters but *circuli*, which frame the word KANON. The *omicron* in the word ΒΙΓΛΑΤΟΡΑΣ is performed in two strokes and gives an almond-shaped result, as does the *omicron* inside KANON and two other clearly

3 The translations are mine unless stated otherwise.

4 Job 1:15, ותפל שבא ותקחם ואת הנערים הכו לפי-חרב וכו'. 'And the Sabeans made a raid, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword ...' (translation by JPS).

5 Due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, no firm claims can be made about the origin of Rashi's interpretation or common tradition behind the gloss in T-s F2(1).164 and the reconstructed source of Rashi.

visible *omicrons* on the *verso* of the folio. On the contrary, the glyph at the beginning of OKANONO is a single circular stroke, just as the interlinear signs that link the referents to their glosses.

Interestingly, the main text of line 17 lacks such reference anchors, and it seems unlikely that the stain above the first word of line 18 functioned as one. Above KANON there is a mark in dark ink similar to Greek *theta*, which may have some meaning—or none.

Placement of a word between *circuli* could be a decorative device, or it could mean that the gloss relates to a word on the opposite page—unfortunately, the fragment is too short to supply more data and the opposite page is unavailable. I suggest that the gloss between *circuli* relates to the text in a different way—it is not a translational equivalent of some specific lexeme but a note/commentary to the passage as a whole. Conventions of comparable kind are known in Greek tradition, e.g. the sign of *diple* ‘double’ used by Aristarchus of Samothrace to append a loosely related commentary to the text.<sup>6</sup>

KANON, a slightly misspelled variant of *κανών*, poses no morphological or phonetic problems: quantitative distinctions between vowels would have already lost their significance. Analysing KANON in the context of the gemara requires understanding its meaning in earlier and contemporaneous Greek and Judaeo-Greek. The semantics of *κανών* are too branching and convoluted to analyse in detail; I will point at only a few important directions of semantic development.<sup>7</sup> In Ancient Greek, the lexeme evolved from literal ‘rod, bar’ (cf. קֶנֶן, see LSJ s.v. *κανών* A.1–11) to abstract metaphorical ‘rule, standard’ (LSJ s.v. *κανών* 11). Picked up by philosophers as ‘principle, criterion’, already in late antiquity it started to compete with *νόμος* for the meanings ‘law, institutionalised ruling, legal norm’. With the establishment of Christianity the word was actively employed by the Church and developed meanings ‘rule of faith’, ‘rule of ecclesiastical law’, ‘canon of behaviour, moral standard’, and numerous technical ones, such as ‘canon of scripture’, ‘liturgical order’, ‘liturgical hymn’, ‘ecclesiastical rank/order’, etc. (all—Lampe s.v.).

Due to the structure of Byzantine society the boundary between *κανών* and *νόμος* was movable and negotiable, as were the powers of relevant authorit-

6 See Schironi (2012, 92–107). I do not suggest any direct link between Alexandrian tradition and the scribal conventions of the particular folio not least because *diple* is angular, not circular, although over centuries one could have evolved into another. I am just pointing to the precedent and possibility of such a sign.

7 All major Christian encyclopaedias address the lexical and cultural history of the word/concept under the lemma *canon*. Fans of classical *Wortgeschichte* may opt for Oppel 1937.



ies.<sup>8</sup> Towards the time when our gloss was penned, *κανών* in mainstream Greek could have meant anything between ‘standard of moral behaviour’, ‘rule’, ‘custom’ and ‘law’. Although a culturally important term, *κανών*, in contradistinction to *νόμος*, was never directly borrowed into Hebrew / Aramaic, probably because of phonetic and semantic competition with כּוּן, כּוּנ and כּוּן.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, it occurs already in Early Judaeo-Greek: according to TLG, Philo used it 27 times and Josephus twice. However, Judaeo-Greek writing had a pronounced tendency to associate Torah with *νόμος*, which limited the sphere of applicability of *κανών*, pushing it towards ‘applied law’, ‘specific regulation’, ‘custom’. An enlightening example of the fine interaction of both semantic fields is the following passage from *Contra Apionem*:

‘Ο δ’ ἡμέτερος νομοθέτης ἄμφω ταῦτα συνήρμοσεν κατὰ πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν οὔτε γὰρ κωφὴν ἀπέλιπε τὴν τῶν ἡθῶν ἄσκησιν οὔτε τὸν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου λόγον ἀπρακτον εἶασεν, ἀλλ’ εὐθὺς ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἀρξάμενος τροφῆς καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὸν οἶκον ἐκάστων διαίτης οὐδὲ τῶν βραχυτάτων αὐτεξοῦσιον ἐπὶ ταῖς βουλήσεσι τῶν χρησομένων κατέλιπεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ σιτίων, ὅσων ἀπέχεσθαι χρῆ καὶ τίνα προσφέρεσθαι, καὶ περὶ τῶν κοινωνησόντων τῆς διαίτης ἔργων τε συντονίας καὶ τοῦμπαλιν ἀναπαύσεως ὅρον ἔθηκεν αὐτὸς καὶ κανόνα τὸν νόμον, ἴν’ ὥσπερ ὑπὸ πατρὶ τοῦτῳ καὶ δεσπότη ζῶντες μὴτε βουλόμενοι μὴθ’ ὑπ’ ἀγνοίας ἀμαρτάνωμεν (Flavius Josephus, *Contra Apionem* (= *De Judaeorum vetustate*), book 2, sect. 174, line 4).

But [O]ur [L]egislator combined both forms with great care: [H]e neither left character-training mute nor allowed the words from the law to go [unpractised]. Rather, starting right from the beginning of their nurture and from the mode of life [practised] by each individual in the household, [H]e did not leave anything, even the minutest detail, free to be determined by the wishes of those who would make use of [the laws], but even in relation to food, what they should refrain from and what they should eat, the company they keep in their daily lives, as well as their intensity in work and, conversely, rest, [H]e set the law as their boundary and rule, so that, living under [such F]ather and [M]aster, we might commit no sin either wilfully or from ignorance.<sup>10</sup>

8 Various aspects of the phenomenon are highlighted, e.g., in Troianos, Simon and Neye, 2017, Macrides 1990, Druwé 2015, and Wagschal 2014.

9 But cf. Sokoloff (2009, 1381). *κανών* could have influenced the semantics of the above Hebrew roots.

10 Translation by John M.G. Barclay 2007 with minor modifications in brackets.

‘Setting the [L]aw as boundary (ὄρος) and rule’ implies here positive and negative commandments of the νόμος-Torah, where κανών (‘rule’) is מצוות עשה, an advised way of life, divinely approved and encouraged, but also prescribed and ordered.

Having understood what κανών could have meant, let us turn to its possible referent. Opposite the gloss in the main text we find the following passage. Here and below, words directly translating the original are in bold; the rest is added for coherence:

איתיביה עד מתי שומר שכר חייב לשמור עד כדי (בראשית לא, מ) הייתי ביום אכלני חורב וקרח בלילה א"ל התם נמי בחזוני מתא אמר ליה אטו יעקב אבינו חזן מתא הוה דאמר ליה ללבן גטרי לך נטירותא יתירתא כחזוני מתא.

Abaye raised an objection to Rabba from another *baraita*: **To what extent is a paid bailee obligated to safeguard?** He is obligated to the extent that Jacob said to Laban: **“Thus I was: In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night”** (Genesis 31:40). Rava said to him: **There too, the *baraita* is speaking of city watchmen**, whose responsibility extends further. Abaye said to him: **Is that to say that Jacob, our forefather**, whose statement is the source of this halakha, **was a city watchman?** Rava replied: **It means that Jacob said to Laban: I safeguarded for you an extra level of safeguarding, like that of city watchmen.**<sup>11</sup>

Bailees’ obligations are discussed here on the background of the biblical story of Jacob. It is helpful to see, how this story looks from the perspective of Byzantine law. The activity of herdsmen was a subject of so called *Νόμος γεωργικός* known under translated titles *Farmer’s Law*, *Agrargesetz* or *Landwirtschaftsgesetz*, and *Loi agraire*.<sup>12</sup>

Few texts can match *Nomos Georgikos* as to the spectrum of proposed chronologies: various scholars have dated its parts from the sixth to the fourteenth century. It has been preserved in more than a hundred manuscripts falling into

11 The translations are from the *The William Davidson Talmud*, quoted from <http://www.sefaria.org>.

12 By bringing this material into comparison, I do not wish to claim that the scribe was familiar with the particular text or any parallel piece of Byzantine legislation. Common law could have been a fact of common knowledge without there necessarily being access to its written versions. The question, how much Roman law was known to Rabbis, has occupied scholars for centuries (see, e.g. Hezser 2007 for historical excursus), and there is no space to deal with it here.

several mutually independent families. Researchers agree that *Farmers' Law* occupies a unique place in Byzantine legal production: its language is decidedly unprofessional. Some see it as a result of the incorporation of *ad hoc* practical rulings into the system of classical Roman law, others tend to reconstruct an opposite process, namely an attempt by high-brow jurists to devise regulations for trivial mundane matters. Be that as it may, due to its utter practicality, *Georgikos Nomos* has been widely popular and exercised profound impact on the legal systems of Balkan and Slavic countries.<sup>13</sup> Let us consider Gen 31:38–39, immediately preceding the phrase quoted by Abaye:

לח זה עשרים שנה אנכי עמך רחליך ועזיך לא שכלו ואילי צאנך לא אכלתי.

38 These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flocks have I not eaten.

לט טרפה לא-הבאתי אליך--אנכי אחטנה מידי תבקשנה גנבתי יום וגנבתי לילה.

39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bore the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.<sup>14</sup>

Compare:

Ἐὰν ἀγελάριος βοῶν ἔωθεν παρὰ τοῦ γεωργοῦ λάβῃ βοῦν καὶ συγκαταμίξῃ αὐτὸν μετὰ τῆς ἀγέλης καὶ συμβῇ τὸν βοῦν λυκωθῆναι, δεῖξάτω τὸ πτῶμα τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναίτιος ἔστω (*Farmer's Law* no. 23).

If a [cowherd] in the morning receives an ox from a farmer and mixes it with the herd, and it happens that the ox is destroyed by a wolf, let him explain the accident to its master and he himself shall go harmless.<sup>15</sup>

13 Details about the history of research and *stemma codicum* can be found in the editions of Medvedev 1984 and Koder 2020. Some older articles, such as Vernadskij 1925 and Karayannopoulos 1958, may be still helpful.

14 The translations of Genesis are by JPS.

15 The text, purged of variant readings, is from Koder 2020; the translations are modernised from Ashburner 1912. The fact that the animal used for the exemplification is an ox (and not a sheep or a goat) is hardly of relevance.

Ἐὰν ἀγελάριος βοῦν παραλαβὼν ἀπολέσῃ καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐν ἧ ὁ βοῦς ἀπώ-  
 λετο οὐ καταμηνύσῃ τῷ κυρίῳ τοῦ βοῦς ὅτι τὸν βοῦν ἔως ῥῆδε καὶ ῥῆδε ἐώρακα,  
 τί δὲ γέγονεν οὐκ οἶδα, ἀζήμιος μὴ ἔστω, εἰ δὲ καὶ κατεμήνυσεν, ἔστω ἀζήμιος  
 (ibid. no. 26).

If a herdsman in the morning receives an ox from a farmer and the ox disappears, let him swear in the Lord's name that he has not himself played foul and that he had no part in the loss of the ox and let him go harmless.

From the viewpoint of *Nomos Georgikos* Lavan's requirements appear exaggerated and contradicting the established practice, while Jacob's conscientiousness and good will certainly appear as נטירותא יתירתא 'excessive care'.

I believe that the background analysed above has brought us closer to understanding what the glossator could mean by marking *καρών* on the margin of T-S F2(1).164. First, it has become obvious that the gloss refers to the phrase נטירי לך נטירותא יתירתא. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the clause is also vocalised. The intentions of the glossator could have been: 'נטירי לך נטירותא יתירתא is an important tenet / practical law / encouraged conduct'. Pragmatically, this would mean: 'Memorise the maxim and apply it'. Alternatively, in a more scholarly way, the gloss could mean: 'Note the contradiction between the applied law and the principle brought into halachic argument'.

### 2.3 HKAZYSEIN

HKAZYSEIN appears on the outer margin near line 20 and is linked through *circulus* to the nearest word of the main text, which is also vocalised: אומדין. It is possible that the original form was אומרין, as in the previous line, and the fourth character was corrected into *dalet*, not overwritten. Curiously, modern editions may contain the same root in both occurrences, but the translation distinguishes between 'say' and 'estimate', for instance:

איתיביה רועה שהיה רועה והניח עדרו ובא לעיר בא זאב וטרף ובא ארי ודרס אין אומדים אילו היה שם היה מציל אלא אומדין אותו אם יכול להציל חייב ואם לאו פטור.

Abaye raised an objection to Rabba from another baraita: With regard to a shepherd who was herding the animals of others, and he left his flock and came to the town, if in the meantime a wolf came and tore an animal to pieces, or a lion came and trampled one of his flock, we do not say definitively that had he been there he would have rescued them and therefore he is liable due to his absence. Rather, the court estimates with regard to him: If he could have rescued his animal by chasing a beast of

this kind away, he is **liable**, as his departure from the scene was certainly a contributing factor to the damage. **If not**, he is **exempt** from liability.

The gloss ΗΚΑΖΥ|ΣΙΝ corresponds to *εικάζουσιν* ‘they estimate’, cf. LSJ s.v. *εικάζω* A.III. ‘infer from comparison, form a conjecture’. Towards the period when the gloss was penned, the diphthong εῖ would have long ago evolved from /e:/ > /i:/ > /i/ (see Horrocks 2010, 161–162) and consequently could have been written through any grapheme or combination thereof with phonetic value /i/. The scribe used *eta* for the first syllable, which could be a random choice, or hint at a partial knowledge of traditional Greek spelling, since in most verbs with initial ε the augment would be realised as η. The vowel [u] is written not as a digraph but through *upsilon*, which could have originated from sloppy spelling or fronting of the original /u/ to /y/.

#### 2.4 ΑΜΕΛΕΣΕΝ

The interlinear gloss ΑΜΕΛΕΣΕΝ is positioned above its referent בִּישׁוּעָה סוּפוֹ in line 22. The antithesis סוּפוֹ—תְּחִילָתוֹ is repeated in our fragment (lines 22–23), but not in modern editions:

תְּחִילָתוֹ בִּישׁוּעָה וְסוּפוֹ בְּאוֹנָס חַיִּיב

This is a mishap that came about **initially through negligence and ultimately by accident**, and in a case of this kind he is **liable** due to his negligence.

The gloss is semantically straightforward: ἀμέλεσεν < ἀμέλησεν ‘he did not sufficiently care’, ‘was careless, negligent’. The aorist in -εσα is not unusual, as it frequently appears as by-form to -ησα in later Greek, including Judaeo-Greek, e.g. φορέω > ἐφόρεσα LXX Si. 11.5, but ἐφόρησα elsewhere (LSJ). What is unexpected, however, is the strategic choice not to reflect the syntax and morphology of the original—something hardly ever done in Judaeo-Greek biblical glossaries of the period. Instead, the glossator opts for rephrasing the clause, and through introducing the verb instantly creates a comprehensible Greek *protasis*. באונס and חייב must have also been translated as verbs.

#### 2.5 ΣΤΟ | ΤΟΠΟ[

The only Greek gloss on the *verso* appears on the left margin near the line 6. No marking of a glossed item is visible due to the badly rubbed condition of the leaf, neither is the gloss itself clearly legible. De Lange and Tchernetska (2014, 260) read the gloss as ΣΤΟΙ | ΤΟΠΟ[. As can be seen on the other side of the

folio, the scribe had a habit of encroaching the space of the main text. It is consequently possible that the first syllable of the gloss ends not in *iota* but in the left leg of some other glyph, e.g. *nu*, which in recto is strictly vertical. Multiple reading possibilities hinder connecting the gloss to a lexeme in the main text.

### 3 Summary

Medieval Greek-speaking scholars are mostly known as those who obliged R. Sherira and R. Hay, the Pumbedita Gaons, with translations of unfamiliar Greek loanwords. Yet beyond and behind this semi-anecdotal evidence there existed a culture of Talmud study, of which the glosses of T-S F2(1).164 are first-hand evidence. Their value is manifold. First, it lies in the relative rarity of the material: complete works by Greek Talmudic scholars, such as eleventh-century *perushim* to the order *Moed* or the annotated digest of Talmud composed by Shemariah ben Elijah of Negroponte for his son, did not survive.<sup>16</sup> Second, individual glosses represent the stages of *peshat* and lexicography preceding large and complex ventures, such as the *Aruch* of Nathan b. Yeḥiel: they are modest bricks for superb edifices. Last but not the least, they shed light on the very process of teaching and learning: glosses suggest that the Talmudic text was freely translated into natural Greek and perhaps even assessed vis-à-vis another legal tradition.

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<sup>16</sup> See Bowman 1985: 131–133, 255–262 and Ta-Shma 2005: vol. 3, 317–321.

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# A Hidden Hoard in a Synagogue or a Church?

*Avihai Shivtiel*

## 1 Introduction

The hundreds of thousands of fragments of the Cairo Genizah are an invaluable source of information on the Middle Ages, covering a wide range of areas and topics. Many of these fragments had attracted the attention of scores of scholars who, began working on them since collections were moved to Cambridge and to other centres around the world. Moreover, in addition to known and unknown works and official and private correspondence, which reflect daily life of communities as well as individuals, one may find in the Genizah anecdotes and tales of private experiences, which leave the reader with many unexplained enigmas about their source, their writers and the time and the occasion of their composition.

To this 'genre' belongs the fragment T-S NS 108.19, upon which I stumbled when my late colleague, Friedrich Niessen, and I were preparing the Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic catalogue (Shivtiel and Niessen, 2006). It is one leaf measuring 17 × 12.8 cm, written on paper in semi-cursive Hebrew script. The recto is a poem in Hebrew written by the Jewish Andalusian poet Solomon ibn Gabirol (fl. 11th century),<sup>1</sup> and above it the three ending lines of the text on verso. The verso contains information about a hoard of 'Roman' coins (*danānīr rūmiya*) found in a local synagogue or church (*kanīsa*) situated in al-Fayyūm, Egypt. 'Roman', i.e., from Rūm, generally refers to Byzantium throughout medieval Arabic sources (El Cheikh 2010), though it can be found in the Genizah, in the 12th century, with specific reference to Italy (Blau 2006, 267). Given the prevalence of Roman hoards in Egypt, a reference to ancient Rome remains a distinct possibility.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The poem was published by Brody and Schirmann (1974, 137–138 and 279).

<sup>2</sup> A huge number of Roman coins have been recovered from hoards in Egypt, for which see Christiansen (2004) and the sources cited in Faucher (2022).

## 2 Edition and Translation

2.1 *Verso—Text in Judaeo-Arabic*

1. אדא וצלת אלי אלפיום פאסל  
 2. ען קריה יקאל לה [א] אלכרבה  
 3. והי מן אעמאל אלפיום פאדא  
 4. צרת אליהא אסל ען כניסיה  
 5. אלקריה אלתי בהא והי מן  
 6. כארג אלקריה ומן עלאמתה [א]  
 7. הדה אלכניסה אן חדאהא  
 8. סדרה (?) ונכלה ופי חאיטהא  
 9. וסטה חגר מן אלבנא ופי הדא  
 10. אלחגר חפרה רצאק<sup>3</sup> קיס אלחגר  
 11. אל [י] כארג אלחאיט דראעין לא  
 12. גיר ואחפר פאנד תגד חגר  
 13. ובנא תחתה גרה נחאס ממלוה  
 14. דנאגיר רומיה צכה איצא  
 15. פי אלכרבה אנצר אלי אלחמאם  
 16. אלדי פיהא אנצר כלף צהרה

1. If you arrive at al-Fayyūm<sup>A</sup> ask<sup>B</sup> for
2. a village called al-Kharba
3. which belongs to the district of al-Fayyūm. When
4. you arrive there, ask about the synagogue/church<sup>C</sup> of
5. the village which is by it, as it is
6. outside the village. The characteristic feature
7. of this synagogue/church is that it is close to<sup>D</sup>
8. a lotus tree and a palm tree. In its wall
9. in the middle there is a stone brick,<sup>E</sup> and in this
10. stone is a cavity [coated] with lead (?). The measurement of the stone
11. to the outside of the wall is two cubits, not
12. more, and if you dig you will find a stone
13. and bricks. Beneath them is a copper pitcher full of
14. [minted]<sup>F</sup> ‘Roman’ dinars. Also
15. in al-Kharba, look at the bathhouse
16. which it has. Look behind it.<sup>G</sup>

3 Since the writer does not use diacritical dots for the transliteration, the word רצאק (Arabic (رضاض), meaning ‘broken’ (i.e. stones, gravel), may also be acceptable. See Hava (1915, 255).

## 2.2 *Recto—Top Margin*

(above the Hebrew poem, continuing the passage from the verso)

- .1 ובהא איצא אלכרבה ביר כארגהא  
 .2 גרבי אלבלד ענדה כום עליה חגארה  
 .3 תחת אלחגר ודיעה אן שא אללה

1. And outside al-Kharba there is also a well.
2. West of the town there is a heap with a large stone on it.
3. Under the stone is a stashed amount, God willing.

## 2.3 *Verso—Right Margin*

(text follows on immediately from two illegible lines in the top margin)

- .1 מסגד [?] לטיף מבני בטוב אצפר אנצר קבל  
 .2 פוק ראס אלחליה אלדי ללקבלה טוק קבל[?]

1. a beautiful mosque (?) built of bright yellow bricks, look before (?)
2. on top of the topmost ornament which belongs to the *qibla*, a ring before (?)

## 3 **Remarks on Translation**

- A. On al-Fayyūm district and town in the Middle Ages, and especially the Jewish community, see, for example, Strauss (1944, 31–32). Also, the most famous Jewish personality who was born in al-Fayyūm district—well-known from the Cairo Genizah—is Sa'adya Gaon (882–942), whose full name was Sa'adya b. Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (= of Fayyūm).
- B. The shortened form *isal* 'ask!', where the medial *hamza* (= glottal stop) is omitted, occurs in Classical Hebrew (Gesenius 1966, 80f.), Classical Arabic (Wright 1967, 1:77), and Judaeo-Arabic (Blau 1980, 83).
- C. The common Judaeo-Arabic words for 'synagogue' are בניסיה and בניס. See Friedman (2016, 373). *Lisān al-'Arab* notes that the word كنيسة is borrowed from كنيشت, meaning a Jewish synagogue, but does not say from which language, and quotes al-Jawhari who claims that it is a Christian church (Ibn Manzur 1956, 199). For the etymology of the word in Hebrew, see Klein (1987, 280). Most Classical Arabic dictionaries state that كنيسة refers to both Jewish and Christian temples of worship. However, in Modern Arabic, it only means a Christian church, while בניס denotes 'synagogue'.

It seems that the word כניסיה is unique to Judaeo-Arabic. Given the context in a Judaeo-Arabic text, it is likeliest that this word refers to a synagogue.

- D. א close to it', see Spiro (1895, 131).
- E. For חג'ר מן אלבנא as 'brick laying' see Hinds and Badawi (1986, 108).
- F. Although the text uses the word צכה, which one of its meanings is 'authenticated', 'approved', it is possible that the writer of the document meant the root סכך 'minted' i.e. of 'coins'. Both meanings may therefore apply. For the interchange of ס\צ in Judaeo-Arabic, see Blau (1980, 36–38).
- G. The spelling צהרה 'behind him/it' (lit. 'his back') may simply indicate an accidental omission of the diacritical point over צ, although the common transcription of the word in Judaeo-Arabic would have been טהרה with a diacritical point over ט. For the different transcriptions of ص ض ظ in Judaeo-Arabic, see Blau (1980, 38–39).

#### 4 Conclusion

The document provides detailed information for finding a hoard of Roman coins which is hidden inside a place of worship in Fayyum in Egypt. However, the document does not provide any information about its writer or the date it was written. It also does not say whether the hoard was found inside a synagogue or church, although the fact that it is in Judaeo-Arabic suggests that it was written by a Jew, and therefore the place of worship was probably a synagogue. Moreover, even though the document does not clearly indicate that the type of metal used, the word צכה may suggest that they were gold coins (i.e. Roman aurei). Various sources confirm that Fayyum was, in the Middle Ages, a centre of the three monotheistic religions in which Muslims, Jews and Christians co-existed, and they all had mosques, synagogues, and churches. Furthermore, excavations in the site of the ancient city of Philadelphia, today's el-Kharba el-Kebir—perhaps the same place mentioned in our text—have unearthed papyri and a huge number of Roman coins.<sup>4</sup>

Other unsolved questions are the two lines on the margin, which do not seem to belong with our document, but instead to a different one. Another enigma is whether the writer of this document had seen the hoard with their own eyes, or if the detailed information about the exact location of the treas-

4 See the place identification "TM Geo 1760" in the Trismegistos database ([www.trismegistos.org/place/1760](http://www.trismegistos.org/place/1760); accessed 10 January 2024).

ובהא אי נח לפיבה ביר טאלגהא  
 אדעו לאל שנה כוס פסה חגזיה  
 תחת ל חנה וצויה תשע  
 T-S NS 108.19 לשעה הקטן  
 תחלת החפזה וכאשית העינוה  
 ליל הרעה ויוצה היוצורים ו  
 ונמשון בתולה ואחיהת כולתכלה  
 מרוגס בתולה ומשכיל אן ועיס  
 אשר לוי יתרה במשון גם נה  
 ואיפה ושתיה בשבת כנצרים  
 אכלשת בעני להבול אולק צר  
 אבצבים צר ועשות כשקרים  
 אשר גאז קדם והכלם ה נדום  
 ועד לאעם אדם ולאי צר הרים  
 ושם ארבע ידות נכונות ועונות  
 נלמה סודות צפונם וסודות

FIGURE 8.1 T-S NS 108.19 recto

ure was just a rumour that they had never confirmed. Finally, the formula with which the writer chose to conclude this document, *אן שא אללה*, is common in both Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic with the meaning 'God willing' or 'hopefully'. Just as for the writer of this document, the truth about its contents is incomplete, but may be revealed in the future, *inshallah*.

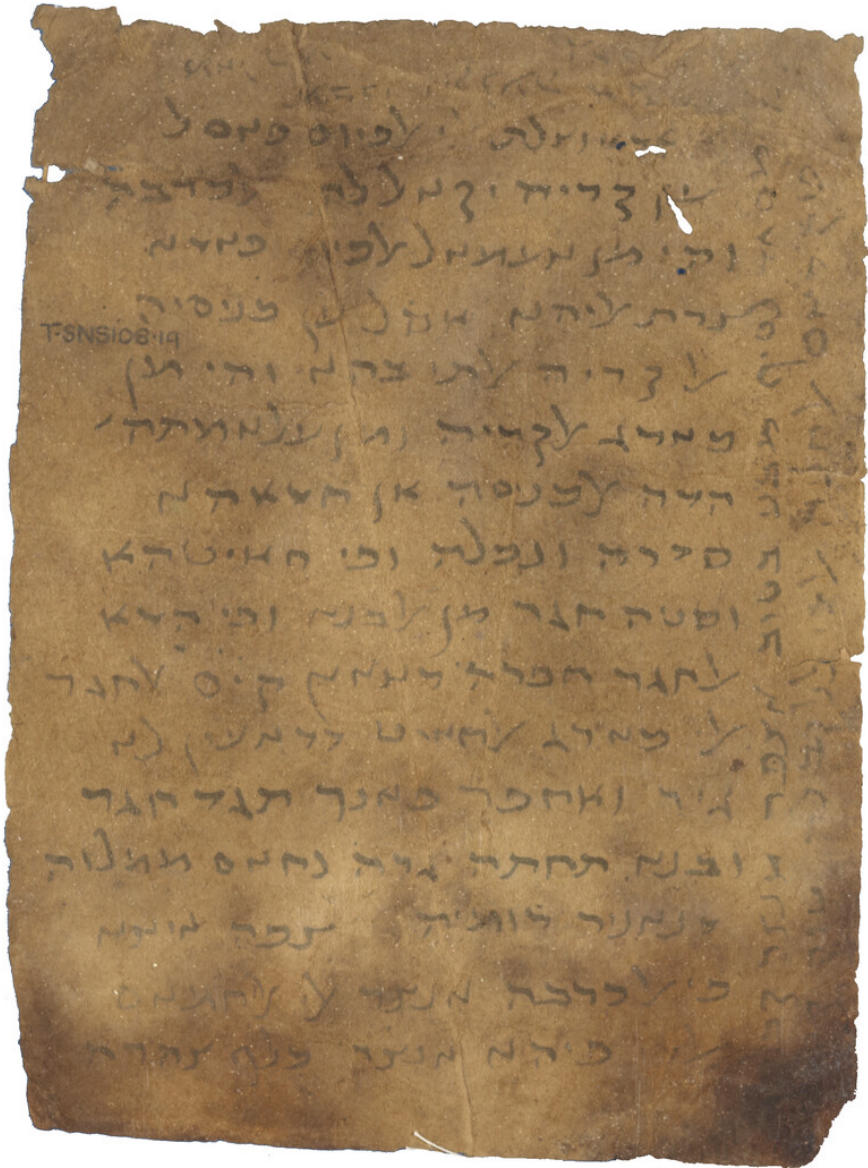


FIGURE 8.2 T-S NS 108.19 verso

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# Fragments of a Hitherto Unknown Judaeo-Arabic Transcription of Ibn al-Tilmīd's *Aqrābādīn* Found in the Cairo Genizah

*Leigh Chipman*

## 1 Introduction

This article will present two fragments of a hitherto unknown Judaeo-Arabic transcription of Ibn al-Tilmīd's *Aqrābādīn* found in the Cairo Genizah. Apart from the basic importance of every identification of previously anonymous Genizah fragments, this identification is significant in that it serves as further evidence of the multi-confessional character of Islamicate medicine, on the one hand, and of their professionalism in keeping up to date with the latest publications on the part of Cairo's Jewish medical community, on the other.

Amīn al-Dawlah Abū al-Ḥasan Hibatallāh b. Ṣaʿīd b. Ibrāhīm b. Salāma (c. 466–560AH/1074–1165CE), known as Ibn al-Tilmīd, was a Nestorian Christian physician who worked at the ʿAḍudī hospital in Baghdad. Born into a family of physicians, he was trained in medicine and other branches of learning, achieving a skilled command of both Syriac and Arabic. As a young man, he travelled in Iran, apparently treating the Seljuk sultan Sanjar b. Malikšāh in Marw in Ḳurāsān before returning to Baghdad and setting up practice adjacent to the Niẓāmiyyah madrasah. There he treated patients and lectured on medicine, his reputation eventually causing him to be appointed the chief physician of the ʿAḍudī hospital, as well as court physician to the caliph al-Mustaḍīʿ (reigned 566–575AH/1170–1180CE). A contemporary writer referred to him as ‘the Hippocrates of his time and the Galen of his day’. As well as his medical career, Ibn al-Tilmīd appears to have written poetry and was also an important member of the Christian community of Baghdad, of which he served for some time as head. He died in 560AH/1165CE, having composed several medical works, among them a pharmacopoeia for the use of the ʿAḍudī hospital.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ullmann (1970, 163); Kahl (2007, 7–13).



This pharmacopoeia, known usually as *Aqrabādīn Ibn al-Tilmīd*, had not yet been printed during the period I was working at the Genizah Research Unit (GRU) (2003–2006 CE). As this pharmacopoeia was an important source for another work, *Minhāj al-dukkān* (‘The Rule for the Pharmacy’) by al-Kūhīn al-‘Aṭṭār—the subject of my dissertation, on which I was working at the time—I had at my disposal copies of a number of manuscripts of the text.<sup>2</sup> This enabled the identification of two fragments in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection at Cambridge University Library (CUL), CUL T-S Ar.43.98 and CUL T-S NS 34.16, as parts of a hitherto unknown manuscript of *Aqrabādīn Ibn al-Tilmīd* in Judaeo-Arabic, mentioned neither by Steinschneider nor by Ullmann. Both fragments had been previously identified by Isaacs as pharmacopoeias,<sup>3</sup> without stating which one. Thanks to the existence of a scientific edition,<sup>4</sup> to which the existing text of the fragments can be compared, it is now possible to present both fragments here in their entirety.

## 2 Editions and Translations

The transcriptions and translations below will follow Kahl’s edition, with adaptations. Words missing in the fragments will appear within [ ], while rubbed and erased words will appear within { }. Kahl’s numbering of the recipes appears within ( ). // ... // indicates words appearing above the numbered line.

### 2.1 CUL T-S Ar.43.98

Description from Isaacs-Baker (1994, 39, no. 496):

Pharmacopoeia.

Judaeo-Arabic; Oriental semi-cursive script; Paper; 2 leaves (1 bifolium); stained and rubbed; 16.2 × 24.7; 18 lines.

Headings for what are numbered chapters 2–3; recipes for pills, pastilles, and pastes; among diseases treated are severe coughing associated with vomiting in children, tinea of the scalp and splenic enlargement.

2 The MSS were as follows: London, British Library Or. 8293 (considered to be an autograph copy); Oxford, Bodleian Marsh. 537; London, Wellcome Library WMS Or. 9.

3 Isaacs-Baker (1994), 39, no. 496, and 54, no. 700.

4 Kahl (2007). I would like to thank my friend and colleague Dr Oliver Kahl of Marburg University, for kindly giving me a copy of this book.



FIGURE 9.1 T-S Ar.43.98 recto



FIGURE 9.2 T-S Ar.43.98 verso

## 2.1.1 Text

2.1.1.1 *F. 1r (Left)*

1. (42) זאג ומלח מח{ר} קיז וכברית ותראב אלזיבק ועפץ וערוק
2. ומרדאסנג מן כל ואחד גזו ידק וינכל ויעגן במא ויקרץ
3. כל קרץ תלתה דראהם ויגפף ויסתעמל בעד אן יחד
4. {מו}צע {אלס}עפה ויטלי עליה כל כמר ועסל ומלח {ואשנאן אכצר}
5. (43) קרץ ללסעפה אלרטבה
6. אספידאג אלרצאץ וקנביל וקרץ ו גלנאר
7. מן כל ואחד נצף רטל {כזף אלתנור רטל ידק}
8. ויעגן בדהן ורד וכל כמר {ויס}תע{מל}
9. (44) קרץ ללסעפה אליבאסה
10. גלנאר וערוק אלצבאגין ומרדאסנג {מן כל} ואחד
11. גזו ראתינג ומר ועדס ומאמיראן זראונד טויל
12. מן כל ואחד נצף גזו ידק ויעגן בכל חמר ויסתעמל
13. (45) קרץ ללמטחול{ין}
14. עצארה גאפת מתקל אירסא מתקאלין קשור
15. אצל אלכבר ארבעה מתאקיל לב בזר אלקתא ובטיד
16. מן כל ואחד כמס מתאקיל בזר הנדבא וכשות מן
17. כל ואחד תלתה דראהם אניסון בזר כרפס בזר
18. ראזינג מן כל ואחד דרהמין לז מר תלתה

2.1.1.2 *F. 2v (Right)*

1. אסקולופנדריון כמסה // דראהם // ידק ויעגן במא אלהינדבא
2. אלמרה או בכל קד אנקע פיה אשק ויקרץ מן א
3. מת'קאל (46) וללסחאל אלצלב אסקולופנדריון יטבד פי שראב
4. {ויוצפי} וישרב עלי אלריק איאמא ויחלה אלסצמיד - - -
5. באל{אשק ואלכל כאלטין} (47) וכדלק בזר אלפנגנכשת וקשור
6. אצל [אלכבר] מן כל ואחד כמסה דראהם ינקע פי כל
7. ויגפף? {וידק ויוכד מן אלג'מלה} תלאתה דראהם פי כל
8. יום בסכנן{גבין ויבריה פי אסבוע}
9. אלבאב תאני
10. פי אלחבוב ואלאיארגאת
11. (48) צפה חב
12. לסעאל אלצביאן אלדי לח עליהם קי מע שדה סעאלהם
13. אפיון דרהם נשא צמג ערבי ורב אלסוס וכשכאש
14. אביץ מן כל ואחד דרהם ידק ויעגן בלעאב אלכזר
15. קטזנא ויחבב כאלפלפל ויצע פי אלפס ואחדה ענד
16. אלנוס ולא יקצד בלעהא
17. (49) חב ללסעאל אלמארסתאני

2.1.1.3 *F. iv (Left)*

1. חדית ואהילג אסוד מן כל ואחד ארבעה דראהם
2. מלח הנדי בור אלפגל סקמוניא מן כל ואחד תלתה
3. דרא' אניסון ובזר כרפס וראזינאג מן כל ואחד
4. דרהמין יעגן במא ורק אלפגל אלני אלשרבה מן {דרהמין}
5. אלי מתקאל{ין} : (72) צפה בנאדק
6. קויה אלדראר בזר כרפס ומו פו {דוקו}
7. ופטרסאליון ואבהל אסארון {נאנכואה בזר ראזיאנג}
8. וסנבל ולוז מר מן כל ואחד עשרין דרה' בזר
9. בטיך מקשור עשרה דרה' אשק תלתה דראהם
10. יחל אלשאק פי שראב ויעגן ויבנדק שרבה תלת
11. בנאדק או כמסה (73) צפה
12. <דוא> לחב אלקרע ואלדידאן אלצגיר<sup>5</sup> סרחס
13. וברנג וקנביל ותרבד ותרמס ומר אגזא סוא אלשרבה
14. ארבעה דראהם במא חאר
15. (74) צפה דוא אלמסק
16. אלחלו ללכפקאן ואמראן אלסודא ועסר אלנפס ואל
17. אלצרע ואלפאלג' ואללקוה ואלרבע יוכד זנרבאד ודרונג
18. מן {כל ואחד} דרהם לולו צגאר וכהרבא ובסד וחריר

2.1.1.4 *F. 2r (Right)*

1. כאם מחרק מן כל ואחד דרהם //ונצף// בהמן אחרמ ובהמן
2. אביץ' וסאדג הנדי וסנבל וקאקלה וקרנפל וגנדבאסתר
3. ואשנה מן כל ואחד נצף דרהם זנגביל דאר פלפל מן כל
4. ואחד ארבעה דואניק מסק דאנק ונצף ידק אלדויה
5. {ותנ} כל בחריר ותעגן בעסל כאם שהד לם יצבה נאר
6. {לל}ואחדה תלאת אגזא? עסלא ורפע פי אנא ויסתעמל
7. בעד {שהרין אלשרבה מנה אלחמסה} בשראב ריחאני
8. (75) {חב נאפע}
9. מן אכתר א{צנאף} אלקולנג שחם חנטל סקמוניא מן
10. כל ואחד דרהמאן צבר תלתה דראהם בורק מקל
11. מן כל ואחד דרהם יחבב אלשרבה מן דרהם {אלי} מתקאל
12. ומן אלמעגונאת
13. אלנאפעה אלתמרי פי חל אלקולנג ואלסהרבאזאן (!! )ופי
14. תסכין וגעה אלפלוניא אלרומי ואלפארסי זעם ואלמשהור
15. ענד גירה פי דלק אלרומי כאצה ואיארג פיקרא
16. אקוא אלמנפעה פי תסכין גתיאן אלקולנגיין
17. אלבאב אל ג

5 Kahl: *al-kibār*.

## 2.1.2 Translation

2.1.2.1 *F. 1r (Left)*

[A pastille for the treatment of chronic scabies]

1. (42) Burnt vitriol and burnt salt, sulphur, mercury dust, oak galls, turmeric,
2. and litharge one part of each. (This) is pounded, strained, kneaded with water, formed into pastilles
3. of three dirhams<sup>6</sup> each, dried, and used after scratching
4. the scabious area and rubbing onto it wine vinegar, honey, salt, and green lye
5. (43) A pastille for (the treatment of) moist scabies
6. Ceruse, kamala, babul, tabasheer, and pomegranate flowers
7. half a *raṭl*<sup>7</sup> of each; potsherds one *raṭl*. (This) is pounded,
8. strained, kneaded with rose oil and wine vinegar, and used.
9. (44) A pastille for (the treatment of) dry scabies
10. Pomegranate flowers, turmeric, and litharge, of each one
11. Part; pine resin, myrrh, lentils,<sup>8</sup> greater celandine, and 'long' birthwort
12. half a part of each. (This) is pounded, kneaded with wine vinegar, and used.
13. (45) A pastille for one who suffers<sup>9</sup> from spleen disease<sup>10</sup>
14. Agrimony sap, two *mitqāls*;<sup>11</sup> water flag, two *mitqāls*; the peels
15. of the caper root four *mitqāls*; the pulp of serpent melon seeds and musk melon seeds,
16. five *mitqāls* of each; endive seeds and flax dodder, of
17. each three *mitqāls*; aniseed, celery seeds, and fennel
18. seeds, two dirhams of each; bitter almonds three (dirhams);

2.1.2.2 *F. 2v (Right)*

1. rusty back fern, five dirhams. (This) is pounded, kneaded with bitter endive-water
2. or with vinegar in which had been soaked ammoniacum, and formed into pastilles of one

6 1 *dirham* = 3.125 g (all metric equivalents of the weights used here are taken from the list in Kahl 2007, 33).

7 1 *raṭl* = ~406 g.

8 Kahl: Bitter lentils, '*adas mirr*'.

9 Kahl: those who suffer, *maḥḥūlīn*

10 The word *lahu*, "his," i.e. invented by Ibn al-Tilmīd, found here in Kahl's edition, is missing.

11 1 *mitqāl* = 4.46 g.

3. *mitqāl* (46) And for (the treatment of) the indurated spleen, rusty back fern is cooked in wine,
4. strained off, and drunk on an empty stomach for a few days; the application of a cataplasm ...
5. ammoniacum and vinegar. (47) And (again) for that, agnus castus seeds and the peels of
6. the caper root, five dirhams of each. (This) is soaked in vinegar,
7. dried, pounded, and three dirhams from the lot are taken every
8. day with oxymel beverage to cure the spleen within a week.
9. Chapter Two
10. On Pills and Hierata
11. (48) Recipe for a pill
12. for (the treatment of) the cough in children who, besides heavy coughing, are (also) troubled by vomiting.
13. Opium one dirham; starch, gum-arabic, liquorice rob, and light-
14. coloured poppy, one dirham of each. (This) is pounded, kneaded with maceration,
15. of fleawort, formed into pills similar to peppercorns, and one (of these) is put in the mouth at
16. bedtime, not to be swallowed.
17. (49) A hospital pill for (the treatment of) coughing

2.1.2.3 *F. iv (Left)*

1. fresh dodder and black myrobalan, four dirhams of each;
2. Indian salt, radish seeds, and scammony, of each three
3. dirhams; anise, celery seeds, and fennel, of each
4. two dirhams. (This) is kneaded with the water of young radish leaves, (and) the dose is two dirhams
5. to two *mitqāls* (of it). (72) Recipe for 'hazelnuts'
6. which strongly promote urination. Celery seeds, spignel, valerian, carrot,
7. parsley, savin, asarabacca, visnaga, fennel seeds,
8. Indian spikenard, and bitter almonds twenty dirhams of each;
9. peeled musk melon seeds ten dirhams; ammoniacum three dirhams.
10. The ammoniacum is dissolved in wine, and (the other ingredients) are kneaded with it. This is formed into 'hazelnuts', (and) a dose is three
11. 'hazelnuts' or five (73) Recipe for (the treatment of)
12. flukes and small worms. Male fern,
13. embelia, kamala, turpeth, lupine, and myrrh (in) equal (parts). The dose is
14. four dirhams (of it) with hot water.

15. (74) Recipe for the sweet musk
16. remedy, for (the treatment of) palpitations, black-bilious diseases, difficulty in breathing,
17. epilepsy, hemiplegia, facial paralysis, and quartan. Take zerumbet and great leopard's bane
18. one dirham of each; small pearls, amber, red coral, and burnt

2.1.2.4 *F. 2r (Right)*

1. raw silk one and a half dirhams of each; red sea lavender, white
2. sea lavender, Indian laurel, Indian spike-nard, grains of paradise, clove, castoreum,
3. and usnea half a dirham of each; ginger and long pepper, of each
4. four *dāniqs*;<sup>12</sup> musk one and a half *dāniqs*. The ingredients are pounded,
5. strained through a cloth of silk, and kneaded with raw honeycombs undisturbed by fire
6. (in a ratio of) three parts of honey to one (part of ingredients). (This) is stored in a vessel, and used
7. after two months. The dose is (an amount similar to) a chickpea from it with aromatic wine
8. (75) A pill which is useful
9. against most kinds of colic. The pulp of colocynth and scammony, of
10. each two dirhams; aloe three dirhams; borax and bdellium mukul
11. one dirham of each. (This) is formed into pills. The dose is one dirham to one *mitqāl*.
12. Among the electuaries
13. which prove useful in resolving colic are the (ones called) 'datish'<sup>13</sup> and *šahriyārān*<sup>14</sup> and with regard
14. to easing colical pain, the (one called) Greek *filūniyā*<sup>15</sup> and, it is said, (also) the Persian *filūniyā*<sup>16</sup>—but particularly renowned
15. compared to the other for this (effect) is the Greek, and *hiera picra*<sup>17</sup>
16. is of great benefit in settling nausea in those who suffer from colic.
17. Chapter Three

12 1 *dāniq* = 0.52–0.74 g.

13 See Kahl (2007), recipe 145.

14 This is a type of stomachic. See Kahl (2007, 201, n. 55) for comparanda and etymology.

15 *Philonium romanum*; see Kahl (2007), recipe 119 for an example; for the etymology, see Kahl (2007, 215, n. 89).

16 *Philonium persicum*; see Kahl (2007), recipe 120 for an example; for the etymology, see Kahl (2007, 216, n. 90).

17 Literally, 'divine bitter'. See Kahl (2007), recipe 56 for an example; for the etymology, see Kahl (2007, 195, n. 40).



FIGURE 9.3 T-S NS 34.16 recto

### 2.1.3 Notes

- F. 2r, l. 13 is garbled, and should read אלנאפעה פי חל אלקולנג אלתמרי ואלסהרבאזאן. The translation follows this amended form.
- The same line shows evidence of copying from an Arabic-script original: Kahl has شهریاران in f. 2r, l. 13, which should be transliterated شهرياران. The Hebrew in the fragment transliterates سهر بازان instead, indicating a misreading (or lack) of diacritical points in the source manuscript.

### 2.2 CULT-S NS 34.16

Description from Isaacs-Baker (1994, 54, no. 700):

Pharmacopoeia.

Judaeo-Arabic; Oriental semi-cursive script; Paper; 1 leaf; mutilated, stained, and rubbed; 12 × 12.5; 16 lines.





FIGURE 9.4 T-S NS 34.16 verso

*Recto*: preparation of a rob and an electuary containing rose, fenugreek, linseed, almond, starch of wheat and gum Arabic.

*Verso*: Recipes for three electuaries.

2.2.1 Text

2.2.1.1 *Recto*

1. [170] לעוק רב אלסוס
2. ללפצ'ול אללזג'ה [פי] אלצדר רב אלסוס {וכתי'רא אוקיה
3. לזו מקשר מן אלקשרין וראזיאנג אגזא סוא ידק מא
4. ידק מנהא וינקע מא ינקע ויעגן בעסל מנזוע אלגרוה
5. ויסתעמל בטביך אלזופא כאלבנדקה
6. [171] ענב ללרבו

7. בזר אלראזיאנג [ח'מסה דראהם סא] ליוס דרהמאן  
 8. {תין שאהנגיר ח' מס עשרה // חבה// עדי יטבך דלך פי [מנא] סלאפה ענב  
 9. ענב מע נצף רטל מן סכר {כוזי} חתי יבקי אלנצף ויצפי  
 10. ויצ'אף אליה רב אלסוס מסחוקא עשרה דראהם ויקום  
 11. [172] ללסעאל  
 12. {אלמזמן} אלבארד אלעליט' אלמאדה יוכל אתין לרב אלג'וז  
 13. {ויתחד} לעוק מן עסל זעתי [ועסל לבנא ופודנג וצמג בטם]  
 14. [173] צפה לעוק  
 15. אתין לאצחאב אלרבו תין ובר[שיאושאן פותנג' יטבך]  
 16. {אלתין} ויוכד עסלה פיקום וי[צאף ...]

2.2.1.2 *Verso*

1. [174] רב אל[מ]ורדאנג // והו חב אללאס // לאסתטלאק  
 2. {אלבטן ואלקיא} אלדריע יוכד מן אלטלא אללאס [וד] {אלעתיק אלשחין}  
 3. ארבעה {דואריק} ומן אלמורדאנג אלנצ'יג אללאס [וד] סתה  
 4. אר[טאל ונצף יציב עליה] דלך אלטלא פי אגאנה כט'רא  
 5. יתרך סתה איאם פיעתצר פיחרג מאוה' ענד תצפיתיה  
 6. {פי אל}טלא פיצייר פי אנא מן אניא אלטלא פיסתעמל  
 7. [175] צפה  
 8. רב אלורדאנג אלסאדג  
 9. ללדס ואלעראס ואלסעאל יעתצר מא אלורדאנג ויטבך  
 10. חתי ידהב דון אלנצף אלשרבה מ[לעק]ה ואחדה  
 11. [177] לעוק אלחלבה  
 12. אלנאפע מן אלסעאל בזר כתאן {חמסה} עשר דרהמא  
 13. [חלבה שאמיה ולוז חלו] מקשר מן כל ואחד ארבעה  
 14. [דראהם כתי'רא ואצל אלס]וס מחכוך ולוז אלצנובר מקשר  
 15. [ולוז מר מקשר ונשא]סתג אלחנטה' וצמג ערבי מן  
 16. [כל ואחד דרהמין תגמע] אלאדויה ויסחק מא יחתאג' ...

## 2.2.2 Translation

2.2.2.1 *Recto*

1. (170) The liquorice rob lohoch
2. for (the treatment of) viscid residues in the chest. Liquorice rob and tragacanth one *'ūqīyah*,<sup>18</sup>
3. peeled almonds and fennel in equal parts. Pound what
4. can be pounded, soak what can be soaked, knead (all that) with clarified honey,

18 *'ūqīyah* = ~33g.

5. and use (from it an amount) similar to a hazelnut with the hyssop decoction.
6. (171) A grape [lohoch] for (the treatment of) asthma
7. Fennel seeds five dirhams; moon carrot two dirhams;
8. 'king' figs<sup>19</sup> fifteen fruits in number. Cook this in one *mann*<sup>20</sup> (of) the finest matured grape wine
9. together with half a *ratl* of Kuzistanī sugar<sup>21</sup> until one half remains, strain it,
10. add to it ten dirhams (of coagulated and then) ground liquorice rob, and let (that) gain consistency.
11. (172) For (the treatment of) coughing,
12. cold, tough-mattered, and chronic. Eat figs with walnut kernels,
13. and prepare a lohoch from *za'tar* honey,<sup>22</sup> liquid storax, pennyroyal, and turpentine.
14. (173) Recipe for
15. the fig lohoch for those who suffer from asthma. Fig, maidenhair, and pennyroyal. Cook
16. the figs, take their syrup, let it gain consistency, and add ...

#### 2.2.2.2 *Verso*

1. (174) The *murdānaj* or 'myrtle seed' rob for (the treatment of) abdominal disorder and torrential vomiting. Take from thick black aged *tilā* wine
2. four jugfuls and from ripe black myrtle seeds six
3. and a half *ratl*, pour this wine over the seeds into a green trough,
4. and leave (that) for six days; (then) press it and extract the juice (of the seeds) by straining the wine.
5. (This) is put into one of the wine vessels, and used.<sup>23</sup>
6. (175) Recipe for
7. the *murdānaj* only (rob)
8. for (the treatment of) an (increased) afflux of blood, ulcerations, and the cough. Express the juice of myrtle seeds, and cook it
9. until more than one half (of it) is gone. The dose is a single spoonful (of it).

19 *Šāhānjir* figs are a specific type, considered very tasty. See Kahl (2007, 232, n. 125) for the etymology.

20 1 *mann* = ~816 g.

21 This region of Iran was famous for its sugar plantations on the Middle Ages. See Kahl (2007, 216, n. 93) and references there.

22 Honey derived from, or flavoured by, the plant savory (*Satureja* spp.).

23 Kahl adds: 'after six months'.

11. (177) The fenugreek lohoch
12. which is useful against the cough. Linseed fifteen dirhams;
13. Syrian fenugreek and peeled sweet almonds, of each four
14. dirhams; tragacanth, scraped liquorice root, peeled pine nuts,
15. peeled bitter almonds, wheat starch, and gum-arabic, of
16. each two dirhams. Bring the ingredients together, grind what needs ...

### 2.2.3 Notes

- The verso and recto of this fragment are reversed in the online presentation (see <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-NS-00034-00016/1>).
- The differences between the text of this fragment and that of Kahl's edition suggest that the Genizah MS may be related to Kahl's MS c. This manuscript—MS A 31/1, ff. 1b–66b—is held in Bethesda MD, at the United States National Library of Medicine, and is dated from the copyist's colophon to 902AH/1496CE. Its leaves are numbered in Coptic numerals, which may indicate an Egyptian provenance, strengthening the hypothesis of a connection.<sup>24</sup>
- Recipe 176 in Kahl's edition of the *Aqrabādīn*, for a pomegranate rob, is missing from the fragment.
- L. 12 of the recto contains dietary advice before the recipe. This is unusual, dietary advice tending to appear as part of the dosage at the end of recipes and prescriptions.<sup>25</sup>
- The verso contains a line of Arabic-script text in the top margin, in a different ink. I was not able to decipher its contents.

## 3 Discussion

Both fragments come from the first half of the text of *Aqrabādīn Ibn al-Tilmīd*, which comprises twenty chapters and a total of 424 recipes in Kahl's edition, but not from its very beginning. CUL T-S NS 34.16 is in considerably worse condition than CUL T-S Ar.43.98, with the bottom torn away such that the last few lines of CUL T-S NS 34.16 are partially or completely lost, in addition to many more words being rubbed out than in CUL T-S Ar.43.98. Interestingly, to my eye the two fragments seem to come from the same manuscript, but the Joins Suggestions function at the Friedberg Genizah Project website did not suggest

<sup>24</sup> But see the provenance in Savage-Smith's description (online), which returns us to Iraq.

<sup>25</sup> See Lev and Chipman (2012, 154).

either fragment as a possible match for the other. The handwriting in both fragments is very similar, despite the different levels and types of damage in each fragment. Furthermore, if CUL T-S NS 34.16's lower margins were to be reconstructed, the size of a single leaf would be much the same.<sup>26</sup>

The first recipes in CUL T-S Ar. 43.98 (nos. 42–44) are for pastilles that treat scabies and their *materia medica* includes a higher proportion of inorganic substances, as is common for external applications. As soon as the text continues to internal applications, i.e. pastilles for the treatment of spleen diseases (recipes nos. 45–47) and then pills against coughing (recipes nos. 48–49), the *materia medica* becomes almost entirely plant-based; again, as is common in the treatment of these ailments.<sup>27</sup> Moving to the second half of the bifolium, we remain in the same 'Chapter Two on Pills and Hierata', and find ourselves in the middle of recipe no. 71, which deals with jaundice. The following recipes (nos. 72–75) deal with a variety of illnesses, and the connection between them seems to be fairly random. In his edition, Kahl gives no opinion on the internal structure within the individual chapters, and it would appear that there is no set format, neither alphabetical nor topical, for the arrangement of recipes in a particular order. This is true of other pharmacopoeias, too, in my experience.<sup>28</sup>

The second folio of CUL T-S Ar. 43.98 ends with the beginning of the heading for Chapter Three, which deals with powders, while the second fragment, CUL T-S NS 34.16, jumps much further ahead, to 'Chapter Six on Lohochs and Robs', and contains six recipes for lohochs (nos. 170–177, breaking off in the middle of the last; as noted above, recipe no. 176 is missing). Lohochs are a medicament of a consistency between electuaries and syrups, usually licked (Ar.: *la'iqa*) from a spoon (Ar.: *mil'aqah*), hence their name (Ar.: *la'ūq*) which entered European languages through medieval translations from Arabic. With the exception of recipe no. 174, which treats gastric problems, all the lohochs treat the respiratory system: colds, coughs, and asthma. This is yet another example of the importance of the treatment of cough among the Cairo Genizah people,<sup>29</sup> as seven of the total nineteen recipes here treat varieties of coughs. The *materia*

26 I thank Dr Magdalen M. Connolly for confirming this identification, specifying the consistent handwriting and folio size (pers. comm., March 2023).

27 For detailed information on the individual ingredients of the recipes and their typical uses in the Genizah, the relevant entries in Lev and Amar (2008) may be consulted.

28 See, e.g., the chapter on pills (*aqrāṣ*) in Ibn Abī al-Bayān's *al-Dustūr al-bīmāristānī*: Sbath (1932–1933, 36–41); or the chapter on electuaries (*ma'jūnāt*) in al-Kūhīn al-'Aṭṭār's *Mūnhāj al-dukkān* (1992, 65–78).

29 Cf. Lev and Chipman (2012, 152).

*medica* suggested in these recipes is consistent with the findings of an earlier study on the most common plants used for treating cough.<sup>30</sup>

Apart from the identification of yet more Genizah fragments, what is the significance of finding parts of *Aqrabādīn Ibn al-Tilmīd* among the scraps of paper brought to Cambridge from Cairo by Solomon Schechter? First of all, this is another book to add to the known medical library of the Jews of Cairo. Ibn al-Tilmīd does not appear in the index of Allony's book on booklists from the Cairo Genizah,<sup>31</sup> so this was not a book that researchers were expecting to find, and its appearance enriches the pharmacological bookshelf of that library. This particular book is interesting for a number of reasons: given that the majority of pre-Expulsion documentary Genizah fragments are considered to date between 950–1250 CE, this is quite a late work, as its author lived in the twelfth century CE. Moreover, unlike the majority of fragments of pharmacopoeias identified in the Cairo Genizah hitherto,<sup>32</sup> Ibn al-Tilmīd's pharmacopoeia is not the work of a member of the Genizah community, as he was neither Jewish nor a resident of al-Fuṣṭāṭ/Cairo—but a Nestorian Christian of faraway Baghdad. In this sense, these fragments are similar to the fragments of Sābūr b. Sāhl's *Aqrabādīn al-ṣaḡīr* identified by Efraim Lev and me in the Cambridge Cairo Genizah Collections.<sup>33</sup> Following the Arabic bio-bibliographical tradition, it appears that from the time of its publication, sometime in the 1130s CE, Ibn al-Tilmīd's *Aqrabādīn* more or less replaced that of Sābūr b. Sahl (d. 255 AH/869 CE), after some 300 years in which the latter had been preeminent.<sup>34</sup> Among the evidence for this is the requirement, in a number of *ḥisbah* manuals (manuals instructing the inspectors of the marketplaces how best to carry out their duties) of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE, that the syrups for sale be prepared in accordance with the instructions appearing in the books of Sābūr b. Sahl and Ibn al-Tilmīd.<sup>35</sup>

These fragments are evidence that the practitioners of the Cairo Genizah community—pharmacists and physicians—kept up to date with the latest works in their field. This is contrary the earlier argument, based on the identification of CUL Or. 1080 1.6 as a fragment of Sābūr b. Sahl's *Aqrabādīn al-ṣaḡīr*, that

30 See Chipman (2002).

31 Allony (2006).

32 See Chipman and Lev (2006)—1 fragment, Lev et al. (2008)—11 fragments.

33 Six fragments were identified, of which one (CUL Or. 1081 1.6; in Judaeo-Arabic) was published in Lev and Chipman (2007), and another two (CUL T-S Ar. 40.5, Ar. 41.9; in Arabic script) were published in Chipman and Lev (2008).

34 Kahl (2007, 5).

35 See Chipman (2010, 158, n. 70) and references there.

the community continued using the latter work even after it had been superseded.<sup>36</sup> This claim now seems to have been premature, and rather it should be said that both pharmacopoeias continued in use in tandem; indeed, the fact that both are cited in *Minhāj al-dukkān* may also be considered evidence of this. Moreover, up to now, to the best of my knowledge, no manuscript in Judaeo-Arabic of Ibn al-Tilmīd's *Aqrabāḍīn* has been found. It should be recalled that the transliteration of an Arabic text into Hebrew letters was no mean feat, requiring knowledge of both alphabets rather than the scribe simply copying the text before him (and let us not forget that even 'just' copying a manuscript was an expensive undertaking that required time and effort). The existence of a Judaeo-Arabic version of a text is evidence for that book's popularity among a Jewish readership, which was fluent in Arabic but preferred reading in Hebrew letters—and this seems to describe the community of practitioners of medicine and pharmacy among the Cairo Genizah people.

Kahl's earliest manuscript, MS London, Wellcome Library Or. 9/4, was dated by Iskander<sup>37</sup> to 597AH/1200CE; and while we have no evidence that Ibn al-Tilmīd travelled west of Iraq (as noted above, he apparently spent extensive time in Iran), his pupils are known to have moved after his death from Baghdad to Damascus.<sup>38</sup> The appearance of the Baghdadi Christian Ibn al-Tilmīd's *Aqrabāḍīn* in the Cairo Genizah, in a script that makes it clear that his readers were Jews, serves as further evidence not only for the importance and impact of this individual work, but also for the multi-national and multi-confessional character of medicine and pharmacy in the 'Mediterranean society' and beyond of the medieval Islamic world.

### Acknowledgments

The initial work on this material—identifying the fragments and a preliminary transcription of CUL T-s Ar.43.98—was carried out within the framework of working at the GRU as research assistant to Prof. Efraim Lev of Haifa University during 2003–2006. I thank Efraim for inviting me to join him, and Prof. Stefan Reif for agreeing to employ me. Together, Efraim and I scrutinised all the fragments listed in Isaacs-Baker (1994) and added many more, with the aim of achieving a broader and deeper picture of the medical world of

36 Lev and Chipman (2007).

37 Iskander (1967, 78), cited in Kahl (2007, 20).

38 Kahl (2007, 13).

the Cairo Genizah people—an aim that has continued to animate Efraim's research agenda. Unlike him, I largely set aside work on this material once the culminating project of 'the prescription book' (Lev and Chipman [2012]) was completed, and I am grateful to the GRU50 project team (Nick Posegay, Magdalen M. Conolly, Ben Outhwaite) for providing me with the opportunity to return to this topic.

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# An Arabic Document of Sale from Medieval Cairo Preserved in the Firkovitch Collection

*Geoffrey Khan*

## 1 Introduction

I was privileged to be able to work in the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit between 1983 and 1993.<sup>1</sup> When trawling through the many manuscript treasures of the Taylor-Schechter collection, I was particularly struck by the relatively large number of Arabic documents in Arabic script, the majority of which had not been published at that time. I collected together a corpus of these documents and published them in 1993 in the volume *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in Cambridge Genizah Collections* (henceforth ALAD).

The legal documents in this corpus included twenty medieval documents of sale of landed property in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and its environs. Many of the documents of sale recorded a transaction between a Jewish party and Muslim party. It is understandable why contracts in which only one of the parties was Jewish were not made out by a Jewish notary. In some cases, however, the transaction was between two Muslims or between two Jews. Occasionally one of the parties was a Christian.<sup>2</sup>

During a visit to the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg in 1993,<sup>3</sup> I came across two Arabic documents of sale in the Second Firkovitch collection (II Firk. Arab. 1, II Firk. Arab. 3) that were contemporary with the legal documents from the Genizah published in ALAD. These documents complement the ALAD corpus in a number of important ways. I would like, therefore, to devote this paper to a study of these documents from St. Petersburg. Due to exigences of space, I shall publish the full text of only one of the documents (II Firk. Arab. 1).

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1 I would like to express here my gratitude to Stefan Reif, the Director of the Unit at that time, for giving me this opportunity.

2 For explanations as to why such documents ended up in the Genizah, see Khan, ALAD, p. 1.

3 I gratefully acknowledge the support of this trip by the British Academy.

While I was in St Petersburg, I made a preliminary decipherment of the documents and acquired black-and-white photographs. Those photographs appear at the end of this article (figs. 1–3). The two documents are complete, without lacunae. The majority of the documents in the ALAD corpus, by contrast, have survived only in fragments.

The document that is published below, II Firk. Arab. 1, records on its recto the purchase of a portion of a house in Cairo (referred to as *al-Mu'izziyyah al-Qāhira*) in 553AH/1158CE. On its verso there are two documents recording the subsequent transfer of its ownership in 555AH/1160CE and 572AH/1176CE respectively. The document II Firk. Arab. 3 records the purchase of the same house in 638AH/1241CE. Richards (1972, 108–112) reports discovering a document in the possession of the Karaite community in Cairo that records the later fate of this same house. According to his description of the document (he does not publish the whole text), it records on its recto the transfer of the ownership of the house in 658AH/1260CE. On its verso various transactions are recorded. There were transfers of ownership in 663AH/1265 and 664AH/1266CE. A deed of *waqf* indicates that it was established as a pious foundation in 673AH/1274CE for poor Karaites of Cairo and Fuṣṭāṭ. Further deeds of *waqf* dated 724AH/1324CE indicate the extension of the range of beneficiaries of the *waqf*. On the verso of the document published here, II Firk. Arab. 1, there is a note in a late (post-15th century) Hebrew hand and late Judaeo-Arabic orthography that reads אצל וקפייא קדיים *'aṣl waqfiyya qadīm*. This can be paraphrased as 'old certificate of sale relating to what has been established as a pious foundation.'

So, we are able to trace the history of one particular house in Cairo from the twelfth century CE until the later Middle Ages. As can be seen from the preceding paragraph, the house was in the possession of members of the Karaite community. There is no explicit reference to Karaites in II Firk. Arab. 1, but in II Firk. Arab. 3 the purchaser is described as *al-yahūdī ... al-qarrā'* 'the Karaite Jew', and it is clear that the later document described by Richards relates to the Karaite community. The presence of legal documents concerning Karaites of Cairo in the Second Firkovitch collection is not surprising, given that Firkovitch appears to have found most manuscripts in this collection among the Karaites of Cairo (Harviainen 1996). The various documents relating to the house are likely to have been originally kept together and passed on to successive owners and then to trustees of the *waqf*. Vorderstrasse (2013, 284) has argued in relation to medieval Arabic documents of sale that the documents follow people's property and that 'The fundamental organizing principle of archives was the properties and not the owners'. This explains why the late note relating to the *waqf* was attached to the earlier document II Firk. Arab. 1.

In the transaction recorded on the recto of II Firk. Arab. 1 (553AH/1158CE) Sa'īd al-Dawlah Abū Maṣṣūr, the Jewish physician, buys half a house for his wife, who has granted him the right to act as her legal representative (*wakīl*). He buys this from a certain Abū Aḥmad 'Alī ibn Abī al-Qāsim, who, judging by his name, was a muslim. The internal layout of the house and its furniture are described in detail, followed by a description of its location in the Zuwaylah district of Cairo. On the right side of the verso, a *faṣl* 'supplementary document' (555AH/1160CE) records the transfer of ownership of half of the house to a certain Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn, the money changer. On the left side of the verso, another *faṣl* (572AH/1176CE) records the subsequent transfer of the half portion of the house from the ownership of Abū al-Ḥasan, who is described here as 'the Jew', to the ownership of his son, Hibah. II Firk. Arab. 3 (638AH/1241CE) records the purchase of the whole house (*jamī' al-dār al-kāmilah*) by the Jew Nuṣayr ibn Abī Ishāq ibn Abī al-Ḥasan from Abū al-Faḍl ibn Abī Naṣr, the Jewish secretary (*kātib*).

## 2 Edition and Translation<sup>4</sup>

II Firk. Arab. 1

Parchment; 88.5 cm × 34 cm.

### 2.1 Recto

1. ثبت والحمد لله موفق من توكل عليه
2. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله وحده [وصلوته على سيي]دنا محمد نبينا [والله وسلامة
3. هذا ما اشترى الشيخ سعيد الدولة ابو منصور بن الشيخ رشيد الدولة ابو [الفرج اليهودي والمتطبب لزوجته على ما حكاه بنت القوم امة القادر المعزية
4. الاطرابلسية اليهودية المرأة الكامل ابنة معمر اليهودي الصائغ المعزي بما لها وامرها واذنها له في ذلك وضمائه الدرك فيها من ابى احمد على بن ابى القسم
5. العسقلاني المعزي بالمشهد الحسيني الشريف علي ساكنه افضل السلام والتحية والاکرام وشهوده به عارفون وله مثبتون اشترى منه لها صفقة [واحدة وعقدا]

4 I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewer of an earlier version of the paper who made several suggestions that helped me improve the reading of the document in places.

6. واحدا جميع الحصص التي مبلغها النصف اثنا عشر سهما من اربعة وعشرين سهما شائعا غير مقسوم من جميع الدار التي ياتي ذكرها ووصفها وتحديدها في هذا الكتاب]
7. الذي ذكر هذا البائع ان هذه الحصص من جميعها له وفي يده وملكته ملكا صحيحا وحقا واجبا ثابتا في يده وهي الدار التي بالمعزية القاهرة المحروسة بحجارة
8. زويلة بطرف حارة سرور اللولوى المجاورة الدار الملاصقة [بالدر] ب [المر] وف بالترجمان ذات الباب المربع والدلهيز يصار منه الى قاعة سفلى ذات الباب المربع وعل [به]
9. فردة باب وذات المرحاض على يمينه من دخل من باب هذه القاعة وذات الباب الثانى المربع وعليه زوج ابواب يدخل منه الى القاعة ذات مجلس حيرى بكين وعليه [هما]
10. فردى كمية كل منهما زوج ابواب منهم باب المجلس منقوش وذات المجلس المذكور وعلى يمينه من دخله خزانة بغير ابواب وعلو الخزانة كندوج وذات الخريستانان الذى فى
11. مجلسها بغير ابواب والصفيتين المتقابلتين وعلو كل منهما كندوج وذات الاربع خريستانات المتقابلات بغير ابواب وذات السدلا اللطيف والمطبخ الذى بجواره
12. الذى هو تحت سلم هذه الدار المذكورة الحقوق وذات السلم الذى فى دهليزها المقابل لباب قاعتها المعقود بالحجر على يسرة من دخل باب هذه الدار يصعد من عليه الى عل [وه]
13. مقابل من طلع من السلم احد الكندوجين الذى هو علو صفة قاعتها المقدم ذكرها ويصعد من على المذكور الى مسترقة مطلة على وجه باب هذه الدار فيها شبك
14. خشب وطاقات للتطلع وذات المرحاض وهو نهاية قناة هذه الدار المجاور لمسترقتها وذات المرافق والحقوق ويصعد من على السلم المذكور الى طبقتين متجاورتين وصفة احدهما
15. انها ذات باب مربع بزواج ابواب غير منقوشة على يسرة من طلع من السلم يدخل منه فى مجاز على يمينه من دخل الطبقة الى مجلس على يسرة من دخل المجاز ذات ب [اب]
16. مربع بزواج ابواب منقوشة يدخل منه الى مجلسها ذات الباداهنج على يمينه من دخل من باب المجلس وقيالته صفة وخريستانات ويدخل من المجاز الى المطبخ عليه فردة باب وعلوه كندوج فى ]
- [
17. باب معلق عليه وفى صدر المطبخ المذكور كندوج سفلى وذات الطاقة فى المجاز يودى النور الى قاعتها وصفة الطبقة الأخرى ذات باب مربع عليه [زوج]
18. ابواب غير منقوشة ويدخل منه الى دور قاعة مبلطة بالكزان وذات الصفة والمخدمات التى بجوارها وذات المجلس عليه زوج ابواب منقوشة تقابل صفتها ذات الب [داهنج]

19. والطاقت للتطلع وباب مربع وانخرستانان المقابلان وعلى كل منهما زوج ابواب منقوشة وذات الخزانة الكسوة الذى على يمنة من دخل من باب هذه الطبقة الذى علوها الكند [وج]
20. الذى بابه فوق المطبخ الذى فى الطبقة الاولى ذات الشباك الخشب الذى يودى النور الى مُسترقتها ومرحاضها السفلى ويُصار من على السلم المذكور الى علوها ذات
21. الكندوج الذى على سلمها وعليه فردة باب وعلى الكندوج سلم مَعقُود بالحجر يصعد من عليه الى كنيسة عليها فردة باب والمرافق والحقوق ويصعد من على السلم المذكور
22. الى سطوحها العالية عليها المخضرة ودور القاعة ويمشى من على السطوح فى مجاز دور قاعتها الى طبقة عليها زوج ابواب منقوشة فيها خزانة بفردة باب على يسرة الد[ا]خل
23. اليها وفى صدرها طاقت ويحيط بها ويجمعها ويشتمل عليها وعلى سائر حقوقها كلها حدود اربعة الحد الاول منها وهو القبلى ينتهى الى الد[ا]ر
24. المعروفة بابى الفرج بن سباع اليهودى الكاتب وتعرف قبله ببنت ابو البركات والحد الثانى وهو البحرى ينتهى الى الطريق الشارع المسلوک منه الى ازقة ه[ذه]
25. الحارة ونفاذاها وفيه يشرع بابها ويطل عليه روشنها وطاقتها والحد الثالث وهو الشرقى ينتهى الى دار تُعرف بناشية ابنة ابرهيم ابن شعيا اليهودى
26. والحد الرابع وهو الغربى ينتهى الى الدار المعروفة بابى الفضل البزاز المعروفة بابن خوار بحدود جـمـمـيع ما وقع عليه عقد هذا البيع وحـ[دوده]
27. وبنائه وبابه وقاعته السفلى وسلمه وطباقة ومجازه وخزائنه وصفته وابوابه المنقوشة وطاقتاه وبادهنجاته وطوبته ولبنه وخشبه وفضته وخزينه وما يعرف
28. به وينسب اليه من حقوقها كلها بخمسة وستين دينارا ذهباً عيناً وازنة محققة جيداً شرى قاطعاً ماضياً جائزاً نافذاً صحيحاً لا شرط فيه
29. يفسده ولا علة عليه تبطله ولا على سبيل رهن ولا معاملة ولا توثق فى مداينة ودفع هذا المشتري من خالص مال زوجته المشتري لها الى هذا البائع جميع
30. الثمن المذكور وهو من العين الوازن الجيد المحقق خمسة وستون دينارا فتسليمها منه وصار فى يده وقبضه وحوزه وتسلم وابراه والمشتري لها من وزنه وتقده وعدده ومن اليمين عد[ليه]
31. او على شى منه براءة صحيحة براءة وقطع وفصل وسلم البائع الى المشتري جميع النصف اثنا عشر سهماً المشاع مفرغ لا مشاغل له فتسليمه منه كذلك وصار فى يده وقبضه

32. وحوزه ومالا من مال المشتري لها تتصرف فيه وفيما شات منه تصرف المالكين في املاكهم بغير مانع ولا معترض وذلك بعد النظر والتفرق بالابدان فما ادرك فيما وقع
33. عليه عقد هذا البيع المذكور من درك من احد من سائر الناس عليهم اجمعين فضمامه على هذا البائع حتى يسلم ذلك الى من يجب تسليمه اليه من رد ثمن وقيا [م]
34. بقيمة وتسليم من قليل وكثير على اتم الضمانات واصح الكفلات واوفاهها واكدها بحق هذا البيع وضمان الدرك الموصوفين فيه وقد احضر البائع في يده كتاب يشهد
35. له بصحة ملكه لما باعه النصف من الدار المذكورة وكتاب بان اصلا له وقد كتب على ظهر كل منهما اقرار يشهد بهذا البيع تاريخه تاريخ هذا الكتاب وشهوده
36. شهوده وتسليمهما المشتري لمن سميت فيه وصارا في يده حجة له وثقة لليوم ولما بعدُ شهد على اقرار المتبايعين بما فيه وكتب في اليوم مستهل ربيع الاخر
37. سنة ثلث وخمسين وخمسمائة فيه مصلح هو المسطور ما مثاله الفرج وقناة وعلى يمنة من دخل من باب المجلس وتحتها وللتطلع وعلى يسرة الداخل اليها ومستهل
38. وهو صحيح وكتب فتوح بن علي وقد علم هذا المشتري ان هذه الدار مشققة الحيطان زالقة الاركان مُغْدَرَة وبعض جدرانها مبنى بطوب وبخشب وانها
39. لا انتفاع بها الا بعد هدمها وعمارتها وايرا البائع عن اذن المشترا لها من جميع العيوب براءة قاطعة لليوم وما بعده وعلى ذلك شهد في التاريخ

## 2.2 Recto, Witness Clauses

1. شهد علي بن منصور بن عبد الله بن علي
2. على اقرار البائع والبيع وقبض الثمن والمشتري
3. لمن سميت معهما بضمان الكتاب كل منهم فيه بتاريخه والمبلغ ٦٥
4. وشهد عليهما في صحة منهما وجواز امر وهو بهما
5. عارف
6. شهد علي بن عبد الله بن محمد بن علي
7. على اقرار البائع والمشتري
8. لمن سميت فيه وكتب في تاريخه
9. في صحة منهما وجواز امر وهو بالبائع والمشتري

10. لمن سميت فيه عارف
11. وما علم مغيرا لشهادته هذه الى حين اداها
12. شهد عندي ذلك والثقة بالله
13. شهد هبة الله بن محمد بن الحسن
14. على اقرار البائع والمشتري لمن سميت
15. معه فيه بما ضمنه هذا الكتاب وكتب بتاريخه
16. وشهد عليهما في صحة منهما وسلامة
17. وجواز امر وهو بهما عارف وما علم مغيرا
18. لشهادته هذه الى حين اداها
19. شهد صالح بن علي بن احمد بن علي على اقرار البائع
20. والمشتري لمن سميت معه فيه بما فيه بتاريخ شهر
21. ربيع الاخر سنة ثلث وخمسين وخمسمائة في صحة منهما وجواز
22. امر وهو بهما عارف وما علم مغيرا لشهادته هذه
23. الى حين اداها شهد عندي ذلك والثقة بالله

### 2.3 *Right Margin*

1. اشهدني البائع والمشتري لمن سميت فيه ذلك وكتب محمد بن علي بن احمد بن علي في مستهل ربيع الاخر سنة ثلث وخمسين وخمسمائة
2. وشهد عليهما في صحة منهما وجواز امر وهو بالبائع والمشتري عارف شهد عندي ذلك والثقة بالله

### 2.4 *Recto, Textual Notes*

- Line 4 The readings احمد and القسم are not completely certain, due to the tarnished state of the parchment at this point.
- Line 7 وهو الدار: This is the onset of the section of the document that describes the house. There is a conspicuous extension of the connecting stroke between the *dāl* and the preceding *ʿalif* in the word الدار, which is a strategy for marking the onset of a new section.
- Line 18 The scribe first wrote تحتها and then wrote over this بجوارها.



- Line 20 A redundant dot is written over the *ḥā'* in *ومر خاصها*.
- Line 25 Nāšiyah ibnat Ibrāhīm ibn Ša'yā al-Yahūdī. The name was first written *سعد* then corrected to *شعيا*. In the document II Firk. Arab. 3, line 18 (638AH/1241CE), the name is 'Nāšiyah ibnat Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'd al-Yahūdī'. Richards (1972, 109) reads the name as '... ibn Sa'īd al-Yahūdī' in the document he saw in Cairo relating to this house (658AH/1260CE).
- Lines 36–37 Apart from the last word, all other words and phrases listed as corrections are clearly later corrections in the document, either inserted above the line or written over the original. The word *تحتها*, however, was written first and subsequently corrected to *مجاورها*.

## 2.5 Verso, Right Column

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله شكرا
2. اقر الشيخ سعيد الدولة ابو منصور بن الشيخ رشيد الدولة ابى الفرج اليهودى المتطب وهو المشتري
3. المسمى باطنه ووكيل زوجته المشترا لها المسمى باطنه والقائم عنها فى هذا الاقرار باحكام
4. الوكالة التى بيده منها واقامته فيها مقام نفسه يقوم مقامها واصارت فعله وامضت اقرار
5. فصل يقر به بيع ما يرى بيعه عنها من ربيعها وعقارها بيعا قاطعا وضمانا وهذا
6. كتاب المبايعه والاشهاد فيه وقبل ذلك منها قبولا صحيحا وتاريخها الثانى والعشرين من شهر
7. محرم سنة خمس وخمسين وخمسائة وشاهداها القاضيان الفقيه ثقة الدولة ابو محمد عبد الله
8. بن احمد بن على بن عمر والموتمن السعيد عماد الملك امين الدولة ومكينها صنيعة امير المؤمنين ابو المجيد
9. خليل بن نصر بن الحسن الخزرجى عند شهود هذا الفصل طوعا فى صحة عقله وبدنه وجواز
10. امر غير مكروه ولا مجبر ولا مضطهد انه قد انتقل عن يد موكلته وخرج من ملكها الى ملك
11. ابى الحسن بن حسين اليهودى الصيرفى المعروف بابن التنيسى جميع الحصه التى مبلغها النصف
12. اثنا عشر سهما من اربعة وعشرين سهما شائعا غير مقسوم من جميع الدار المحدودة
13. الموصوفة بباطنه بحق الاتباع القاطع الماضى الصحيح بكتاب شهد بذلك تاريخه
14. موافق لتاريخه وشهوده شهوده بثمن مبلغه من العين خمسون دينارا قبضا منه وصارت فى
15. يده ولم يبق لموكلته فيها حق ولا طلب بسبب ملك ولا يد ولا سكنى ولا اجرة ولا اجارة

16. ولا استحقاق منفعتة بوجه ولا سبب وضمن الدرك عن موكلته ضمان الدرك بماله في مال زوجته

17. وذلك في التاسع والعشرين من شهر ربيع الاول سنة خمس وخمسين وخمسمائة

## 2.6 *Witness Clauses, Verso, Right Column*

1. اشهدنى الوكيل
2. المقر به فيه كتب القاضى المخلص
3. فى الخامس من ربيع الاخر
4. سنة خمس وخمسين وخمسمائة
5. اشهدنى الوكيل بذلك
6. وهو المقر القاضى المخلص السعيد
7. فى الخامس من ربيع الاخر
8. سنة خمس وخمسين وخمسمائة
9. اشهدنى الشيخ سعيد الدولة الوكيل
10. المقر بذلك وكتب شاكر بن عبد الله بن نصر بن على
11. فى الخامس من ربيع الاخر سنة خمس وخمسين وخمسمائة

## 2.7 *Verso, Textual Notes*

Line 4 فعله: *fi'la-hu* 'his action': A dot has been mistakenly written over the 'ayn.

Line 5 فصل يقر به: The text is damaged and the reading is not certain.

## 2.8 *Verso, Left Column*

1. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
2. اقرباوا الحسن بن حسين بن ابوالحسن اليهودى المعزى وهو المد[شترى
3. المكتتب قرينه وهو يومئذ رجل كهل رقيق السمرة [ ]
4. واضح الجبهة وبها غضون اشهل العينين اقنى الانف مستدير اللحية [ة عند شهود]
5. هذا الفصل واشهدهم على نفسه بما فيه فى صحة عقله وجو[از امر]
6. وهو طائع غير مكره ولا مجبر ولا مضطهد انه قد خرج من [يده]

7. وانتقل من ملكه الى ملك ولده هبة الرجل الكامل جـ[جميع]
8. الدار المحدودة الموصوفة بباطنه من ذلك ما يشهد به با[طنه]
9. النصف اثنا عشر سهما من اربعة وعشرين سهما شائعا غير مقـ[سوم]
10. من جميعها وتمت الدار المذكورة يشهد بها كتاب ثان قد كتب
11. على ظهره فصل بهذا البيع تاريخه وتاريخه وشهوده بثمن
12. مبلغه من العين الوازن الخيد المحقق المصرى مائة دينار
13. يرى اليه منها هذا المشتري حسب ما يشهد بذلك
14. كتاب المبيعة المكتتب بينهما القاطع الماضى الصحيح الجليز
15. النافذ المضمن قبض الثمن والتسليم والرويا وضمان الدرك
16. والافتراق بالابدان الموافق تاريخه بتاريخه وشهوده شهوده
17. ولم يبق لهذا المقر فى جميع هذه الدار المبيعة يوم تاريخه
18. حق ولا طلب بسبب ملك ولا يد ولا ارت ولا موروث
19. ولا استحقاق منفعة ولا سكا ولا رويا ولا اخر بوجه ولا سبب
20. شهد على اقرار المقر بما نسب اليه فيه فى اليوم المبارك
21. المورخ الخامس عشر من جمادى الاخر سنة ائمتين وسبعين وخمسمائة اربعة نسخ

## 2.9 *Verso, Left Column, Textual Notes*

Line 18 Two diacritical dots of *tā'* are written in the document, although the word in Classical Arabic has *tā'* (ارت). This reflects the vernacular shift of *tā'* to *tā'*.

At the top right of the verso, there are remnants of two medieval notes in Arabic script. One consists of one line, the last word of which is للناس or الناس. The other consists of two lines, but none of the words can be read with any certainty. Perpendicular to these two notes, there is a note in a late Hebrew hand, which can be read:

1. אצל וקפייא קדים
2. רחבת שרור
3. אלולוי

1. Old document relating to a pious foundation.
2. The square of Surūr,
3. the pearl-dealer.

The orthography שרור is a representation of the name Surūr, which is a common personal name. This area of Cairo is mentioned within the body of the documents and also in the documents referred to by Richards (1972, nos. III, IV and v). There is a conspicuous space left between lines 1 and 2.

Over the left column there are remnants of a medieval note of two lines in Arabic script, none of which can be read with any certainty. There is also a note in late Hebrew script, in the same hand as the note above the right column. This note reads: רחבת שרור אללולוי 'The square of Surūr, the pearl-dealer'.

## 2.10 *Translation*

### 2.10.1 Recto

1. It has been registered. Praise be to God. He who relies on Him is granted success.
2. In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. Praise be to God alone [and His blessings be upon] our Lord Muḥammad, his prophet and his family, and safety.
3. This is what the elder Sa'īd al-Dawlah Abū Manṣūr the son of Rashīd al-Dawlah, Abū al-Faraj, the Jewish physician, bought for his wife, (whose name is) according to his report Bint al-Qawm ('daughter of the people'), Amat al-Qādir ('handmaid of the Mighty One'), the Cairene,
4. the Tripolitanian Jewess, an adult woman, the daughter of Mu'ammār, the Jew, the Cairene goldsmith, with her money and by her command and permission to him with regard to that and (granting him authority) to guarantee against claims from a third party with regard to it, (he bought) from Abū Aḥmad 'Alī ibn Abī al-Qāsim
5. originating from Ascalon, the Cairene, in the shrine of the noble al-Ḥusayn—on its resident (i.e. al-Ḥusayn) may there be the most excellent peace, greeting, and respect. His witnesses are acquainted with him and verify his identity. He bought from him for her, with one clapping the hand [and one contract]
6. all the portion that amounts to a half, twelve shares from twenty-four shares, held in common, not divided, of all the house that will be mentioned, described and whose boundaries will be identified in this [document.]
7. This seller stated that this portion of all of it (the house) belonged to him and was in his possession and his ownership, with a valid ownership, a binding established right in his possession. It is the house that is in al-Mu'izziyyah, Cairo—may it be protected—in the district
8. of Zuwaylah, on the edge of the neighbouring district of Surūr al-Lu'lu'li, the house that abuts the street known as al-Turjumān, with a square door-

- way, and a corridor from which one enters the courtyard of a ground floor with a square doorway, in which
9. is a single-leaf door, and with a washroom on the right of somebody who has entered from the door of this courtyard, and with a second square doorway, in which there is a double-leaf door, through which one enters the courtyard, with a T-shaped living room with two vestibules, over which
  10. there are two single chests, each (vestibule) with a pair of door leaves, of these the door of the living room is engraved; and (the house) contains the aforementioned living room and on the right of somebody who has entered it is a storage chest without doors, and over the storage chest is a cabinet; and (the house) contains two shelves, which are in
  11. its living room, without doors, and two facing seats, over both of which there is a cabinet, and (the house also) contains four facing shelves without doors and a small couch, and a kitchen near to it,
  12. which is under the staircase of this house whose rights have been mentioned, and (the house) contains a staircase in its corridor facing the door of its courtyard that is arched in stone on the left of somebody who has entered the door of this house, on which one climbs to its upper floor;
  13. facing somebody who has come up from the staircase is one of the cabinets, which is above the bench of the aforementioned courtyard. One ascends from this to a loggia, which overlooks the front of the door of this house, in which there is
  14. a wooden lattice and windows to look down from; and (the house) contains a washroom, which is the end of the conduit of this house, next to its loggia; and (the house) includes amenities and rights. One ascends from the aforementioned staircase to two adjacent upstairs apartments. The description of one of them
  15. is that it has a square doorway with a pair of unengraved door leaves, on the left of somebody who has come up from the stairs. From this one enters, through a passage on the right of somebody who has entered the apartment, into a living room. On the left of somebody who has entered the passage (there is an apartment) with
  16. a square doorway with a pair of engraved door leaves, through which one enters its living room. (The house) has a ventilation shaft on the right of somebody who has entered from the door of the living room, and opposite is a bench and storage shelves. One enters by a passage to the kitchen, which has a single door, above which is a cabinet in [ ]
  17. a door suspended over it. In the wall opposite the entrance of the kitchen, there is a lower cabinet. (The house) has a window in the passage, which

- brings light to its courtyard. The description of the other upper apartment is that it has a square doorway with [a pair]
18. of unengraved door leaves. One enters through it to a lowered reception area paved with tuff gravel. (The house) contains a bench and service rooms close to it. It contains a living room with a pair of engraved doors opposite its bench. It contains a ventilation shaft
  19. and windows for looking out of, and a square door, and two facing shelves, on both of which are a pair of engraved doors. It contains a wardrobe, which is on the right of somebody who has entered from the door of this upper apartment, above which is a cabinet,
  20. the door of which (i.e., of the cabinet) is above the kitchen that is in the first upper apartment. (The house) contains a wooden lattice, which brings light to its loggia and its lower washroom. One goes up from the aforementioned staircase upstairs. (The house) contains
  21. a cabinet, which is on its staircase, which has a single door leaf, and above the cabinet is a staircase with a stone arch, by which one ascends to a hut, which has a single-leaf door, and amenities and rights. One ascends by the aforementioned staircase
  22. to its upper roofs, on which is a garden and a lowered reception area. From the roofs, one walks along the passage of the reception area to an upper apartment, which has a pair of engraved door leaves, in which is a storage container with a single door on the left of one entering
  23. it (i.e., the apartment), and on the wall facing the entrance there are windows. Four boundaries surround it, contain it and surround it and all the rest of its rights. Its first boundary, which is the southern one, extends to the house
  24. known by (the name of) Abū al-Faraj ibn Sibā', the Jewish secretary, and before him, it was known by (the name of) Bint Abū al-Barakāt. The second boundary, which is the northern one, extends to the thoroughfare leading from it to lanes of this
  25. district and its thoroughfares, and onto this opens its (the house's) door and its window balcony and windows overlook it. Its third boundary, which is the eastern one, extends to a house known by (the name of) Nāš-iyah ibnat Ibrāhīm ibn Ša'yā al-Yahūdī.
  26. The fourth boundary, which is the western one, extends to the house known by (the name of) Abū al-Faḍl, the cloth merchant, known (also) by (the name of) Ibn Kuwār; with the boundaries of all that the contract of this sale entailed, namely its boundaries,
  27. its structure, its door, its lower courtyard, its staircase, its upper apartments, its passage, its storeroom, its bench, its engraved doors, its win-

- dows, its ventilation shafts, its brick, its baked bricks, its unbaked bricks, its timber, its silver, its treasury,
28. all its rights, by which it is known and which are attributed to it, for sixty-five *dīnārs*, gold, in minted coin, full weight, verified, of good alloy, a decisive, effective, permitted, operative, valid sale, without a condition
  29. that may corrupt it, without a defect that may invalidate it, it being not by way of pledge, nor trading, nor surety for a debt. This buyer paid from the clear money of his wife, for whom it was bought, to this seller all
  30. the aforementioned price, this being sixty-five *dīnārs*, in minted coin, full weight, good alloy and verified. He (the buyer) received these from him and it came into his hand, his possession, and his ownership. He received them and released him and the woman for whom it was bought from its payment, disbursement and counting out, and from an oath upon it
  31. or upon any part of it, with a valid release, a release, a decisive act and a severance. The seller delivered to the buyer all the half, twelve shares, held in common, cleared, without encumbrances, and he (the buyer) in turn received it from him and it came into this hand, his possession,
  32. and his ownership, part of the property of the woman for whom it was bought. She is free to dispose of it or of whatever she wants of it in the way that owners are free to dispose of their property, without anybody preventing or obstructing. This was after they had inspected (the house) and separated from one another physically. Whatever claim relating to fault in ownership is made against them in respect of what
  33. the contract of the aforementioned sale entailed by any other people, this seller is obliged to stand warranty for it and deliver that to whomsoever be owed, by way of returning a price, or vouching
  34. for a value, and the handing over of anything whatsoever, little or much, with the fullest warranties, and the most valid, complete, and secure guarantees, for the sake of this sale and warranty against a claim described herein. The seller brought in his hand a document testifying
  35. in his support to the validity of his ownership of what he sold, the aforementioned half of the house, and he has a document with the status of a primary document (i.e. a certificate of his original ownership), and on the verso of each of them was written an acknowledgement of this sale, its date being the date of this document and its witnesses being
  36. its witnesses, and the buyer for the person named (herein) received them both and they came into his hand as a proof for him and a security for today and for the future. The acknowledgment of the transacting parties of what is in it was witnessed. It was written on the first day of *Rabīʿ II*,
  37. in the year five hundred and fifty-three (5 May, 1158 CE). It contains corrections, including the following, which have been written (in the doc-

ument): 'al-Faraj', 'conduit', 'on the right of somebody who has entered from the door of the living room', 'under it', 'for looking', 'on the left of one entering it' and 'beginning'.

38. This is correct. It was written by Futūḥ ibn 'Alī. This buyer is aware of the fact that this house has cracked walls, is of unstable structure, is neglected, and some of its walls are built with brick and wood, and that
39. it cannot be used except after demolishing them and rebuilding them, and he (the buyer) released the seller, with permission of the woman for whom it was bought, from the (liability of) all the faults with a decisive release for today and thereafter. This was witnessed on the date (it was written).

#### 2.10.2 Recto, Witness Clauses

1. 'Alī ibn Maṣṣūr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī witnessed
2. the acknowledgement of the seller, the sale, the receipt of the price, and (the acknowledgement) of the buyer
3. for the woman named together with them in the contents of the document, each of them in it, on its date. Its amount is 65.
4. He witnessed them in sound health and legally capable of conducting their affairs, and he was
5. acquainted with them.
6. 'Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī witnessed
7. the acknowledgement of the seller and the buyer
8. for the woman named in it and (that) it was written on its date
9. (they being) in sound health and legally capable of conducting their affairs; and he is acquainted with the seller and the buyer
10. for the woman named therein.
11. He was not aware of any reason to change this testimony of his up to the time he performed it.
12. This was witnessed in my presence, and my trust is in God.
13. Hibat Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan witnessed
14. the acknowledgement of the seller and the buyer for the woman named
15. with him in it in the content of this document and he wrote (this) on its date.
16. He witnessed them to be in sound health, well,
17. and legally capable of conducting their affairs, and he is acquainted with them. He was not aware of any reason to change
18. this testimony of his up to the time he performed it.
19. Ṣāliḥ ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī witnessed the acknowledgement of the seller



20. and the buyer for the woman named with him in it on the date of the month
21. of Rabīʿ II, in the year five hundred and fifty-three, they being in sound health and legally capable of conducting
22. their affairs, and he is acquainted with them. He was not aware of any reason to change this testimony of his
23. up to the time he performed it. This was witnessed in my presence, and my trust is in God.

#### 2.10.3 Right Margin

1. The seller and the buyer for the woman mentioned in it called me to witness that. This was written by Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī at the beginning of Rabīʿ II, in the year five hundred and fifty-three.
2. He witnessed them while they were in good health and legally capable of conducting their affairs, and he is acquainted with the seller and the buyer. This was witnessed in my presence, and my trust is in God.

#### 2.10.4 Verso, Right Column

1. In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate
2. The elder, Saʿīd al-Dawlah Abū Maṣṣūr son of the elder Rašīd al-Dawlah Abū al-Faraj, the Jewish
3. physician, he being the buyer named on the recto, and the agent of his wife for whom the purchase was made, named on the recto, and standing for her in this acknowledgement by authority of the documents of power
4. of attorney that are in his hand issued by her, in which she appointed him in her place to take her place, authorised his action and endorsed the acknowledgement
5. of a supplementary document, in which is acknowledged the sale of whatever he sees fit to sell on her behalf of her residence and her property, by a decisive sale with warranty. This
6. is the document of the transaction and the witnessing of it. This was received from her with a valid receipt. Its date is the twenty second of the month
7. of Muḥarram, in the year five hundred and fifty-five. Her two witnesses are the two judges the jurisperit Trust of the Dynasty Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh
8. ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar and the Blessed Trusted One, Support of the Kingdom, Trustworthy of the Dynasty and its Powerful One, the Protégé of the Commander of the Faithful, Abū al-Majīd

9. *Ḳalil ibn Naṣr ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḳazrajī*, in the presence of the witnesses of this supplementary document, willingly, in healthy mind and body, legally capable of conducting
10. his affairs, not forced, nor coerced, nor constrained, (the elder, *Saʿīd al-Dawlah*) acknowledged that it (the property) has moved from the possession of the woman who appointed him as her representative and has left her ownership and (has been transferred) to the ownership
11. of *Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn*, the money changer, known as *Ibn al-Tinnīsī*, all the portion that amounts to a half,
12. twelve shares from twenty-four shares, held in common, not divided, of all the house that is defined
13. and described on the recto, by right of a decisive, effective and valid purchase in a document that testified to that, its date
14. corresponding to its (i.e. the current document's) date and its witnesses being its (i.e. the current document's) witnesses, at a price amounting to fifty *dīnārs*, which he received from him and they came into
15. his possession. The woman who appointed (her husband) as her representative no longer had any right or claim due to ownership, possession, habitation, rent, lease,
16. right to usufruct, in any way whatsoever. He stood warranty for a claim from a third party on behalf of the woman who had appointed him as her agent, with a warranty against a claim with his wealth against the wealth of his wife.
17. This was on the twenty ninth of the month of *Rabīʿ I*, in the year five hundred and fifty-five (14 April, 1160 CE).

2.10.5 Witness Clauses, Verso, Right Column

- 1–2. The agent who is the acknowledger of this called me to witness. Written by the sincere judge
3. on the fifth of *Rabīʿ II*
4. in the year five hundred and fifty-five.
- 5–6. The agent in this document, who is the acknowledger, called me to witness, the sincere and blessed judge,
7. on the fifth of the month of *Rabīʿ II*,
8. in the year five hundred and fifty-five.
- 9–10. The elder *Saʿīd al-Dawlah*, the agent who is the acknowledger in this (document) called me to witness, written by *Šākir ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Naṣr ibn ʿAlī*,
11. on the fifth of *Rabīʿ II*, in the year five hundred and fifty-five.

## 2.10.6 Verso, Left Column

1. In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate
  2. Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn ibn Abū al-Ḥasan, the Cairene Jew, who is the buyer
  3. written in the adjacent document, he being on this day a middle-aged man, of pure (i.e. uniform) brown complexion [...]
  4. with a smooth forehead, on which are wrinkles, with dark brown eyes, with a hooked nose and a round beard, in the presence of the witnesses
  5. of this supplementary document, and he called them to witness for himself with regard to what is contained in it, he being in sound mind and legally capable of conducting [his affairs],
- 6–10. willing, not forced, nor coerced, nor constrained, acknowledged that all the house that has been defined and described on the recto, (namely the portion) of this that has been testified to on the recto, a half, twelve shares from twenty-four shares, held in common, not divided, of all of the aforementioned house and its totality, has left his possession and has been transferred from his ownership to the ownership of his son, Hiba, who is an adult man. This is testified to by a second document that was written
11. on its verso as a supplementary document concerning this sale, its (the other document's) date is the (same as) its (the document's) date, and its witnesses are the same as its witnesses, for a price
  12. amounting to one hundred Egyptian dīnārs, in minted coin, of full weight, of good alloy, verified.
  13. This buyer was released from these (the hundred dīnārs after paying them) to him (the seller), as is testified to by
  14. the document of the transaction that was drawn up between them, this being decisive, effective, valid, permitted,
  15. operative, which includes (a record of) the receipt of the price, the delivery, the inspection, the warranty against claims from a third party,
  16. and the physical separation of the parties. Its date was the same as its (this document's) date and its witnesses were the same as its (this document's) witnesses.
  17. This acknowledger no longer had with regard to all of the house that was sold this day
  18. any right, claim due to ownership, nor possession, nor legacy, nor inheritance,
  19. nor right of usufruct, habitation, examination, nor any other claim whatsoever.

20. The acknowledgement of the acknowledger of what is attributed to him in it (i.e. the primary *ʿaṣl* document) was witnessed on this blessed day,  
 21. which is the date of the fifteenth of Jumādā 11, in the year of five hundred and seventy-two (25 December 1176). In four copies (i.e., copies of the primary *ʿaṣl* document).

### 3 Commentary

#### 3.1 *Notes on the Text's Contents*

##### 3.1.1 Recto

Line 1: ثبت *ṭabata* 'it has been certified (and registered)': The Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence, which was the dominant one, came to accept the probative value of written documents if the identification of the writing was certain and if there was no possibility that the text could have been changed. This applied to copies of documents that did not remain in the hands of the interested parties but were held by a witness to the transaction or were deposited in the archives of a court or government office. It is for this reason that many of the extant medieval documents contain an annotation referring to the certification and registration of the document in a court archive. The act of registration granted the written documents probative value. Terms used for such registration include ثبت *ṭabata* (literally: 'it has become firm') or *tubbīta* 'it has been made firm', اعترف *ʿaturifa* 'it has been recognised/certified', صح *ṣahḥa* 'it has been certified'. For registration of documents see al-Ṭarsūsī, *Kitāb al-Iʿlām*, 395–405, Khan ALAD, p. 8, Khan (1990, 49–50). For a discussion of the development of legal proof by written documents, see Tyan (1959, 5–16), Johansen (1997). Some documents identify the place of registration of the documents to be a court, e.g. *faḡad atbatat al-mamlūkah al-ḥujaj bi-mablaḡ al-dayn fi majlis al-ḥukm al-šarif* 'The slave has registered the documents with the amount of the debt in the noble court' (Khan 1990, 45, line 8).

Line 3: The buyer has the title Saʿīd al-Dawlah ('Blessed One of the Dynasty') and his father has the title Rašīd al-Dawlah ('Rightly Guided One of the Dynasty'). Such honorific titles, which were bestowed by the Fāṭimid régime, reflect the fact that the bearers had some kind of affiliation to a government office. Since the buyer is described as a physician (*mutaṭabbib*), this was presumably due to his affiliation to a government hospital, i.e. one founded by a Muslim ruler. It was the more prominent physicians who worked in the hospitals (Goitein 1971, 250). He may have also served in the Fāṭimid court. The Genizah documents refer to several Jews who bore such honorific titles, e.g. T-S

Ar. 7.23 (אלדולה פכר אלדולה 'the exalted priest, Pride of the Dynasty'), T-s 12.290 (אבו אלמכארם סני אלדולה משה בן יפת הלוי) 'Abū al-Makārim, Exalted One of the Dynasty, Moshe ben Yefet ha-Levi'; cf. Goitein (1971, 113, 355–357). For the origin of such titles see Rosenthal (2012).

The names of the buyer's wife Bint al-Qawm ('Daughter of the People'), Amat al-Qādir ('Handmaid of the Mighty'), reflect the prominent status and wealth of her family. The latter name is attested in T-s Ar.38.85 (ALAD 39), line 11. A possible alternative reading would be *أمة القادة* 'Handmaid of the Leaders'. Women's names in the Genizah often reflect the profession of the father of the family, e.g. girls from the family of a government secretary (*kātib*) were called Sitt al-Kuttāb ('Daughter of Secretaries') (Goitein 1971, 355).

Many of the richest Jews in medieval Egypt and of those connected with the government (such as the Tustarī family) were Karaites. They, indeed, became the principal link to the government for Rabbanites, who wrote petitions to them; cf. Goitein (1971), Rustow (2008, 176–199).

Line 3: The husband acts as representative for his wife. This authority was granted to him by her through a document of power of attorney, which is referred to on the verso, right column, 3–4 (*b-ahkām al-wikālah allatī bi-yadi-hi min-hā* 'by authority of the documents of power of attorney from her that are in his hand'). Compare T-s Ar. 53.66 in the ALAD corpus (no. 16, p. 129.), in which the buyer acts as a representative for the sister of the seller. The formula in T-s Ar. 53.66 is *hādā mā 'ištara PN<sub>1</sub> li-PN<sub>2</sub> bi-māli-hā wa-'amri-hā min PN<sub>3</sub>* 'This is what PN<sub>1</sub> bought for PN<sub>2</sub> with her money and her command from PN<sub>3</sub>', which is the formula proposed by the third century AH *šurūṭ* scholar Abū Zayd Aḥmad ibn Zayd al-Šurūṭī (cf. al-Taḥāwī, *al-Buyū'* 111, 45.1). Our document has a fuller formula *bi-māli-hā wa-'amri-hā wa-'idni-hā la-hu fī dālīka wa-ḍamāni-hi al-darak fī-hā* 'with her money and by her command and permission to him with regard to that and (granting him authority) to guarantee against claims from a third party with regard to it'. Crucially this transfers responsibility for the warranty of the sale to the representative. The ALAD corpus contains documents of power of attorney (nos. 61, 62, pp. 279–280).

Numerous medieval Arabic documents are extant that record the purchase of property directly by women, e.g. P.Cair.Arab. 56 (Edfū 854CE), in which a woman buys a house from her husband: *hādā mā 'ištara Yūna ibnat Ḥalīṣā 'ištara min zawji-hā Yazīd al-jarrār manzil la-hu* 'This is what Yūna, daughter of Ḥelīṣā, has bought. She has bought from her husband Yazīd, the leather-bottle merchant, a dwelling house belonging to him'. The APD contains many more examples.

There are many references in the Genizah to women owning property, usually as a secure source of income from rent (Goitein 1983, 85).

Line 4: المرأة الكامل 'adult woman'. For the use of the term *kāmil* in the sense of 'adult', see al-Maḳzūmī, *Kitāb al-Minhāj*, 64:20 and Khan, ALAD, pp. 115, 474. The term is used for males and females; cf. *al-rajul al-kāmil* 'the adult man' on the verso of our document, left column, 7. When used as an attribute of women, there is no feminine agreement; cf. T-S NS J469 *al-imra'ah al-kāmil* (ALAD no. 126:2, p. 464). Also, synonymous adjectives lack feminine agreement in medieval documents, e.g. T-S K6.162 *al-mar'ah al-bālīg* 'the adult woman' (ALAD no. 31:5, p. 189).

Line 5: For *al-Mašhad al-Ḥusaynī* 'The Shrine of al-Ḥusayn' in Cairo, see al-Maqrīzī, *Kiṭāṭ* II, 322–323, III, 91; *al-Sulūk* I, 435. This was a shrine that housed the relic of the head of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abī Ṭālib. The head was brought from Ascalon to Cairo on the 8 Jumādā II, 548AH (6 September, 1153CE). The shrine, now known as *Masjid al-Imām al-Ḥusayn* 'The Mosque of the Imām al-Ḥusayn', was built in 549AH/1154CE under the supervision of the vizier al-Šāliḥ al-Ṭalā'i'. Our document indicates that the legal transaction and the drawing up of the document by the notary took place in *al-Mašhad al-Ḥusaynī*. It is not usual in the extant Arabic legal documents from the period for the building in which the transaction took place to be indicated. Notaries were a category of certified witness, who were under the authority of a judge. We know from various medieval sources that they offered their services in public places. They would often set up their booths (*ḥawānīt*) next to or inside mosques. Indeed, judges would also hold audiences in mosques (Tyan 1959, 21–40).

Line 6: This division into twenty-four shares is connected with the laws of inheritance, in which the shares of the heirs are calculated in twenty-fourths (Grohmann, APEL I, 172). Since a system of partible inheritance was in operation, heirs often received part of a house. The transaction recorded here could be an attempt to consolidate ownership of the entire house (cf. Vorderstrasse 2013, 284).

Line 6: الدار: The term *dār* in medieval documents referred to what would be more accurately termed an enclosure or compound, since it often comprised several buildings (Goitein 1983, 56–57; Harrison 2016, 69–110).

Line 7: وهي الدار التي بالمعزية القاهرة المحروسة: 'and it is the house that is in al-Mu'izziyyah Cairo (may it be protected)'. Al-Mu'izziyyah is an alternative name for the Fāṭimid capital al-Qāhirah (Cairo). The newly founded city was originally called al-Manṣūriyyah by the general al-Jawhar but was renamed al-Qāhirah by the caliph al-Mu'izz on his arrival from the West (al-Maqrīzī, *Kiṭāṭ* I, 377). For this

reason, it is sometimes referred to as al-Qāhirah al-Mu'izziyyah. The order of these is inverted in our document. The same order is found in T-S 13H4.5 (ALAD no. 10, fifth–sixth century AH/eleventh–twelfth century CE) and T-S Misc. 29.24 (ALAD, no. 23, 509 AH/1115 CE) and also in numerous legal documents from the Fāṭimid period written by Jewish notaries; cf. Worman (1906, 9).

Line 8: For the district of Zuwaylah (*ḥārat Zuwaylah*) in Cairo, see al-Maqrīzī, *Kiṭāṭ*, III, 8. This was named after a unit of troops in the invading Fāṭimid army from a district of Mahdiyyah in North Africa that was called Zuwaylah. It was situated in the north-east of the medieval city of Cairo. The document II Firk. Arab. 3 indicates that the house was in the north of Cairo (*fi baḥriyyihā*).

Most Jews who inhabited Cairo, Rabbanites and Karaites, since the Middle Ages until the twentieth century CE inhabited this district and it came to be known also as the 'district of the Jews' (*ḥārat al-yahūd*). In 1917 CE there were 1,096 Karaites in Zuwaylah, most were concentrated in the eastern part of the district (Meital 1995, 33–61). Our document states that the house was 'in the district of Zuwaylah, on the edge of the neighbouring district of Surūr al-Lu'lu'li'. I have not been able to identify the district of Surūr al-Lu'lu'li in the literary sources.

Line 8: قاعة سفلى: The term *qā'ah* can have various senses in the Genizah documents (Goitein 1983, 63; Harrison 2016, 138), including (i) the ground floor in general, (ii) a courtyard with its surrounding structures and (iii) a courtyard without the surrounding structures. The term *al-suffl*, which here qualifies the term *qā'ah*, is used to refer to the ground floor in general and, moreover, there are references to structures attached to the *qā'ah*. The *qā'ah* here, therefore, must be understood in the restricted sense of (iii) 'courtyard'. Note, however, that in some Genizah documents the *qā'ah* is said to be roofed, e.g. T-S Ar. 53.17, recto 6 (Khan, ALAD no. 5, recto 6, p. 78): *al-qā'ah al-laṭīfah al-musaqqaffah* 'the small ground floor with an (ornamental) ceiling', indicating that sometimes it has the sense of 'reception hall', as was its meaning at a later period; cf. Lane (1954, 17–18).

Line 8: ذات الباب المربع: 'with a square doorway', i.e. a rectangular door. The genitive pronoun *dāt* occurs frequently in the description of the house. It is sometimes unclear what noun it is describing. In many cases it appears to be presenting an attribute of the *dār* 'house', which is feminine. The location of these various sections in the house is often only implied by the context. Sometimes, however, it may be presenting an attribute of a noun that has been

mentioned in the immediately preceding context, as is the case here, where it seems to be presenting an attribute of the *qā'ah*.

Line 9: مجلس حيرى: For the occurrence of this term in Genizah documents see Khan, ALAD no. 19:12, p. 135. Goitein (1983, 69) interprets this feature of houses as an enclosed living room (< *ḥayr* 'enclosure'), i.e. *majlis ḥayrī*. It seems, however, that the living room was a T-shaped living room with two vestibules and portico and its name comes from *Qaṣr al-Ḥayr*, which was built by the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil in Sāmarrā' (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān* II, 328). According to al-Mas'ūdī (*Murūj al-Dahab* IV, 4–5) the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil introduced a T-shaped architectural structure called *al-ḥūrī*, inspired by and named after the pre-Islamic kingdom of al-Ḥīrah. The phrase مجلس حيرى could, therefore, also be read as *majlis ḥūrī* (Harrison 2016, 97–109). There was a Mesopotamian influence on the architecture of medieval Egypt. It has been suggested that the tradition came to Egypt from Iraq in the ninth century CE during the time of Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn (see Vorderstrasse 2013, 300 and the references cited there).

Line 9: بيكمن *bi-kummayn*: A *kumm*, which literally means a sleeve, was a 'vestibule' or 'narrow passage'; cf. Goitein (1983, 366), Blau, *Dictionary*, 607.

Line 10: كمية فردى *farday kummiyyah* 'two single chests'. A *kummiyyah*, which literally means a 'sleeve ornament', appears to have the meaning of a chest in a vestibule (Goitein 1983, 387; Blau, *Dictionary*, 607).

Line 10: كندوج *kandūj* 'cabinet or compartment fixed on top of a closet or kitchen'; cf. Goitein (1983, 75), Blau, *Dictionary*, 609. The word is of Iranian origin, cf. Persian *kandū* 'beehive, storage jar'. The *-j* ending is a reflex of Middle Persian *-g*, which has been elided in New Persian. It derives from Middle Persian *kandan* 'to dig' (Asbaghi 1988, 235).

Line 10: A *kuristān* was a shelf in the recess of a wall. The word is derived from Persian, in which it designates a pantry (< *kor* 'food' + *istān* locative suffix); cf. Goitein (1983, 66–67), Asbaghi (1988, 107).

Line 11: السدلا اللطيف: 'The narrow couch'. Cf. Dozy, *Supplément* vol. 1, 642 sv سدلة *banc rembourré* ('padded bench'), *canapé* ('couch'). Goitein (1983, 68) refers to it as a type of bench and derives it etymologically from Latin *sedilia*, the plural of *sedile* 'seat'. This was apparently for repose rather than social intercourse. Lane, *Lexicon*, sv, cites it in the form سدلى *sidillā* with a final long /ā/ vowel, as it has in



our document. He defines it as ‘an oblong chamber with a wide and deep recess on either hand at, or near, one extremity thereof’ and derives it from the Persian سه دله *seh dāleh* ‘three-hearted’, ‘as though it were three chambers in one chamber’. Lane (1954, 12) describes the *sidillā* in Egyptian houses of the early nineteenth century CE as follows: ‘Sometimes the mattress ... lies upon a platform of stone, about half a foot high, called “sidilleh” or “sidillè,” a word of Persian origin, and also applied to a recess, of which the floor is similarly elevated, and nearly equal in width and depth, with a mattress and cushions laid against one, or two, or each, of its three sides. Some rooms have one, and some have two or more of such recesses, generally used as sitting-places in cool weather, and therefore without windows.’ Briggs (1921, 237) describes the *sidilla* in houses in the early twentieth century CE as a ‘small recess’ in which *divans*, i.e. mattresses, were placed. For the use of the adjective *latīf* in the sense of ‘small’ or ‘narrow’ in relation to household furniture and architecture, see T-S Ar. 53.17, recto 6 (Khan, ALAD 5 recto, 6, p. 78): *al-qā’ah al-latīfah* ‘the small ground floor’.

Line 12. هو تحت سلم هذه الدار المذكورة الحقوق: The syntax of this is somewhat difficult. What seems to be intended is that the staircase in question belonged to the rights of the owner of the house.

Line 13: صفة *ṣuffah*: In the Genizah documents this designated a bench (Goitein 1983, 68), but in a later period the structure with this name underwent development (Harrison 2016, 139–140). Lane (1954, 11–12) describes this feature of houses in the early nineteenth century CE as follows: ‘There is generally, fronting the door ... a shelf of marble or of common stone, about four feet high, called a “ṣuffeh,” supported by two or more arches, or by a single arch, under which are placed utensils in ordinary use; such as perfuming vessels, and the basin and ewer which are used for washing before and after meals, and for the ablution preparatory to prayer: water-bottles, coffee-cups, &c., are placed upon the ṣuffeh.’

Line 13: مسترقة *mustaraqah*: This was an elevated structure that generally overlooked the courtyard (Goitein 1983, 73). It literally means ‘the stolen one’, i.e. taking away from the space of the upper stories. This corresponded in later houses to a *maq’ad*, which Lane (1954, 17) describes as a room that is ‘elevated about eight or ten feet above the ground-floor ... having an open front, with two or more arches, and a low railing’.

Line 14: The term *tāqah* referred to a regular window in a house. It was without glass panes (Goitein 1983, 62). It is of Persian origin; cf. Steinglass, *Persian-*

*English Dictionary*, sv طاق *tāq* ‘an arch ... vaulted work; window’, from Middle Persian *tāg* (Asbaghi 1988, 192). The *tā marbūṭah* of the Arabic singular form طاقة *tāqa* appears to be a back-formation from the plural طاقات *tāqāt*.

Line 14: A *ṭabaqah* in the medieval documents could denote the upper floor or an apartment forming part of it (Goitein 1983, 58).

Line 14: وصفة احداهما ‘and the description of one of them’. Here وصفة is to be read *ṣifah* ‘description’ not *ṣuffah* ‘bench’.

Line 16: الباداهنج *al-bādāhanj* ‘ventilation shaft’, ‘wind-catcher’; cf. Goitein (1983, 79, 356–357; Harrison 2016, 72). This typically had a shaft protruding above the house with an opening facing towards the cooling breezes. The word is an Arabised form of a Persian word *bād-āhang* ‘drawer of wind’ (Asbaghi 1988, 33). In a later period this structure was known in Persian as *bādḡīr* ‘wind-holder’ and in Arabic as *malqaf* (Rosenthal 1977).

Line 17: صدر المطبخ *ṣadr al-maṭbak* ‘the wall opposite the entrance of the kitchen’. For this meaning of *ṣadr* see Goitein (1983, 65).

Line 18: دور قاعة *dūr qā‘ah*. This was the part of the inner floor where one slipped off one’s shoes, which was one step lower than the rooms (Goitein 1983, 67; Harrison 2016, 96–98). Lane (1953, 10–13) describes it as ‘a small part of the floor, extending from the door to the opposite side of the room, ... about four or five inches lower than the rest’.

Line 18: مبلطة بالكذان *muballaṭah bi-l-kaddān* ‘paved with tuff gravel’. For *kaddān* see Dozy, *Supplément* II, 450–451.

Line 19: الخزانة الكسوة *al-kizānah al-kiswah* ‘the wardrobe’. Presumably *kizānat al-kiswa* is meant. This is how the phrase appears, with the initial noun in the *‘idāfah*, in the later documents relating to this house (II Firk. Arab. 3, recto, 12; Richards 1972, 109).

Line 21: سلم معقود بالبحر *sullam ma‘qūd bi-l-ḥajar* ‘a staircase with a stone arch’, i.e., it was built over an arch.

Line 21: كنيسة *kanīisah* ‘hut, shack’; cf. Blau, *Dictionary* 610. According to Dozy, *Supplément* II, 463 the word is used also to refer to a large litter for transport.

Line 21: المخفضة *al-maḥḍarah* ‘garden; lawn’. This seems to be a better reading than المحضرة, which would mean ‘assembly room’ according to Dozy, *Supplément* 1, 299. Some wealthy Jews had houses with roof gardens (Goitein 1983, 150). The document 11 Firk. Arab. 3, which describes the property in 638 AH/1241 CE, refers to a *saḥḥ muḥaddar* ‘roof made green’, i.e. planted with greens (line 12). Some Arabic legal documents from the Genizah mention ground floor gardens, which are referred to by the terms *bustān* (Khan, ALAD no. 8:2, p. 61; no. 25:8, 173) and *jinān* (Khan, ALAD no. 4:3, 9, 13, 16 pp. 72–73, no. 28:8, p. 81).

Line 25: ونفاذها *wa-nuffādi-hā* ‘and its thoroughfares’. I am interpreting this as the plural of *nāfid*, a term that is used as an attribute of a thoroughfare street.

Line 25: The term *rawšan*, which is of Persian origin, translated here as ‘window balcony’ was an alcove consisting of a bay window from which inhabitants could observe what was happening in the street below (Goitein 1983, 61). In Middle and Modern Persian *rowšan* means ‘light, bright’. Cf. also Middle Persian *rōzan* ‘window’ (MacKenzie 1971, 72).<sup>5</sup>

Line 27: وخزينته *wa-ḥazīnu-hu*. This is referring to what is deposited (*ḥazīn*) in a storeroom (*ḥizānah*).

Line 28: For the terms qualifying the coins, see Khan, ALAD, p. 28. The price of the half portion of the house was 65 *dīnārs* (beginning of Rabīʿ II, 553 AH/8 May 1158 CE). According to the *faṣl* on the right side of the verso (line 14), the half portion was sold two years later (9 Rabīʿ I 555 AH/ 25 March 1160 CE) for 50 *dīnārs*. According to the *faṣl* on the left side of the verso on 15 Jumādā II 572 AH/25 December 1176) the half portion of the house was, in turn, sold to the owner’s son for 100 *dīnārs*. We see, therefore, that the cost of the half portion fluctuated considerably in these transactions. One factor in these fluctuations may have been differing degrees of dilapidation of the property. Prices of houses could also slump during periods of political instability (Goitein 1983, 56). The slump to 50 *dīnārs* in 555 AH/1160 CE coincided with the beginning of the reign of the puppet child caliph al-ʿĀḍid and the enfeeblement of the Fāṭimid state due to attempts by the Crusaders and the Sunnī Syrian ruler Nūr al-Dīn to gain control of Egypt. The conspicuous rise in price to 100 *dīnārs* in

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Masoud Mohammadirad for drawing my attention to this.

1176 CE may have been brought about by a rise in demand for property in Cairo after the burning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ by the vizier Ṣawār in 1168 CE, to prevent it from falling into the hands of Amalric, the king of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. After this event, a large proportion of the inhabitants of al-Fuṣṭāṭ moved to Cairo.<sup>6</sup> According to the document 11 Firk. Arab. 3, the complete house was sold on 17 Jumādā 11, 638 AH/9 January 1241 CE for 125 dīnārs.

Line 34: *وكتب بان اصلا له* 'and he has a document with the status of a primary document (i.e. a certificate of his original ownership)'. The syntax here is somewhat garbled. 11 Firk. Arab. 3, line 5 has a parallel formula that is more transparent: *واحضر في يده كتابا يشهد له بها وثلاثة كتب اصول له وكتب على كل منهم فصل بالبيع* 'and he brought in his hand a document testifying to his ownership of it (the house) and he had three primary documents, on (the verso of) each of which was written a supplementary document of the sale.'

Line 38: *وعمارتها* *wa-'imārati-hi* 'its repair'. For this meaning of the term see Blau, *Dictionary*, 458.

### 3.1.2 Recto, Witness Clauses

Line 3: *والمبلغ ٦٥*: The amount is expressed by an Arabic numeral. At this period Coptic numerals were more commonly used in documents (Goitein 1967, 209, 241).

Line 11: *وما علم مغيرا لشهادته هذه الى حين ادائها* 'He was not aware of any reason to change this testimony of his up to the time he performed it.' For this formula, which also occurs in lines 17–18, 22–23, see al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-'Arab* IX, 54: *وما علم مغيرا لشهادته الى أن أقامها عنده*. For the expression *اداء الشهادة* 'performing the testimony', see al-Sī'nāqī, *al-Kāfī*, III, 330, al-Muqaddasī, *al-Šarḥ al-Kabīr*, XXIX, 435.

Line 12: *شهد عندى ذلك والثقة بالله* 'This was witnessed in my presence, and my trust is in God': This formula occurs also in line 23 and margin, 2. In each case it appears to have been written by a different hand from that of the witness. This is evidently an example of secondary witnessing of the testimony of the witnesses, known as *šahādah 'alā šahādah*. One of the functions of this was to supplement the primary witnesses whenever there was some element within a

<sup>6</sup> I am grateful to Lorenzo Bondioli, who suggested to me this correlation with the burning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

contract, or added to it, that might weaken the contract or expose it to a claim. The secondary witnesses strengthened the validity of the contract (Wakin 1972, 68–69). Possibly the reference to the faults in the structure of the property at the end of our document (recto, 37–38) motivated this secondary witnessing.

### 3.1.3 Verso, Right Column

Line 10: *انه قد انتقل*: This is the sentential object of the verb *'aqarra* at the beginning of the document: 'The elder, Sa'īd al-Dawlah acknowledged ... that it (the property) has moved from the possession of ...'.

### 3.1.4 Witness Clauses, Verso, Right Column

Lines 3–4. The date of the witness clause is several days later than the date of the document.

### 3.1.5 Verso, Left Column

Line 3: *رجل كهل* *rajul kahl* 'a middle-aged man'; cf. Khan, ALAD, p. 15. According to Ibn Sīdā, *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* I, 40, citing ibn Jinnī, the term *kahl* refers to a man between thirty-four and fifty-one years of age.

Line 3: *ريقق السمرة* *raqīq al-sumrah* 'pure (i.e. uniform) in brownness'. For this phrase in Genizah documents, see Khan, ALAD, p. 16.

Line 4: *واضح الجبهة* *wāḍiḥ al-jabhah* 'with a smooth forehead', i.e. having a comely forehead, not coarse with an excess of flesh; cf. Ibn Sīdā, *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* I, 88, al-Maḳzūmī, *Kitāb al-Minhāj*, 64 and Khan, ALAD, p. 16.

Line 4: *اشهل العينين* *ašhal al-ʿaynayn* 'with dark brown eyes', i.e. eyes with dark, red-brown irises; cf. Ibn Sīdā, *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* I, 99, al-Maḳzūmī, *Kitāb al-Minhāj*, 65, Khan, ALAD, p. 17.

Line 4: *اقنى الانف* *ʿaḳnā al-ʿanf* 'with a hooked nose'; cf. Ibn Sīdā, *Kitāb al-Muḥaṣṣaṣ* I, 132, al-Ṭāʿālabī, *Kitāb Fiqh al-Luḡa*, 85, Khan, ALAD, p. 18.

Line 5: *واشهدهم على نفسه بما فيه* 'he called them to witness for himself with regard to what is contained in it'. This is a development of the phrase *šahida ʿalā nafsihi* 'he witnessed for himself', which appears in early Arabic legal documents from the Umayyad period and has pre-Islamic roots (Khan 1994). It indicated that the party of the legal act confirmed acceptance of a legal obligation arising from the act.

### 3.2 *Legal Process*

Written contracts did not have the status of constitutive instruments. The transactions were completed orally by means of oral acknowledgement (*'iqrār*) of the parties (see recto, 35) and the legal relations came into existence before a written record was made. The documents were declarative instruments.

The transactions in the document are described in an objective style. The parties are referred to in the third person. This reflects the fact that the document is in essence a deposition made by a notary in his capacity as professional witness.

In the transaction recorded on the recto the seller has the status of offeror and the buyer that of offeree. The text of the document, however, is written from the point of view of the buyer. The transaction is presented as the purchase of property by the buyer rather than the sale of the property by the seller and opens with the formula *hādā mā 'ištārā PN* 'This is what PN bought'. This presentation of the transaction from the perspective of the buyer and the objective style can be explained by the fact that the legal formulary had its roots in a monumental type of legal text, which was originally intended for public display. The demonstrative pronoun originally referred to the object on which the text was inscribed. The exophoric reference of the demonstrative of the original monumental formula to a surrounding physical structure on which an inscription was written was subsequently transferred to the textual object of a document (Khan 2019).

After the document was drawn up the witnesses wrote declarations at the bottom that they had witnessed the oral acknowledgement by the parties of the transaction, that the parties were in sound health as well as legally capable of conducting their affairs, and that they are acquainted with the parties. Extant Arabic legal documents from the first two Islamic centuries do not have autograph witness clauses, but rather only a list of the witnesses' names. In the early Islamic period written declarations of witnessing were not regarded as reliable or legally binding. Only oral testimony could validate a document (Schacht 1950, 188). By the 3rd AH, it was performed in writing by means of autograph witness clauses written by the witnesses. There appears to have been an intermediate stage in which witnesses wrote private, unofficial notes to record their acts of oral witnessing. These written notes were separate from the legal documents, which were public, official texts. Reference to the existence of these private written records is found in some extant legal documents from the second half of the second century AH and the beginning of the third century AH, where in addition to a list of witnesses there is an indication that each witness wrote a document recording his act of witnessing. The witnesses can be assumed to have made written copies of their oral testimonies for their

own private records. Such private records of testimonies can be identified in some extant papyri (Khan 2019, 31–36).

When the house was subsequently sold and its ownership transferred to somebody else, this was recorded on the verso in the form of a *faṣl*. This literally means ‘section’. I have translated it as ‘supplementary document’. For the term see Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿArab* IX, 26:13. This has the form of a record of legal acknowledgement, opening *ʿaqarra* PN (‘PN declared’), in which the buyer named on the recto acknowledged in the presence of witnesses that the ownership was transferred to another party.

In the document on the recto 11 Firk. Arab. 1, lines 34–35, it is stated that ‘The seller brought in his hand a document testifying in his support to the validity of his ownership of what he sold ... and he has a document with the status of a primary document (*ʿaṣl*), and on the verso of each of them was written an acknowledgement of this sale, its date being the date of this document and its witnesses being its witnesses’.

This indicates that when a person bought a house (or a portion of one) two documents were drawn up. One of these is what is referred to as the *ʿaṣl* ‘origin, base, foundation’, i.e. a foundational certificate of his ownership. This is the document of sale written from the perspective of the buyer, opening *hādā mā ʾiṣtarā* PN ‘This is what PN bought’, as on the recto of 11 Firk. Arab. 1.

The second of these was a document of *ṣahādah* ‘a document testifying in his support to the validity of his ownership’. Many such documents of *ṣahādah* from the Middle Ages are extant. They typically open with the formula *ṣahida al-ṣuhūd al-musammūna ʾākira hādā al-kitāb ... ʿalā ʾiqrār* PN ‘The witnesses at the end of this document have borne testimony ... to the acknowledgement of PN’ or slight variants of this. Examples of *ṣahādah* documents relating to the transfer of property include Vienna, National Library 10254 (ed. Thung 2006, 66–67) and Qaṣr Ibrīm 46 recto (ed. Khan 2024). Such documents can be considered to record acts of secondary witnessing (*ṣahādah ʿalā ṣahādah*) in order to strengthen the protection of the contract against claims (Wakin 1972, 68–70). Al-Ṭaḥāwī recommends that such *ṣahādah* documents contain a copy of the full text of the *ʿaṣl* document and the names of its witnesses (al-Ṭaḥāwī, III, *al-Buyūʿ*, 12.0–12.2).

It is possible that these *ṣahādah* documents were a development of the written copies of the oral testimony of witnesses that appear first in the second century AH, when witnesses still did not write witness clauses on the contracts themselves (see above).

When the property was sold, the *ʿaṣl* and the *ṣahādah* of the seller had a *faṣl* written on their verso recording an acknowledgement of the sale. The date and

witnesses of these *faṣl* documents were the same as those of the new *ʿaṣl* document drawn up for the buyer.

### 3.3 *Structure*

The structure of the document of sale on the recto corresponds closely to that of the documents of sale in the ALAD corpus. This structure has been described in detail in Khan, ALAD, pp. 10–29, and there is no need or space to examine this in detail here. I shall restrict myself to a few remarks.

Several of the documents from the Genizah include a description of the physical features of the contracting parties, known as a *ḥilyah*. Most of the named parties in our document are not accompanied by a detailed *ḥilyah*. The exception is the seller in the *faṣl* in the left column of the verso, Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn ibn Abū al-Ḥasan, who is given a *ḥilyah*. The same person in the earlier document in the right column of the verso, however, is not given a *ḥilyah*. The explanation for this may be that the burning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ by Ṣawār in 1168 CE caused a large increase in the population of Cairo and this occurred between the writing of the document in the right column of the verso (1160 CE) and the writing of the document in the left column (1176 CE). We have already seen that this increase in population caused a conspicuous increase in the price of the property bought in 1176 CE. The practice of writing a *ḥilyah* in the Genizah documents reflected a dense population, in which individuals were not necessarily well-known throughout the community. They are lacking in medieval documents from rural areas of Egypt, such as al-Fayyūm. It is significant that both parties in the later document 11 Firk. Arab. 3, dated 1241 CE, have a *ḥilyah*.

The typology of the formulae of the document of sale in 11 Firk. Arab. 1 recto corresponds in most details more closely to that of the contemporary documents from al-Fuṣṭāṭ preserved in the Genizah rather than to that of documents written in Upper Egypt or outside of Egypt. It is worth mentioning, however, some details about the warranty formula.

The warranty against a fault in ownership (*darak*) in the event of the buyer's title being contested by a third party<sup>7</sup> is expressed by a formula that corresponds broadly to the one that is found in the Genizah documents, but somewhat more detailed (recto, 31–33). As in the Genizah documents, it opens with a protasis construction with the indefinite pronoun *mā* 'whatever': *fa-mā ʿadraka fīmā ʿalay-hi ʿaqd hādā al-bayʿ al-madkūr min darak ...* 'Whatever claim relating to fault in ownership is made against them in respect of what the contract

<sup>7</sup> For the origin of the term *darak*, see Khan (1994).



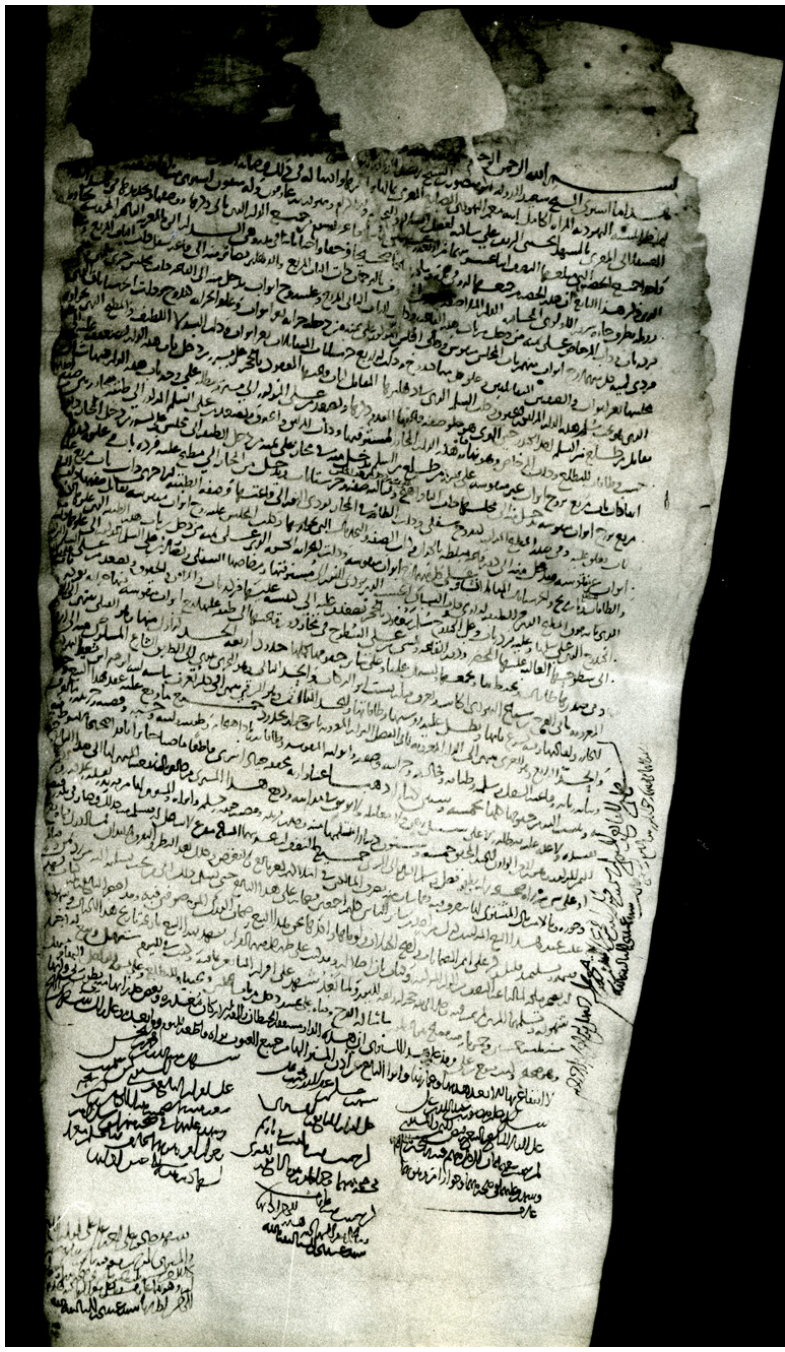


FIGURE 10.1 II Firk. Arab. 1 recto

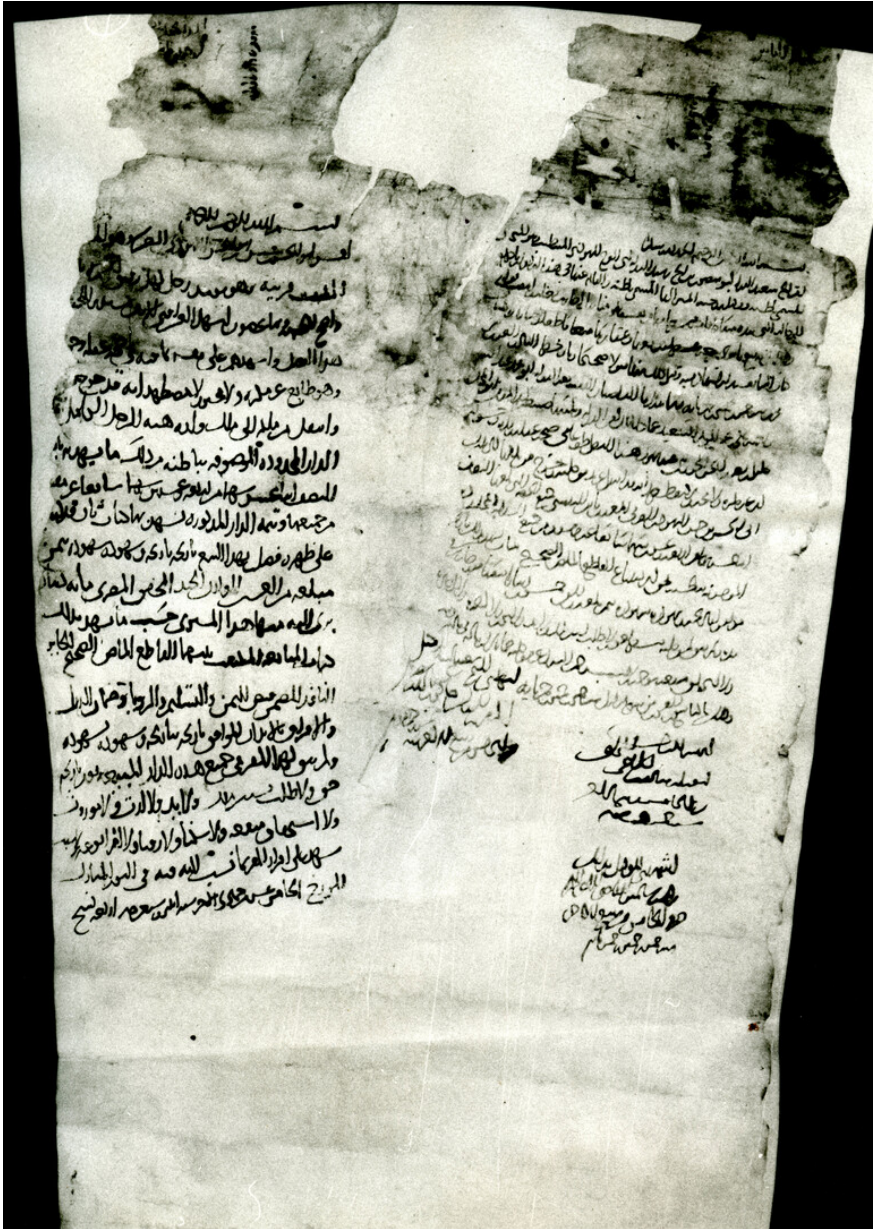


FIGURE 10.2 II Firk. Arab. 1 verso

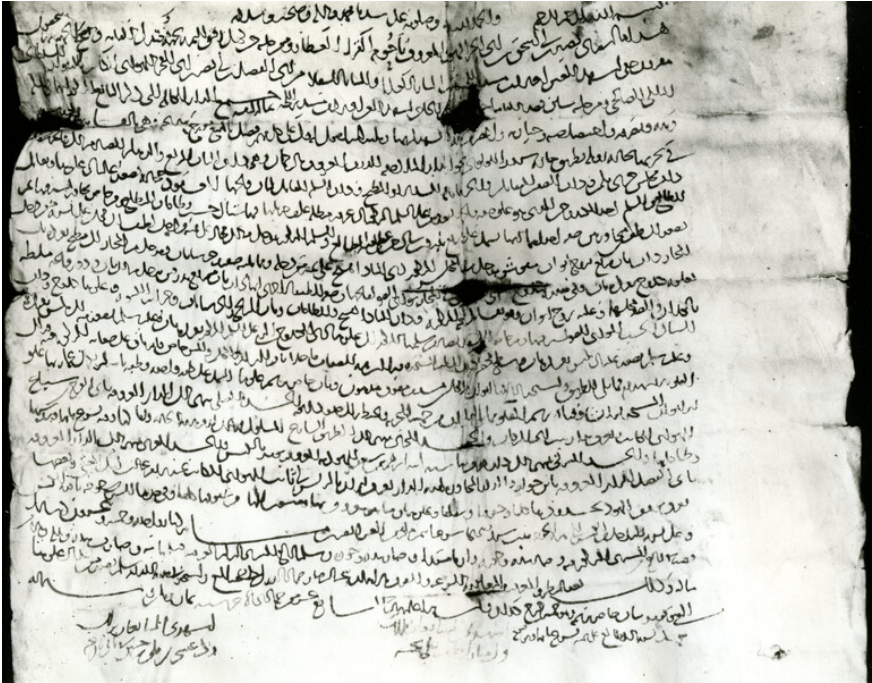


FIGURE 10.3 II Firk. Arab. 3 recto

of the aforementioned sale entailed'. The apodosis, however, opens *fa-ḍamānuhu 'alā hādā al-bā'i' ḥattā yusallim dālika* 'this seller is obliged to stand warranty for it and deliver that', whereas the corresponding section of the warranty in the Genizah documents typically opens *fa-'alā hādā al-bā'i' taslīm* 'it is the duty of this seller to deliver ...'. A close equivalent to the apodosis of the warranty in our document is found in the documents recording the purchase of land in the environs of Damascus in the fourth century AH published by Sourdél-Thomine and Sourdél (1965), e.g. nos. 1 and 2: *fa-ḍamān mā yajib (read so) fī dālika 'alā PN ḥattā yusallim dālika* 'the warranty of what is due in respect of this is incumbent upon PN. (He is responsible) until he delivers that'.

#### 4 Concluding Remarks

The Arabic legal documents from Cairo that are the subject of this paper are important complements to the Arabic legal documents from the Genizah in the ALAD corpus. They give us insight into the structure of houses in medieval Cairo. They allow us to trace the fate of one particular house over several gen-

erations and the fluctuations in price due to population changes. Furthermore, they cast light on the process of drawing up documents during the sale of a house.

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# *Qiṣṣat al-Ġumġuma*: An Arabic-script Version of ‘The Story of the Skull’ in the Cairo Genizah Collections

Magdalen M. Connolly

## 1 Introduction

This paper comprises a brief discussion of the text of the fragment classified as CUL T-S NS 306.13,<sup>1</sup> followed by a transcription, translation into English, and comments on some of the text’s notable orthographic and linguistic features. This small fragment, catalogued as an ‘Apocalyptic legend about Jesus’ (Shivtiel and Niessen 2006), is—more specifically—a version of ‘The Story of the Skull’ (قصة الجمجمة *qiṣṣat al-ġumġumah*).<sup>2</sup> There are a few known copies of this popular tale in the Cairo Genizah collections, but this is the only Arabic-script version therein that has yet been identified.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it differs from the (possibly later) extant versions in Arabic in Hebrew characters in one important way; the skull’s interlocutor is referred to not as ‘that man’ (ذلك الشخص *dālika al-šaḡṣ*), but as ‘Īsá, Prophet of God’ (عيسى نبي الله *Īsá nabīy `allāh*).

This narrative was popular among all three monotheistic faiths in the Arabic-speaking world. Versions of it survive in Arabic in several scripts (Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac, for example), Syriac (Hall 1890), Neo-Aramaic (Pennacchietti 1991), Turkish (Bernardini 1999a; 1999b; Babacan Bursalı 2018), Urdu, Persian (Pennacchietti 1996), and several Indonesian languages, including Javanese (Brakel-Papenhuyzen 2002). Although the narrative is adapted to reflect

1 My thanks to the syndics of Cambridge University Library for allowing me to publish this fragment. This work has been made possible by the generous support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in the form of a Humboldt Post-doctoral Research Fellowship.

2 I came across this fragment while working as a Research Associate at the Genizah Research Unit (GRU) as part of my cataloguing duties. The experience of working at the GRU was invaluable and enormously enjoyable. I am grateful to Dr Ben Outhwaite and for all my colleagues at the GRU for making it such a positive and rewarding experience.

3 See, e.g., JTS ENA 1275.5, 1275.12, 13, ENA 2700.48, ENA 3239.34, which comprise leaves which have been separated, but are all from the same version; and CUL T-S Ar.37.39 For Judaeo-Arabic versions of the text, which are not from the Cairo Genizah collections, see, e.g., NLI Cairo Collection JC 104 and Ørum (2017).

each religious tradition's prevailing views on punishment, resurrection, and the afterlife, the story may be briefly summed up as follows: ʿĪsá (or ʿAlī, Mūsá, or an unidentified man)<sup>4</sup> encounters a skull lying on the ground. He prays to God, asking that the skull be permitted to speak to him, answer his questions, and satisfy his curiosity. His prayer is fulfilled and there ensues a dialogue, in which the main protagonist poses questions about the skull's life, death, and experiences in hell, to which the skull responds with detailed answers. Through this dialogue, the reader/listener learns that the skull was a great ruler, who enjoyed high status, employed swathes of decorated (and, sometimes, bejewelled) soldiers, had multiple wives and many children, and cared for the poor and needy. His one weakness—and the reason for his disgrace—is that he worshipped idols. He thus falls ill, dies, and descends into hell, where he encounters Munkar, Nakīr, and the Angel of Death, and is subjected to the torments of hell. In Muslim and Christian versions of the tale, the skull is resurrected and permitted to live a reformed life on earth. In the Jewish tradition, the skull is simply allowed to rest in peace.

Tottoli (2003, 229) demonstrates that versions of this story are attested in more limited forms in some eleventh-century CE sources, such as Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī's (d. 1038 CE) *Ḥilyat al-ʿawliyāʾ*. However, its non-canonical status is evident in its exclusion from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭaʿlabī's (d. ca. 1035 CE) contemporaneous *Qiṣaṣ al-ʿanbiyāʾ*, and from its ready adaptation to the needs and interests of many different communities. It has no precedent in pre- or early Islamic poetry or in the Qurʾan (Tottoli 2003, 229, 232). Pennacchietti (1996, 102–103) also finds references to this more limited narrative in the twelfth-century CE works of al-Ġazzālī (d. 1111 CE) and al-Ṭurṭūšī (d. 1127 CE).

In the earliest extant adaptations of the tale, the skull does not give details of his life or status on earth, and no mention is made of Munkar and Nakīr (Tottoli 2003, 231). By the twelfth century CE, these elements are encountered in

4 The skull's interlocutor is referred to by several different names, reflecting the religious or sectarian affiliation of the copyist/writer. For example, Tottoli (2003, 233) refers to several Šīʿī versions of the tale in which the main protagonist is ʿAlī, while Pennacchietti (2005, 298) discusses a Judaeo-Persian version, which features Mūsá. The versions in Arabic in Hebrew characters found in the Cairo Genizah collections do not identify the skull's interlocutor by name, but simply call him 'that man'. The skull's own identity also changes; in some Christian versions—be they in Syriac, Neo-Aramaic, or Arabic—the skull is identified as Arsānis (Hall 1890; Pennacchietti 1991; 2005). In most Muslim and Jewish Arabic versions, the skull is an unnamed King or Sultan, but Pennacchietti (1995) transliterates (into Latin characters) and translates (into Italian) a pre-modern rhymed-Arabic version (Ms Gotha Orient. A 2212, fols. 2 verso–9 recto), in which the skull is named as Bālwān b. Ḥaṣḥ b. Daylam.



some versions of the narrative,<sup>5</sup> but as Tottoli (2003, 239) notes, the extended versions, preserved in many later manuscripts, are not yet in evidence at this time. The emergence of this fuller narrative (which includes many if not all of the elements mentioned above) is attributed to the composition of the Persian tale, *Ġumġuma-nāma*, ascribed to Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār (d. 1221 CE) (Pennacchiotti 1995, 145; Tottoli 2003, 239; cf. Bernardini 1999a; Babacan Bursalı 2018).<sup>6</sup> Although this version appears to have lent the story some literary authority, later learned figures mention it only rarely, and today the tale is found most commonly in unpublished manuscripts (Pennacchiotti 1996, 103; Tottoli 2003, 241).

Despite its lack of literary prestige, the popularity of the tale during the pre-modern era is attested by the large number of manuscripts in which adaptations of it survive.<sup>7</sup> These versions are rarely identical, showing variation in both narrative content and linguistic style. These differences have led Pennacchiotti (1996, 91) and Tottoli (2003, 253) to conclude that the narrative was primarily transmitted orally, in all the languages in which it was recounted. Yet while these differences are significant, the plot is—with the exception of the ending—largely established by the fifteenth/sixteenth century CE. The majority of post-thirteenth-century CE texts include a detailed account of the skull’s life, mention of Munkar and Nakīr, and an in-depth discussion of the levels of hell, to which various sinners are banished (Tottoli 2003, 239).

Although we do not (as yet) possess more than a single leaf of this version of the narrative, the extant contents (missing the beginning and end) grant us

5 Tottoli (2003, 237) notes that al-Ġazzālī (d. 1111 CE) refers to the skull as a king—a detail absent in other pre-thirteenth-century CE versions of the narrative—which he attributes to Šī‘ī influence.

6 Ritter (1960) attributes the Persian tale to ‘Aṭṭār. This attribution has been recently challenged by Turkish Studies scholars (see Babacan Bursalı 2018).

7 Most of these texts—if not all—can be dated to between the sixteenth and early twentieth centuries CE (Tottoli 2003, 242). To the 32 Arabic-script versions Tottoli (2003, 255–257) identifies, may be added CUL Qq. 173, fols. 148 recto–156 verso (dated 1124AH/1712 CE) (see Connolly 2020) and more than 30 versions written in Maghrebi- and Sūdānī-style scripts (on varieties of which, see van den Boogert 1989; Nobili 2011), which are now housed in three libraries (the Aboubacr Ben Said Library, the Mamma Haidara Library, and the Bibliothèque de Manuscrits al-Imam Essayouti) in Mali, and which are available to view via the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) (<https://www.vhmmml.org>). Although these manuscripts are now located in Mali, the founder of the Mamma Haidara Library, for instance, is known to have collected manuscripts in Egypt and areas of the Maghreb, as well as from West Africa. Although the exact provenance information is not available on the HMML website, an (extremely) approximate sense of regional origin might be gained through the study of the very distinctive palaeographical styles used in many of the manuscripts.

some insight into its possible period of composition or copy and a (albeit rather vague) sense of its regional origin. In its extant form, it begins with the skull's description of his wealth, generosity, and magnanimity as a ruler. At the behest of 'Īsá, who asks the skull about its death, his experience of the grave, encounters with Munkar, Nakīr, and Mālik, the skull goes on to describe his illness, descent into hell, and encounter with the Angel of Death. The narrative breaks off just after the skull has finished telling 'Īsá about the six faces of the Angel of Death. Bearing these elements in mind, it seems likely that this text would have been committed to paper after the thirteenth century CE. The level of detail regarding the skull's life is akin to that given in sixteenth- to early twentieth-century CE versions of the narrative. However, the composition of the material support renders a post-seventeenth-century CE date very unlikely (see below). As such, this fragment's text can be tentatively dated to between the thirteenth and late sixteenth centuries CE.

Moreover, this single leaf contains a detail which raises questions about its regional origin and the regional variants of the narrative. On the last line of recto and first line of verso, the skull recounts—somewhat euphemistically<sup>8</sup>—having sexual intercourse with one of his wives, before heading to the *ḥammām*, where he falls ill. This personal detail is missing in many of the versions that can positively be identified as having been written down in Levantine and Egyptian contexts; I have only come across it in manuscripts of Maghrebi and West African origin.<sup>9</sup> In Islamic teaching, individuals who engage in sexual intercourse are considered ritually unclean and are morally obliged to wash (*ḡusl*) themselves before partaking in any further activities, such as eating or drinking. This additional detail, therefore, provides important context for why the king/sultan went to the *ḥammām*—context that is omitted (if indeed it was ever included) in many of the extant versions of the narrative.

8 This version of the narrative states only that 'I looked at one of my wives and [then took place] what is between the [*sic.*] man and a wife. Then I entered the *ḥammām*.' (CUL T-S NS 306.13, recto, line 12–verso, line 2). This ambiguous phrasing is also found in other manuscripts that contain this detail (see, e.g., MS Mali Bibliothèque de Manuscrits al-Imam Essayouti 15389, f. 3, lines 16–18), but in BnF Arabe 5616, the event is described explicitly:

انا كنت يوما من الايام مع النساء فنظرت الى احد منه [ن] فتحركت شهوتي فواقعها ثم دخلت الحمام  
'One day, I was with my wives, and I looked at one of (them) and my desire was aroused, so I had sex with her. Then I entered the *ḥammām*.' (BnF Arabe 5616, f. 67 recto, lines 23–25).

9 See, for example, BnF Arabe 5616, fols. 67 recto–68 verso (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9065616f/f71.item.r=5616>, accessed 1 February 2024); MS Mali Bibliothèque de Manuscrits al-Imam Essayouti 3776, p. 4, lines 4–5 (<https://www.vhmmml.org/readingRoom/view/160820>, accessed 1 February 2024); MS Mamma Haidara Library 15387, p. 3, lines 5–8 (<https://www.vhmmml.org/readingRoom/view/161768>, accessed 1 February 2024). These texts all appear to have been produced during or after the eighteenth century CE.

Does this text represent an earlier, coarser, but widely circulated version of the tale? Potentially, this lewd detail was gradually excluded in eastern adaptations of the narrative until there was no reason given for the king/sultan's visit to the *ḥammām*. Or does this fragment represent a regional version of the tale popular in the Maghreb and West Africa, which differed from those recounted in eastern regions of the Islamicate world?

Unfortunately, this single leaf with no colophon does not provide us with concrete answers to these questions. Indeed, it remains silent not only in relation to specificities of content, regional origin, and date, but also as to the reason for its presence in the Cairo Genizah collections; its Islamic origin cannot be doubted. As such, we can only speculate as to its inclusion in a *genizah*. It could have been bought by a Jew to be used as an exemplar from which to transliterate the narrative from Arabic into Hebrew characters; but the many differences between this version and the (possibly later) versions in Hebrew characters found in the Genizah collections render this improbable. Moreover, there is little that is exemplary about its execution. One possible clue to its use, if not its ownership, is that the leaf has been folded horizontally at least ten times, suggesting that it was rendered portable. As with some of the Arabic-script Qur'an fragments contained in the Cairo Genizah collections (see Connolly and Posegay 2021), it may signify active and popular (if only at the non-elite levels of society) Jewish engagement in broader Islamicate society.<sup>10</sup>

## 2 Physical Description of the Fragment

### 2.1 *Codicology*

The material support, which is 'buff-coloured', soft, thick, and fibrous, is wove paper that measures 16×10.7 cm. As Posegay and Da Rold (forthcoming, 19–20)<sup>11</sup> find in their study of watermarked paper in the Cairo Genizah collections, it is extremely rare to find wove paper in Cairo Genizah material after about 1600 CE.<sup>12</sup> As such, it is likely that this paper was produced before this period. The outside edge of the recto is more fibrous than the inner edge, suggesting

10 On popular literature recorded in Arabic script in the Cairo Genizah collections, see Ahmed (2018).

11 I am grateful to Dr Nick Posegay for allowing me to read the pre-print version of his forthcoming article.

12 Gacek (2009, 189–190) states that wove paper's heyday was between the mid to late eighth

that it has been separated from a bifolium without the use of a knife; this may indicate that the text was written on the leaf after it had been removed from a bifolium. There are a few dark stains, some evidence of humidity damage, two small tears to the top margin, and five small holes. The leaf has been folded horizontally ten times. The colour of the ink varies a little and is notably darker in the latter ten lines of verso.

## 2.2 *Palaeography*

The writing cannot be described as professionally executed. The lines of writing slope variously upwards and downwards towards the end of the textline, suggesting that no *miṣṭarah* was employed in its production. The hasty execution is also evident in the omission of words (see, e.g., verso, line 11) or a letter (see, e.g., recto, line 6), and the writer's attempt to fit just one more word onto the end of a textline; after writing the first few letters of the word, the writer realises that they cannot complete it, so abandons it, and re-writes the word again on the following line (see, e.g., verso, lines 9–10).<sup>13</sup>

Each word slants diagonally downwards in a manner reminiscent of *ta'liq* and *nasta'liq* script-styles, but the script itself does not replicate any particular style and can only be described—somewhat unhelpfully—as 'cursive'. Of particular note, *ṣād* and *ḍād* are written without a 'tooth' (or 'denticle'). In word-medial and word-final positions, *kāf* is rendered as an s-shape (*kāf mabsūṭah*), but in word-initial position, its form oscillates between *kāf mabsūṭah*, a straight-lined form without a top stroke, and a curved-base with a straight, diagonal top stroke (*kāf maškūlah*). The generous sweep of word-final *nūn* alternates between a semi-circle and a bowl-like shape. *Lām* followed by *'alif* is written as a ligature, which most closely resembles *lām-'alif al-muḥaqqaqah*, in so far as it has a gentle, curved bottom, but it sometimes has a closed, as opposed to open, loop.

In isolation, the absence of a 'tooth' on the letters *ṣād* and *ḍād* could be considered indicative of a Maghrebi origin—or at least of Maghrebi influence (Gacek 2009, 149). However, many of the other palaeographical features are reminiscent of (eastern) *nasḵī* script styles and the overall impression is mixed—even miscellaneous.

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century CE until the late thirteenth century CE, after which point European paper began to be widely imported into the region. As Posegay and Da Rold (forthcoming, 16, n. 48) note, this trajectory is corroborated by the findings of their study.

13 As Dr Nick Posegay points out (personal communication), the seeming haste with which this text was written down might indicate that it was transcribed during an oral performance.

There are several instances of unorthodox ligatures, such as in the joining of *wāw* to the following *mīm* in the word *اليوم* ‘the day’ (verso, line 6) and the conjoining of *rāʾ* and *yāʾ* in *كرما* ‘generous’ (recto, line 6).<sup>14</sup>

### 3 Transcription and Translation<sup>15</sup>

Key:

- { } superscript word or letter.  
 < > reconstruction based on another version.<sup>16</sup>  
 [ ] reconstruction based on this text.  
 ( ) addition to the translation intended to aid readability.

#### 3.1 *Recto*

(And on their heads, they wore crowns of) gold and silver, studded with pearls, rubies, and gems.

1 الذهب والفضة مرصعة بالدر والياقوت والجوهر  
 الذهب والفضة مرصعت<sup>17</sup> بالدر والياقوت والجوهر

And there were under my control four thousand (soldiers) in whose hands were un-sheathed swords,

2 وكان في رماي اربع الاف نادمهم السيوف  
 المنجده<sup>18</sup>  
 وكان في زماي اربع الاف بأيديهم السيوف  
 المتجدة

14 These ligatures have not been replicated in the transcription, here.  
 15 I am grateful to both Dr Vevian Zaki and Dr Nick Posegay, who kindly read my transcription, making useful and insightful comments and suggestions. Any errors herein are mine (Editor's note: Unless Nick messed something up, that's on him).  
 16 The versions of this narrative consulted in the transcription of this text are: (in Arabic script) CUL Qq. 173, fols. 148 recto–156 verso; BnF Arabe 5616, fols. 67 recto–68 verso; BnF Arabe 3655, fols. 110 recto–115 verso (incomplete); BnF Arabe 3652, fols. 90 verso–94 recto; BnF Arabe 2761, fols. 64 verso–78 verso; Vat.Ar.1747, fols. 145 recto–147 verso; Aboubacr Ben Said Library MS 4145; Aboubacr Ben Said Library MS 4023; Mamma Haidara Library MS 15387; Mamma Haidara Library MS 15389; Bibliothèque de Manuscrits al-Imam Essay-outi MS 3776; and (in Hebrew characters) NLI Cairo Collection JC 104; CUL T-S Ar.37.39; and JTS ENA 1275.5, 1275.12, 13, ENA 2700.48, ENA 3239.34.  
 17 مرصعة (see § 4).  
 18 The final letter could also be read as an additional *dāl* or perhaps even a *yāʾ*?

- so (that) no one was able to reach me. But I (and) they—we were worshipping idols and
- 3 ولا يقدر احد يصل الي وكتب اناهم نعد الاصنام  
وما  
ولا يقدر أحد يصل الي وكنت أنا [و]هم نعبد  
الأصنام وما
- and none of us declared: “there is no god except Him!” I had a thousand servant girls
- 4 وما منا من يقول لا اله الا هو وكان لي الف حاربه  
وما منا من يقول لا اله الا هو وكان لي ألف جارية
- and a hundred wives from among the daughters of kings. I was the handsomest
- 5 ومائه امراه من سبات الملوك وكتب احسن الناس  
وجها  
ومائة امرأة من بنات الملوك وكنت أحسن الناس  
وجها
- and funniest person (in the world)! I was generous in the world; I loved the weak (and vulnerable)
- 6 واصحهم سنا وكتب كريما في الدسا واحب  
الضعاف [ف]  
واضح [ك] هم سنا<sup>19</sup> وكنت كريما في الدنيا واحبت  
الضعاف
- and I clothed the orphans and the widows. Then ‘Īsá, peace be upon him, said,
- 7 واكسى الساما والارامل فبعد ذلك قال عسى  
عليه السلام  
واكسى اليتاما<sup>20</sup> والارامل فبعد ذلك قال عيسى  
عليه السلام
- “tell me, O Skull, what did you see of death and (its) appearance?”
- 8 احبريني باها الجمجمة كيف راب الموت ووجه  
أخبريني بأيها الجمجمة كيف رأيت الموت ووجه
- And the Angel of Death and his terrors? And the grave and its anguish? (What about) Munkar
- 9 وملك الموت ورعسه والفر وصعفه ومكر  
وملك الموت ورعبته والقبر وضيقته ومنكر

19 Based on alternative versions of this narrative, I have read this as سنا; ماضحكهم; on the understanding that the *kāf* has been omitted by mistake. The alternative readings are ضاحك السن (BnF Arabe 2761, 66 recto, lines 8–9) and ضحك السن (CUL Qq. 173, 150 recto, line 2).

20 يتامى (see § 4).

and Nakīr and their tyranny?  
And the fire and its torment?  
And (what about) Mālik and  
his agony?"

10 ونكرو وصولهم والنار وعذابها ومالك وعصه  
ونكير ووصولهم والنار وعذابها ومالك وغصته

The Skull answered him, "O  
Prophet of God, you have  
indeed asked me about a  
prodigious matter. I shall tell  
you

11 فقالت الجمجمة له يا سي الله لقد سألني عن امر  
عظيم اعلمك  
فقالت الجمجمة له يا نبي الله لقد سألتني عن أمر  
عظيم أعلمك

O Prophet of God, that one  
day I (was with) my wives and  
I looked at one

12 يا سي الله اني يوم من الايام انا وساي ان نظرت  
الى احد  
يا نبي الله اني يوم من الايام انا ونسائي ان نظرت  
الى احد

### 3.2 *Verso*

of them and (then took place)  
that which is between (a) man  
and a wife. Then I entered the  
*ḥammām*.

1 مهم ما يكون بين الرجل ورحه اد دخلت الحمام [م]  
منهن ما يكون بين الرجل وزجه<sup>21</sup> اذ دخلت الحمام

I stayed there (in) the washtub  
(a while). Then (suddenly),  
pallor came upon me, so they  
carried me to my palace

2 واظلت {هها} المكن فارف لي<sup>22</sup> الصفرا فحملوني  
الى قصرى  
واظلت<sup>23</sup> فيها المكن فتأزق لي الصفرا<sup>24</sup> فحملوني  
الى قصرى

and laid me on my bed, where  
I slept that night, sorrowful

3 وارقدوني على سريري ومنت ذلك اللله مهموما  
وارقدوني على سريري ومنت ذلك الليلة مهموما

and distressed. When I woke,  
every physician in the city  
came to me

4 معموما فلما اصبح ابوني بكل طبب كان في  
معموما فلما اصبحت اتوني بكل طبيب كان في

21 وزوجة (see § 4).

22 Could also be read as بي.

23 Form IV used as form I (see § 4).

24 الصفرة (see § 4).

- to treat me with all the remedies for seven days, but they were of no use to me. On the eighth day, my limbs began to tremble and my tongue cleaved to the back of my throat.
- Then they (lit. he) gathered all my possessions, for they (lit. he) were not concerned about me [...]. Then I fainted and I saw the Angel of Death; for he was already present. His head was in the seventh heaven and his feet were at the boundaries of the earth. He had spread his wings across East and West and in his right hand (he held) a spear, while in his left (he held a chalice). I saw that he had six
- 5 المدسه يعالجوني تلك بجميع الادويه سعه انام فلم  
المدینه يعالجوني بجميع الادوية سبعة ايام فلم
- 6 بمعني مهن سيات فلما كان في اليوم الثامن اصحت  
ينفعني مهن شيا فلما كان في اليوم الثامن أصبحت
- 7 مفاصلي قد ارتعدت ولساني قد تعلقه في سقف  
حلقي  
مفاصلي قد ارتعدت ولساني قد تعلقه في سقف  
حلقي
- 8 فاحصر بجميع ملكي فلم يعنى عني من ا [...] نى تم  
عمي  
فاحضر بجميع ملكي فلم يعنى عني من [...] ثم غمي
- 9 علي فراش ملك الموت { } وقد حضر وراسه في  
السماء  
علي فرأيت ملك الموت وقد حضر وراسه في السماء  
السابعة
- 10 السابعة ورجليه في محوم الارض سد محاحه  
الاحافض  
السابعة ورجليه في تخوم<sup>25</sup> الأرض سدّ بجناحيه  
الاخافضين<sup>26</sup>
- 11 وفي يده الامن وفي يده اليسرا كأس وراش له  
ست [ه]  
وفي يده الأيمن <حربة><sup>27</sup> وفي يده اليسرا<sup>28</sup> كأس  
ورأيت له ستة

25 I read this as *تخوم* 'limits, boundaries' on the basis that it is the reading found in CUL Qq. 173, 150 verso, line 13. However, other (later) manuscripts have *نجوم* 'stars', here (see, e.g., BnF Arabe 2761, 67 verso, line 9).

26 Although there appears to be an initial (additional) *ʿalif* after the definite article here, this should be read as *الخالقين* 'East and West' (cf. CUL Qq. 173, 150 verso, line 14).

27 Reconstructed on the basis of CUL Qq. 173, 150 verso, line 15.

28 *اليسرى* (see § 4).



faces; a face above his head, a face under his feet, a face	12	وجوه ووجه فوق رأسه ووجه تحـ رجليه ووجه وجوه ووجه فوق رأسه ووجه تحـ رجليه ووجه
on his right (side) and a face on his left (side), a face behind his back and a face	13	عن يمينه ووجه عن شماله ووجه خلف ظهره ووجه عن يمينه ووجه عن شماله ووجه خلف ظهره ووجه
in front of him.” ‘Īsá, peace be upon him, said, “did you know what he did (with them)?”	14	قدامه قال عيسى عليه السلام فهل علمي ما يصنع قدامه قال عيسى عليه السلام فهل علمي ما يصنع <بها>

#### 4 Notes on Orthography and Grammar<sup>29</sup>

##### 4.1 *Orthography and Phonology*

This un-vocalised and often un-pointed Arabic-script text perhaps conceals more than it reveals in terms of phonology. However, through, for example, the occasional graphemic substitution or omission of *hamzah*, an impression is gained of colloquial influence. In terms of orthography, the economical use of diacritical dots is not unusual for pre-modern Arabic-script texts (see, e.g., the documents reproduced in Khan 1993a; 1993b), but is perhaps more notable in a literary genre. Most folktales that I have seen copied in manuscripts produced in Egypt ca. sixteenth/seventeenth century tend to have pointed graphemes (albeit often incompletely). This omission may be indicative of an earlier date of production or simply be in keeping with the overall impression that the copyist of this particular fragment was not overly concerned with its appearance.

##### 4.1.1 Diacritical Dots

Diacritical dots are used rather sparingly by the composer or copyist; the only letters to receive diacritical dots (or horizontal dashes) are: *fāʾ*, *qāf*, *nūn*, *tāʾ* (for the pointing of *tāʾ* see § 4.1.6.2), and *yāʾ*. Among these, *qāf* is marked with a supralinear horizontal dash in only one out of 20 occurrences (5%). *Fāʾ*, which is marked with a single supralinear dot in the eastern tradition, is pointed in three out of the 35 instances in which it occurs (8.6%). The grapheme *tāʾ*, when representing the voiceless alveolar stop [t], is marked with two diacritical dots or a horizontal dash in four of 37 instances (10.8%). The letter *nūn* is marked with a supralinear diacritical dot in nine out of 59 instances (15.3%). Finally,

29 In the examples from the text listed in § 4, I have pointed the non-pointed graphemes to ensure readability.

the grapheme *yā'*, which is used to represent the consonant /y/ (voiced palatal glide [j]), the long vowel /ī/ ([i:]), and the diphthong /ay/ ([aj]), is pointed in 23 out of 90 occurrences (25.5%). Of 22 instances in which *yā'* represents /y/, only two of these are pointed. Of 53 instances in which *yā'* represents /ī/, 17 of these are pointed. Of 14 instances in which *yā'* represents the diphthong [ay] (assuming that it was pronounced as such), four of these are pointed.<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Representation of Final Long /ā/ Vowel

The final /ā/ vowel is represented in Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) orthography in one of two ways; with *'alif ṭawīlah* (ا-) or *'alif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yā'* (ى-).<sup>31</sup> In this text, the two graphemes appear to be used interchangeably and, therefore, are likely to both represent the phoneme /ā/, e.g., e.g., اليتاما 'orphans' (recto, line 7) (MSA: يتامى *yatāmá*); اليسرا 'the left hand' (verso, line 11) (MSA: يسرى *yusrá*); عيسى 'Īsá' (recto, line 7; verso, line 14) (MSA: عيسى); على 'on' (verso, line 3) (MSA: على *'alá*).

#### 4.1.3 Representation of Medial Long /ā/ Vowels

The *defectiva* spelling of medial /ā/ in demonstratiḡe pronouns is consistent, e.g., ذلك 'that' (recto, line 7; verso, line 3) (MSA: ذلك *dālika*), while elsewhere this medial long vowel is spelled *plene*, e.g., عليه السلام 'peace be upon him' (recto, line 7; verso, line 14) (MSA: *'alay-hi al-salām*). While this is in keeping with spelling practices found in pre-modern personal-use Qur'an fragments (see Connolly and Posegay 2021, 25–29), in which the medial long vowel /ā/ in demonstrative pronouns tends to be written *defectiva*, the data set presented here is too small to permit expanding on the significance of this finding.

#### 4.1.4 Representation of Final Short /i/ Vowel

In the following example, the 2.f.sg. subject suffix *-ti* (ت-) is written with *mater lectionis yā'* (without the sublinear dots): علمتي 'you knew' (verso, line 14). In classical Arabic and MSA (*'alimti*) and Modern Cairene Arabic (*'ilimti*), this verbal suffix is written and pronounced with a final short /i/ vowel: علمت. Today, in some other dialects, such as San'ānī Arabic, the final vowel of this verbal suffix

30 When not pointed with two sublinear dots or a single horizontal dash (i.e., ي), the grapheme *yā'* in word-final form (i.e., ى-) is indistinguishable from the letter *'alif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yā'* (ى-). *'Alif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yā'* occurs six times in this text.

31 On the question of whether these two graphemes once represented two independent phonemes, see van Putten (2017; 2023). The symbols ā and á are used here to represent *'alif ṭawīlah* (ا) and *'alif maqṣūrah bi-ṣūrat al-yā'* (ى), respectively. This should be understood as an attempt to distinguish the two graphemes in transcription rather than a comment on their phonetic value.

is lengthened (*'alimī*) (Watson 2002, 178). While it is possible that the use of (non-pointed) *yā'* here is intended to convey the lengthening of the final vowel from /i/ > [i:], it is also possible that it is simply a practical solution to the problem posed in non-vocalised texts of the indistinguishability between the 2.f.sg. (علبت) 2.m.sg. (علبت), 1.c.sg. (علبت), and 3.f.sg. (علبت) suffix conjugation verbal forms; without the final short vowels or *sukūn*, they can only be distinguished from one another by context.

#### 4.1.5 The Glottal Stop

The glottal stop [ʔ], which is represented with *hamzah* (ء) in MSA orthography, is not represented graphically, either in medial or final position in this text, e.g., كأس 'a cup' (verso, line 11) (MSA: *ka's*); راسه 'his head' (verso, line 12) (MSA: *ra'su-hu*); السما 'the heaven' (verso, line 9) (MSA: *al-samā'*); ونسائي 'and my wives' (recto, line 12) (MSA: *wa-nisā'-ī*). Its lack of orthographic representation does not necessarily mean that it wasn't pronounced, but there is no way of knowing—from the text's orthography—whether *'alif* or *yā'*, as they appear in these examples, were intended to initiate the pronunciation of the glottal stop, here. The omission of the grapheme representing [ʔ] is often understood to indicate that the writer or copyist did not pronounce this phoneme. In Modern Cairene Arabic and many Maghrebi dialects today, the [ʔ] in word-medial and word-final positions is very rarely pronounced; when it is, it is thought to be due to the influence of MSA pronunciation norms (Heath 2002, 180, § 3.4.2; see also Ennaji et al. 2004; Abdel-Massih et al. 2009).

#### 4.1.6 Graphemic Substitutions

##### 4.1.6.1 'Alif, tā', and hā' for tā' marbūṭah

The f.sg. nominal ending *-ah* is represented with *tā' marbūṭah* (ة) in MSA orthography. In this text, the f.sg. ending is variously represented with the graphemes *'alif*, *tā'*, and—most commonly—*hā'*, e.g., الصفرا 'pallor' (verso, line 2) (MSA: *al-ṣufrā*);<sup>32</sup> مرصعب بالدر 'studded with pearls' (recto, line 1) (MSA: *muraṣṣa'atan bi-l-durr*); الجمجمة 'the skull' (recto, lines 8, 11) (MSA: *al-ǧumǧumah*). In none of the eleven instances in which *hā'* represents *tā' marbūṭah* are the two supralinear dots normally associated with *tā' marbūṭah* used.

32 The interchangeability of *'alif* and *hā'* in the representation of the f.sg. ending is also evident in pre-modern Arabic texts in Hebrew letters, in which the Hebrew graphemes *heh* and *'alef* are both used for this purpose (see Connolly 2024). The interchangeability of these graphemes in word-final position may indicate that the phonemes they represent were not distinguishable from one another in quantity or quality but may both have been understood to represent [a] (on this, see Lentin 2012, 217).

This is a common practice in pre-modern 'Middle Arabic' texts of both Muslim and Christian origin (den Heijer 2012, 162–163).

In the construct state, in which the first term ends with a *tā'* *marbūṭah*, *hā'* is used, e.g., سبعة أيام 'seven days' (verso, line 5) (*sab'at 'ayyām*); ومانه امرأه 'and a hundred wives' (recto, line 5) (*mi'at 'imra'ah*).

#### 4.1.6.2 *Tā' for tā'*

In one of the rare instances of grapheme-pointing, the initial letter of the adverb ثم 'then, after that' (*tumma*) is pointed with two supralinear dots: تّم 'then' (verso, line 8), indicating that it was pronounced with an initial voiceless dental-alveolar stop [t], as opposed to a voiceless interdental fricative [θ], as it is in MSA. The interdental fricative phonemes \*/t̪/, \*/d̪/, and \*/d̪̣/ are realised as dental-alveolar stops (\*t̪/ > [t], \*/d̪/ > [d], and \*/d̪̣/ > [dʰ]) in Modern Cairene Arabic (Watson 2002) and some urban dialects in the Maghreb (Aguadé 2018, 44).<sup>33</sup> This graphemic substitution contributes to the overall impression that the copyist/composer was not concerned with—or was unaware of—the standardised orthography.

#### 4.1.7 *'Alif Tanwīn*

The indefinite accusative marker *-an* is generally represented with two supralinear *fathas*, one atop the other (ّ) in vocalised texts. When used to mark indefinite nouns in the accusative case (except those with the f.sg. (*tā'* *marbūṭah*), f.pl. endings, and final *hamzah* preceded by a long vowel), the letter 'alif *ṭawīlah* usually acts as a seat (l). In this text, there are several instances in which 'alif *ṭawīlah* is suffixed to indefinite nouns and one instance in which the f.sg. ending (non-construct state) is represented with *tā'*, e.g., شيا 'something' (verso, line 6) (MSA: *šay'an*); مہموما 'sorrowfully' (verso, line 3) (MSA: *mahmū-man*); مرصعت بالدر 'studded with pearls' (recto, line 1) (MSA: *muraṣṣa'atan bi-l-durr*).

Whether *tanwīn 'alif* would have been pronounced here as [an], [a:], [a], or indeed pronounced at all, is almost impossible to decipher. However, the substitution of *hā'* (which is the most common representation of the f.sg. ending in this text, see above) with *tā'* in a non-construct state noun does suggest that this vocalisation might have been read by the writer or copyist as either [tan], [ta], or [t].

33 For a list of North-African urban dialects in which the interdental fricatives are heard today, see Aguadé (2018, 44); for a more detailed treatment of this phenomenon and its historical development, see Guerrero (2021).

## 4.2 Morphology

On the whole, the morphological features of note in this text are akin to those encountered in texts which are generally termed ‘Middle Arabic’, today.<sup>34</sup>

### 4.2.1 Form IV Verb

There is one instance in this fragment, in which a form IV suffix conjugation verb is used to convey the meaning of a form I verb; اطلت فيها ‘and I stayed there ...’ (verso, line 2) (MSA: وظلت فيها *wa-ḍalltu fi-hā*). The meaning of this verb in forms II and IV is usually ‘to guard, protect s.th.; to overshadow s.th.’, whereas it is better understood with the form I meaning ‘to remain, stay’, here. The interchangeability in meaning of form I and IV suffix conjugation verbs is noted as a common feature in contemporaneous Arabic-language texts written in Hebrew letters (see Blau 1981, 111; 1995, 75–77).

### 4.2.2 Negation

Three different particles of negation appear in this text; *lam* (see, verso, lines 5–6) and *lā* (see, recto, line 3) are favoured for verbal negation, while the particles *mā* and *lā* are used in nominal negation (see, recto, line 4). With regards to *lam*, it is used before prefix conjugation verbs, but is not (as is evident in the following example) followed by the jussive, as one would expect in MSA; فلم يعنى عني ‘for he was not concerned about me’ (verso, line 8) (MSA: فلم يعنى بي *lam ya’ni*).

### 4.2.3 Demonstrative Pronouns

Although we only have one example of demonstrative pronominal-noun agreement in this text, it would seem from this instance that the demonstrative pronoun (far deixis) is invariable; at least, it does not inflect for gender: ذلك الليلة ‘that night’ (verso, line 3) (MSA: تلك الليلة *tilka al-laylah*). It is worth noting, however, that its pre-nominal position reflects the normative classical Arabic and MSA practices and Moroccan Arabic grammar, rather than the post-nominal position favoured in modern Egyptian colloquial Arabic (see Ennaji et al. 2004; Abdel-Massih et al. 2009).

### 4.2.4 Accusative Case Marking

In this text, we encounter several instances of final ‘*alif ṭawīlah*’ attached to indefinite nouns in the accusative case. Its use is not consistent, but where it

34 On the difficult question of what ‘Middle Arabic’ is, see Stokes (2021) and Connolly (2024). For an overview of ‘Middle Arabic’ as it is widely understood among scholars today, see Lentin (2008).

does occur, it is used in accordance with MSA norms. For example, the indefinite adjective *karīma(n)* acts as the predicate (and thus takes the accusative case) of *kān(a)*, with the subject being implicit within the verb; *وكنت كريما في الدنيا* 'I was generous in the world.' (recto, line 6). In another example, two indefinite passive participles are marked with *'alif (tanwīn)* to mark that they are expressing the state in which the action of the verb is performed, in a constructive referred to as *ḥāl* (circumstantial accusative); *وتمت ذلك الليلة مهموما*; *وتمت ذلك الليلة مهموما* 'I slept that night sorrowful and distressed.' (verso, lines 3–4). The phrasal comparative (*tamyīz*) is employed in the text; *وكنت أحسن الناس وجها واضحكهم سنا* 'I was the handsomest and funniest person (in the world)!' (recto, lines 5–6).

## 5 Summary

Like so many items in the Cairo Genizah collections, this unimposing fragment belies a rich, complicated history—whether examined from a socio-religious or linguistic perspective. It is a fine example of the many Arabic-script texts in the Cairo Genizah collections that have yet to be properly identified and examined, and which may—cumulatively—have profound significance for the understanding of non-standard written Arabic language in the medieval and pre-modern eras.

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# Six Leaves of the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna* in Hebrew Characters

*Mohamed Ahmed*

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

*Kalila wa-Dimna* is a collection of exciting moral stories written in a unique style, both in terms of narration and its technique of maintaining suspense.<sup>2</sup> The stories in *Kalila wa-Dimna* are based on an imaginary dialogue between animals, and each story holds another internal story, which holds another, and so on.<sup>3</sup> The book dates back roughly to the third or fourth century BCE, and it was originally written in Sanskrit. In the eighth century, a Persian version was translated into Arabic by ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa’ (died ca. 756 or 759 CE). The original Persian copy has been lost though. *Kalila wa-Dimna* eventually became exceptionally popular throughout the world, which resulted in various copies and many translations, of which Hebrew, French, and Greek were among the oldest, produced around the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The manuscript under the classmark BNF Arabe 3465, which is currently held in Paris, in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, is considered one of the oldest extant Arabic copies of this famous book. It dates to the early thirteenth century (1220 CE). The Cairo Genizah—which should be considered a plentiful source for the study of Arabic litera-

1 The present author would like to thank Dr Ben Outhwaite for reading a draft of this *Fragment of the Month*. This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No. 851411 APCG).

2 \* This article was originally published as the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit’s *Fragment of the Month* for February 2021, where it appeared with the title: ‘*Kalila wa-Dimna*: T-S Ar.6.32 part of the Arabic book *Kalila wa Dimna*, story nine—‘*Ilād*, *Balād* and *Iirākt*’ (<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2021/fragment-0>). It is reproduced here, slightly modified by the editors, with permission from Mohamed Ahmed.

3 Editor’s note: On other Arabic folk tales in the Cairo Genizah, see in the present volume, ‘*Qiš-ṣat al-Ġumġuma*: An Arabic-script Version of ‘The Story of the Skull’ in the Cairo Genizah Collections’ by Magdalen M. Connolly.

ture—holds fragmentary works and numerous pieces of otherwise lost Arabic literary texts, including *Kalila wa-Dimna* manuscripts from the same period as BNF Arabe 3465. For instance, the well-known fragment T-S Ar.51.60 comes from a magnificent, illustrated Arabic copy of *Kalila wa-Dimna* (Baker & Pollack 2001, no. 7533 and plate 19), likely from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. T-S Ar.40.9 is from a separate illustrated Arabic copy (Khan 1986, 60), which likely predates T-S Ar.51.60.

In their catalogue of the T-S New Series, Shvitiel and Niessen (2006) spotted a single bifolium of *Kalila wa-Dimna* in Judaeo-Arabic: T-S NS 97.16, copied probably in the 12th–13th century. The newly identified Judaeo-Arabic manuscript for this article is T-S Ar.6.32. Its discovery doubles the number of known copies of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* that are written in Arabic in Hebrew characters in the Genizah. A more extensive find, it consists of six leaves (three bifolia), including headings of sections/chapters. This fragment was apparently part of a complete copy of the book of *Kalila wa-Dimna* in Judaeo-Arabic, which is now lost. Comparing the text in T-S Ar.6.32 to BNF Arabe 3465 reveals that the Genizah fragment preserves text from the story of Ilād, Balād, and Irākt, story nine in the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna*.

## 2 Judaeo-Arabic Excerpt

Reading the Judaeo-Arabic text, one can easily spot differences in comparison to the oldest Arabic copy preserved in Paris. To give an example, I compare here some lines from the two copies, first giving the Genizah fragment in its original form alongside a transcription into Arabic script:

T-S Ar.6.32 P2f. 2 recto

Translation	Arabic transcription	Hebrew script	Line
The king addresses Bmābrūn:	الملك يخاطب بمأبرون	אלמלך יכאטב במאברון	13
“I was asleep on the back of my clothes until I heard six voices	كنت نائما علا ظهر اتواي فسمعت من ال ارض ٦ اصوات فاستيقظت ثم	כנת נאימא עלא טהר אתואבי פסמעת מן אל ארץ ٦ אצואת פאסתיקטת תם	14 15
coming from the ground. Then I continued my sleep	عدت فأعقبت	עדת פאעקבת	
and I had 8 dreams, which I told the Brahmin about. They interpreted them for me	٨ أحلام فحدثت بها ال برهمن فعبروها	ח אחלאם פחדדת בהא אל ברהמין פעברוהא	16

(cont.)

Translation	Arabic transcription	Hebrew script	Line
and I am worried about this, and I did not wish to be extinct and to lose my	وأنا خائف من د[ل]ك وأشفتت أن أهلك ويعطب	ואנא כאיף מן ד[ל]ך ואשפקת אן אהלך ויעטב	17
kingdom". He told him about his dream, and so Bmābrūn interpreted it	ملكي وقص عليه [ر]ويه ففسرها فقال	מלכי וקץ עלי[ר] ויאה פפסרהא פקאל	18
for him: "You should not be sad, my Lord, for what you saw,	بما [بر]وان لا [ت]حزن يا هو الملك لما رايت	במא[בר]ון לא [תח]זן יא יהו <sup>4</sup> אלמלך למא ראית	19
and you should not let worries arise in your heart because of this dream. Because, there is nothing	ولا يخلجوا في صدرك منها شيا فانه لا	ולא יכתלגו פי צדרך מנהא שיא פאנה לא	20
going to harm you or reach you. As for the two fishes ...	يصيبك مكروه ولا يصل اليك أما السمكان	יעיבך מכרוה ולא יצל אליך אמא אל סמכטאן	21

We find the same part of the story in the following pages of BNF Arabe 3465:

BNF MS. Arabe 3465, fol. 132r:

فقال له الحكيم: ما بالك أيها الملك وما لي  
أراك متغير اللون فقال له الملك إني رأيت في المنام ثمانية أحلام فقصصتها

BNF MS. Arabe 3465, fol. 132v:

على البراهمة وأنا خائف أن يصيبني من ذلك عظيم أمر مما سمعت  
من تعبيرهم لرؤياي وأخشى أن يغضب مني ملكي أو أن أغلب عليه فقال  
له الحكيم إن شئت اقصص علي احلامك وان شئت قصصتها عليك واخبرتك  
بما رايت جميعه قال الملك بل من فيك اخبر فقال لا يحزنك أيها الملك هذا

BNF MS. Arabe 3465, fol. 133r:

الأمر ولا تخف منه أما تفسير السمكتين ...

Although the main storyline remains the same in the two versions, the comparison reveals considerable differences between the two texts. Personal names

4 This could be read as an abbreviation of *אלמלך יא איהא*, meaning 'my Lord'.

are among the main differentiators here. Take, for example, the name of the wise man (*al-Ḥakīm*), who was called *كباريون* *Kbāryūn* in the BNF Arabic-script MS. He takes the name *במאברון* *Bmābrūn* in the Genizah fragment T-S Ar.6.32. This is not the only name that is distinctive in the two versions. The main character in the story also holds two completely different names. In the Arabic script, she is called *إراخت* *Īrākt*, but in the Hebrew script she is *אבלאד* *Ablād*. The second distinctive feature in the Judaeo-Arabic version is the incorporation of some Hebrew elements within the text. For instance, the writer used Hebrew numbers in the text (*ח אהלל א* or '8 dreams'), which is common in Judaeo-Arabic texts in general.

### 3 Conclusion

Hopefully, further investigation will reveal more distinctive features of the Judaeo-Arabic text. The initial analysis suggests that the Judaeo-Arabic text might have been copied from another Arabic-script copy, but it could be that it was directly translated into Judaeo-Arabic from a text written in a non-Arabic language. All in all, the Judaeo-Arabic version opens new avenues for questions about the original *Kalila wa-Dimna* text and the versions through which it was transmitted during the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The present author is working on a complete edition of the leaves under the classmark T-S Ar.6.32, with English translation and analysis.

# How Many Refutations Did Saadya Gaon Write against Ibn Sāqawayh?

*Nadia Vidro*

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The bibliography of Saadya Gaon's works is yet to be fully established. This is especially true in the field of polemics, where many questions remain unresolved.<sup>2</sup> One bibliographical conundrum involves two treatises ascribed to Saadya: *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* (*Kitāb al-Radd 'alā Ibn Sāqawayh*) and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker on the Mishnah and the Talmud* (*Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Mutaḥāmil 'alā al-Mishnah wa-l-Talmud*), neither of which have hitherto been reconstructed. It is often assumed that both these works were written against the same Qaraite scholar Ibn Sāqawayh,<sup>3</sup> but the relationship between them remains unclear. This article is an attempt to provide a solution to this question.

Little is known about the identity of Ibn Sāqawayh.<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Hitī stated in the *Chronicle of Qaraite Doctors* that Ibn Sāqawayh argued against the Rabbanites and Saadya on the calendar and festivals, forbidden fats, and the validity of the rabbinic tradition.<sup>5</sup> Moses Ibn Ezra referred to Ibn al-Sāqawayh in *Maqāla al-*

1 This article was written in the framework of the project "Saadya Gaon's works on the Jewish calendar: Near Eastern sources and transmission to the West" funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

2 R. Brody, *Sa'adya Gaon*, Oxford, Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013, p. 147.

3 See below, near n. 15.

4 On Ibn Sāqawayh, see S. Poznanski, *The Karaite Literary Opponents of Saadiyah Gaon*, London: Luzac & Co., 1908, pp. 4–8; M. Zawanowska, "Ibn Sāqawayh", in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 14 August 2023, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1878-9781\\_ejiw\\_SIM\\_0011070](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1878-9781_ejiw_SIM_0011070), and the literature cited there. Assaf believed to have found a fragment of an anti-Saadyan polemic composed by Ibn Sāqawayh (published in S. Assaf, "Polemics of an Early Karaite Against Rabbinism", *Tarbiz* 4 (1932), pp. 35–53, 193–206 [Hebrew]). This identification is highly conjectural (see below n. 16).

5 G. Margoliouth, "Ibn Al-Hitī's Arabic Chronicle of Karaite Doctors", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 9/3 (1897), pp. 429–443, esp. pp. 435 (text), 442 (translation); L. Nemoj, *Karaite Antho-*

*Ḥadiqa* as the author of a work entitled *Kitāb al-Faḍā'iḥ* (*Book of Infamies*).<sup>6</sup> A polemic against *Kitāb al-Faḍā'iḥ* published by Harkavy describes it as a book intended to demonstrate that the rabbinic tradition contradicts the Scripture and that the rabbis of the Talmud deviated from the rabbis of the Mishnah.<sup>7</sup> The book is said to have covered all standard matters of the Rabbanite-Qaraite dispute, including the validity of the Oral Tradition, anthropomorphism, Sabbath laws, laws of forbidden marriages, calendar and festivals, dietary laws (especially forbidden fats), and the laws of male and female ritual purity.

In the 19th century, both *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* were known only from short quotations and references in later sources. On the basis of a small number of quotations in Rabbanite works, Geiger postulated that they were one and the same treatise.<sup>8</sup> Poznanski, whose familiarity with both works was also originally limited to quotations albeit from a wider range of Qaraite and Rabbanite sources, rejected Geiger's hypothesis, believing that *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* was chiefly on the calendar and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* on anthropomorphism.<sup>9</sup> Poznanski appears to have viewed the books as entirely unrelated and even targeting different persons.<sup>10</sup> In 1901, Harkavy published a fragment of a polemic

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logy: *Excerpts from the Early Literature, Translated from Arabic, Aramaic and Hebrew Sources*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p. 234.

- 6 NLI Heb 8° 5701, pp. 46–47, 132 (translated into French in P. Fenton, *Philosophie et Exégèse dans 'Le Jardin de la Métaphore' de Moïse Ibn 'Ezra, Philosophe et Poète Andalou du XI<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 289, 371).
- 7 RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2 (A. Harkavy, "Fragments of Anti-Karaite Writings of Saadia in the Imperial Public Library at St. Petersburg", *Jewish Quarterly Review* Old Series, 13 (1901), pp. 655–668, esp. pp. 663 (text), 666 (translation)). On the identification of this Genizah fragment see below, near n. 11. See also Poznanski, *The Karaite Literary Opponents*, pp. 4–5.
- 8 A. Geiger, *Niṭ'e Na'amanim* (*Sammlung aus Alten Manuscripten*), Breslau: S.L. Heilberg, 1847, part II, p. 46. Geiger's theory (*Niṭ'e Na'amanim*, part II, pp. 46–47) that Ibn Sāqawayh was the Arabic name of Salmon b. Yeruham was refuted by subsequent scholars (J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 11: *Karaïtica*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1935, pp. 1469–1470; M. Zucker, "Two Anti-Karaite Fragments", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 18 (1948–1949), pp. 1–24 [Hebrew], esp. pp. 3–4; see also Zawadowska "Ibn Sāqawayh").
- 9 S. Poznanski, "The Anti-Karaite Writings of Saadia Gaon", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 10/2 (1898), pp. 238–276, esp. p. 254. The view that *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* was mainly on the calendar is repeated in M. Steinschneider, *Die Arabische Literatur Der Juden: Ein Beitrag Zur Literaturgeschichte Der Araber, Grossenteils Aus Handschriftlichen Quellen*, Frankfurt A.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1902, p. 51 (para 31 no. 15). Poznanski abandoned this division of subjects once manuscripts of *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* were identified (see n. 13).
- 10 This is most clear in S. Poznanski, "Addenda and Corrigenda to My Essay on 'The Anti-

against *Kitāb al-Faḏā'ih*, which he identified as *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* (RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2),<sup>11</sup> and two further fragments of this refutation were published by Hirschfeld in 1903 (T-S 10Ka5 and T-S 8Ka10.1, the latter of which overlaps with RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2).<sup>12</sup> These publications made it clear that *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* was not merely on the calendar, but also followed the contents of *Kitāb al-Faḏā'ih* and addressed the full range of topics in the Rabbanite-Qaraite debate.<sup>13</sup> In 1905, Hirschfeld discovered a fragment (T-S 8Ka10.6) that laid out rules for successfully refuting one's opponent's views and discussed examples of bad practice of a certain "unfair attacker" (*al-mutaḥāmil*), which Hirschfeld identified as Saadya's *Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*.<sup>14</sup> Hirschfeld adopted Poznanski's theory that *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* were two separate works but, noting certain similarities in Saadya's treatment of his opponent, proposed that both were written against the same person, and that *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* was a second rejoinder against Ibn Sāqawayh.<sup>15</sup> This view was accepted by many subsequent scholars.<sup>16</sup> However, a careful look at the codicological and textual features of the fragments published by Harkavy and Hirschfeld, as well as at references to these works in later sources not previ-

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Karaite Writings of Saadiah Gaon' (J.Q.R., x, 238–276)", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 20/2 (1908), pp. 232–239, esp. p. 235, where Poznanski contrasts *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* with "the polemical work against Ibn Sāqaweih", suggesting that he viewed *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* as directed at a different opponent.

- 11 Harkavy, "Fragments of Anti-Karaite Writings", pp. 661–667.
- 12 H. Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah at Cambridge. (Third Article.): Saadyah Fragments", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 16/1 (1903), pp. 98–112, esp. pp. 99–112. Hirschfeld correctly argued that RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 1 also belongs to the same work (p. 100).
- 13 As also acknowledged by Poznanski in his later publications (*The Karaite Literary Opponents*, pp. 6–7; "Addenda and Corrigenda", p. 235).
- 14 H. Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion of the Cairo Genizah at Cambridge. (Eleventh Article.)", *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 18/11 (1905), pp. 113–120, esp. pp. 113–119.
- 15 Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion XI", p. 114.
- 16 S. Eppenstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Literatur im Geonäischen Zeitalter*, Berlin: L. Lamm, 1913, p. 109; H. Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1921, pp. 266, 384; Assaf, "Polemics of an Early Karaite", pp. 36–38; Zawanowska "Ibn Sāqawayh". Hirschfeld's theory was further developed by Assaf, who believed that Ibn Sāqawayh's *Kitāb al-Faḏā'ih* was refuted by Saadya in *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*, to which Ibn Sāqawayh composed a rejoinder consequently refuted by Saadya in *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* (Assaf, "Polemics of an Early Karaite", pp. 36–38). The core of this idea was proposed already by Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, p. 109. Assaf's theory was strongly doubted by Mann and refuted by Zucker (J. Mann, "Varia on the Gaonic Period (Conclusion)", *Tarbiz* 6/1 (1934), pp. 66–88 [Hebrew], esp. p. 67n.199. Zucker, "Two Anti-Karaite Fragments", pp. 4–5).



ously discussed in research literature, calls for a re-evaluation of the relationship between *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*.

## 2 Re-Evaluating the Refutations

Consider the following three arguments, 2.1–2.3:

### 2.1 *Codicology*

In her catalogue description of T-S 8Ka10.1 (published by Hirschfeld as *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*) and T-S 8Ka10.6 (published by Hirschfeld as *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*), Ayala Meyer Eliyahu (from the FGP Philosophy, Theology, and Polemics team) noted that these fragments were written in a similar handwriting, employed the same graphic signs, had the same width of the written area,<sup>17</sup> and used identical expressions; for example, **אלמשנה ואלתוספא ואלתלמוד**. These similarities were entirely ignored in Hirschfeld's publications of the fragments (as was generally the case for scholarship of that period). On the basis of her observations, Ayala Meyer Eliyahu suggested that the fragments originally belonged to the same manuscript. In support of her conclusion, it can be added that the fragments have the same width and the same line height.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.2 *Textual Parallels*

Hirschfeld's main argument against the identity of the works was the fact that both RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2 (published by Harkavy as *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*) and T-S 8Ka10.6 (published by Hirschfeld as *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*) invoke Prov. 25:8, a repetition which he regarded as improbable in one and the same treatise.<sup>19</sup> This is not a strong argument, for nothing prevents an author from quoting the same Biblical verse twice. More importantly, in RNL Evr Antonin B 204, Saadya does not simply quote Prov. 25:8, but also refers to his earlier comment on this verse. Having pointed out a number of faults with Ibn Sāqawayh's manner of criticising the rabbinic tradition, Saadya writes:

17 13 cm according to the FGP catalogue entry for T-S 8Ka10.6. I measure 11.5 cm.

18 Width: 14.7 cm; line height 0.8 cm. The height of the fragments cannot be compared due to the damage to T-S 8Ka10.1.

19 Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion XI", p. 114.

And, as I live, he was quite right when he gave to his book the title *Book of Infamies*, for it is a book which sets forth his own infamies and his own shame, as I explained in connection with “if your fellow puts you to shame”.<sup>20</sup>

Prov. 25:8

It seems eminently possible that Saadya is referring here to the following passage in T-s 8Ka10.6, where a fuller version of Prov. 25:8 is adduced to support a similar but a more general point, that if a person violates the rules for successfully refuting his opponent's views,

then he himself will be abashed by that with which he intended to abash and will be put to shame by that with which he desired to shame his opponent. He will then wish he had not undertaken to refute him, since his attack did not profit him, as it is said “Do not go hastily into a quarrel. Otherwise, what will you do in the end if your fellow puts you to shame?”.<sup>21</sup>

Prov. 25:8

Instead of being an argument for assigning RNL Evr Antonin B 204 and T-s 8Ka10.6 to two separate works, the quoted passages suggest that both fragments belong to a single introductory section of one treatise,<sup>22</sup> with the follow-

20 RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2r:

ולעמרי אנה קד אצאב פי תסמיה כתאבה כתאב אלפצאיה לאנה כתאב פצאיהה הו וכויה  
עלי מא שרחת פי בהכלים אתך רעך

My edition and translation; see also Harkavy, “Fragments of Anti-Karaite Writings”, pp. 663 (text), 665 (translation). My translation of Prov. 25:8 follows Saadya's Arabic version (J. Kafih, *Proverbs with R. Saadya Gaon's Translation and Commentary*, Jerusalem: Akiva Yosef, 1976 [Hebrew], p. 197).

21 T-s 8Ka10.6, fol. 1v:

פכגל הו מן חית קדר אלאכגאל וכזי הו במא טמע אן יכזי כצמה פתמני אנה לם יתערץ אלי  
אלרד עליה בחית לא תנפעה אלזאמה וכמא קאל אל תצא לריב מהר פן מה תעשה באחריתה  
בהכלים אתך רעך

My edition and translation; see also Hirschfeld, “The Arabic Portion XI”, pp. 116 (text), 118 (translation). In his commentary on Prov. 25:8, Saadya interprets רעך רעך (“if your fellow puts you to shame”) as a warning to a litigant who concentrates on insulting and defaming his opponent rather than on the disputed matter, or to a participant in a scholarly disputation who frequently changes his arguments (*al-taqallub fi i'tā' al-'illa*; Kafih, *Proverbs*, pp. 197–198).

22 See also Eppenstein *Beiträge*, pp. 109–110nn.4, 5. Despite accepting Hirschfeld's theory, Eppenstein believed that such parallels between Harkavy's fragment of *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* (RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2) and Hirschfeld's fragment of *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* (T-s 8Ka10.6) increase the likelihood that the two works are one and the same.

ing overall structure: 1. A set of ten general rules on how to successfully refute one's opponent's views and the consequences of violating them (T-s 8Ka10.6, fols 1r–2r, see second passage quoted above); 2. a presentation of a person who attempted to criticise the rabbinic tradition; an assertion that “this unfair attacker (*hādā al-mutahāmil*)” failed on account of “his ignorance (*jahluhu*) of the ten rules” (T-s 8Ka10.6, fol. 2r); 3. a listing of his violations of the various rules (T-s 8Ka10.6, fol. 2r–2v and RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2r, not continuous), culminating with a play on the title of his work, *Book of Infamies* (RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2r, see first passage quoted above); 4. a description of the contents of the *Book of Infamies* and the structure of Saadya's refutation of “this ignoramus” (*hādā al-jāhil*) (RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2r–2v).<sup>23</sup>

The argument from textual parallels is further strengthened by the above codicological argument. Indeed, sections 3 and 4 of the proposed introduction are also partially attested in T-s 8Ka10.1, which appears to have originally belonged to the same manuscript as T-s 8Ka10.6. This supports the assumption that all three fragments published by Harkavy (RNL Evr Antonin B 204) and Hirschfeld (T-s 8Ka10.1, T-s 8Ka10.6) belong to the same work.

### 2.3 A Quotation from The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker

An important piece of evidence comes from an anonymous commentary on *Hilkhot Alfasi* (*Hullin*) preserved in MS Sassoon 1062 and published by Kafih.<sup>24</sup> In a passage on the permissibility of eating the fat-tail (*alya*), the author of the commentary remarks that Saadya dealt with this question in two of his works, namely, in the Commentary on Leviticus and in *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*.<sup>25</sup> He then quotes a passage by Saadya on this topic.<sup>26</sup> In what follows,

23 This introduction is followed in RNL Evr Antonin B 204, fol. 2v by a discussion of the first point of contention: anthropomorphic passages in rabbinic literature.

24 MS Sassoon 1062, pp. 97–98 (ed. J. Kafih, *Ha-Rif le-Massekhet Hullin*, Jerusalem: Ha-Aguda Le-Hatzalat Ginzei Teiman, 1960, pp. 63–64. I thank the anonymous reviewer of this article for drawing my attention to Kafih's edition). The importance of this manuscript in the context of *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* was first pointed out by Mann, who was familiar with it only from its description in David Sassoon's catalogue *Ohel David* (Mann, “Varia”, p. 67n.199; D.S. Sassoon, *Ohel David: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library, London*, London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1932, vol. 2, pp. 1081–1084).

25 MS Sassoon 1062, p. 97 reads פקד אחתפל רבינו סעדיה פי מעני דאלך פי מוצעין פי פירוש ויקרא ואלתלמוד פקד אחתפל רבינו סעדיה פי מעני דאלך פי מוצעין פי פירוש ויקרא ואלתלמוד והו כתאב אלרד עלי אלמתחאמל עלי אלמשנה ואלתלמוד. I accept Mann's suggestion to read ופי ‘and in’ instead of והו ‘which is’ (Mann, “Varia”, p. 67n.199). This reading was also adopted by Kafih (*Ha-Rif le-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 63).

26 MS Sassoon 1062, p. 98, Kafih, *Ha-Rif le-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 64.

I present a parallel edition of this quotation and of a passage in *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* as published by Hirschfeld (the division into paragraphs is mine).

*The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*<sup>27</sup>

Quotation from *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* or from Saadya's Leviticus Commentary<sup>28</sup>

והו אן אעצא אלמוקדשין עלי צרבין מנהא מא קד שרע  
ליכון ללנאס מאכלא פהו ק[ו]דש פקט וליס הו אשה.  
ומנהא מ[א] קד געל ללנאר מאכלא פהו קודש ואשה  
פאלאליה מן אלבהמה אלמוקדשת היא לא מחאלה  
קדש ואשה

פקאל נצר אללה וגהה  
והו אן אעצא אלמוקדשין עלי צרבין מנהא מא קד שרע  
אן יכון ללנאר מאכלא פהו קדש פקט וליס הוא אשה  
ומנהא מא קד געל ללנאס מאכלא פהו קדש והו אשה  
פאלאליה מן אלבהמה אלמוקדשת הי לא מחאלה קדש  
ואשה

פמן אכלהא ילזמה חדיין. אחדהמא מן אגל אלקדש  
אלב[סי]ט ואלאכר מן אגל אשה ריח ניחוח. וכדא קאלו  
פי תורת כה[נ]ים מה החלב בשני לוויין אף אליה בשני  
לוויין. ואמא פי אלבהמה אלחולין פלא דכר לאליה בתה.  
אלא אן יטן אנה יחצר דלך הדא אלרגל. ודאך מא לא  
יגיוה.

ובאקי אלקול

וקאלו פי אלתלמוד קולא פציחא אן אלאליה חלאל פי  
אלחול לקו אמ ליה ר פפא לאביי אלאמענתה(!) אליה  
בזמן הזה תיתסר אמ ליה עולה<sup>29</sup> אמר קרא כל חלב  
שור וכבש ועז לא תאכלו דבר השווה בשווה.<sup>30</sup> ואמא  
אלאליה אלתי ליסת פי שלשתן פגיר מחטורה.

ואיצא פקד קאל רב פפא לאביי אלא מעתה אליה בזמן  
הזה תותסר(!) אמ ליה עלך אמ קרא כל חלב שור וכבש  
ועז לא תאכלו דבר השווה בשלשתן

Namely, the organs of a sacred animal are of two types: it has been legislated about some of them that they are to be consumed by the people, and they are only a holy sacrifice but not an offering by fire. Others were set to be consumed by the fire, and they are a holy sacrifice and an offering by fire. The fat-tail of a sacred animal is beyond any doubt a holy sacrifice and an offering by fire.

He said, may God see his face:

Namely, the organs of a sacred animal are of two types: it has been legislated about some of them that they are to be consumed by the fire, and they are only a holy sacrifice but not an offering by fire. Others were set to be consumed by the people, and they are a holy sacrifice and an offering by fire. The fat-tail of a sacred animal is beyond any doubt a holy sacrifice and an offering by fire,

27 My edition and translation of T-S 10Ka5, fol. 6r. See also Hirschfeld, "The Arabic Portion 111", p. 111.

28 My edition and translation of MS Sassoon 1062, p. 98. See also Kafih, *Ha-Rif le-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 64. Only the beginning and the end of the discussion on the fat-tail in MS Sassoon 1062 was published in Sassoon, *Ohel David*, vol. 2, p. 1083, which did not include the quotation presented here (republished in Mann, "Varia", p. 67n.199).

29 Expected is עליך

30 בשור וגו' is perhaps an error for בשלשתן or for בשור וגו'.

(cont.)

*The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*Quotation from *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* or from Saadya's Leviticus Commentary

He who consumes it deserves two punishments, one on account of the lesser holy sacrifice, the other on account of an offering by fire of pleasing odour. Thus, they said in *Torat Kohanim*: "Just as fat comes under two interdicts, so the fat-tail (of a sacred animal) comes under two interdicts".<sup>31</sup> But with regard to a non-sacred animal, there is no mention of the fat-tail at all. Yet this person presumes that it is included, and this is what they do not permit.

and the rest of the statement.

They explicitly said in the Talmud that the fat-tail of a non-sacred animal is permitted, as it is said: "Rav Papa said to Abaye: If that is so, the fat-tail should be prohibited at this time. He said to him: With regard to your (claim), the verse states: 'You shall eat no fat of ox, or sheep, or goat' (Lev. 7:23)—only what is exactly the same."<sup>32</sup> But as for the fat-tail, which is not found in all three of them, it is not forbidden.

Moreover, Rav Papa said to Abaye: "If that is so, the fat-tail should be prohibited at this time. He said to him: With regard to your (claim), the verse states: 'You shall eat no fat of ox, or sheep, or goat' (Lev. 7:23)—only what is the same in all three of them."<sup>33</sup>

The similarities between these two texts are obvious. The first paragraph is identical *verbatim*, apart from the order of the phrases לא לנאור מאכלא 'to be

31 *Sifra Nedavah* 19:2.

32 The closest passage in the printed Talmud is bT Keritot 4a: כדאמר ליה רב מרי לרב זביד: אלא מעתה אליה דחולין תיתסר אמר ליה עליך אמר קרא הכל חלב שור וכשב ועז דבר השוה בשלשתן (see also bT Hulin 117a), where this exchange is attributed to a different pair of rabbis (R. Mari and R. Zevid instead of R. Papa and Abaye) and the reading דחולין ('of a non-sacred animal') appears in place of בזמן הזה ('at this time'). Interestingly, the variant reading אמר ליה רב מרי לרב זביד: אלא מעתה אליה בזה תיתסר אמר ליה עליך אמר קרא כל חלב שור וכשב ועז לא תאכלו דבר השוה בכולן, suggesting that this reading may have been current in geonic period Babylonia but was 'corrected' in later European manuscripts of the Talmud to דחולין which is better fitting in contextual terms (see this passage on FGP, where the following manuscripts are listed with the reading דחולין: London, BL Add. 25717 (402, Ashkenazi handwriting, 13th century); Munich, BSB Cod. Hebr. 95 (Ashkenazi handwriting, 1342 CE); Vatican BAV Vat. ebr. 118–119 (Ashkenazi handwriting, 13th century), Vatican BAV Vat. ebr. 120–121 (Ashkenazi handwriting, end 12th–beginning 13th century)). I thank Prof. Sacha Stern (UCL) for discussing this quotation with me.

33 See n. 32.

consumed by the fire' and לֹאֵלֶנָּאס מֵאֵלֵי 'to be consumed by the people', which are swapped in the quotation. This is a simple scribal error. The second paragraph in *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* is not included in the quotation, the omission indicated by וּבְאֵקִי אֵלְקוּל 'and the rest of the statement'. In the third paragraph, the same talmudic passage is adduced, with the same deviations from the printed text.<sup>34</sup> It is clear that the quotation from Saadya in the commentary on *Hilkhot Alfasi* is a faithful, if shortened, representation of the text as it appears in *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*.

The author of the commentary on *Hilkhot Alfasi* did not specify whether he quoted from *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* or from the Leviticus Commentary.<sup>35</sup> Importantly, the author stressed his reliance specifically on two works by Saadya<sup>36</sup> and did not list *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* as one of them. Since the text in the quotation is found in *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*, this book must be identical either with the commentary on Leviticus, which cannot be the case, or with *The Refutation of an Unfair Attacker*.

On their own, none of the arguments 2.1–2.3 prove definitively that *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* are one and the same work, and some can be explained by other factors. T-S 8Ka10.1 and T-S 8Ka10.6 could have been part of a miscellany that contained more than one work by Saadya (argument 2.1). The author of the commentary on *Hilkhot Alfasi* may not have been familiar with *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*, and hence spoke of only two sources rather than three (argument 2.3). However, the only way to explain all of the arguments and still maintain the existence

34 See n. 32.

35 Saadya's commentary on the relevant portions of Leviticus has not yet been fully reconstructed, making it impossible to know whether the quotation in MS Sassoon 1062 is attested in the commentary. Dr. David Sklare, who together with Yehuda Seewald, is currently preparing a critical edition of Saadya's Leviticus Commentary, confirmed in a private communication that the text under discussion is not attested in the fragments of the commentary identified to date. Moreover, a commentary on Leviticus 7:23 by the Qaraite David b. Bo'az includes a lengthy polemic against Saadya on the permissibility of the fat-tail, with quotations from Saadya's commentary on Leviticus (RNL Evr Arab 1 4508, quotations on fols. 107r–107v, 109r–109v, 54r–54v, 113v–114v, 214r–214v). The text under discussion is not attested in these quotations.

36 MS Sassoon 1062, p. 97, Kafih, *Ha-Rifle-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 63: מוֹצְעִין "two places" (see full text in n. 25). MS Sassoon 1062, p. 98, Kafih, *Ha-Rifle-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 64: וְאִנְמָא אַחְזַר "ואנמא אחצר" "I am bringing this because not everyone knows these two books" (for נִסְכָּה in the sense of "book", see J. Blau, *Dictionary of Medieval/Judaean-Arabic Texts*, Jerusalem: Academy of Hebrew Language, 2006 [Hebrew], p. 692; see also H. Ben-Shammai, "Edition and Versions in Yepheth b. Ali's Bible Commentary", *Alei Sefer: Studies in Bibliography and in the History of the Printed and the Digital Hebrew Book* 2 (1976), pp. 17–32 [Hebrew], esp. pp. 18–19).

of two separate refutations is to assume that all identified fragments belong to one of the works, while the other is still unidentified.

The only consideration that requires such an assumption and prevents viewing these refutations as one and the same work are their different titles. Given that Saadya did not refer to either title in his own books, it is useful to look at how they occur in other sources. In Genizah book lists, the title *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* is attested at least 10 times,<sup>37</sup> whereas *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* does not appear at all. On the other hand, to the best of my knowledge, Qaraite authors never mention *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker*, while they do refer to and quote from *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* on multiple occasions.<sup>38</sup> Sometimes Qaraites mention the title in an indirect form: “the book in which he refuted Ibn Sāqawayh.”<sup>39</sup> Among Rabbanite authors, Mubashshir b. Nissi ha-Levi discusses an opinion expressed by Saadya in “the book of his refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh”.<sup>40</sup> Moses Ibn Ezra, writing in *Maqāla al-Ḥadīqa* about the need to understand anthropomorphisms in a metaphorical sense, says: “Saadya Gaon explained this in *Kitāb al-Tamyīz* and in his refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh, the author of *The Book of His Own Infamies*, and of others

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- 37 ENA 2539.1 (N. Allony, *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages: Book Lists from the Cairo Genizah* (edited by M. Frenkel, H. Ben-Shammai, with the participation of M. Sokolow), Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2006 [Hebrew], no. 97, p. 336, l. 54); T-S 10K20.9, T-S Misc.36.147 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 4, p. 16, ll. 107–108); T-S 10K20.7 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 16, p. 68, ll. 7–8); T-S Ar.52.213 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 17, p. 70, ll. 7–8, 16–17); T-S Misc.36.150 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 30, pp. 110, 112, ll. 19, 45); ENA 1290.5 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 39, p. 153, l. 24); T-S 13K1 (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 73, p. 279, l. 16, erroneously listed as T-S 10K131). Allony also reconstructs this title in Manchester, Rylands Genizah fragment 47, a 10th-century list that contains exclusively Saadya's works (Allony, *The Jewish Library*, no. 84, p. 311, ll. 1–2). However, this reconstruction does not fit well with the remaining letters and with the word פקה “jurisprudence” at the end of the entry.
- 38 E.g. Yefet b. Eli, Commentary on Exodus, RNL Evr Arab 1 41, fol. 147v and Commentary on Deuteronomy, RNL Evr Arab 1 19, fol. 80v; Sahl b. Maṣṣliḥ, *Book of Commandments*, RNL Evr Arab 1 819, fol. 3r; Jeshua b. Judah, *Tafsīr Tora Šivva Lanu*, RNL Evr Arab 1 551, fol. 88v; Anonymous, *Refutation of Kitāb al-Tamyīz*, RNL Evr Arab 1 865, fol. 5r; a quotation from Salmon b. Yeruḥam(?) in a Rabbanite polemical work, T-S Ar.51.38, recto left–verso right.
- 39 Yefet b. Eli, Commentary on Exodus, RNL Evr Arab 1 41, fol. 148r: אלכתאב אלדי רד פיה עלי; בן סאקויה כתאבה; Anonymous(?), Commentary on Leviticus 23:24, BL Or. 2518, fol. 73r: כתאבה אלדי רד בה עלי אבן סאקויה (this passage was described by Poznanski, “The Anti-Karaite Writings”, p. 253 as the second recension of Yefet b. Eli's commentary on Leviticus 23:5, a view challenged by Ben-Shammai, “Edition and Versions”, pp. 17–18).
- 40 J. Blau, Y. Yahalom, *Rav Sa'adya Ga'on in the Focus of Controversies in Baghdad: Sa'adya's Sefer Ha-Galuy and Mevasser's Two Books of Critiques on Him: A Critical Edition*, Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2019 [Hebrew], p. 324, l. 15: כתאב רדה עלי אבן סאקויה.

who unfairly attack the religious law and those who uphold it".<sup>41</sup> Nissim b. Jacob states that Saadya dealt with the topic of anthropomorphism in "the book of *The Refutation of the Objector* (Heb. התשובה על הטוען), known in Arabic as *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā al-Mutaḥāmil*.<sup>42</sup> Finally, the above-mentioned commentary on *Hilkhot Alfasi* mentions *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker on the Mishnah and the Talmud* in the context of forbidden fats.<sup>43</sup>

A number of observations can be made. No sources known to me refer to both titles. While Moses Ibn Ezra mentions both Ibn Sāqawayh and "others who unfairly attack the religious law", the use of the singular form *raddiḥi* ("his refutation") seems to imply that there was one refutation that addressed both Ibn Sāqawayh and other unfair attackers rather than two separate ones. As such, it does not constitute strong evidence for the existence of two separate refutations, one against Ibn Sāqawayh and another against other unfair attackers. Interestingly, authors who opposed Saadya (the Qaraites and Mubashshir b. Nissi ha-Levi) mentioned only *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*, whereas those who accepted his opinions (Nissim b. Jacob, Moses Ibn Ezra, and the commentator on *Hilkhot Alfasi*) kept the reference to unfair attacker(s). The absence of the title *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* from book lists and its occasional use in an indirect form suggest that it is not properly a title but a description of the book's purpose. It is probable that the title *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* was avoided by Saadya's opponents due to its excessively belligerent nature, and was substituted by the more neutral and descriptive *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh*. If so, the titles, too, supply no convincing evidence in favour of the existence of two separate works against Ibn Sāqawayh.

41 NLI Heb 8°5701, pp. 46–47: וקד בין רבנו סעדיה גאון זצ"ל פי כתאב אלתמיזי ופי רדה עלי בן: סאקויה צאחב כתאב אלפצאיח לנפסה ועלי גירה מן אלמתחאמלין עלי אלשריעה וחאמליהא (see also Poznanski, "The Anti-Karaite Writings", p. 245n3; Harkavy, "Fragments of Anti-Karaite Writings", p. 661; Fenton, *Philosophie et Exégèse*, p. 289). For the translation of כתאב אלפצאיח לנפסה as *The Book of His Own Infamies*, compare Fenton, *Philosophie et Exégèse*, p. 371. Harkavy's emendation "refutation of Ibn Sakaveiḥi, the author of the כתאב אלפצאיח, [where the Gaon] controverted the latter himself" seems unnecessary.

42 Poznanski, "The Anti-Karaite Writings", p. 254; A. Jellinek, *Quntres Taryag*, Vienna: Brotherters Winter, 1878, p. 46; S. Emanuel, "A New Fragment of *Meqillat Setarim* by R. Nissim Gaon", M. Bar-Asher (ed.) *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer Festschrift: Collected Papers in Jewish Studies*, Jerusalem: Academon, 1992, vol. 2, pp. 535–551 [Hebrew], esp. p. 547 (the Arabic title is somewhat garbled in Nissim b. Jacob's text; see details in the provided references). I thank the anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to Emanuel's publication.

43 MS Sassoon 1062, p. 97 (Mann, "Varia", p. 67n.199; Kafih, *Ha-Rif le-Massekhet Hullin*, p. 63).



### 3 Conclusions

This article addresses a longstanding bibliographical problem concerning two hitherto unreconstructed polemical works by Saadya Gaon: *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker on the Mishnah and the Talmud*. In 1905, H. Hirschfeld suggested that these were two separate works against a single 10th-century Qaraite scholar, Ibn Sāqawayh. Hirschfeld's theory was based on scanty evidence and disregarded important features of identified Genizah fragments. Despite this, it is still cautiously accepted in research literature. In this article, I considered codicological and textual features of the fragments, as well as quotations from and references to *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* and *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker* in Rabbanite and Qaraite sources and Genizah book lists, and argued that they must be regarded as one and the same polemical treatise (a view originally put forward by Geiger, albeit for the wrong reasons). The fact that the title *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* is not attested in book lists and was only used by authors critical of Saadya Gaon suggests that the title of the polemic was *The Refutation of the Unfair Attacker on the Mishnah and the Talmud*, whereas *The Refutation of Ibn Sāqawayh* was a descriptive moniker intended to tone down the title's belligerence.

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# Representations of a New ‘Mental Time’ in Karaite Exegetical Sources

*Meira Polliack*

## 1 Introduction

By the tenth century CE, Arabic culture was intensely literate. Genres with strong oral roots such as Arabic poetry and Tradition (Ḥadīṭ) were committed to writing and circulated as fully written texts. The dogma of *iʿjāz al-qurʾān*, which cemented the Qurʾān’s status as an exemplar of Arabic literature in its finest (heavenly-endowed) form, was in place, as was the understanding that all fields of science, especially, linguistics and rational philosophy serve as auxiliary genres in the study of the Qurʾān and its exegesis. The Arabisation of the near-eastern Jews (and Christians), namely, their adoption of the Arabic language and culture was completed by the tenth century CE. This is apparent in the standard Judeo-Arabic script in which many genizah documents are penned. In other words, whereas the Jews spoke and wrote Arabic in various forms long before the tenth century CE, it was during this century that they adopted a standard measure for writing classical Arabic in Hebrew letters.<sup>1</sup>

The historian Jacques Le Goff (1924–2014 CE), in his book *Pour un autre Moyen Âge: temps, travail et culture en Occident* (1977; English version: *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*; 1982) introduced ethnology to the study of the European Middle Ages. Among his various contributions Le Goff developed the concept of mental time (deriving from collective psychology and behavior) as a time out of joint with other (chronological or material) historical time scales. In other words, he showed how historical thinking, in the sense of thinking about the past, is not necessarily linear. We can be living physically in one time yet thinking of ourselves, or experiencing life, in the context

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1 On this orthographical stabilisation and further bibliography see M. Polliack “Arabic Bible translations in the Cairo Genizah collections”, in *Jewish Studies in a New Europe: Proceedings of the Fifth Congress of Jewish studies in Copenhagen 1994, under the auspices of the European Association for Jewish studies*. Haxen, U., Trautner-Kromann, H. and Goldschmidt Salamon, K.L. (eds.). Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1998, pp. 595–620.

of another (much earlier) time. This is especially true of medieval societies (and by extension, perhaps, more traditional societies). Le Goff illuminated how, in the medieval Christian west, history and memory, past and present, ancient, and contemporary did not constitute binary oppositions. They only gradually drifted apart, thus enabling a prolonged mental experience of the past, as in some way merging with the present.<sup>2</sup> Though Le Goff concentrated on the experience of time in western European historical thinking, his concept of mental time is universal, and in my view at least, one may apply it loosely to non-European, Near Eastern medieval sources, as a fruitful theoretical concept. In these sources, we find a similar process of gradual distancing from the past through growing awareness of its distinctiveness from the present. Still, the past is not altogether binary to the present in the writings of Jewish and Muslim medieval thinkers, as would be typical in many of their modern views of history. The Karaite Bible exegetes lived mainly in Jerusalem of the tenth–twelfth centuries CE, yet they also lived, mentally, in biblical times, and though they thought biblical times were different to theirs, they still tended to see their lives as issuing naturally from ancient forms of thinking and experience.<sup>3</sup>

In this short contribution in honour of the Cairo Genizah Research Unit's fiftieth anniversary, I have chosen to point out three instances of mental time as reflected in medieval Karaite sources. These instances also underlie, in my view, how the rise of literacy in the everyday life and mentality of the Jews of

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2 For further discussion of Le Goff's understanding of medieval historical thinking in contradistinction to the modern, see Patrick H. Hutton, *History and Theory*, 33/1 (1994): 95–107 (review of *History and Memory* by Jacques Le Goff). Hutton emphasizes how in Le Goff's view "historical thinking emerged historically out of a rising awareness of differences between past and present realities" (p. 98) and how distancing the past and gaining a critical view of it was an extremely gradual process which began only in the late Middle Ages yet cementing only in modern historical thinking. The medieval sense of history is partly evoked by the French term *longue durée* (literally, "long duration"), introduced by the historian Fernand Braudel, as a standard term of reference in the work of the Annales School of historians which influenced Le Goff. "The term *longue durée* is used to indicate a perspective on history that extends further into the past than both human memory and the archaeological record, so as to incorporate climatology, demography, geology, and oceanology, and chart the effects of events that occur so slowly as to be imperceptible to those who experience them, such as the changing nature of the planet, or the steady increase in population in a particular area" (from 'Longue Durée' in Ian Buchanan, *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. Oxford: University Press: 2010. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100114325jsessionid=64ED8DDB08DCF2FEE9974CA6BD16C8EA>, accessed 1 February 2024).

3 Karaite historical thinking has been specifically discussed in the following work: M. Polliack,

the Islamic world, affected the development of new conceptions of Scripture, primarily amongst the Karaites, but also among Rabbanites. In my view, Karaite Judaism, which emerged and became consolidated in the Near East during the ninth–eleventh centuries CE, was in part a mental response to the challenge of literacy, to a large extent, though not of course, as its singular motivation. The Cairo Genizah sources further teach us that this challenge, primarily posed by the ideals of Islamic society and Arabic culture, was one with which the learned Jewish elites clearly identified, as when producing, exchanging, and owning books.<sup>4</sup>

In several works, I have argued that the conceptualisation of the Hebrew Bible as a product of written (as opposed to) oral communication is basic to the Karaite-Rabbanite polemic. It reflects a society that identifies oral communication with uneducated social strata and written or literate communication with the educated man of letters. This type of identification was not part of the pre-Islamic Rabbinic world. The ancient Jewish Sages were undoubtedly educated in Jewish sources, and highly literate in Hebrew and Aramaic (some of them also knew Greek). Their mental world was as sophisticated as that of their medieval counterparts, yet their mentality was not one of literacy; they considered oral communication no less important and worthwhile than written communication. Jewish Rabbinic tradition, which crystallized during the first century BCE to the sixth century CE, did not deem oral communication to be a sign of illiteracy, even when engulfed by a highly literate Greco-Roman and Christian culture. During the Islamic period and certainly from the tenth century CE onwards a mental shift takes place, as we find in genizah documents and other sources; there is a growing identification of oral communication with illiteracy and a clear preference for written communication. This development explains the critical Karaite stance towards Oral Law (*torah šebe-ʿal peh*). It also explains why “normative” Judaism, namely, traditional Rab-

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“Historicizing Prophetic Literature: Yefet ben ‘Eli’s commentary on Hosea and its relationship to al-Qūmisī’s ‘Pitrōn’”, in *Pesher Nahum: Texts and studies in Jewish History and Literature from Antiquity through the Middle Ages Presented to Norman (Nahum) Golb*. Kraemer, J.L., Wechsler, M.G. and Golb, N. (eds.), Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2012, pp. 149–186. Also cf. the more recent works of M. Zawanoska, “Reconstructing the Past and Conceptualizing the Jewish ‘Other’: How the Babylonian Geonim Contributed to the Creation of the Founding Myth of Karaism.” *History of Religions*, 62/1 (2022): 73–108; and J.H. Andrus, *Jewish Piety in Islamic Jerusalem: The Lamentations Commentary of Salmon Ben Yerūhīm*. Oxford University Press, 2023.

4 For a detailed discussion see M. Polliack, “The Karaite Inversion of “Written” and “Oral” Torah in Relation to the Islamic Arch-Models of Qur’an and Hadith”, *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 22/3 (2015): 243–302.

binic Judaism, which continued to base itself on modes of oral learning and to uphold them, also, though more gradually and more reluctantly, began to adopt new modes of writing on the Hebrew Bible. These modes included linguistic-contextual exegesis, as apparent in the works of Saadya Gaon and the Spanish Judaeo-Arabic exegetes. Hence, in tune with the Karaite interpreters, Rabbanite commentators also found themselves asking questions about the “textuality” of Hebrew scripture.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, Karaites and Rabbanites formulated their ideas, for the first time in the history of Jewish exegesis, around the concept of written language, and the understanding that the Hebrew Bible was a literary product.

The Karaites were the ones who gave the new mentality the most open or free expression, as already pointed out in the seminal work of Rina Drory, who claimed they spearheaded this development.<sup>6</sup> Hence, we find a keen interest in the literary and linguistic aspects of the biblical text expressed in the writings of Karaites such as Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb al-Qirqisānī (d. 960 CE) and Yefet ben ‘Eli (d. c. 1009 CE), in terms which remind us of modern “textual theory” or “text criticism”. Drory pointed out three types of queries in this respect, namely:

- (1) What is the connection between the biblical text and the “real” world?  
In other words, is the Hebrew Bible describing real events or “inventing” them?
- (2) What kind of narrative techniques are employed in the Hebrew Bible?
- (3) How does the biblical text build up meaning?

Though the Karaite exegetes did not formulate these questions in the above literary jargon, they were clearly engaging with them, and tried to answer them (and other related questions as well). Their mental time became thus distinguished from traditional modes of thinking on the Hebrew Bible as the revealed “Word of God” to be interpreted through open-ended *midrašic* exegesis, prevalent amongst their Rabbanite counterparts. This was the result of their early embracing of a literate consciousness ushered in by Islam. Let me add to Drory’s insights by exemplifying these three queries in the following:

5 See my article (above) and further cf. M. Polliack, “Deconstructing the Dual Torah: A Jewish response to the Muslim model of Scripture”, in *Interpreting Scriptures in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Overlapping Inquiries*. Cohen, M.Z. and Berlin, A. (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 113–130.

6 See R. Drory, *The Emergence of Jewish-Arabic Literary Contacts at the Beginning of the Tenth Century*, Tel-Aviv: Publications of Porter Institute of Poetics and Semiotics, Tel-Aviv University [Hebrew], 1988.

## 2 Three Aspects of Karaite Text Criticism

### 2.1 *Is the Hebrew Bible Describing "Real" Events or "Inventing" Them and Does It Offer a "Reliable" Depiction of the Reality of Biblical Times?*

In the introduction to his commentary on Genesis, al-Qirqisānī offers 37 hermeneutic rules, some of which are clearly concerned with the question of whether the Bible contains a "reliable" depiction or transmission of the reality of biblical times. He asks, for instance, whether the Hebrew Bible, upon describing foreign or non-Israelite nations, cites their words in the original language (suggesting these nations might have spoken Hebrew) or translates their tongues into Hebrew; are there signs in the text, asks al-Qirqisānī, as to whether their words were transmitted in the original? (Principle 6.)

Al-Qirqisānī further asserts that the Bible mentions place names according to how these were known in the time of the Bible's composition or writing down (which took place, according to al-Qirqisānī, in Moses's time), and not according to how they were known in earlier historical times when some of the events occurred (Principle 11). Al-Qirqisānī further attempts to distinguish between fictive and non-fictive elements in the text (Principle 5). All these questions derive from a unique mental time that accentuates the difference between reality and the words used to describe it. The Karaite writers appear to deliberate a great deal over the reliable or unreliable depiction of reality in the biblical text, as if they are concerned to ward off criticism in this respect. Naturally, Islamic claims as to the Jews' distortion of God's Word fueled this concern. Yet, it would not have arisen had not a new kind of literary and historical consciousness emerged among the Karaite elite, regardless of Muslim polemic against the Jews.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.2 *Narrative Techniques*

The Karaites intensely engaged in deciphering biblical techniques in fashioning discourse and narrative. They envisaged a person or persons responsible for employing these techniques, whom they referred to by the Arabic term *mudawwin*, in other words, an authorial-narrator-editor of the biblical text.<sup>8</sup> This served them as a wide and flexible theoretical concept. The differentiation

7 For a discussion of al-Qirqisānī's principles, see L. Nemoj, *Karaite Anthology: Excerpts from the earliest literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952, 42ff.; cf. M. Zucker, "Towards Solving the Problem of the Thirty-two Middot and the "Mishnah" of Rabbi Eliezer", *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 23 (1954): 1–39 [Hebrew].

8 See further on this concept M. Polliack "The "voice" of the narrator and the "voice" of the



between the *mudawwin*'s voice and that of the characters is common in Yefet ben 'Eli's works, in particular. Here, I suffice with two examples. First, in commenting on Esther 1:1, Yefet explains the intention of the *mudawwin*'s wording:

By the statement "Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus" he (the *mudawwin*) is referring to all that which the scroll contains, the purpose of which is the recounting of what happened to Israel during his time, for all that which it mentions is connected with them—that is today, since it was the intention of the *mudawwin* to inform us of the matter on account of which Israel enjoined upon themselves (the continual observance of) the two days of Purim, it was inevitable that he should recount that which took place of their affairs (during the reign of Ahasuerus), from their first to their last [...] He then continues to link the report together (*silsilāt al-qawl*), in order to point out that the king prescribed that which Esther and Mordechai had in mind concerning the matter of the annihilation of Israel's worst enemies, and also (to show) what they received as a religious obligation on account of these two days.<sup>9</sup>

Yefet further suggests the *mudawwin* of Esther, whomever he might have been, finalized the text of the Book originally written by Esther, albeit containing all the essential episodes or scenes of the affair. The implication, therefore, is that the *mudawwin* added or subtracted, and perhaps, to a certain extent, refashioned, Esther's "Urtex" into a canonical book which explains the events behind the festival of Purim.

According to Michael G. Wechsler, "it is in the same vein apparently that Yefet implicitly identifies Esther 9:23–28 as a summarizing statement of the *mudawwin* rather than that of Esther when he writes *ad* 9:25: 'The *mudawwin* indicates that the Jews found rest from their enemies (only) when Haman as well as his sons had been impaled.'<sup>10</sup>

Often throughout his commentary on the Torah too, Yefet systematically distinguishes between the "voice" (*qawl*, literally: 'saying, utterance') of the

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characters in the Bible commentaries of Yefet ben 'Eli", in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism presented to Shalom M. Paul on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*. Cohen, C. (ed.), Winona Lake: Penn State University Press, Vol. 2, 2008, pp. 891–915.

9 Michael G. Wechsler, *The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli the Karaite on the Book of Esther*, Leiden: Brill, 2008, pp. 167–169. See Wechsler's further discussion on the semantics of *mudawwin* in this work pp. 30–34.

10 Ibid, p. 303.

*mudawwin* and the direct speech of the characters in the story. A case in point concerns Sarah's words to Abraham, in which she explains her request that he should beget children from her Egyptian maid, Hagar, by admitting that "the Lord has prevented me from bearing children" (Gen 16:2). In his comment on this verse, Yefet compares Sarah's awareness of God's role in her predicament with similar interpretations of barrenness in the cases of Rachel (Gen 30:2) and Hannah (1 Sam 1:6), as follows:<sup>11</sup>

Similarly to this statement, Jacob, may he rest in peace, said (to Rachel): '(Am I in place of God), who withheld from you the fruit of the womb?' (Gen 30:2), **and the authorial-narrator-editor** [emphasis added] said (*wa-qāla al-mudawwin*; Gen 30:22): '(and God remembered Rachel and heard her) and opened her womb'. He (= the narrator) attributed the opening of the womb to Him (= to God) just as he referred its prevention from conception to Him. As he said concerning Hannah (1 Sam 1:6): 'because the Lord had closed her womb'. And God, the exalted and lofty, included both aspects in one saying (Isa 66:9): 'Shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?'

In this comment, Yefet clearly distinguishes between three types of voices in the biblical text: Firstly, the voice of the characters in the story, such as Jacob, which is related in the first-person direct speech form ("Am I in place of God, who withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"). Secondly, the voice of the *mudawwin*, who relates certain data concerning the characters, in the third person form ("and God remembered Rachel and heard her and opened her womb"). Thirdly, the voice of God speaking, in first person direct speech ('Shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?').

The writing process behind the transition of voices in the narrative span is not discussed by Yefet, nor does he make evident whether the narrator is responsible for quoting the actual words of the human characters, or God, or whether he "merges" in some way with the characters, subsuming their voice. Yefet's primary purpose in applying the distinction between voices remains exegetical in that he alerts the reader to the transition, in order to elucidate a textual feature in the narrative span. Certain sections of text are thus openly marked off as issuing from the *mudawwin*, representing his words, while other sections represent the words of the characters. Why is this so important to Yefet? The answer seems to lie, in my view, in his mental time. Yefet is

11 MS Cambridge, Trinity College (= CTC) 24 (folios not numbered).

troubled by the lack of smoothness or consistency in the Bible's "reportage" or "textualisation" of historical events, real events, real people, or real situations, due to his new sensibility to such matters. In explaining the textual mechanism behind these transitions, he wishes to show there is a logical explanation for the perplexing textual features of the Bible's way in relating "authentic" materials. Yefet's concern with the historical cohesion of the biblical text arises from common Islamic polemic against the Jews, namely, the claim that they distorted (*tahrīf*) God's message, and hence their texts have been abrogated (*nask*), as impaired or inauthentic, by the Qur'ān. Though he does not mention this openly, Yefet is in fact engaging with this claim. He appears sensitized to what may be criticized as the Hebrew Bible's lack of textual cohesion. This is a clear sign of his mental time, namely, a state of mind, which has shifted from the rabbinic-midrāšic traditional reading of the Hebrew Bible as intrinsically multi-significant, regardless of its textual cohesion.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3 *The Build-up of Meaning in the Biblical Text*

A major concept in the Karaite understanding of the build-up of meaning is that of the discourse gaps employed by the *mudawwin*. The Karaite grammarian Ya'qūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ used the term *'ikṭiṣār* in designating the 'elision of letters in the morphological derivation of a word and the elision of words from a verse'.<sup>13</sup> Ibn Nūḥ's terminology is almost identical to Yefet's, namely, *kalimah muḳtaṣirah al-tadwin* refers to words that 'exist implicitly in the structure of the text but have been omitted in the explicit written form (*'uḳtuṣira fī l-tadwin*). The implicit presence of such words in the structure of the text is posited only if some structural feature in the text requires this.<sup>14</sup> Yefet extended Ibn Nūḥ's grammatical theory to the literary sphere and further developed it, using the notion of elision to reconstruct wider textual units, i.e., as a form of discourse analysis. Thus *'ikṭiṣār*, in Yefet's usage, explains the narration process in which certain elements of a narrative span (or a prophetic utterance) are omitted or abridged from the explicit written form of the story (or prophecy), but remain implicit in its literary structure or pattern. It is as if this abstracted structure preserves the contours of an ideal or complete literary form, which was in the mind

12 For further examples of Yefet's identification of narrative technique in prophetic literature and other genres see M. Polliack, "The Unseen Joints of the Text: On the medieval Judaeo-Arabic concept of elision (*iḥtiṣār*) and its gap-filling functions in biblical interpretations", in *Words, Ideas, Worlds: Biblical essays in honour of Yairah Amit*. Brenner, A. and Polak, F.H. (eds.). Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012, pp. 179–205.

13 See G. Khan, *The Early Karaite Tradition of Hebrew Grammatical Thought*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, p. 147.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 133; and further on pp. 134–135, 150.

of the author or compiler-editor of the biblical text. Yet, its explicit expression in the written text could never be complete, since its realisation in the text is partial, due to narration and rhetorical considerations, as well as limitations of space.<sup>15</sup> The Bible translator and interpreter is able, nevertheless, to reconstruct this full structure by comparing between its different realisations in the written text, within the same text-type or genre (i.e., comparisons between different texts within the prophetic, historiographic or narrative genres). In this manner, the interpreter may arrive at the specific significance or accurate *meaning* of the text as intimated by the expression of the abstract structure within the written form of the text. Al-Qirqisānī too discussed the linear structure of the biblical text and its interruption in several of his principles of interpretations (nos. 7–10), including gaps and their usage, and textual foreshadowing.<sup>16</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

In sum, the above examples demonstrate how Karaite exegetical sources came to reflect a unique mental time, namely, a form of historical thinking, which is beginning to dissociate itself, due to the encounter with Arabic literacy, from the ancient Rabbinic blurring between present and past. Judaeo-Arabic sources from the Cairo Genizah collections reflect how biblical exegetes in the High Middle Ages in the Near East distanced themselves from the ahistorical approach of ancient Rabbinic exegesis.<sup>17</sup> They asked questions about the possible connection between the biblical text and the “real” world. Especially, whether the Hebrew Bible included fictive elements that one can differentiate from non-fictive, historical events. This lead inevitably to the discovery of narrative techniques employed by the Bible’s various authors-editors and to literary reflection on the ways the biblical text built up meaning. Though imbued with a biblical world view, and wanting to revive a biblical past, the Karaite exegetes understood this was not possible in practice since the biblical text

15 See further in Polliack, “The Unseen Joints of the Text” (note 12 above) and cf. Khan, *The Early Karaite Tradition* (note 13 above), p. 134.

16 See above note 7.

17 On the Rabbinic Sages’ disinclination towards historical realism in biblical interpretation, see M.D. Herr, “The Conception of History among the Sages”, *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1973*, pp. 129–142 [Hebrew]. On the Sages’ views on the “historicity” of the stories found in midrashic literature, see C.J. Milikowsky, “Midrash as Fiction and Midrash as History: What Did the Rabbis Mean?” in *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative*, edited by Jo-Ann Brant et al., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005, pp. 117–127.

had to be interpreted in new ways that suited their present. They tried to focus on grammatical meaning and the literal sense as a way of regaining confidence in the biblical message, yet they did not engage in midrašic gap-filling, which often deliberately merged the present and past. Rather, they engaged in such questions as formulated above, and tried to answer them (and other related questions as well). Their mental time had become transformed, when compared with the traditional modes of thinking on the Hebrew Bible prevalent amongst the Rabbinic Sages and their Rabbanite counterparts. In this respect Karaism was the beginning-of-the-end of the drawn-out, elastic mental time of ancient Rabbinic exegesis. In the next five hundred years Jewish biblical exegesis would experience further critical breaks from this *longue durée*, such as taken by Abraham Ibn 'Ezra or Baruch Spinoza. The transition in Jewish mental time, at least on the hermeneutic level, resulted from the Karaites' early embrace of a new literate consciousness, due to their encounter with medieval Arabic thought and literature.

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# “To Hire Tents and Camels and Take the Desert Route by Way of Gaza”: Margaret Gibson’s 1896 Expedition from Cairo to Jerusalem

*Catherine Ansoerge*

## 1 Introduction

In early 1896, the remarkable twin sisters Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843–1920) and Agnes Smith Lewis (1843–1926) set out from their home in Cambridge on an expedition to visit Cairo and Jerusalem, searching for manuscripts which they had been informed were on sale in the local markets. The sisters were already well-known at the time, both for their scholarship and their language skills, especially in Arabic and Syriac, and for their manuscript discoveries and decipherment skills. They were also seasoned travellers, having already made several visits to Egypt, Sinai, and Jerusalem. In 1898, Agnes published *In the Shadow of Sinai*, an account of her travels and research discoveries. Chapter seven, *A Leaf of Ecclesiasticus*, is her description of the 1896 expedition, including some details of the manuscripts they had found (Lewis, 1898, 142–158). A more recent account of the expedition appeared as *Keepers of Manuscripts*, chapter 24 of *Sisters of Sinai*, a biographical account of the sisters’ lives by Janet Soskice (Soskice, 2010, 232–238).

Later perceptions of this expedition have been based on the narrative written by Agnes. However, housed in the archives of Westminster College in Cambridge are two vivid and surprisingly personal narratives of the 1896 expedition written by the other sister, Margaret Gibson. She was the less outspoken of the two women, and these accounts have remained unpublished, though mentioned and quoted by Stefan Reif in his 2004 account of the Cambridge scholars involved in the discovery of the Cambridge Genizah collection (Reif, 2004, 332–346). The aim of the present paper is to give a fresh account to the sisters’ 1896 journey from Margaret’s point of view.

Margaret’s first account, *Cairo to Jerusalem by Land*, describes her journey overland from the Suez Canal, eastwards via Gaza, to Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The second account, *Jerusalem in 1896*, describes her subsequent month-long stay in the

1 “*Cairo to Jerusalem by Land*” by Margaret Dunlop Gibson, WGL6/2/2, Archive Collections, Westminster College, Cambridge, UK (cited in the text as Cairo, folio number). Unpublished.

city.<sup>2</sup> These two narratives describe Margaret's daily experiences and observations both in greater detail and in a more thoughtful style than in the briefer account by Agnes. They also record in some detail her own personal reactions and experiences as the expedition progressed. I became aware of these travelogues in 2016, after a visit to Westminster College when first working in the Genizah Research Unit, and I subsequently made a complete transcription of the two narratives which provided such a lively and colourful account of Margaret's experiences.

## 2 The Documents and the Archive

The sisters, originally from Ayrshire in Scotland, had decided to settle permanently in Cambridge by 1890. The home they built—Castle-brae, in Chester-ton Lane—provided the centre of their activities and contacts with the University's academic community. After the deaths of Margaret in 1920 and then Agnes in 1926, a number of their papers and manuscripts were transferred from their home to nearby Westminster College (Soskice, 2010, 302), where they form an archive with other personal belongings.<sup>3</sup> Margaret's original documents are unremarkable in appearance, written on plain paper without illustration, in a neat and consistent style looking rather like two school essays.<sup>4</sup> She recounts her activities and surroundings in refreshing detail, giving the impression these accounts were written close to the events described, possibly during the expedition itself, on the journey home, or immediately on her return to Cambridge.

Few other examples of the sisters' original writing have survived, as much of it was destroyed after their deaths, but there is an extensive photographic collection which provides a unique record of their work and travels. They are among the earliest photographic records made by European travellers in the Middle East and North Africa. The sisters used photography primarily to make

2 "*Jerusalem in 1896*" by Margaret Dunlop Gibson, WGL6/2/1, Archive Collections, Westminster College, Cambridge. UK (cited in the text as Jerusalem, folio number). Unpublished.

3 Westminster College in Cambridge was founded as a theological training college serving the Presbyterian Church. Formerly the English Presbyterian College, founded in London in 1844, it was moved to Cambridge in 1899 and renamed after the 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith. The sisters were among the chief benefactors to the Cambridge foundation, also securing the site of the building from St John's College.

4 The first narrative is written on fourteen loose pages of lined paper, measuring 28.5 × 22.5 cm. The second, consisting of twenty-four loose pages, has leaves of slightly different sizes.



copies of the manuscripts they discovered, but they also photographed landscapes, excavations, local inhabitants and travelling companions. They certainly carried a camera with them on their 1896 expedition; Margaret refers to this specifically in her second narrative (Jerusalem, 8). Although the photographs are mostly without original captions, it is likely that some were taken on the journey Margaret describes and those included in this chapter have been chosen specifically to illustrate the narrative.<sup>5</sup>

### 3 The Context of Margaret's Travel Accounts

Margaret and Agnes (née Smith) were the daughters of a wealthy Presbyterian lawyer who ensured that they received a high standard of education, especially in languages. A notable local Scottish minister, William Bruce Robertson (1820–1886), became their mentor, supporting their academic pursuits and desire to travel. A significant inheritance received on their father's death gave the sisters freedom to pursue their own interests and they visited Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. In 1869, they made their first trip to Palestine, including Jerusalem. Both sisters later married, Agnes to a Fellow of Corpus Christi College in Cambridge, but both their husbands died within a few years and neither of them had children.

In Cambridge, the sisters studied Arabic, Syriac, and Persian, and took private tuition with the Hebrew scholar Robert Kennett (1864–1932). They attended palaeography classes with the biblical scholar James Rendel Harris (1852–1941), who became a close friend. Their Scottish Presbyterian beliefs continued to be a powerful influence and fired their interest in the transmission of biblical texts traced through early manuscript sources. Despite being marginalised from the Cambridge academic community on grounds of their sex, the sisters achieved scholarly success. They continued to travel, and between the years 1892 and 1906, made five expeditions to the monastery of St Catherine in Sinai, as well as visits to Syria and the Coptic monasteries on the Nile (Soskice, 2010, 124–187 and 272–276).

Margaret and Agnes can be included in the long tradition of European women travellers to the Middle East, but they were far from being the first. Until the end of the eighteenth-century, European travel in the region had been largely a male experience. Opportunities for women to visit there, except

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5 The collection can be viewed in the Cambridge Digital Library at: <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/westminster/1>.

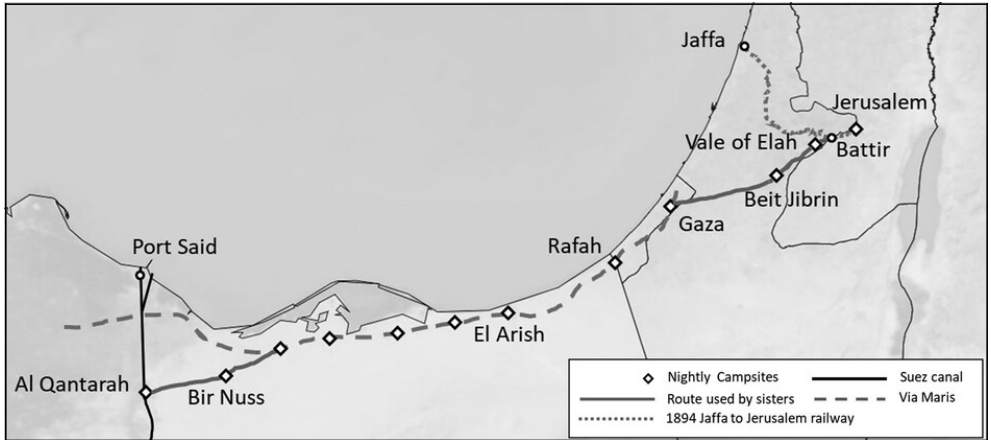


FIGURE 15.1 Sketch map of Margaret's journey to Jerusalem showing overnight stops; those between Bir Nuss and El Arish are approximate.

as pilgrims, or later as wives of diplomats or missionaries, were rare. In 1798, Napoleon's conquest of Egypt brought about greater accessibility for European travellers and explorers, including the possibility for women to travel more widely. A further, rapid expansion of organised tourism in the late nineteenth century made travel both easier and safer for women (Melman, 1992, 8–18).

But the twins did not travel as tourists. They organised the 1896 expedition themselves, just as they had their previous expeditions. They hired a dragoman (local guide and interpreter) and servants but brought no other companions. Their original plan had been to take the sea route from Alexandria to Jaffa, but the opening lines of Margaret's first narrative explains how their plans changed quite suddenly and in a way beyond their control:

In February of this year, my sister Mrs Lewis and I were in Egypt, and intended to go to Jerusalem, but unsuspected difficulties came in our way. Five days of quarantine was put on at all the Syrian ports against Alexandria, where cholera had only just begun to appear ... we therefore resolved, rather rashly perhaps, to hire tents and camels and take the desert route by way of Gaza.

Cairo, 1. Final words also quoted in the article title

The arduous journey took eleven days, and a sketch map of the route is shown in Fig. 1.

#### 4 Cairo to Jerusalem by Land—Margaret's First Travel Account

Margaret's narrative begins on 9th March, after the sisters had taken the train from Cairo to Kawa Zara, a small station on the Suez Canal where they camped overnight. They were so close the water's edge they could see the huge, brightly-lit ships passing close by. A string of camels to carry their tents and provisions was assembled on the canal bank at Al Qantarah with their dragoman, a young man named Joseph, whom they knew well, as he had accompanied them to Sinai the previous year. With all the arrangements in place they were ready to set out, and Margaret joked "on the morning of Tuesday the 10th of March, I mounted the tallest camel I have ever rode upon, my feet when he was standing, being higher than a man's head, and felt not a little elated at looking down on my sister for the first time." (Cairo, 3).

As the sisters progressed along the desert route, Margaret describes the animal and plant life they saw; goats, mice, tortoises, beetles, and a variety of grasses and daisies. They followed a route north to El Arish, then parallel to the Mediterranean coast to Rafah and Gaza, the route of the ancient Via Maris. The first night was spent at the small settlement of Bir Nuss, and it then took a further ten days of arduous riding to complete their journey. A scene with the sisters mounted on camels is shown in Fig. 2.

Margaret's account dwells on the arduous nature of this first half of the trek across the desert to Rafah. It took five days of hard riding, mostly over deep sand, but sometimes on ground as hard as asphalt. By contrast, Agnes covers the first half of the journey very briefly in her account. As the sisters ride along, Margaret's observations are not all about the everyday world. She reflects in her vivid imagination, on her deeply held Christian beliefs, and their journey in the context of the biblical narrative. She muses that this same route might have been taken by the Holy Family on the Flight into Egypt, in primitive conditions of much greater privation:

What did the Virgin mother ride while bearing the infant Saviour along this road? Doubtless a camel. An ass would have much difficulty getting over such deep sand and with a rider on its back. How did she fare? She had not, like us, biscuits and jam and St Galmier water but perhaps dates and goat's milk, for we twice passed a flock of these.

Cairo, 3

The sisters rode by day, pausing for lunch which they ate in a small square luncheon tent that always accompanied them. This is shown with the sisters



FIGURE 15.2 The sisters mounted on camels with Margaret in the foreground. This slide is not labelled, but a print of this image in the sisters' album (WGL1/26) is labelled 'Mrs Gibson 1892' and so slightly predates their 1896 expedition.

inside in Fig. 3. At night, larger tents were set up to prepare a larger meal and for sleeping. The main tent is shown in Fig. 4. The main tents and baggage sometimes travelled on ahead to allow the sisters more time to explore.

Margaret observed how sometimes their progress was influenced by local customs:

our Mohammedan escort were all fasting, as it was the last week of Ramadan. They must not let anything pass their lips, not even a drop of water or a pipe between daybreak and sunset. Consequently, they did not make our daily journey longer than they could help. They take a good meal at 7 PM, and go on smoking, eating and talking until 1 am.

Cairo, 4



FIGURE 15.3 The kitchen tent with the sisters standing inside.

On Sunday, March 15th, which was the last day of Ramadan, they reached El Arish after an arduous ride “over large and bare sand hills for six hours” (Cairo, 5). Perhaps they were expecting difficulties here with the authorities, but Margaret records that after all the “custom-house officers did not trouble us. They contented themselves with taking a cup of coffee in our kitchen tent.” (Cairo, 5).

The next day, March 16th, they had an unexpectedly long ride and left Egypt, crossing into Palestine, known at the time as Southern Syria (the Syria Vilayet, founded in 1841). Margaret writes:



FIGURE 15.4 Tents in an encampment. It is uncertain on what expedition this photograph was taken.

our Bedouins fast, having now terminated, having got their heart's desire in having spent the last day of Ramadan with their friends at El Arish, were in good humour for travelling. Consequently, our baggage camels went too far and darkness overtook us long before we got to them.

Cairo, 5-6

And

It was 8PM when a man met us with a paper lantern and we soon found ourselves under the welcome shelter of our tents. Mrs Lewis's little camel having repeatedly gone down on its knees to protest against a day's ride of eleven hours. In the morning we found that we were literally in a field of clover, and that our tents were between the boundary-stones of Egypt and Syria.

Cairo, 6.

The next day they passed the village of Khan Jenga and reached the outskirts of Gaza, where one startling event did give them cause for alarm. As Margaret reports, they were attacked by a group of men: "one of them ... threw a stone at my camel-herder which struck him on the head. The others were using bad language and calling us 'infidel Christians.'" (Cairo, 7-8)



FIGURE 15.5 Turkish soldier on horseback.

When Agnes judged that one of the pursuers was about to pull out a pistol, she reacted by laughing and they managed to escape shaken but unscathed. Here Joseph averted a possible disaster, the first of several occasions on this expedition where he succeeded in saving the day. At his request, the local Governor sent two Turkish cavalry soldiers to guard the party. The presence of Turkish authorities prevented any further trouble for the travellers, a matter especially significant for unaccompanied women. One of the guards, named Mohammed, accompanied them the rest of the way to Jerusalem and became an indispensable member of the party. A photograph of a Turkish soldier is shown in Fig. 5.

Margaret's accounts contain several descriptions of officers from the Ottoman administration, military personnel, or Turkish officials, which places her narrative into the wider political context. The sisters were travelling not far from where the Cambridge Professor of Arabic, Edward Henry Palmer (1840–1882) had been shot dead in the desert of El Tih in 1882. Yet the sisters seemed undeterred by danger, and although the contemporary Baedeker's guide advised carrying weapons except on major routes, they carried none with them (Baedeker, 1894). Others in their party may well have been armed, but this is not mentioned.

After Gaza, their route left the Via Maris and twisted inland over firmer, more undulating terrain, but the sisters decided to press on with their camels rather than exchanging them for horses. This was a decision they later came to regret. On this second part of the journey, Margaret and Agnes were keen to visit nearby archaeological sites. With assistance from local guides, they located the site of Tell el-Hesi. Excavated in 1890 by Flinders Petrie, this was the first archaeological site in Palestine to be scientifically excavated and was identified by him as the site of Lachish. In 1891–1892, this work was continued under the sponsorship of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) by Petrie's American student, Frederick Bliss, whom the sisters were to meet in Jerusalem a few days later (Hallote, 2006, 99–118).

On 19th March, they rode to the village of Beit Givrin. A little higher than the village, they passed the site of Eleutheropolis, the ancient Roman city, which had been identified in 1838 by the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson (1794–1863). This was a hilly region where, according to the Book of Kings, Hezekiah had once faced the Assyrian army (2 Kings: 17.3). Joseph enquired the way to the caves of El Adullam, where, by tradition, David hid from King Saul (1 Samuel 23:13–29). But after climbing some steep hillsides to three natural caves they were unable to identify these caves precisely. How much Margaret already knew of archaeology is unclear, but her interest in exploring ruins and making connections with the biblical narrative is obvious. She continues to reference biblical characters and stories, indicating that her imaginative contacts with a previous era continued as an inner dialogue.

On the same day, after riding across the Vale of Elah to the village of Beit Nassif, they sent their tents on ahead and slowed their pace to provide more time to explore. They then failed to catch up with them before darkness fell. Mohammed, the soldier, called for help but a local shepherd had been unable to direct them, and they had to admit that they were lost. Agnes's clothes had become wet while being ferried over boggy ground by Joseph, but their campfire failed to dry the thick fabric. Margaret makes no comment in her narrative about the clothing choices for their expedition, but the sisters continued to wear European dress with bodices and skirts made from fabrics unsuitable for such a climate and mode of transport. As their experiences in their overland journey demonstrated, this ensured neither their safety nor their comfort. It is Margaret's account that provides more domestic details of the situation:

Our little luncheon tent was put up. A rug was spread on the grass below, wet with rain and heavy dew. With the help of two red cotton quilts, we made ourselves a bed, using our hold-alls for pillows. Our Bedouin made



a bright fire of brushwood in front of this tent, round which they sat, with Joseph, Mohammad and my sister drying her skirts.

Cairo, 13

The following morning, they decided to abandon their trek and to catch the train at nearby Battir, the final stop on the recently opened Jaffa-Jerusalem railway. The camels had proved unsuitable for the rocky terrain and the wet stones were too slippery underfoot. Riding over the mountains to where the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives could be seen in the distance, Margaret remarks “we were now tired of so much hard climbing, so we gave it up, sent on our baggage with the camels, and ourselves rested for five hours under the olive trees, till the afternoon train took us in twenty minutes to Jerusalem.” (Cairo, 14). Here the first travelogue ends, and Margaret seems relieved that such a wearisome journey was over. But there was no delay in recording her subsequent adventures, and her second travelogue proves to be of a very different character.

## 5 Jerusalem in 1896—Margaret’s Second Travel Account

Margaret’s second narrative begins with a reference to her previous visit to Jerusalem in 1868, nearly 30 years earlier. Then a young woman, now she and her sister were revisiting places with a more mature experience. Reaching Jerusalem after their brief train journey, they were relieved to be reunited with the rest of their party whom they had missed the previous night near Beit Nassif. They camped for a further three nights close to the Pool of Gihon, then moved nearer to the Jaffa Gate, guarded again by Turkish soldiers. On their final night under canvas, on 22nd March, another disaster occurred when they were drenched by a violent storm, which soaked their beds and turned the floor of their tent into a pool. Early the following morning they moved, with great relief, to the Grand New Hotel just inside the Jaffa Gate. The recently opened hotel provided modern accommodation and the sisters remained there for the rest of their stay (Gibson et al., 2013). A contemporary photograph of the Jaffa Gate is shown in Fig. 6.

Once established in Jerusalem, Margaret’s focus shifts towards the archaeology and history of the city and its religious communities, about which she provides many vivid descriptions. Here she met Frederick Bliss, the colleague of her Cambridge friend James Rendel Harris, who himself had travelled to Sinai with Bliss in 1889 and accompanied the sisters on their 1893 Sinai expedition. Bliss became a key figure for the sisters in Jerusalem, acting as unofficial guide



FIGURE 15.6 The Jaffa Gate around the time of the sisters' visit. Also published in *Shadow of Sinai*, 161.

to archaeological sites and at meetings with church dignitaries. Their reputation as linguists and academics facilitated their contacts with religious dignitaries and European residents in the city, expanding their breadth of experience and possibilities far beyond those of the average tourist.

In Jerusalem, Margaret's very first visit proved to be of a deeply personal nature. She walked to the so-called "green hill" outside the Damascus Gate, thought by many Protestant Christians to be the true site of Calvary. The sisters visited the rock-cut tombs here, known as the Garden Tombs, believed to be the site of the burial of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> Margaret ponders this deeply, and remarks:

<sup>6</sup> In 1894–1898, the London-based Garden Tomb Association was in the process of purchasing

I, at least, was convinced that I stood on the meeting place between heaven and earth and felt repaid for my ten days' toilsome tramping through the wilderness ... whether this is the real site or not, it is the one that appeals to the imagination and satisfies the heart.

Jerusalem, 4

Since the fourth century, the belief held by Orthodox Christian and Roman Catholic traditions was that the true site of the crucifixion and burial was within the Holy Sepulchre Church. These variant beliefs caused continual controversy throughout the ages with debates centred around the historical variations in the location of the city's walls. As the biblical narrative states that the crucifixion took place "without the city walls", whether the Church stood inside or outside the city walls at the time was therefore crucial and was the focus of Frederick Bliss's excavations in Jerusalem, begun in 1894 after his work at Tel el-Hesy.<sup>7</sup> This controversy on the location of Calvary formed the subject of a lecture that Bliss gave one evening and which the sisters attended. The different opinions on the history of the city walls were hotly debated:

One evening we had a lecture in our hotel from Dr Frederick Bliss, on the walls of Jerusalem. Partisans of both the disputed sides were present, and the lecturer felt as if he were stepping on a tightrope. Not that evening only, but during all the time of our stay, we had to discuss the subject with residents and visitors alike.

Jerusalem, 4–5

Margaret also mentions that this topic remained a focus of conversation throughout her stay in Jerusalem and she takes a very particular interest in the matter. Agnes, in her account, passes quite briskly over the walk to the green hill and the city walls, but Margaret describes both in detail. More than three pages of her narrative are devoted to this subject as she absorbs and comments on the sites of mounds, gateways, and towers and the implications of this information for the history of the city. It appears to have been a matter of significant spiritual importance to her, beyond just an everyday walk.

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this site from the Ottomans with the aim of developing it as a focus of pilgrimage (Kark and Frantzman, 2010, 199–216).

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Bliss (1859–1937) was born in Mount Lebanon where his father was a missionary and subsequently president of the Syrian Protestant College, later the American University in Beirut. At the time of Margaret's travelogue, Bliss was employed by the PEF to excavate in Jerusalem. (Hallote, 2006, 85–96, and 121–132).

### 5.1 *Visits to Religious Sites and Ceremonies*

In 1896, the Easter festivities of the Greek and Roman churches, which frequently fell on different dates, coincided, and were celebrated on the 5th to 8th of April. Margaret and her sister were much involved in these, and on Maundy Thursday they visited the Armenian Church to observe the ceremony of the washing of the feet. Deeply impressed by the splendid vestments, Margaret commented "when the blue curtain was raised, the prelate and twelve other Archbishops in gorgeous robes stood revealed, the former glittering with gold cloth and diamonds." (Jerusalem, 9–10).

Margaret frequently remarks on the sumptuousness of the vestments she saw. Possibly this offended her Scottish Presbyterian beliefs, but the sisters had their own personal appreciation of fine clothes and fabrics which was well known in Cambridge, so perhaps these reactions were genuine. As wealthy women, they were always able to indulge themselves with clothing of the best quality. Margaret ended Maundy Thursday with a visit to the communion service in the English Church on Mount Zion, followed by a walk around the city, crossing the Brook Kidron and the site of Gethsemane.<sup>8</sup> Attending a service there touched her deeply and this is obviously where, as regards her own personal beliefs, she felt most at home. She remarks "to have taken part in this is a memory of a lifetime." (Jerusalem, 11).

On Easter Saturday, Margaret and Agnes paid a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. There they witnessed the ancient tradition of the Holy Fire, in which a flame is believed to erupt spontaneously from the site of the tomb of Christ, thought to be situated within the church (Montefiore, 2011, 270). A photograph of the Church is shown in Fig. 7.

The Easter celebrations drew large numbers of Christian pilgrims who visited Jerusalem to witness the ceremony, but the sisters had already seen it on their 1869 visit. As Margaret explains "we did not intend to see the Holy Fire, having done so on our previous visit, but the Greek Patriarch kindly sent us tickets, and we wended our way on Saturday at 11 o'clock to the upper gallery of the church, just under the dome." (Jerusalem, 12). Inside, they found that the large crowds, kept in check by Turkish soldiers, had descended into raucous behaviour, and after an altercation with an Arab girl and her mother who blocked their line of sight, the sisters made an early exit.

Many people, from both religious and secular backgrounds, some of whom Margaret spoke with in Jerusalem at the time, regarded the Holy Fire as fraudulent and controversies rumbled on regarding the ceremony throughout history.

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<sup>8</sup> Margaret refers here to Christ Church, situated inside the Jaffa Gate, the oldest Protestant

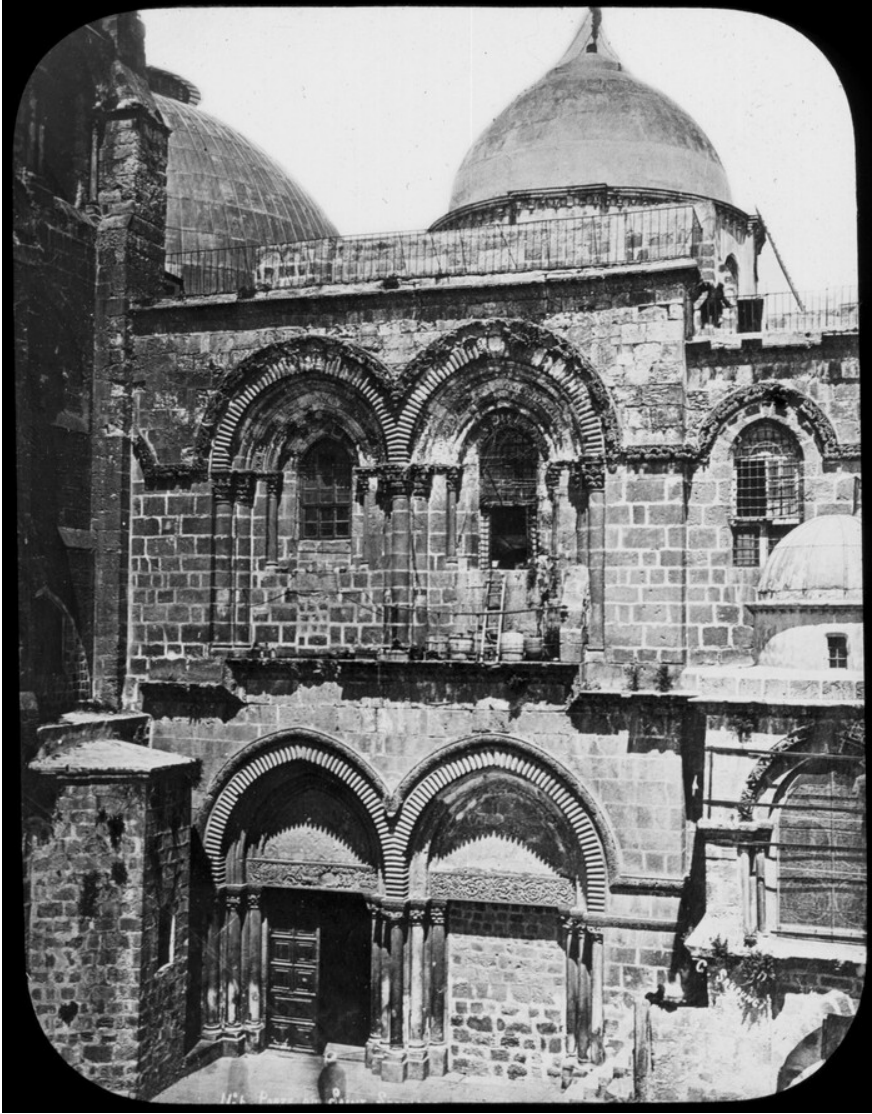


FIGURE 15.7 The doorway of the Holy Sepulchre Church.

Margaret records her own belief that such ceremonies had no basis in common reality. With celebrants from so many Christian faiths, the Turkish authorities

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church in the Middle East. Founded in 1849, it remained the seat of the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem until the establishment of St. George's Cathedral in 1899.

were very afraid of unrest. Margaret comments how members of the different religions and sects often held one another in mutual antipathy, and a small spark could easily lead to a major conflict. She observed such situations closely and was rarely critical, but on one occasion, she lost her usual restraint and remarked somewhat tartly:

to our colder Northern natures, pomp and display when carried so far, make devotional feelings well-nigh impossible. The more gorgeous a Bishop's robes and the more homage he receives, the less he becomes like a follower of the meek and lowly Saviour whose minister he is.

Jerusalem, 16

On Easter Monday, the sisters visited the Greek Patriarch in his palace where he was presenting each of a line of Russian pilgrims with a painted egg. The sisters conversed with him in fluent Greek, marking them as no ordinary tourists, but as established scholars, opening doors for them to other influential people in the city.

Margaret also found that her friendship with Bliss provided opportunities to meet with other European residents in Jerusalem. The sisters visited the German archaeologist Conrad Schick (1822–1901), who had worked for the PEF and constructed a notable series of wooden models of the Second Temple and Temple Mount, which the sisters went to see (Rubin, 2006, 43–63). They also met Dr Percy Wheeler (1859–1944), a well-known medical missionary from the Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews (founded in 1836) whose dedication had improved medical provision for the Jewish population within the framework of furthering Christian missionary efforts (Yaron and Lev, 2006). Wheeler took the sisters on other visits, including one to visit synagogues, and another to meet the Bishop of the Syriac Church, who happened to be his patient. Agnes omits these visits from her account, finishing her description of their activities after the ceremony of the Holy Fire. In contrast, Margaret describes the different people they met and the circle of friends they established.

Margaret appears, superficially at least, to tolerate the diversity of Christian traditions surrounding her, and to observe them without criticism; but there is also a sense of her unease towards the Eastern Christian traditions where they contradict her own beliefs. She hardly refers to Jewish traditions at all, as the sisters only briefly visited some synagogues. They did have some familiarity with Muslim religious practices, as in the brief mention of Ramadan on the way to Gaza, but despite Muslims forming a significant minority of the local population of Jerusalem at the time, Margaret rarely mentions them in the narratives.

## 5.2 *Visits to Archaeological Sites*

Archaeological visits formed a significant focus for Margaret during her time in Jerusalem. Excavations had been carried out in the city as far back as the time of the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson (1794–1863), known not only for his identification of Eleutheropolis, but also the eponymous Robinson's arch on the south-western flank of the Temple Mount. Further excavations began in the later nineteenth century, such as those of Charles Wilson (1836–1905), who, with members of the Corps of the Royal Engineers, carried out projects to improve the city's water supply system. In 1864–1865, he also directed the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem project, producing the first professional maps of the region. These initiatives provided an impetus towards the founding of the PEF in 1865, crucial to the further archaeological developments. In 1867, Charles Warren (1840–1927) had been recruited by the PEF to conduct an initial survey of biblical Palestine. His first excavations, carried out in Jerusalem in 1867–1870, included the discovery of the water shaft running under the Temple Mount, known as Warren's shaft (Ben-Arieh, 1984, 153). Some of this work would have been contemporary at the time of the sisters' 1869 visit, but Agnes makes no mention of it in *Eastern Pilgrims*, the travel account published a year later describing this visit, so perhaps they were not aware of its significance.

By the time of Margaret's visit in 1896, Wilson and Warren were of a past generation, but could claim major achievements in excavations and cartography (Gibson, 2011, 22–57). Frederick Bliss, appointed by the PEF in 1891 to work both at Tell el-Hesi and Jerusalem, was a natural successor to this work and had excavated both the fortified walls dating from the age of the second Temple and the Siloam Pool (Reich 2019, 61–80). The excavations of the walls were ongoing at the time of the sisters' visit (Hallote, 2006, 121–135). Margaret recounts how Bliss took them for a walk to view his work along the southern wall of the ancient city, as far as the Pool of Siloam towards the site of Warren's shaft. Margaret appears to have a genuine interest in these historical associations and the religious connotations they hold (Jerusalem, 17–18).

## 5.3 *The Visit Comes to an End*

The sisters did not venture far outside the city during their visit, except for one expedition to Jericho and Bethany, where they photographed a "Mahomedan" woman and her newly married daughter-in-law at the door of a cave-dwelling, one of very few mentions of local inhabitants which Margaret recorded. She makes no mention of any women they met in Jerusalem, apart from those viewing the Holy Fire ceremony, nor does she remark on the daily lives of the local female population.

Towards the end of their visit, the sisters paid a brief visit to Bethlehem, but were horrified at being pursued by vendors of rosaries and noted other signs of increased commercialisation of the town. They ended this excursion with a walk to the Mount of Olives and from the summit, Margaret surmises:

there are more extensive views to be found in the world, than that from the top of Olivet but none can excel it in interest. The blue mountains of Moab and Gilead in the distance, the windings of the Jordan, the Dead Sea, and nearer still, the Rock Rimmon, and other sites too numerous to mention bewilder the mind with their historic associations.

Jerusalem, 20

On the final day of their stay in Jerusalem, Margaret records that Frederick Bliss invited her and her sister to lunch at the Palestine Exploration Society's tents, but that the occasion was brought to an abrupt end by the news of the death of Ibrahim Effendi, the dig's Turkish inspector of works, causing Bliss to halt the day's work (Hallote, 2006, 131). Ibrahim had been Bliss's loyal foreman both at Tell el-Hesy and in Jerusalem, so his death must have been keenly felt. Margaret brings her narrative to an end here as if her train of thought was suddenly interrupted by these unexpected events. She says no more of the visit to Jerusalem but concludes with a brief account of the carriage ride to Jaffa on April 17th, which initiated their journey home to Cambridge.

#### 5.4 *Libraries and Manuscript Collecting*

Margaret makes very few mentions of visits to libraries, but on one occasion, Dr Wheeler took the sisters to see the Syriac Bishop, and they managed to photograph some manuscripts in the Syriac Convent. During the visit on Maundy Thursday with Bliss to see the Greek Patriarch, they were also given permission to work in the Library of the Greek Monastery. These promises turned out not to be quite so generous as they seemed, as Margaret recounts:

here, on the other hand, after we had gone on for a week, working for two hours at a stretch when Father Justinian [the Librarian] was at leisure, he suddenly told us on Saturday, after the dinner bell had rung and his soup was getting cold, that the library was to be shut for a fortnight.

Jerusalem, 8

It appears that at least a modest amount of photography work had been successful, and presumably, this was the primary reason for taking their camera with them on the expedition.



Despite manuscript collecting being the declared aim of the expedition, Margaret makes no mention of this until the final page of her second narrative, declaring that the results of their expedition had been worth all their hardships. The manuscripts they had bought in Cairo, before the start of the first narrative, had been sent by sea to Beirut, then Jaffa, and were to be collected on their return home, so the sisters had carried no manuscripts with them on their overland trek. No details are given as to the source of the manuscripts acquired in Jerusalem, but it is likely that Solomon Wertheimer, a manuscript and book collector, may have been resident in the city at the time. He was a known dealer in Genizah manuscripts and had already supplied the Cambridge University Library with a number of fragments during the 1890s. Agnes also mentions that manuscripts had been purchased on their way back to Jaffa from “a dealer on the Plain of Sharon.” Rebecca Jefferson gives a more detailed description of possible sources of these manuscripts in her recent publication on the provenance of the Genizah collection (Jefferson, 2022, 117–119).

On arrival in Jaffa and ready to embark on their way home, Margaret recounts how the quick thinking of Joseph rescued their manuscripts from confiscation by the customs officials. The problems the sisters encountered here indicate that the export of antiquities and manuscripts, formerly carried out by European collectors without question, was now being challenged, and new restrictions introduced (Donkow, 2004). Both consignments of manuscripts, those from Cairo and those from Jerusalem, the sisters donated to Westminster College in Cambridge.<sup>9</sup>

### 5.5 *Return to Cambridge*

Margaret and Agnes reached home in Cambridge on 3rd May and immediately began sorting through their manuscript haul. In the final ten lines of her narrative, Margaret comments on one particularly significant acquisition:

One of them, since our return to Cambridge, has been identified by Mr Schechter as a portion of Ecclesiasticus, unknown to the learned world since the days of Jerome. Is this not emblematical of the impressions we carry away from the journey in the East? We are not always conscious of their value at the time, but they come up and prove helpful for years afterwards, nor is their worth to be measured by any scales at our command.

Jerusalem, 23

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9 The collection, now known as the Lewis-Gibson Collection, bought by the Bodleian Library and CUL in 2013, can be viewed in the Cambridge Digital Library at: <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/lewisgibson/1>.

As well as a fitting end to her narrative, Margaret's closing words also proved to be prophetic. It was this manuscript leaf which instigated the expedition that Solomon Schechter, the Cambridge Reader in Rabbinics, made by to Cairo later the same year, resulting in his acquisition of the Cairo Genizah Collection now held in Cambridge University Library.<sup>10</sup>

## 6 Conclusion: Margaret's Pilgrimage Text

This reference to the identification by Schechter of the Ecclesiasticus manuscript makes clear that Margaret's narratives were completed after her return home, yet her intentions behind them remain unclear. Were they a personal diary, possibly never intended for publication? Not all travel accounts by women writers were intended for publication at the time of writing, and perhaps this was so in Margaret's case (Bassnett, 2002). Or possibly their publication was abandoned due to her involvement in other work, or she was pre-empted by Agnes producing her own version of the journey.

The 1896 expedition made by Margaret and her sister has much in common with others made by European explorers and collectors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Margaret was writing at a time when the tradition of the individual explorer was already declining, but when organised travel by middle class Europeans to Jerusalem and Palestine was developing rapidly. For those who could afford to pay, the means of travel and standard of accommodation was much improved compared to those endured by pilgrims in hospices and monasteries in earlier centuries. In 1869, Thomas Cook's *Tours* (Cook, 1876) first established guided visits to Palestine—providing a dragoman, camels, and tents—and such travel tours boomed in the 1890s (Kark, 2001).

The initial and unexpected upset to their plans which caused the sisters to take the land route from Al Qantarrah had resulted in a longer and more dangerous journey, suffering some obvious privations. Possibly, they had intended to remain in their tents for the whole expedition, but one wet night too many outside the Jaffa Gate had changed their minds. It was almost as if, from the time they abandoned the tents and moved the Grand New Hotel, they made a shift from the explorer tradition to the tourist tradition, with all the comforts and security that brought with it. Yet interwoven within the everyday narrative there is the clear thread of Margaret's own inner personal itinerary. Agnes

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10 The collection, now known as the Taylor-Schechter Collection, can be viewed in the Cambridge Digital Library at: <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/genizah/1>.

had written of this expedition with a broad brush, but all the detail of their experiences is to be found in Margaret's account. Her narratives follow her own spiritual journey while providing an on-the-spot social account of Palestine and Jerusalem at this specific time in history.

Throughout her narratives, Margaret echoes beliefs and reactions common in Christian pilgrimage accounts and mentions many well-known pilgrimage sites. She comments on the route of the Holy Family across the desert, while in Jerusalem she mentions the Green Hill, the Garden Tomb, and the Holy Sepulchre Church. Later, she visits Bethany, Bethlehem, and the Mount of Olives, all of which echo associations with the Bible text and the life and death of Jesus, which had, over time, become sacred spaces (Ridinger, 2021). Despite her own Presbyterian faith and belief that worship could take place anywhere, Margaret became involved in a pilgrimage narrative in places with deep Christian connection, recounting her own religious experience in parallel to her day-to-day activities.

This tradition of pilgrimage had continued through the centuries and the writing of pilgrimage accounts was already long-established before Margaret (Frankopan, 2001). Among the earliest surviving pilgrimage narratives is that of St Silvia of Aquitaine (515–592 CE), whose original text was rediscovered and published in 1887 by G.F. Gamurrini. St Silvia's pilgrimage was known to the sisters and Margaret had already written an account of her life from notes by Agnes, as a chapter of *How the Codex was Found* (Lewis, 1893, 108–124).<sup>11</sup> Margaret would have had a solid background in Bible stories and missionary tales dating as far back as her Scottish childhood, but perhaps it was St Silvia's account which provided the steady foundation for her narrative and a focus for her thoughts—an important aspect of her own spiritual and scholarly pilgrimage.

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11 Research in 1903, and therefore unknown to Margaret at the time, identified the author of this itinerary as Egeria, a fourth-century nun (Wilkinson 1971) who, in 381–384 CE, made the earliest recorded pilgrimage by a woman. She describes visits to sacred spaces in Sinai, Jerusalem, Edessa, and Constantinople and observes religious practices there (Bader 2020, 91–102).

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# Ernest James Worman and the Victorian Genizah: A Salt-Miner's Tale of Romance, Tax Evasion, and Sudden Death

*Nick Posegay*

## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In 1898 CE, Solomon Schechter and Charles Taylor agreed to donate their 'hoard' of Cairo Genizah manuscripts to the Cambridge University Library (CUL). CUL in turn provided a modest fund to catalogue the new Taylor-Schechter Collection. Under Schechter's leadership, this project was estimated to last ten years.<sup>2</sup> Four years later, Schechter was living in New York and no one in Cambridge was working on the collection full-time. This was a problem, as Schechter's successor, Israel Abrahams, would later explain, "It must be remembered that the gift to the University, and through it the nation, of the great Taylor-Schechter Collection was conditional on a certain amount of work being done on the collection within a stated period."<sup>3</sup> Someone had to catalogue the collection, and they had to do it soon. That someone turned out to be Ernest James Worman

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- 1 Thank you to Catherine Ansorge, Ben Outhwaite, Sarah Sykes, Melonie Schmierer-Lee, Jill Whitelock, Suzanne Paul, Menachem Butler, and the CUL special collections teams for their assistance in accessing records for this project. Thank you to Rebecca Jefferson and Liam Sims for their comments on an earlier version of this article. Special thanks to Liam Sims for offering his expertise on CUL history and for providing me with additional sources by Worman's contemporaries.
  - 2 Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Nextbook, Schocken, 2011), 82; see also, Rebecca J.W. Jefferson, 'The Historical Significance of the Cambridge Genizah Inventory Project', in *Language, Culture, Computation. Computing of the Humanities, Law, and Narratives*, ed. Nachum Dershowitz and Ephraim Nissan, vol. 8002, Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Berlin: Springer, 2014), 10, n. 5 and 11, n. 10. Here we are, 126 years later. Some scholars refer to this as the 'long nineteenth century'.
  - 3 Israel Abrahams, 'Work at the University Library', in *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 19. For Abrahams' role in Cambridge, see Nicholas De Lange, 'Books and Bookmen: The Cambridge Teachers of Rabbinics 1866–1971', *Jewish Historical Studies* 44 (2012): 139–163.

(1871–1909), a Baptist bookseller and Sunday-school teacher who would be paid just two shillings an hour for the work.<sup>4</sup>

Worman was the first scholar to experience what many of us have come to recognise as the ‘salt-mine’ of the Genizah.<sup>5</sup> Already seven decades before the founding of the Genizah Research Unit (GRU), he toiled away in the depths of the CUL, documenting fragment after fragment that, for the most part, did not move the needle of history one way or the other. Many of his greatest successes were secondary, research performed on behalf of other scholars who needed a librarian’s assistance in their own career-defining projects. He died tragically young, but his history is still entangled with that of the GRU and CUL. That said, Worman himself may have preferred to be remembered for his activities outside of academia. He was a devout Christian, a talented musician, an avid boater, and a committed activist for the wellbeing of young men. This article documents his life spent in service to the Cambridge community and the legacy he left behind for modern Genizah scholars.

## 2 Life of a Prominent Baptist

Ernest James Worman was born in Cambridge in 1871 CE. His father, James (d. 1888), was a coach driver while his mother, Harriet (d. 1900), cared for his older siblings, Elizabeth (b. 1849), Henry (b. 1857), and Laura (b. 1859). The family lived at 41 Norwich Street, just north of the Cambridge Botanic Gardens.<sup>6</sup> R. Brimley Johnson, an early schoolmate of Ernest, recalled that he was brilliant, generous, and kind, but had few close friends and even less ambition. Work came easily to him, as Johnson wrote after his death:

The boy was no typical student; he did not talk much of books or shew any particularly love for work. He had, apparently, little conscious ambition, and I often wondered at his feeling no particular desire for a University career ... The fact is it was always natural in him to do his best without

4 Equivalent to about £9.60 as of 2022. Based on hourly logs in Worman’s notebooks, signed off by the CUL Secretary, Harry Gidney Aldis (1863–1919). Thank you to H.D. Miller for calculating Worman’s pay rate and Arnold Hunt for identifying Aldis’ initials.

5 A metaphor coined by Gerson D. Cohen, ‘Introduction’, in *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1972). Hoffman and Cole also used the phrase to describe Worman’s work; *Sacred Trash*, 126, 263.

6 Claire Martinsen, ‘Clara Worman; Ernest James Worman’, in *Mill Road Cemetery*, accessed 16 January 2023, <https://millroadcemetery.org.uk/worman-clara/>.

effort; and he could always get in front of us all at the last moment. There was not any striking power in one subject: it was all done well and easily—very well, with remarkable ease.<sup>7</sup>

Though somewhat directionless, already Worman could excel in many disciplines, an ability that would eventually serve him well in his library career. Before that, however, he found his first genuine passions outside of school. When he was 15, he joined the Baptist congregation at St. Andrew's Street Chapel,<sup>8</sup> a place where he would spend much of his non-working time for the rest of his life. As his minister, Reverend Charles Joseph, would later write:

He threw himself into the spiritual activities of the church and congregation, and was the brother and servant, the helper and friend of every member of the community. In earlier days he was for a time the voluntary organist of the church, when its only musical instrument was a simple harmonium. When it was decided to build an organ Mr. Worman took lessons in anticipation of the more exacting duties that seemed to be awaiting him.<sup>9</sup>

Worman only became the backup organist, but his commitment to the congregation never faltered. For years afterward, he and his brother-in-law, Oswin Smith, took over teaching for the Young Men's Bible Class at St. Andrew's. This position led Worman to co-found the Cambridge Men's Brotherhood, help organise a Cambridge Boys' Life Brigade, and join both the Cambridge Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Robert Hall Society.<sup>10</sup> He also

7 R. Brimley Johnson, 'School Days', in *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 8.

8 Henry Thomas Francis and F.J.H. Jenkinson, 'Recollections', in *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 17. This piece was originally published in the *Cambridge Review*, 480–481 on 17 June 1909. It appears next to an article about the congregation where Charles Darwin's son received an honorary doctorate.

9 C. Joseph, 'Work at the St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church', in *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 21. Worman's older sister, Laura, was a music teacher and still lived at their family home.

10 *Cambridge Independent Press*, "Men's Brotherhood Formed," 8 issued 27 Oct. 1905; *CIP*, "Robert Hall Society," 5 issued 14 Nov. 1902; Joseph, 'Work at the St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church', 20; Francis and Jenkinson, 'Recollections', 17; Cambridge Y.M.C.A. Committee, 'Extract from the Annual Report of the Cambridge Y.M.C.A., 1909', in *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 24.



sang in the church choir and gave solo performances. Particularly popular was his rendition of *Remember Now Thy Creator*, reportedly performed in “capital style.”<sup>11</sup> In 1901, the congregation elected him deacon and appointed him secretary of the church.<sup>12</sup> From then on, he kept meticulous minutes—probably not unlike his later manuscript catalogues—of each church meeting. Worman was thus instrumental to one of the congregation’s greatest accomplishments: the construction of a new chapel for St. Andrew’s in 1903. As a fundraiser, he helped put on a three-day historical re-enactment of an “old English town” inside the Cambridge Guildhall. This event reportedly raised over £430 in the first two days alone (about £41,600 in 2023). Charles Joseph was ill on the day of the new chapel’s dedication ceremony, but the deacons, not wanting him to miss out, acquired a cutting-edge ‘electrophone’ to broadcast the proceedings to his home.<sup>13</sup> In a strange act of “passive resistance” that contradicts Worman’s usual generosity, in at least four years (1904, 1905, 1907, 1908), he also joined a few dozen Baptists who refused to pay the public education portion of their income tax. This decision was in protest of their tax money paying for schools of other denominations.<sup>14</sup>

In 1886, the same year he joined St. Andrew’s, Worman began his first job in the bookshop of Macmillan & Bowes. There he developed the deep interest in books and bookmaking that he would later parlay into employment at the Cambridge University Library. In fact, the shop’s location at 1 Trinity Street (now the Cambridge University Press bookshop) is situated almost directly opposite the Old Schools, which was the site of CUL prior to 1934. It was also where Worman met G.J. Gray, another employee who became one of his closest friends. For the next decade, he applied his keen eye for detail to assist Gray in acquiring and selling books. Six months after Worman’s death, Gray wrote of their first year together:

11 *CIP*, “Chesterton Baptist Chapel,” 5 issued 25 Jan. 1889; *CIP*, “St. Andrew’s Street Young Men’s Bible Class: The Annual Soirée,” 5 issued 30 Nov. 1889.

12 A list of Baptist deacons in Cambridgeshire, including Worman and Smith, appears in *CIP*, “Baptist Motor Tour in Cambridgeshire,” 6 issued 20 July 1906.

13 *CIP*, “Death of a Prominent Baptist,” 8 issued 11 June 1909; *CIP*, “New Baptist Chapel at Cambridge,” 8 issued 29 Jan. 1904; *CIP*, “St. Andrew’s Street Chapel: Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Structure,” 8 issued 8 May 1903; *CIP*, “Puritan Bazaar at Cambridge,” 9 issued 13 Nov. 1903. This last report mentions the re-enactment of “Ye Olde English Tea Gardens” where Ernest’s wife, Clara, served refreshments.

14 *CIP*, “Passive Resistance in Cambridge: To-Day’s Police Court Proceedings,” 8 issued 21 Feb. 1908; *CIP*, “Condemnations by Baptist Union,” 7 issued 2 May 1902. See Martinsen, ‘Clara Worman; Ernest James Worman’.

I remember that I had then just commenced my Index to Hazlitt's *Bibliographical Collections and Notes* ... Many difficulties had to be solved to avoid mistakes in such a work, consisting of 841 pages printed in double columns, each column consisting of fifty lines. There must have been over 10,000 references, and all were verified before being finally printed; and I must confess to being weary of the work again and again. But Worman was with me, and kept me at it by encouragement and help. I cannot say exactly what he did, but I know he read through all the proofs, and that alone was a great undertaking.<sup>15</sup>

Gray was also responsible for introducing Worman to the academic side of book history, nominating him to the newly-formed Bibliographical Society and encouraging him to publish his own works. As he later recalled, "Many a hunt have we had together, following up new facts concerning persons and books; we seemed to form a kind of research committee consisting of only our two selves."<sup>16</sup> In 1892, Worman anonymously published his first academic work, a pamphlet titled *The newly-discovered fragment of the Gospel attributed to St. Peter, Translated from the version of Prof. Swete and compared with that of M. Bourriant*. A local Cambridge printer, Metcalfe & Son, issued 150 copies that (incredibly) turned a profit for Worman. By 1910, Gray remarked that the pamphlet was out of print and exceedingly difficult to acquire.<sup>17</sup> I have located only one copy still in Cambridge, which Trinity College lists (although they do not identify Worman) with an acquisition note from 1904: "Donation; Burn."<sup>18</sup>

Worman's employment at Macmillan & Bowes ended in March of 1895 when CUL hired him as a Library Assistant. Gray recalled that he would often return to the bookshop after the library closed to spend time with the remaining staff.<sup>19</sup>

15 G.J. Gray, 'Recollections', in *Ernest Worman (1871-1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910), 10.

16 Gray, 'Recollections', 11.

17 Gray, 'Recollections', 12-13.

18 Trinity College Cambridge Library, '289.c.85.39[11]' (The Newly Discovered Fragment of the Gospel Attributed to St. Peter: Translated from the Version of Prof. Swete and Compared with That of M. Bourriant), in *Trinity College Library Catalogue* (Cambridge: Trinity College), accessed 22 November 2022, [https://discover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/t9gok8/44CAM\\_CON\\_TRImig1000123312](https://discover.lib.cam.ac.uk/permalink/f/t9gok8/44CAM_CON_TRImig1000123312). Other copies survive at the British Library, the National Library of Wales, the National Library of Scotland, and Trinity College Dublin. Thank you to Liam Sims for identifying these copies.

19 Gray, 'Recollections', 11-12.

In contrast to his lack of school friendships, Worman remained uncharacteristically close with Gray up until his death. Gray seemed to know this as, finally, he wrote:

I suppose I am one of the very few who knew his many-sided character. Those who knew him in connection with his work at the University Library knew not of his work with the St. Andrew's Street Chapel, and his colleagues at the Chapel knew nothing of his other work. I knew of most things in connection with him, and many a quiet talk have we had on subjects not of business, and it will be long before I forget his kindness to me when in trouble and distress.<sup>20</sup>

Worman began his CUL work mainly as a copyist, called upon by scholars around the world to transcribe manuscripts that were otherwise inaccessible to them. He had a knack for learning languages, and even for languages he did not know, he could often accurately transcribe their scripts.<sup>21</sup> The result was that Worman spent much of his time corresponding with foreign scholars and sending his notes on manuscripts abroad. For instance, CUL holds a letter that one E. Gordon Duff sent to Worman in September 1903. Writing from Wales, Duff thanks him for providing notes about the English Stationers' Register and some sixteenth-century letters sent between London, Cambridge, and Antwerp. He promises to return the notes soon.<sup>22</sup>

Shortly after arriving at the library, in part to help with his cataloguing work, Worman enrolled at the University of Cambridge as a bachelor's student in Semitic languages. He received a BA degree in December 1898 as a rare 'unaffiliated' graduate, not associated with any college, and accepted an MA in January 1902 as a member of Christ's College.<sup>23</sup> This second degree would have been

20 Gray, 'Recollections', 13.

21 Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, 127–128; Abrahams, 'Work at the University Library', 18. By 1909, Worman was at least somewhat proficient in reading English (including Middle English), French, German, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Latin, Greek, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Pali, Syriac, and Chinese. His colleagues reckoned he could catalogue books in 20 languages; Francis and Jenkinson, 'Recollections', 15–16. See also, Israel Abrahams, 'An Eighth-Century Genizah Document', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 17 (1905): 430.

22 CUL MS Add. 7339/74 ("E. Gordon Duff to Ernest Worman, 1903").

23 CIP, "University Herald Cambridge: Congregation" issued 16 Dec. 1898, 8; CIP, "University Herald Cambridge: Congregation" issued 17 Jan. 1902, 8. Curious readers may wish to know what else the *Cambridge Independent Press* reported on these days. During Ernest's first graduation, Chesterton resident Albert Charles Porcher (described as a "delinquent cyclist") had just pled guilty to cycling without a light while the Beehive Football

the MA that Cambridge awards to any BA student who survives for several years after graduation.<sup>24</sup> Newly equipped with Hebrew and Arabic, Worman was among the most qualified CUL employees to assist Solomon Schechter in sorting the Cairo Genizah collection from 1897 to 1902.<sup>25</sup> It was then that Worman also worked alongside University Librarian Francis Jenkinson,<sup>26</sup> a close colleague who would later help write his obituary. Worman's reputation for generosity and expertise only grew during his tenure at CUL, with one reader saying, "Worman could nearly always tell you what you wanted to know, or at least he could put you on the right track for discovering it yourself."<sup>27</sup> He would remain at the library for more than 13 years, taking over stewardship of the Taylor-Schechter Collection in 1906 and rising to the position of Oriental Curator in 1908.<sup>28</sup>

On August 4th, 1898, three years into his CUL term, Worman married Clara Smith (1853–1931) at St. Andrew's Street Chapel. She was the daughter of a farmer and worked as a housekeeper for her brothers in Cambridge. She was also already 45 years old—17 years Ernest's senior—on the day of their wedding.<sup>29</sup> Their coupling may have been a 'lavender' marriage, meant to provide

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Club delivered their historic two-nil victory over the Cambridge YMCA. At Ernest's second graduation, the city was gripped by the thrilling saga of Dr. Sinclair Rowland, an apparently fake doctor who, alongside his wife and niece, was arrested for "conspiring to print, sell, and publish obscene books, pictures, and pamphlets to the common nuisance of his Majesty's subjects." The arrest involved at least one disguise, two hidden doors, multiple aliases, an extremely heavy laundry hamper, a "quantity of literature in German," and definitely no opium poisoning. Actual doctor Thomas Lucas, whom the police called to examine Rowland when the alleged criminal died mere minutes after entering their police station, specifically testified to this last item in court. Rowland's death was ruled "natural causes."

24 Perhaps a greater achievement in 1902 than it is in 2024.

25 Mathilde Schechter singled out Worman for providing her husband with the most "actual help" when sorting the Genizah material; Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, 127. On others who assisted Schechter and sorted Genizah fragments before 1902, see Jefferson, 'Historical Significance', 11–12.

26 Worman introduced Jenkinson to what was, at the time, a novel invention—the stapler; Stefan C. Reif, 'Jenkinson and Schechter at Cambridge: An Expanded and Updated Assessment', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 32 (1992): 306, n. 110.

27 Francis and Jenkinson, 'Recollections', 16.

28 The CUL Syndicate appointed Worman Oriental Curator for 1908 on November 23rd, 1907; CUL MS Add.4251/1525 ("Ernest James Worman: Letter to H.T. Francis, 1907").

29 Marriage Certificate of Ernest James Worman and Clara Smith (part of the latter's application for financial support from the Royal Literary Fund in 1909). Thank you to Menachem Butler for sending me a copy of this application. For Clara's biography, see Martinsen, 'Clara Worman; Ernest James Worman'.

social and legal cover for queer individuals in the conservative climate of Victorian England. The two never had any children, and a few pieces of evidence suggest that Ernest (at least) had separate romantic relationships. One of them is a letter that he wrote when he learned of his appointment as Oriental Curator:<sup>30</sup>

19, Warkworth Street,<sup>31</sup>  
Cambridge  
Nov. 23/07

Dear Mr. Francis,

I know you will be pleased to hear that the Syndicate has appointed me Oriental Curator for 1908. I did not know until after one o'clock. This enables them to keep me on at the Taylor-Schechter collection "over-time" and will not take me away from you; therefore please don't run away from me.

Yours Sincerely,  
Ernest Worman

This "Mr. Francis" is Henry Thomas Francis (1837–1924), a British scholar of South Asian studies who became a CUL Under-Librarian in 1877.<sup>32</sup> We have no other details about this relationship with Francis, but at least in Worman's mind, it seems they were more than colleagues. More generally, Worman was acquainted with a broader community of queer men in Cambridge. In addition to Francis, he worked alongside CUL librarians Augustus Theodore Bartholomew and Charles Sayle, both of whom maintained somewhat discreet homosexual relationships. The pair attended his funeral together.<sup>33</sup> Worman was also

30 CUL MS Add.4251/1525 ("Ernest James Worman: Letter to H.T. Francis, 1907").

31 19 Warkworth (sometimes Warkwork) Street was Ernest and Clara's home address. Prior to that they had lived at 5 Montague Road (until at least 1901). Thank you to Catherine Anson for tracking down their census records.

32 J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, Part II (1752–1900), Volume II (Chalmers-Fytche)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), 563.

33 See Sayle's diary (CUL MS Add. 8508) for 11 June 1909 (p. 150). Thank you to Liam Sims for copying the relevant passages for me. On Sayle and Bartholomew, see Liam Sims, "Simple and Exquisite Tastes" A.T. Bartholomew: A Life Through Books, *The Book Collector* Autumn (2016): 395–396; and Will T., 'Love in the Library: Charles Sayle, A.T. Bartholomew, and the Making of a Gay Bibliography', *Scene404: Uncreepy Magazine*, 16 May 2005, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060222095607/https://scene404.com/articles/mag-loveintheibrary.php>.

a lifelong member of the Cambridge Young Men's Christian Association, part of a wider YMCA network that often served as a social space for homosexual men in the latter Victorian era.<sup>34</sup>

One evening, in mid-May of 1909, Worman entered St. Andrew's Street Chapel as he had almost every day of his adult life. He taught a music class for children of the missionary society before joining his old friend, Reverend Joseph, for a prayer meeting. The official organist was absent, and Worman planned to play so Joseph would not have to preach without accompaniment. But Worman was visibly ill, and the other members insisted he return home to rest. It was the last time any of them would see him alive:

So it befell that his last services at St. Andrew's Street chapel—the place which he so loved and for which he laboured so ungrudgingly and cheerfully—were rendered to the missionary society and the prayer meeting. We little thought as he left us that night that we should see his face no more; that within a month his earthly life would be laid down.<sup>35</sup>

What little we know of Worman's last days is chronicled in A.T. Bartholomew's diary. He writes of an unseasonably cold Cambridge summer:

June 2 ... Worman, who has been ill and getting gradually worse for some days, is today lying in a most critical state. The trouble is tubercular—but awfully sudden and unaccountable ...

June 4 ... Horribly wet all day and cold ... Worman a shade better today. Fires everywhere and winter clothes.

June 8 ... Worman died this morning. The Library could not have experienced a greater loss. I shall never forget his kindness to me all through

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34 Cambridge Y.M.C.A. Committee, 'Y.M.C.A. Annual Report', 24. On the history of the YMCA in Cambridge (founded in 1852 at St. Andrew's Street Chapel), see Enid Porter, 'The Y.M.C.A. in Cambridge', *Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon & Peterborough Life*, 1970. Incidentally, Robert Bowes, the co-owner of the bookshop where Worman worked, was a leading member of the local YMCA in 1889 (*CIP*, "Young Men's Christian Association," 5 issued 25 Jan. 1889). On homoeroticism in the early YMCA, see John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and David K. Johnson, 'Review of *Take the Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA* by John Donald Gustav-Wrathall', *Newsletter of the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History* 15, no. 2 (2001).

35 Joseph, 'Work at the St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church', 23.

these 9 years and more, and particularly at the beginning and the benefit I got from working with him and for him ...

June 11 ... Sayle to lunch and we went to Worman's funeral at the Baptist Chapel. He was 38.<sup>36</sup>

The death certificate held at the Cambridgeshire Archives confirms Bartholomew's account: the cause of death was tuberculosis after four weeks of illness. Worman died in his and Clara's home at 19 Warkworth Street, witnessed by her brother, Oswin Smith.<sup>37</sup> Like many others who knew him, Bartholomew viewed Worman's death as shockingly sudden. Clara herself remarked: "My husband was, comparatively, but a young man at the time of his sudden and unexpected death, the cause being galloping consumption."<sup>38</sup>

In the following months, friends from every side of Worman's life rallied to celebrate him. All three of his older siblings attended a funeral service at St. Andrew's Street Chapel where Charles Joseph gave a sermon in his honour.<sup>39</sup> The *Cambridge Independent Press* ran an anonymous obituary titled "Death of a Prominent Baptist," making special mention of his service to the congregation.<sup>40</sup> Israel Abrahams and several other scholars wrote letters to the Royal Literary Fund in support of Clara, who applied for financial assistance on "the standing of [her] late husband as a literary man." The fund agreed to pay her three years of his salary.<sup>41</sup> Henry Thomas Francis and Francis Jenkinson co-

36 Thank you to Liam Sims for providing me with transcriptions of the relevant passages in Bartholomew's diary. The complete work is CUL MS Add. 8786/1/1–14. For more on Bartholomew, see Sims, 'Simple and Exquisite Tastes'.

37 "Deaths in the Sub-District of St. Andrew the Less in the Count of Cambridge (1909)," No. 481. Document copied by Cambridgeshire Registrations at the Cambridgeshire Archives in Ely, UK on 3 February 2022.

38 Clara Worman, "Letter to the Secretary of the Royal Literary Fund," 12 November 1909. In retrospect, Worman's illness appears to have advanced with almost suspicious rapidity. Even without modern antibiotic treatments, it can take a year or more for a patient to die from active tuberculosis. It is possible that Worman was ill with milder symptoms for much longer than reported on the Cambridgeshire death certificate.

39 Ernest's siblings are listed as Mr. Harry [Henry] Worman, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Parsons [*sic*] [née Worman], and Miss [Laura] Worman; *CIP*, "The Late Mr. E.J. Worman: Funeral at Cambridge," 3 issued 18 June 1909. See Hugh Parson and Ian Bent, 'Elizabeth Parson; Henry James Parson; Mabel Gladys Parson; Merryn Ernest Parson', in *Mill Road Cemetery*, accessed 23 January 2023, <https://millroadcemetery.org.uk/parson-elizabeth/>.

40 Just above this obituary is an article about a conference of tuberculosis doctors taking place in Cambridge the very week that Worman, ever the academic outsider, was dying of tuberculosis. *CIP*, "Death of a Prominent Baptist," 8 issued 11 June 1909.

41 Clara Worman, "Letter to the Secretary of the Royal Literary Fund," 12 November 1909.

authored an obituary for the *Cambridge Review* and they, along with R. Brimley Johnson, G.J. Gray, Israel Abrahams, and Charles Joseph, contributed to a short memorial book for Worman in 1910. While this book was edited anonymously, we can infer who initiated the project. The publisher, a local printer named Jonathan Palmer, gives his location at Alexandra Street in Cambridge. Alexandra Street no longer exists, but in 1909 it was the site of the Cambridge YMCA headquarters.<sup>42</sup> I suspect the YMCA commissioned Palmer to print the book for their own reading room. The Association thus contributed a portion of their 1909 annual report to the volume:

Mr. E. Worman was a member for more than twenty years. He was one of the founders of the Christian Union, its first secretary and a regular attendant as long as its meetings lasted ... It was one of his characteristic traits that he had no ambition for posts of honour, hence in all the work in which he took part he did more than he was ever credited with. Your Committee are glad to place on record their high appreciation of his character and services.<sup>43</sup>

Facing the title page of this memorial book is a photograph of Worman taken in 1904. Two copies of this photograph are known. One is in the possession of CUL (GBR/0265/UA/ULIB 12/2/4). The other is presumably lost, but Jonathan Palmer copied it in 1910 while printing the volume.<sup>44</sup> At the bottom of that picture is an

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They paid £150 total, equivalent to £14,158 in 2023. Apparently, Ernest was not paid very much, but it should be clear that Clara was not suffering any financial instability. He left her £473, equivalent to £44,646 in 2023, as well as an undisclosed life insurance payment. She still had £455 when she died 22 years later; Martinsen, 'Clara Worman; Ernest James Worman'. In her letter to the RLF Secretary, Clara's exact words were: "This is totally inadequate to support me in the position to which I have become accustomed as the wife of a scholar and MA of the University ... I am considerably older than my husband was; I have no wealthy relatives or friends; and feel wholly unfit at the age of 56 to take up the battle of life on my own account." It was a different time.

- 42 Alexandra Street was demolished in the 1970s during modifications to the layout of Petty Curry. The space formerly occupied by the YMCA and Palmer's print shop is now the Lion Yard shopping centre. See Porter, 'The Y.M.C.A. in Cambridge', 44; and Museum of Cambridge, 'Alexandra Street', *Capturing Cambridge*, accessed 25 January 2023, <https://capturingcambridge.org/museum-of-cambridge/museum-exhibit-stories/7-alexandra-street/>.
- 43 Cambridge Y.M.C.A. Committee, 'Y.M.C.A. Annual Report', 24–25. This report was originally published on page 4 of the *Cambridge Independent Press* on 8 October 1909.
- 44 Anonymous, ed., *Ernest Worman (1871–1909)* (Cambridge: Jonathan Palmer, 1910). A scan of the page with the picture was used for the image in Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, 127.



inscription in Worman's handwriting: "Yours ever, Ernest Worman." We do not know who Worman gave this picture to, although considering he signed it with their shared surname, we might assume it was not Clara. Henry Thomas Francis was among the authors who wrote for the book, so perhaps it was him. Alternatively, G.J. Gray—Worman's friend from the bookshop—transcribed a letter that Worman had sent shortly after marrying Clara. This letter was signed the same as the photograph: "Yours ever, Ernest Worman."<sup>45</sup>

### 3 Genizah Research before the Genizah Research Unit

Worman's career in Cairo Genizah research began shortly after Schechter's 'hoard' arrived in Cambridge, but his most substantial contributions came after Schechter departed for New York in 1902. At this point, most of the Taylor-Schechter Collection was still unconserved and nearly every text was unidentified. Many were still in the wooden crates that Schechter used to ship them from Egypt. Some of Worman's papers survive from his time in this salt mine, but his sudden death left these records disorganised and incomplete. There are four types of extant 'Worman' material at CUL: a set of five handwritten notebooks, an edited handlist, an 'archive' of miscellaneous items, and at least a dozen manuscripts in the Taylor-Schechter Collection.

#### 3.1 *The Notebooks*

Worman began his assignment to catalogue the Taylor-Schechter Collection in early 1906. He recorded notes about the manuscripts in five notebooks labelled according to the classmarks within: Glass Book I, Glass Book II, Bound Volumes, 10J1–9/13J13–26,<sup>46</sup> and 18J1–18J2. The "Glass" titles refer to manuscripts that were first conserved between plates of glass, while "Bound Volumes" referred to fragments attached to paper stubs in bound CUL albums. These notebooks include not just the essential conclusions that Worman reached when identifying Genizah documents, but also his process while working towards those conclusions.<sup>47</sup> Among them are numerous transcriptions and partial translations of medieval documents that are not currently accessible to anyone outside of

45 Gray, 'Recollections', 12. It is possible—I cannot tell for sure from the printed reproduction—that Palmer copied GBR/0265/UA/ULIB 12/2/4 itself and returned the photo to CUL afterwards. The inscription could then be a reproduction of Worman's signature from the letter in G.J. Gray's possession in 1910 (the original of this letter is now lost).

46 The inside cover of this notebook has no title and the label on the spine is lost.

47 See image and discussion of Worman's work in Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, 130–131.

the GRU. Various loose sheets of paper are also tucked between the pages of the notebooks, including more manuscript descriptions, Worman's personal notes, hourly time logs, and a draft report on his progress in the T-S Collection:

Nov. 28. 1906

Report on the Taylor-Schechter Collection

The progress of cataloguing these MSS. from Feb. 1906 to date is now as follows:

**Glass.** Of T.S. 32, T.S. 28, T.S. 24, T.S. 20, and T.S.16 (1-150) full notes have been taken, from which a hand-list can be compiled in a short time.

**Of course the MSS. which Dr. Schechter still has in America are to be excepted, only the information in the present skeleton list being available,** and that of the briefest. This leaves to be dealt with, T.S. 16.151-353, T.S. 12 (800 MSS.), T.S. 8 (267 MSS.) in all 1270 pieces.

About 450 are done, but these are the largest pieces, and the smaller become easier to describe by their help.

**Bound Volumes.** About 150 MSS. have been noted in the same way as those in glass; these are both Documents and Letters. Little time has been spent on these at present but during the next few months more will be as the count[?] of light in the mornings prevents the use of the library.<sup>48</sup>

All names have been taken note of and probably the greater part of the collection of Docs and Letters can ultimately be dated from these.

This report indicates that Worman learned to decipher Judaeo-Arabic texts first by examining the largest, best-preserved manuscripts before moving on to smaller fragments.<sup>49</sup> The inside cover of the notebook "Glass 1" is inscribed with the date February 1906, which appears to be the beginning of Worman's official work to catalogue the collection in Schechter's absence. "Bound Volumes" has a similar inscription from April 1906 and "Glass 11" has February 1907. These notebooks do not currently have CUL accession numbers. The notebook "18J1-18J2," which remains mostly empty, was the last one that Worman worked on before he died. It is clear he intended to continue working on the T-S collection for the rest of 1909, and assuming he was re-appointed Oriental Curator for 1910, quite likely beyond.

<sup>48</sup> I can confirm, writing in a bleak Cambridge December, that it remains dark until 8am.

<sup>49</sup> Thank you to Rebecca Jefferson for pointing this out to me. See Jefferson, 'Historical Significance', 12, n. 17.

### 3.2 *The Handlists*

Some Genizah scholars will be familiar with the digitised ‘Worman’ handlists, two volumes of handwritten descriptions that Worman compiled for approximately 2,300 T-S manuscripts sorted between 1897 and 1909.<sup>50</sup> The physical lists are held at CUL as MSS Add.6404–6405. They contain the names, dates, and measurements of most of the fragments in Worman’s notebooks. However, he omitted many notes that he wrote for himself, including his (often flawed) transcriptions and translations, so the handlists do not reflect the full volume of work that he undertook.

Worman produced the handlists in phases only after examining subsections of the T-S Collection. There are thus some manuscripts which he described in his notebooks that never made it into the handlist. About eight months after Worman’s death, CUL Librarian Harry Aldis audited the notebooks to identify these omissions. He observed, in the inside cover of “Bound Volumes,” that MSS T-S 13G1 and T-S 13G2 are in the notebook but not the handlist. In the unlabelled notebook, T-S 13J25.15–13J16.24 and T-S 10J1.1–T-S 10J9.33 are likewise missing from the handlist. Aldis further noted that all the manuscripts in Worman’s final notebook (T-S 18J1.1–35 and T-S 18J2.1–13) were excluded, for obvious reasons.

There is a curious note at the beginning of the second volume of the handlist, this one not in Worman’s hand. It reads:

Ernest J. Worman, M.A., Christ’s College,  
died 7 June 1909, aged 38.

He was Curator in Oriental Literature for 1908 and 1909.

C.S.

8 June 1923

“C.S.” was Charles Sayle, one of the CUL librarians who worked with Worman and attended his funeral. The handwriting of the note matches that in Sayle’s diaries.<sup>51</sup> He was not a Hebrew scholar and had little connection with the Taylor-Schechter Collection, yet for some reason, he was reading Worman’s handlist on the fourteenth anniversary of his death. He also wrote the incor-

50 Volume I: T-S 32.1–10, T-S 28.1–24, T-S 24.1–81, T-S 20.1–182, T-S 16.1–357, T-S 12.1–818, and T-S 8.1–269. Volume II: T-S 13J1.1–23, 13J2.1–25, 13J3.1–27, 13J4.1–24, 13J5.1–8, 13J6.1–33, 13J7.1–30, 13J8.1–31, 13J9.1–19, 13J10.1–16, 13J11.1–9, 13J12.1–5, 13J13.1–30, 13J14.1–25, 13J15.1–25, 13J16.1–24, 13J17.1–24, 13J18.1–30, 13J19.1–30, 13J20.1–30, 13J21.1–36, 13J22.1–35, 13J23.1–23, 13J24.1–29, and 13J25.1–14.

51 Thank you to Liam Sims for confirming this correspondence.

rect date for that death (June 7th instead of June 8th). As we will see, this note is not the only curious item among Worman's papers.

### 3.3 *The 'Archive'*

There is a box in the GRU office at CUL labelled "Worman Archive" which contains many of Worman's surviving papers. This box has also become a receptacle for all sorts of historical GRU documents dating between 1897 and 1990. Sarah Sykes previously identified many of the items inside and grouped them with labels on separate sheets of paper. Among other things, these items include offprints of Schechter's articles, old manuscript facsimiles, lists of fragments sent to non-Cambridge scholars, correspondence of former CUL employees, and accounting memos from Geoffrey Khan's first job at the GRU.

More relevant here are miscellaneous papers related to Worman's time as a Genizah scholar, including some hand-corrected proofs and offprints but mainly comprising notes about T-S manuscripts. A significant portion of these notes is grouped separately in a large brown envelope containing loose sheets, notecards, and even tickets to Cambridge Guildhall concerts that were repurposed to write manuscript descriptions. Sykes compiled a list of T-S classmarks mentioned in these notes (which now resides in the envelope), although Worman referred to some additional manuscripts using defunct classmark formats like "Box K.3." Another envelope is labelled "Notes to and From Naharai [b. Nissim] in T-S Collection by E.J. Worman." It holds more than 80 sheets of paper, each corresponding to a single T-S manuscript that Worman identified relating to the eleventh-century merchant Naharai b. Nissim. Most of them are blank besides a heading, but several include his transcriptions of entire letters.

The archive box also contains a small booklet with Worman's transcription of T-S 32.5 (a ninth- or tenth-century copy of *Sefer Yeširah*). There is an anonymous note in the back of this booklet addressing J.D. Pearson, a later CUL Under-Librarian for the Oriental Section:<sup>52</sup>

For Mr. Pearson.

This book belonged to the late Mr. Worman. It was never the property of the library, but as it contains the transcription of a T-S MS., it had better be in the possession of someone in contact with the library.

Oct. 22 1940.

52 J.D. Pearson, 'Curiosities of Bygone Days', *Genizah Fragments* 28, no. October (1994): 2.

We do not know who Worman sent this transcription to or who returned it to Pearson, but someone held onto it for at least three decades. It also took several more decades after 1940 before other scholars would publish this manuscript that Worman had already transcribed.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, perhaps the most surprising discovery in the archive box was an unconserved medieval letter written in Persian. Presumably, Worman was working on this letter during one of his last days at CUL, and after his death the remaining staff assumed it belonged with his notes. Whether this manuscript originally came from the T-S collection or another CUL collection is not clear, but it has now been accessioned as “T-S Worman 1.”

### 3.4 *The T-s Classmarks*

Mirroring the medieval letter that slipped into Worman’s personal papers, it seems that someone at CUL may have mistaken Worman’s own notes for genuine medieval manuscripts and added them to the T-S Collection. Whatever happened, those notes are now officially part of the ‘Genizah’ collection, accessioned as T-S Misc.31.35.

T-S Misc.31.35 consists of 35 pieces of paper, most which have writing in Worman’s hand:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| P1         | Quotation of a work by Abraham Harkavy                                     |
| P2–3       | Notes and citations in German  |
| P4–6       | Transcription of an English document titled “Bridewell Orders”             |
| P7–9       | Grammatical notes comparing Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu             |
| P10        | Hebrew glossary and grammatical paradigms with notes on Arabic and Persian |
| P11–21     | Almost 1200 lines of a Middle English text, collating three manuscripts    |
| P22        | Middle English poem “Patience”   |
| P23–27, 29 | Pages from the October 1891 issue of <i>The Indian Antiquarian</i>         |
| P28        | Notes on Latin manuscripts at CUL  |
| P31        | Latin text mentioning Cambridge  |
| P34        | Unidentified   |
| P35        | Transcription of Syriac manuscript CUL Add.1982                            |

Four more leaves from T-S Misc.31.35 are not in Worman’s hand. P30 is a notecard about ‘Moabite’ inscriptions that Dunbar Isidore Heath, a Cambridge rev-

53 See Nehemia Allony, ‘A Scroll of the “Book of Creation” in the Version of Saadia Gaon from the Cairo Genizah’, *Ṭemirin: Meqorot u-Meḥqerim ba-Qabbalah u-va-Ḥasidut*, 1982, 9–29; and A. Peter Hayman, *Sefer Yešira: Edition, Translation and Text-Critical Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

erend, copied in the early 1870s. He gives his name and a date (12 October 1872). These Moabite inscriptions, like most things in life, were forgeries concocted by Moses Shapira, but in 1872 that was still up for debate. In 1873, Heath published a paper about the inscriptions citing an epigraphic analysis performed by J. Park Harrison.<sup>54</sup> T-s Misc.31.35 P32 is a letter that Harrison sent to Heath detailing that analysis, dated 24 January 1873. P33 and P36 are further notes about the transcriptions that accompanied Harrison's letter. All these notes were written when Ernest Worman was less than two years old. How he acquired them—if he did acquire them—and how they entered the Taylor-Schechter Collection, we do not know.

#### 4 Loss to the Library

Moabite forgeries notwithstanding, these papers offer us a glimpse into Worman's time as a student of Middle Eastern languages and widen our view of his activities at CUL. Effectively abandoned by Schechter and without any published catalogues, he investigated questions about the Cairo Genizah that would not be asked again for decades. His work between 1906 and 1909 can rightly be described as pioneering a new field of research, so to a modern reader, it may be surprising how little Worman's contemporaries mentioned his Genizah activities. Back then, he was still more influential as a part-time librarian and a member of the Cambridge Baptist community. Only the University's Reader in Rabbinics, Israel Abrahams, anticipated a future for his Genizah work:

He determined to qualify himself for a task which he foresaw must be undertaken by himself if it were to be undertaken at all. This task was the preparation of a preliminary catalogue of the collection. With untiring diligence and almost magical rapidity he made himself master of a difficult language and an intricate literature, his success being rare in the history of the self-taught.<sup>55</sup> Death interrupted his work, but he had already accomplished much, and had moreover made the continuation of his labours far easier for a successor.<sup>56</sup>

54 Dunbar I. Heath, 'The Moabite Jars', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1873): 341. Harrison was basically a bad anthropologist.

55 Like many people who have written about Worman, Abrahams seems to forget that he had a bachelor's degree in Semitic languages.

56 Abrahams, 'Work at the University Library', 19. Editor's note: On Israel Abrahams' work

But there was no successor. No one continued the cataloguing project, and the majority of the Taylor-Schechter Collection went into CUL storage without classmarks. To this day, Worman's handlists have never been published. It would not be until the 1950s, under Shelomo D. Goitein's leadership, that systematic work to organise the collection would resume—work that continues at the GRU in 2024. One wonders what might be different now if Worman had been able to work for two or three more decades. In the words of Henry Francis and Francis Jenkinson: "The loss to the Library is irreparable."<sup>57</sup>

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with manuscripts at CUL, including the period after Worman's death, see in the present volume, 'Thirteen Fragments of the Passover Haggadah: Tracing their Exodus from Egypt to Cambridge' by Rebecca J.W. Jefferson.

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# Thirteen Fragments of the Passover Haggadah: Tracing Their Exodus from Egypt to Cambridge

*Rebecca J.W. Jefferson*

## 1 The Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit Bibliography Project: A Preamble

The Bibliography Project was the first project undertaken by the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit (GRU) when it was founded by Stefan C. Reif 50 years ago. Reif quickly realised that the project was essential for helping future scholars navigate their way through the vast collection of genizah fragments, particularly as the contents of about one third of the collection were still unidentified. The Bibliography also provided a tool for correctly identifying missing or incorrectly cited fragment reference numbers. Citation errors were a particular hazard in genizah scholarship prior to the great systemisation of the Cambridge Genizah Collections undertaken by Reif, alongside the overall advances made in librarianship to provide greater access to and discoverability of collections. Early publications either provided no classification numbers or, because the scholar did not think to include a pathway for others to check on the original text, supplied only a vague or misleading reference. The success of the GRU Bibliography Project led to the production of several published volumes and one database, and it inspired the larger project undertaken by the Friedberg Manuscript Society to identify and match fragments around the world. The GRU Bibliography Project taught its researchers a range of skills as they engaged in efforts to track down publications and bibliographical references and match them with corresponding fragments. These included great patience, tenacity, skim-reading abilities, close attention to detail, strong visual memory, pattern recognition, inductive and deductive reasoning, lateral thinking, problem-solving skills, and a dedication to accuracy. Only by developing skills such as these could a genizah researcher hope to discover that a published reference to “Box 1.53” was in fact reference to MS T-S J1.53 (Reif & Fenton, 1988, 92) or that “Geniza 4” was really T-S K1.68 (Jefferson & Hunter, 2004, 374). The following article constitutes a paean to the now 50-year-old Bibliography Project and its founder by a researcher who feels very fortunate indeed to have been given the privilege of working on it.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Introduction

In October 1897, Israel Abrahams (1858–1925) published an article which described and transcribed thirteen medieval fragments of the Haggadah. Six of the fragments, he explained, were recently obtained from the Cairo Genizah by Solomon Schechter; four had come from Cairo to Cambridge before Schechter's visit, and three fragments had been presented to Abrahams by Elkan Nathan Adler. None of the fragments had been assigned call numbers, and thus Abrahams classified them as nos. I–XIII. The task of locating these pieces from among the 193,000+ fragments in the Cambridge Genizah Collections was only achieved over a hundred years later; even so, two of the fragments remain unidentified. The following article will demonstrate how the challenge of identifying these 13 fragments, as well as the unestablished provenance of Abrahams' own collection of 41 MSS, exemplifies the wider problems associated with tracing the chain of ownership of Cairo Genizah fragments.

## 3 Israel Abrahams as a Collector

In the year before Solomon Schechter's genizah discoveries, Abrahams was busy lecturing in English, mathematics, and homiletics at Jews' College London. He had just published his opus magnum, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages* with Macmillan & Co., and he regularly contributed to *The Jewish Chronicle* through his column, "Books and Bookmen" (Wright, 1927, xix–xlvi). He was also the co-founder and co-editor of the *Jewish Quarterly Review* beginning in 1889 and a founder-member of the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1893. Abrahams was thus a consummate consumer and disseminator of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* scholarship. Apart from his posthumously published *Hebrew Ethical Wills*, and his unpublished extensive study of the French liturgical rite, he did not engage extensively in textual criticism through the study of Hebrew manuscripts (De Lange, 2012, 153–154). Perhaps for this reason, unlike his friend Schechter, Abrahams did not actively engage in the pursuit of important manuscript witnesses to support his scholarship, nor did he voraciously collect scraps of ancient Jewish writing to hoard in his home like his bibliophile friend, Elkan Adler. In fact, when it came to collecting, Abrahams largely preferred new books: "For dusty old tomes, I go to the public library; but my own

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1 I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Nick Posegay's kindness in helping me to obtain photographs of two of Abrahams' manuscripts in order to resolve a query regarding the catalogue description of these pieces.

private books must be sweet and clean ... If my copy is to be soiled, I want to do all the soiling myself." (Abrahams, 1912, 107). After his death, his 3,000-volume library was divided between the Mocatta Library in University College London and Christ's College Cambridge (Adler, 1928–1931, ix). The books mostly comprised significant 19th century works of scholarship and only a relatively small portion of them were early European-printed works from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Despite his aversion to owning used books, Abrahams was not immune to the romance and lure of manuscript discoveries. "Genizah-grimed fragments" especially held a certain amount of charm for "when the dust of ages is removed, these old-world relics renew their youth", he mused in 'The Solace of Books' (Abrahams, 1912, 110). Indeed, Abrahams was an early genizah enthusiast: just six days after Schechter's Ben Sira discovery was announced in *The Athenaeum*, he excitedly shared with his *Jewish Chronicle* readership the news that: "Mr. Schechter has found out many things in his time, but his most recent find exceeds them all." (Abrahams, 1896a, 15). Not long after Schechter retrieved his giant hoard of genizah fragments from Cairo, Abrahams quickly informed *The Jewish Chronicle* readers of the discovery, describing the fragments' disinterment in somewhat hyperbolic terms: "and now the man has come to rescue them from death, to restore them to their long-lost day." (Abrahams, 1897a, 20). Curiously, Abrahams' piece did not mention the Ben Ezra Synagogue, it only referenced the ideal climate for preservation offered by Egypt: "In the cemetery located on the edge of the desert, where to a European visitor respiration is difficult, the old treasures have been preserved better than had they lain on the bookshelves of a Northern library." (Abrahams, 1897a, 20).<sup>2</sup> By October 1897, he had produced his first scholarly article based on thirteen genizah fragments in Cambridge and belonging to Elkan Adler. The article, entitled "Some Egyptian Fragments of the Passover Hagada", highlighted the texts' "peculiar Egyptian traits", as well as the "clear traces of lost Midrashim" within them (Abrahams, 1897c, 41–51).

His own close-up encounter with the "Geniza at Cairo" did not take place until almost a year later, in March 1898. According to his daughter, Phyllis, the main purpose of Abrahams' Middle Eastern trip was to visit historical sites in Palestine related to his recently contracted book on the history of Judas Macabees. In addition, he also planned to tour schools in Palestine sponsored by the Anglo-Jewish Association on whose committee he served. During the

2 Richard Gottheil also mentioned the cemetery in connection to Abrahams in a memorial tribute article, stating that Abrahams "naturally had a great interest in the Genizah find made in old Cairo (Fostat) and in the cemetery outside the new city." (Gottheil, 1927, 249).

outward-bound journey, Abrahams became acquainted with Samuel Raffalovich who was returning home to Palestine after a successful trip selling Cairo Genizah fragments in England. Raffalovich's brother, Isaac, was a well-established photographer in Jerusalem. He promised to connect Abrahams, who had brought with him a camera for documentation purposes. Since tours of Palestine usually included a stop at Egypt, Abrahams also took the opportunity to visit Cairo. On Friday, March 18th, three days after his arrival, Abrahams reported to his wife that he had spent the morning in Old Cairo and had seen "the Geniza." Again, he did not specifically mention the synagogue, which is a little odd for a historian given the long and venerable history of the building. In fact, his only reference to the location of "the Geniza" was to observe that "The ride is long and the place very dusty indeed." (Abrahams, P., 1970, 9). As to the contents, Abrahams simply marveled at the amount of material left and swore his wife to secrecy on the matter while he contemplated writing up a piece about it for *The Jewish Chronicle*. He also confided to her that he might be permitted "to look through some of the residue on Sunday." A second visit to "the Geniza" was thwarted by the unexpected unavailability of the Chief Rabbi and Abrahams' scheduled departure the next day (Jefferson, 2020, 302).<sup>3</sup>

Abrahams' first-hand encounter with a genizah in Old Cairo was not publicly known until after his daughter published his letters in 1970. Herbert Loewe's biography of Abrahams only referenced his tour of Palestine. Abrahams likewise never shared any information on how he acquired the small collection of genizah fragments attributed to him. The only time he referenced owning a fragment was in his publication of a Viddui (confession) fragment in 1924: "It was, therefore, with some little pleasure that I came across a Viddui beginning with those very words, in a Geniza fragment which I acquired in Cairo a year or two after Schechter's notable visit to Egypt." (Abrahams, 1924, 379). The statement provides no further insights into the site or method of acquisition, or whether more than one fragment was involved. Abrahams concludes the article with a note to inform readers that "The original Ms. is now in the library of the Hebrew Union College". The fragment was identified by Emanuel Friedberg, of the Friedberg Manuscript Society, under the call number: HUC 403. Abrahams visited Hebrew Union College (HUC) in 1912 as its first Lewisohn lecturer and

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3 There may or may not be any significance to Abrahams' non-reference to the synagogue in Old Cairo; however, Jefferson's account of Abraham's visit to Cairo fell into the trap of assuming that his reference to the genizah was a reference to the Ben Ezra Synagogue. This article aims to show that such assumptions are one of the pitfalls of genizah provenance research.

was also awarded an honorary doctorate by that institution. In 1924, when this article was published, and the fragment placed in HUC, Abrahams was teaching in America in connection to his role as co-founder and corresponding faculty member of the Institute of Religion.

In his study of Jewish festivals published in 1906, Abrahams also revealed that he had seen a genizah scroll of the Decalogue: “I hardly know what to infer from the fact that the Ten Words seem in the early Middle Ages to have been sometimes written on separate little scrolls. I saw one at Cairo, taken from the Geniza, and reference is made to such scrolls in the Responses of the Gaonim.” (Abrahams, 1906, 85). Nevertheless, apart from one mention of having seen a genizah fragment in Cairo and one mention of actually owning one—a piece which he gave to HUC, not Cambridge—there is no further written testimony from Abrahams concerning his ownership of a genizah collection.

#### 4 Abrahams’ Genizah Scholarship

Abrahams published 18 genizah fragments in six articles before 1902, when he moved to Cambridge and was able to work with the collection more frequently. The fragments contained liturgical texts, copies of the Haggadah, and copies of the Scroll of Antiochus. None of the fragments were described with call numbers: they were cited either as Roman numerals or just as “a fragment”. For example, his publication of a fragment of *En Kelohenu* failed to inform other scholars where they could find this “fragment now at Cambridge” (Abrahams, 1900, 160). The piece remains unidentified.

While he devoted much time to examining and collating fragmentary copies of certain texts in Cambridge and Oxford, thanks to the help of Schechter and Neubauer alerting him to relevant fragments, some of his planned publications were not realised. This was particularly true of the Scroll of Antiochus. In 1899, after publishing “a geniza specimen” of the Aramaic version, he announced that: “In a later number of the Jewish Quarterly Review I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate. I shall then also offer some further conclusions regarding the date and origin of the Scroll of the Hasmoneans.” (Abrahams, 1899, 299). This “specimen” is also still unidentified.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Editor’s note: See in the present volume, ‘Two Hitherto Unpublished Bilingual (Jewish Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic) Genizah Fragments from the Scroll of Antiochus’ by Siam Bhayro.

The following year, in an article dedicated to the memory of David Kaufmann, Abrahams shared that Kaufmann had privately urged him to “print the collation which I had made of many Mss., complete and fragmentary, of the Aramaic text”. However, it seems that the Aramaic fragments of the Scroll of Antiochus that he’d collated up to that point had not yielded any surprises, and while he felt that he might still resolve to print them, he also admitted that “with the exception of the text which I have already printed in the *J. Q. R.*, the new Mss. do not materially differ from that which Dr. Gaster used as the basis of his edition.” The Arabic version he produced for Kaufmann’s memorial volume, he explained, was “taken from the Cairo Geniza” and he had to “thank Prof. Schechter for the privilege of printing it.” (Abrahams, 1900, 117). This fragment was later identified for the Bibliography Project as Or. 2116. 19. 1 (Reif & Fenton, 1988, 411).<sup>5</sup> Thus, it seems to have never left Abrahams’ possession and eventually became one of the pieces in the Israel Abrahams Collection.

Abrahams was able to have direct access to the genizah fragments after he was appointed as the curator of Oriental literature in the University Library in 1906. In this role, he spent a great deal of time examining manuscripts and leaving with them “notes on slips of paper to help those who followed him.” (Loewe, 1944, 97).<sup>6</sup> Thanks to the bibliographical data available on the Friedberg Manuscript Society database, it’s possible to discover that Abrahams published another 28 genizah fragments between 1903 and 1925. Unfortunately, 21 of these fragments were cited with missing or inaccurate call numbers. This was in part because the fragments were still undergoing classification; for example, Abrahams would not have realised that the manuscript he referenced in 1906 as held in “Cambridge Library Collection, drawer 34” might not always be located there even though, as the curator, he was probably the person who assigned it to the drawer. In fact, the piece was later classified as MS Or. 1080 J287 (Reif &

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5 Hebrew manuscript numbers were designated by Cambridge University Library when they were catalogued. Hebrew manuscripts catalogued in the early 20th century were given Or. numbers. Manuscripts in the Or.1080–1081 series include genizah fragments acquired by the Library before and after it received the Taylor-Schechter collection, but these fragments were only catalogued in the 1950s. Or. numbers in the 2000 range were applied to Hebrew manuscripts catalogued after 1960.

6 It is possible, although at this point unconfirmed, that some of Abrahams’ “slips” survive in the front of certain folders in the T-s Miscellaneous Collection at the Cambridge University Library. The folders T-s Misc.14 and T-s Misc.19, for example, both begin with notecards apparently written by Jacob Leib Teicher (thank you to Nick Posegay for pointing this out), the Cambridge Reader in Rabbinics who took over from Herbert Loewe, who had himself succeeded Israel Abrahams in the post. Handwriting comparisons with Abrahams’ letters could confirm whether any notes in these folders belonged to him.

Fenton, 1988, 409). Only five of the 46 genizah fragments published by Abrahams overall were in the collection purportedly owned by him and, as we shall see, three of those five were previously owned by Elkan Adler.

## 5 The Abrahams Collection

After his death, Abrahams' library was deposited in Christ's College where he had been a fellow for 23 years. His Anglo-Judaica collection was given to the Mocatta Library at the University of London together with his photographic slides (Loewe, 1944, 130–132). In 1953, the collection at Christ's was sent on permanent loan to the Library of the Cambridge Faculty of Oriental Studies. Eight years after that, while the Faculty of Oriental Studies Library retained Abrahams' rare books, the forty manuscripts and fragments in his collection were transferred to Cambridge University Library. Comprising various liturgical and Rabbinical texts, apocryphal literature, and documents, the manuscripts were assigned call numbers in the Or. 2116 series ranging from Or. 2116. 1–19.7.

According to the *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* catalogue, nineteen items in Abrahams' manuscript collection are not associated with the Cairo Genizah. Two of them are manuscript codices comprising over 339 folios. Ten items are fragments of ten folios or less. Most of the pieces are datable to periods within the 15th–19th centuries. Four have signatures of prior ownership within the pages, and one of the documents, a collection of communal decrees from the 17th–18th centuries (Or. 2116. 12), mostly concerns Jewish emigres from Spain living in Morocco. Another manuscript (Or. 2116. 6) is a 37-folio copy of the last testament of a Rabbi Elijah b. Raphael Solomon ha-Levi de Veali Saba of Alessandria, Italy, from the mid-18th century. A second copy of this testament is held in the Bodleian Libraries (Ms. Oppenheim Add. 4<sup>o</sup> 190). Two of the items not classified as genizah fragments are datable to within the 11th–13th century: one is a letter of appeal addressed to Samuel ha-Nagid (Or. 2116.9) and the other comprises six folios of the Scroll of Antiochus. Aside from these minimal provenance clues in the non-genizah portion of Abrahams' collection, no other information beyond his former ownership of them and their transfer between Cambridge libraries is presently available.

Twenty-one pieces in Abrahams' collection are attributed Cairo Genizah provenance in the catalogue, and this provenance is described with varying degrees of certainty ranging from "Probably from the Cairo Genizah" to "Possibly from the Cairo Genizah". One of the pieces, the abovementioned Or. 2116.19.1, is firmly provenanced as "From the Cairo Genizah" no doubt because Abrahams stated this in his publication. All the fragments accorded genizah



provenance consist of one or two folios. Two pieces were placed at some point under glass and are labelled with Roman numerals (Or. 2116.4 is MS IV and Or. 2116.10 is MS X). Most of the fragments are liturgical texts or copies of Rabbinic literature; five of the items are parts of the Scroll of Antiochus. Four pieces are fragments of Haggadah. It is through Abrahams' publication of these four Haggadah fragments and nine others that we can gain some additional clues as to how his collection of genizah fragments was formed.

## 6 Abrahams' Thirteen Haggadah Fragments

In October 1887, Abrahams announced in his 'Books and Bookmen' column that "Some new fragments of the Passover Hagada, unearthed at the Genizah at Cairo, are edited by Mr. Israel Abrahams ..." (Abrahams, 1897b, 27). The article was published in *The Jewish Quarterly Review* and provided selected transcriptions from the thirteen fragments. None of the fragments had call numbers, only Abrahams' numbering system from I–XIII. In the opening paragraph, Abrahams explained their provenance: "Among the many interesting MSS. which Mr. S. Schechter has obtained from the Cairo Geniza are some curious fragments of the Passover Hagada. The generosity of the courteous discoverer has permitted me to inspect and collate them." However, in the first footnote, he further explained that the fragments numbered VI to IX were "acquired by the Cambridge University previous to Mr. Schechter's visit to Egypt." The last three fragments X–XIII he revealed "were brought from Cairo by Mr. E.N. Adler" and Abrahams thanked him "for his kindness in presenting them to me." (Abrahams, 1897c, 41).

Two of the fragments were first identified by researchers working on the second volume of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit Bibliography Project from the 1990s to 2004. These were MSS I–II which were found to be MSS T-S H2.107 and T-S H2.108 respectively. The next set of identifications did not take place until April 2022 when Jonathan Karni, a researcher using the Friedberg Genizah Project (FGP) database, identified MS V as T-S NS J506. Emanuel Friedberg, Head of the FGP Bibliography C Team, began to track down the other fragments, and he first succeeded in identifying MS VIII as Or.1081.2.33. He then informed Ezra Chwat, manuscript bibliographer in the National Library of Israel, who pointed out it must have been one of the fragments Abrahams claimed had arrived in Cambridge prior to Schechter's trip to Egypt. He supposed that it must have been sold to the Library by Solomon Aaron Wertheimer.

At this point, I was copied into their correspondence. Coincidentally, I was compiling a database of Wertheimer's manuscript sales which includes all the

information that I've been able to gather from Wertheimer's sales letters, a handwritten inventory, and provenance clues on the manuscripts. I was able to use my database to confirm that Abrahams' MS VII was Wertheimer's Add.3366. Hebrew manuscripts acquired by Cambridge University Library in the 1890s, including those purchased from Solomon Aaron Wertheimer, were designated Add. numbers in the 3000 range. Sixty-eight manuscripts purchased from Wertheimer between 1893 and 1896 were placed in the Add. 3000 range, and they appear to have been bound and catalogued within a few years of their acquisition. This particular fragment, Add.3366, however, was still uncatalogued at the time Schechter showed it to Abrahams in 1897. At least 83 of the manuscripts purchased from Wertheimer between 1894–1896 were put aside and later catalogued in the Or. 1080–1081 series.

On May 11 2022, Emanuel Friedberg announced that he had found another five of Abrahams' fragments: MS VI (Or.1080.13.53), MS III (Or.2116.19.8), MS XI (Or.2116.19.9), MS XII (Or.2116.19.10), MS XIII (Or.2116.19.11). Thus, the four in the Or.2116 series were in Abrahams' collection and the other one, in the Or.1080 series, was also previously sold to Cambridge by Wertheimer. This discovery prompted me to check the rest of the Wertheimer collection based on a sales inventory compiled by Francis Jenkinson in 1894 (Or. 1080.13). I then found that the Haggadah text in MS Or. 1081.2.83 was Abrahams' MS IX.

Ezra Chwat also pointed out that he had noticed “the numeral 28 inscribed in pencil on fol. 1a” which he felt “could be a clue to a previous collection”. This simple observation opened the key to the Wertheimer collection. I then realised that the numbers on the Jenkinson inventory corresponded with the numbers supplied by Wertheimer in the letters and postcards he sent to Jenkinson and Schechter offering fragments for sale. Most importantly, Wertheimer also noted these numbers on the manuscripts themselves. This revelation enabled me to see exactly what Wertheimer had offered to Cambridge, as well as what was purchased and how much was paid in contrast to the asking price. Wertheimer's method of marking his fragments with numbers also meant that it was possible to finally trace which pieces within the Cambridge Genizah Or. 1080–1081 series had come through him. But with regard to tracking down the fragments in Abrahams' article, even though eleven MSS had now been found, MSS IV and X remain unidentified. The identification of the fragments with their correct call numbers is listed in Appendix 2 below.

The work to trace the Haggadah fragments also revealed more about the journeys undertaken by the fragments and the provenance of Abrahams' own collection. Two of the Haggadah fragments were classified after Abrahams had written his article and while Schechter was still in Cambridge; they were placed in the T-S Collection in box T-S H. One fragment was put aside and ended

up in a crate that was left for Goitein to rediscover in the 1950s, and which eventually became the T-S NS J section (Jefferson, 2014, 22). Three pieces (Or. 1081.2.83, Or.1080.13.53, and Add.3366) were originally part of the collection sold by Wertheimer in 1894. Even though they had been purchased two years prior to Schechter's trip to Egypt, two of them had also been left unclassified until they were placed in the Or. series in the 1950s (Jefferson, 2014, 25–27). Four of the pieces in the Or. 2116 series came to the Library as part of Abrahams' collection in 1961 and yet three of them had originally belonged to Elkan Adler. The other fragments were all attributed to Schechter, including one now in Abrahams' collection. The most likely scenario is that the fragments were given to Abrahams on loan for him to collate and edit, although the ones that Adler "presented" to him may have been a gift. Some of the fragments were clearly returned, but some of them remained in his possession while he worked on them or simply forgot about them. After his death, they were incorrectly believed to be his own fragments.

## 7 Abrahams' Genizah Collection: Chain of Ownership

As stated above, two of the fragments in Abrahams' collection (Or. 2116.19.1 and Or. 2116.19.8) were published by him with provenance statements. In the case of Or. 2116.19.8, Solomon Schechter was credited as the person who had obtained them "from the Cairo Genizah" (Abrahams, 1897, 41) and in the case of Or. 2116.19.1, Schechter was acknowledged as the person who had given Abrahams the "privilege of printing it" (Abrahams, 1900, 118). Another three fragments (Or. 2116.19.9–11) he stated were presented to him by Elkan Adler (Abrahams, 1897.41). All the other fragments that Abrahams published were part of the Cambridge or Oxford collections. He did not publish any fragments from the collection that was later identified as belonging to him (i.e., the Or. 2116.1–19.9 series). The only fragment for which he claimed personal ownership was the fragment he gave to the Hebrew Union College library (HUC 403).

In an address to the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1914, Elkan Adler stated that "Dr. I. Abrahams possesses a few Geniza fragments purchased by him in Cairo." (Adler, 1918, 15). Yet, Abrahams' genizah collection as it came to Cambridge University Library in 1961 was more than a "few". Given that the genizah fragments in his collection exactly represented the areas of his research: Rabbinics, liturgy, Haggadah, Scroll of Antiochus (rather than the mixed bag of materials typical of most genizah purchases), it seems reasonable to suppose that they were selected. The first set, the four Haggadah fragments, were clearly given to him on loan from Schechter and possibly as a gift from

Adler in 1897. An unspecified “few”—if Adler was correct—were purchased by Abrahams in Cairo in 1898 (although he only ever mentioned the fragment that became HUC 403). Others, such as the four “genizah” fragments of the Scroll of Antiochus and the one non-genizah fragment of Antiochus, were most likely also pieces on loan, since he credited Schechter with at least one of them, and Schechter and Neubauer with alerting him to the others.

At some point during Herbert Loewe’s time at Cambridge, he examined and noted descriptions of eight of the manuscripts in Abrahams’ collection. This could have taken place during his time as Curator of Oriental Literature (1909–1911) or, most likely, while he attempted to create a series of catalogues of Hebrew manuscript collections in Cambridge Colleges starting in the 1920s (De Lange, 2012, 157–158). Loewe’s notes on and transcriptions of parts of the Abrahams’ collection are now classified as Or. 2116. 12a, 15, 19, which suggests that they must have come with the collection when it was transferred from the Oriental Faculty Library in 1961 (Reif, 1997, 542). This also supports the idea that they were compiled before or while the collection was at Christ’s College, since Loewe died in 1940 before the collection went over on loan to the Oriental Faculty Library. Another scholar who examined the collection before it moved permanently to Cambridge University Library was Shelomo Dov Goitein. Goitein must have looked at it when he visited Cambridge in the late 1950s, as he referred to two of Abrahams fragments in the first volume of *A Mediterranean Society* (1967). One fragment (Or. 2116.9) was a letter of appeal from the 11th century and the other (Or. 2116.10) was a letter concerning business from the 11th–12th centuries. Goitein cited them as “Christ College, Cambridge, Abrahams Collection” IX and X respectively. Only the latter piece was accorded a tentative genizah provenance in the *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* catalogue.

## 8 Conclusion

Tracing the exodus of genizah fragments from Egypt to European and American institutions is a complicated process. The history of these collections was sometimes further obscured by collectors loaning or gifting fragments to other scholars. Abrahams was clearly the recipient of several loans and possible gifts. In fact, as we have seen, the only reference to his ownership of a fragment concerns a piece he gave to HUC, and the only outside reference to his ownership of a “few” fragments came from Adler in 1914. In addition to such chinks in the chain of ownership there were also problems of citation, through either the lack of classification numbers or through misleading or incorrect

citations. Abrahams' publications prior to the 1920s did not provide any way for other scholars to locate the materials he referenced. The work of tracking down bibliographical references to published genizah fragments therefore not only helps future scholars locate the fragments within the institutional collections and match them to others, it can also help with provenance, especially since fragments often underwent several changes of hands and classification schemes before reaching their final destination. Nevertheless, the process does not always provide full and satisfactory answers. While eleven of the thirteen Haggadah fragments have been identified, and four fragments in the Abrahams Collection have been "joined" by FGP researchers to other fragments in the Cambridge Collections (and one to the JTS Elkan Adler Collection), many of the fragments in Abrahams' Collection can still only be tentatively regarded as "possibly" from the Cairo Genizah. In sum, this present article shows how relatively little is still known about the way fragments circulated after they arrived in Europe and America and how much we still assume—or take for granted—concerning their provenance.



## Appendix 1: Israel Abrahams Collection in Call Number Order

Call no.	Reif catalogue no.	Description	Stated provenance
Or. 2116. 1	662	Collection of poems, 17–18c, Sefardi (N. African?), 342 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 2–3	504	Collection of piyyutim, 17–18c, Sefardi (N. African?) script, 142 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 4	490	Piyyutim for Sabbath and Festivals, 9–11c, Oriental, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 5	451	Prayers and blessings for special occasions, 19c, Ashkenazi square and cursive, 20 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 6	960	Final Testament (Alessandria, Italy), 18c, Ashkenazi (Italian?), 37 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 8	796	Yesirah and Sod ha-Temunah, 15–16c, Italian, 78 ff., paper,	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 9	971	Letter of Appeal, 11c, Oriental (N. African?), 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 10	968	Letter on business matter (Cairo?), 11–12c, Oriental, 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 11	129	Homiletical commentaries on the Five Megillot, 17c, Sefardi hands, 339 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 12	299	Collection of communal decrees, 17–18c, Sefardi (N. African), 40 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 12a. 1	910	Scroll of Antiochus, 12–13c, Oriental square, 6 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 12a. 2	509	Piyyutim for Penitential Use, 12–13c, Oriental square, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 12a. 3	401	Siddur of Sa'adyah Gaon, 11–12c, Oriental square, 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies

Marks of former ownership	Genizah provenance	Chain of ownership clues
Former owner names: Joseph (f. 235v), Jacob (f. 293v), Solomon Nahmias (f. 247r)		The manuscript was bound in leather. Described by Loewe
Former owner name: Solomon Nahmias; some repairs; bound in cloth with leather spine		Described by Loewe
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	Placed under glass. Described by Loewe
Owner (title page): Hayyim b. Moses Schuster (?)		Described by Loewe
		Described by Loewe
		Described by Loewe
		Placed under glass. Roman numeral labels mark line count. "Christ College, Cambridge, Abrahams Collection no. IX" (Goitein, 1967, 562)
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	Placed under glass. "Christ College, Cambridge, Abrahams Collection no. X" (Goitein, 1967, 429)
Former owner: Samuel אוןיילוס		Bound in quarter brown Morocco, with vellum tips and marbled paper sides by Gray of Cambridge.
Enclosed document dated 1509 involving rabbis of Jerusalem;		Unbound, in envelope
		"... I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate."
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	



*(cont.)*

Call no.	Reif catalogue no.	Description	Stated provenance
Or. 2116. 12a .4	911	Scroll of Antiochus, 12c, Oriental, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 12a. 5	912	Scroll of Antiochus, 11–13c, Oriental, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 13	580	Astrological tracts, 15–16c, Italian hands, 37 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 14	184	PT Shabbat, 9–11c, Oriental, 1f., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 16	913	Scroll of Antiochus, 14c, Oriental, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 17. 1	301	Tract on the laws of Pe'ah, Oriental square, 11–13c, 1f. vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 17. 2	347	Selection of Responsa, 11–12c, Oriental, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 17. 3	233	Midrash on Exodus, 10c, Oriental square, 1f., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 17. 4	183	Selections from BT Qiddushin, 11–12c, Oriental, 1f., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 18	216	Introduction to the Talmud, 11–13c, Oriental (?) square, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 1	914	Scroll of Antiochus, 11–12c, Oriental square, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 2	915	Scroll of Antiochus, 11–12c, Oriental square and N. African cursive hands, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 3	877	Homiletical and exegetical notes on Bemidar and other texts, 17–18c, Oriental Sefardi hands, 10 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

Marks of former ownership	Genizah provenance	Chain of ownership clues
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	“... I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate.”
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	“... I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate.”
		Bound in cloth, with leather spine
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	“... I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate.”
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	From the Cairo Genizah	Unbound. “The fragment is taken from the Cairo Geniza, and I have to thank Prof. Schechter for the privilege of printing it”
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	“... I hope to describe the many other Geniza fragments of this book, which (through the kindness of Prof. Schechter and Dr. Neubauer) I have been able to examine and collate.”
		Unbound

(cont.)

Call no.	Reif catalogue no.	Description	Stated provenance
Or. 2116. 19. 4	518	Supplicatory and penitential prayers, 18c, Oriental (N. African?), 46 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 19. 5	945	Divorce Document Formulary, 1778, N. African square and cursive, 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 6	300	Communal Decrees Regarding Unauthorised Acts of Marriage, 17–18c, Oriental square, 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 7	394	Additional prayers and readings for daily use, 16–17c, Sefardi (N. African?), 1f., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 19. 8	413	Pesah Haggadah, 12–13c, Oriental, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 9	414	Pesah Haggadah, 11c, Oriental square, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 10	415	Pesah Haggadah, 12–13c, Oriental, 6 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 11	416	Pesah Haggadah, 11–12c, Oriental, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 12	915	Scroll of Antiochus, 11–12c, Oriental square and N. African hands, 2 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 19. 13	267	Collection of Halachic Discussions, 9–11c, Oriental square, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 14	266	Halakhot Gedolot, 11c, Oriental, 2 ff., vellum	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies
Or. 2116. 19. 15	215	Novellae on BT Baba Qama, 17–18c, Sefardi (N. African?), 6 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 19. 16	106	Commentary on Genesis, 16c, Sefardi, 4 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.
Or. 2116. 19. 17	109	Commentary on Exodus, 17–18c, Sefardi (N. African?), 6 ff., paper	Part of the Israel Abrahams Collection; transferred in 1961 from the Library of the Faculty of Oriental Studies.

The data in this table is mostly taken from Reif's *Hebrew Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library* catalogue, with some data added in the final column based on additional bibliographical research.

Marks of former ownership	Genizah provenance	Chain of ownership clues
		Unbound, but with the leaves sewn together
Dated in Marrakesh, 1778; names Eli b. Shalom; unbound		
		Unbound
		Unbound
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	"Among the many interesting mss. which Mr. S. Schechter has obtained from the Cairo Geniza"
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	"... brought from Cairo by Mr. E.N. Adler"
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	"... brought from Cairo by Mr. E.N. Adler"
	Probably from the Cairo Genizah	"... brought from Cairo by Mr. E.N. Adler"
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
	Possibly from the Cairo Genizah	
		Unbound, in envelope
		Unbound, in envelope
		Unbound, in envelope

### Appendix 2: “Some Egyptian Fragments of the Passover Hagada”

Abrahams MS number	Call number	Collection	Donor/seller	Date of donation/sale	Date MS classified	Identification
I	T-S H2.107	Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection	Charles Taylor and Solomon Schechter	1897	1897–1902	Published Material, vol. II, p. 519
II	T-S H2.108	Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection	Charles Taylor and Solomon Schechter	1897	1897–1902	Published Material, vol. II, p. 519
III	Or.2116.19.8	Israel Abrahams Collection	Israel Abrahams	1925, 1953, 1961	1961	Emanuel Friedberg
IV	Unidentified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unidentified
V	T-S NS J506	Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection	Charles Taylor and Solomon Schechter	1897–1898	1950s	Jonathan Karni
VI	Or.1080.13.53	Cambridge University Library Genizah Collection	Solomon Aaron Wertheimer	1894	1950s	Emanuel Friedberg (MS) Rebecca Jefferson (seller)
VII	Add. 3366	Cambridge University Library Genizah Collection	Solomon Aaron Wertheimer	1894	1950s	Rebecca Jefferson
VIII	Or. 1081.2.33	Cambridge University Library Genizah Collection	Solomon Aaron Wertheimer	1894	1950s	Emanuel Friedberg (MS) Ezra Chwat and Rebecca Jefferson (seller)
IX	Or. 1081.2.83	Cambridge University Library Genizah Collection	Solomon Aaron Wertheimer	1894	1950s	Rebecca Jefferson
X	Unidentified	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unidentified
XI	Or. 2116.19.9	Israel Abrahams Collection	Israel Abrahams (previously owned by Elkan Nathan Adler)	1925, 1953, 1961	1961	Emanuel Friedberg
XII	Or. 2116.19.10	Israel Abrahams Collection	Israel Abrahams (previously owned by Elkan Nathan Adler)	1925, 1953, 1961	1961	Emanuel Friedberg
XIII	Or. 2116.19.11	Israel Abrahams Collection	Israel Abrahams (previously owned by Elkan Nathan Adler)	1925, 1953, 1961	1961	Emanuel Friedberg

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# Senior Assistance for a Junior Initiative: S.D. Goitein and the Genizah Research Unit 1973–1985

*Stefan C. Reif*

## 1 Introduction

Those who are fortunate enough to survive relatively intact into their senior years are at the same time unfortunate enough to witness the departure for climes more eternal of family members, colleagues, and contemporaries. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why interest in biographies and autobiographies appears to become more intense on the part of mature individuals than among those of the younger generation. Concomitant with such an interest is an enthusiasm for becoming acquainted not only with formal assessments of those who are no longer with us but also with personal details, anecdotes and impressions relating to them that are not always included—and indeed sometimes consciously omitted—from the official accounts. Such data are not always available or have to be ferreted out of the personal or institutional undergrowth, but when they do make their appearance, they contribute to more nuanced appreciations of individuals, their characteristics, and their achievements. In her study of the nature of biographical writing, Hermione Lee has stressed how important it is to take into account that the readers of such volumes have an insatiable appetite for stories and anecdotes, as well as personal details and allegiances.<sup>1</sup> I was privileged to be in regular contact, both personally and by correspondence, with Professor Shelomo (Fritz) Dov Goitein, a pioneer and ultimately the doyen of research into Genizah<sup>2</sup> documents from 1973 CE until his death in 1985. A file of our exchanges was maintained in the Genizah Research Unit at Cambridge University Library, and it is on the basis

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1 Lee 2005, 1–3.

2 Cambridge University Library, from the time of the arrival and presentation of the Genizah materials in 1897–1898, used the Hebrew transliteration of “Genizah” rather than the Arabic one “geniza”. SDG used the latter and I have left his spelling, as he preferred it, when citing his letters and publications.



of such a file that I am now able to report on how he related to our work in the Unit and to me as an individual during those dozen years of change and creativity.<sup>3</sup>

To understand better such a report, it is necessary to devote a few remarks to what is widely known about the man who generally referred to himself simply as “S.D. Goitein, or “SDG”. Born and educated in an intellectual and observant Jewish family in Bavaria, and later in Frankfurt-am-Main and Berlin, he was in the best sense of the word a true “Yekke”, a cultured, learned and impeccably behaved German Jew. I never knew him to behave as a “prima donna” in the manner that was characteristic of some of his scholarly contemporaries. Indeed, that may have been one of the reasons why he moved from Jerusalem to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1957, and later to the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton in 1971. He wished for nothing more than a quiet and friendly atmosphere in which he could research and write. To see him sorting, identifying, and analysing small fragments of Genizah texts was to witness a scholar who loved his work, enthused about his discoveries, and was anxious to share the results with all who cared to listen or read. It is undoubtedly true that he was almost obsessively industrious in his academic work but at the same time, he always found time for his students and colleagues and enjoyed socializing with them, often in a most charming fashion. He was unfailingly honest and at times even somewhat direct, offering criticism as well as praise when he thought they were warranted.<sup>4</sup>

Although expertly trained as an assiduous Semitic philologist and perfectly capable of writing accurate and informative footnotes for his studies, he was never of a mind to compile a page that offered two lines of text and the remainder of lengthy and exaggerated documentation. Although he was perfectly capable of producing highly specialised studies, he saw himself, by personality, as well as by profession, as an educator and felt compelled to translate such studies into a form of language and presentation that could be more broadly appreciated. He was never dismissive of attempts to popularise scholarly discoveries; on the contrary he offered praise for such activity when it was accurately done. He assisted his students and other scholars most generously and shared information without hesitation. Especially in his monumental work on the social and economic documents from the Cairo Genizah, he never lost sight of the fact that there were invariably, behind such texts, real people,

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3 I am grateful to the Genizah Research Unit, headed by Dr Ben Outhwaite, for making this file available to me once again after my retirement, and to Sarah Sykes (Unit Research Support & Admin) for facilitating this.

4 For biographical details I am indebted to Udovitch 1987; Lassner 1999; and Wasserstrom 2007.

with worries, ambitions and experiences and they, and not just their writings, deserved the close attention of historians.<sup>5</sup> There was no affected humility about him; he had a sound sense of his own abilities and achievements and was not inclined to shroud these in layers of mock modesty. Nor was he averse to referring to his own life experiences if he could thereby clarify the academic point he wished to make. He generally seemed aware when composing letters for typing that he was consigning his comments to the historical record and when he wished to make a confidential point he would do so in an additional handwritten note in Hebrew.

## 2 Beginnings

Although SDG was, as an expert Semitic philologist, interested in the texts from the Cairo Genizah, and *au fait* with what had been and was continuing to be published, his intense involvement in Genizah research was motivated by a number of factors and events in the mid-1950s. One of these is especially relevant to his relationship with Cambridge and was reported by him in detail during conferences sponsored by the Association for Jewish Studies in April 1973 and published a year or so later; it therefore warrants citation in this context:<sup>6</sup>

A year later, on 7 October 1955, which happened to be Hoshā'na Rabba, Mr Creswick, the Librarian, came down to the Anderson room for manuscript reading and said to me: "I see you here every year working assiduously on our Geniza [*sic.*] collections. I should like to show you something." With Susan Skilliter, then in charge of the Oriental Department, we went up to the uppermost floor, just under the roof, and there I saw a crate of dimensions I have never seen in my life. In huge letters the address Alexandria-Liverpool was written on it, but also, in another script, of course, the word: Rubbish. Some smaller crates were also around. The Librarian said: "We have had this material for about sixty years and now must decide what to do about it. Could you tell us whether it has any value?" One of the crates was opened. The very first paper I fished out was a fragment of 55 lines of a letter sent from Aden to India which now bears the mark TS NS J 1, that is, Taylor-Schechter Collection, Documents, no. 1. I showed it to the lib-

<sup>5</sup> Goitein 1967–1988.

<sup>6</sup> Goitein 1974, 145–146.

rarian and said: “This is a letter exactly like one of those which you keep downstairs under glasses twenty inches long.”

This historical note by SDG is worthy of serious annotation. Firstly, it indicates how significant he thought it was to report in such a personal way, for the record, his involvement with the un-conserved Cambridge Genizah material and with the establishment of the New Series. He also regarded it as important to mention precisely the personalities involved and the date of the event.<sup>7</sup> What is more, ever the teacher, he not only cites the classmark later given to the fragment but also explains what is indicated by the numeration. There is also a touch of drama in the manner in which he presents the conversation and his own assessment of the fragment drawn from one of the crates. If ever I needed any justification for undertaking my present task of offering some personal data relating to SDG and Cambridge, it is surely to be found in his own apparent enthusiasm, as a social historian, and not only a critical philologist, for such data.

A few weeks before SDG’s presentation to the Association for Jewish Studies, I had begun my own close relationship with the Cambridge Genizah Collections. I had been interviewed in Cambridge in February 1973 and offered an appointment as the librarian responsible for those medieval literary and documentary treasures. I had explained that my interest and expertise in such manuscripts was primarily in the literary items in general and in the liturgical fragments in particular, and not in the Judaeo-Arabic documents, but that I was obviously enthused by the idea of taking broad care of the needs of such a rich source of Hebrew and Jewish history.<sup>8</sup> After the formal appointment, which was to begin in the autumn of 1973, I determined that I should seek advice from those with a close acquaintance with the Cambridge Genizah Collections in those two areas of research. I would consult SDG with regard to the latter and my own teacher, Professor Naphtali Wieder, with regard to the former. I thus found myself, on a sunny Sunday in May of that year, on my way by train from Philadelphia to Princeton to meet the hero of documentary Genizah research and publication. SDG, as always, ensured that I, as his guest, was brought from the station and well looked after. He had entrusted this task to Gershon Weiss, who had completed a doctorate under his supervision,<sup>9</sup> and I was able to come to SDG’s office, hear from him how he managed his extensive Genizah research,

7 For the fuller background, see Reif 2000, 245–246.

8 Further details are in Reif 2021, 161–165.

9 Gershon Weiss, who taught at Temple University, sadly died in 1981 at the early age of 46; see Goitein 1976–1988, vol. 4 (1983), xvii.

and discuss with him not only what I had achieved by that point in my career but, more importantly, what plans I had for my work at Cambridge. The two challenges that he regarded as especially critical, among the many that he mentioned, were the sorting and conservation of the many thousands of fragments in the remaining thirty-two crates and the preparation of a bibliography of all published work on the items that had been available until that point. He did not shy away from acknowledging his own personal interest in using such material, as soon as it became available, for his multi-volume work *A Mediterranean Society*. Talks with Naphtali Wieder were to follow in the summer and he offered similar suggestions. SDG made it clear that he stood ready to assist and advise me whenever that might prove necessary. I found that most reassuring. Not for a moment did he give the impression that he was too important a scholar to concern himself with the efforts of a young scholar attempting to climb a steep mountain with a pack of problems weighing him down.

### 3 Cambridge Involvement

So began eleven years of correspondence and cooperation. I kept him informed of developments and he unfailingly responded with comments and advice. When I obtained the external funding that made it possible for Cambridge University Library to create, in February 1974, the Genizah Research Unit that I was destined to direct for thirty-two years, I requested the assistance of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Israel Academy in recruiting the necessary specialists to identify material in the various areas of learning represented by the Cambridge Genizah Collections and in meeting a fair proportion of the costs of sending them to Cambridge for that purpose. I also needed to appoint two research assistants to work on aspects of the project that I had planned and outlined. The two senior academics from Jerusalem with whom I was involved were Professors Ephraim Urbach and Haim Beinart.<sup>10</sup> SDG was keen to have Weiss appointed to one of those posts and pressed his case with me and with Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> I believe that there must have been some residual tensions between SDG and the Jerusalem academic establishment because they did not agree with his proposal as far as the assistantships were concerned and they had in mind their own appointees for specialised work on the Cambridge fragments.

<sup>10</sup> Reif 2021, 200.

<sup>11</sup> SDG to SCR, 28.06.74: "I do not see that the Hebrew University has anyone comparable to Weiss." There is also in the file a copy of his letter of 29.07.74 to Professor Urbach.

Once the crates began to be emptied and the fragments conserved, three of SDG's academic protégés, Mordechai Friedman, Mark Cohen, and Gershon Weiss came to work on the newly available material and to report back to the master on their research and discoveries. He was in touch not only with them but also with other, more senior figures: "I hear from both Dr. Fleischer and Professor Mark Cohen how well you received them and I was very happy about this."<sup>12</sup> SDG himself spent two weeks in Cambridge in July 1975 and spent his days working on the Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic material and sorting it into nine boxes in the newly established Additional Series. It was a great pleasure to watch him working on these items and to marvel at the speed and erudition with which he was able to identify and describe item after item. On one occasion he asked me to come into the closed areas known as the Manuscripts Stacks, where I had set up a working corner for him, so that he could share with me an exciting discovery. He pulled out a fragment from what was to become box CUL T-S AS 146 and swiftly and effortlessly translated the contents, explaining that he saw it as a reference to Judah Ha-Levi's departure from Alexandria in the early summer of 1141 on a voyage to the Holy Land, where he apparently died some two months later. His relevant article appeared in *Tarbiz* two years after the discovery and identification.<sup>13</sup>

SDG and I were in correspondence when I was searching for suitable research assistants to work on the cataloguing of the biblical and Judaeo-Arabic fragments. He had obviously experienced some poor appointments in some earlier project and wished to share with me the lesson he had learned: "My general advice would be to proceed with utmost circumspection. An appointment, even a temporary one, of an unsuitable person, can have disastrous results. We already have had such an experience." He went on to describe the results of that appointment as "worthless or outright faulty."<sup>14</sup> The fragments of the New Series that had begun to undergo conservation a few years before my arrival had been consigned to huge, bulky binders and there was much consternation on the part of numerous scholars about their size and shape. About a year after I took up my post, SDG expressed to me his view in no uncertain terms: "I was sad to learn from Mr. Mark Cohen that the work of demolition of the TS collection is being continued. In August 1970 I warned your predecessor, Mr. Knopf, in the strongest terms that these big cases cannot be used for serious work ...

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12 SDG to SCR, 29.07.74.

13 Goitein 1975.

14 SDG to SCR, 12.03.74.

it is practically impossible to scrutinise the manuscripts exactly ... those who use them will always be forced to lean over them with half their bodies.”<sup>15</sup> I was able to assure him that my plans for smaller and more manageable binders were already under way. SDG came again to Cambridge University Library in the summer of 1979 while I was on study leave at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. He again contributed important descriptions to our records of the documentary material, most of it, of course, in Judaeo-Arabic. He had plans for a return visit in 1980 but these never materialised. Even in 1974 he had been apprehensive about travelling to England “in view of the extremely unstable state of western Europe.”<sup>16</sup>

#### 4 Other Assistance

There were other ways in which SDG consistently assisted our efforts as well as making good use of our presence in the Library to clarify some matter relating to his own work on *A Mediterranean Society*. The Unit was fortunate to have on its staff, at various times, a number of outstanding Arabists and SDG corresponded with them about mutually interesting matters. Simon Hopkins, followed by Paul Fenton, and later Geoffrey Khan, fulfilled such a role and SDG had high opinions of their abilities.<sup>17</sup> It was inevitable that such scholars would ultimately leave to further their careers but their absence, and the discontinuation of their exchanges, obviously disappointed him to a degree, as he specifically stated in connection with Fenton’s departure (“I regret his departure very much.”)<sup>18</sup> When Khan’s first paper appeared, he read it “with much interest.”<sup>19</sup> With regard to the Unit’s plans for a massive bibliography of all published material relating to its Genizah holdings, he was concerned that there should be no unnecessary duplication of effort: “I wonder whether you plan to confine yourself to non-documentary materials or whether you also intend to continue Shaked, which would include correcting his mistakes and filling in his omissions. May I suggest you get in touch with Professor Mordechai Friedman of Tel Aviv University who seems to have similar plans and you both decide about a reasonable division of labor [*sic.*].”<sup>20</sup> Before he arrived at

15 SDG to SCR, 20.08.74.

16 SDG to SCR, 20.11.74.

17 Reif 2021, 201–203.

18 SDG to SCR, 28.09.82.

19 SDG to SCR, 21.12.84.

20 SDG to SCR, 26.04.74.

the Library in 1975 he wished to ensure that the best use would be made of his time: "I should like also to sit with you one or two mornings and go with you over your A[dditional] S[eries] of documentary character. We then shall discuss what action should best be undertaken in connection with AS. After all, I, too, am a member of H[ebrew] U[niversity]".<sup>21</sup> This last comment perhaps indicated a little impatience with what he evidently saw as Jerusalem's tendency to exercise more control over the project than he thought necessary. Once SDG knew that I might be taking on the responsibility for preparing a catalogue of the Library's Hebrew manuscripts, that is, all thousand codices and some Genizah items, he generously offered to check for me the descriptions of those latter items.<sup>22</sup> Alas, many other duties and responsibilities occupied me at the Library and I was unable to complete that task until 1997, some twelve years after his death.<sup>23</sup>

Photographs of fragments were regularly sent to him and I met his request for copies of the slides I used to illustrate my introductory lecture on the Cairo Genizah. Many times (sometimes in confidence) he shared with me his plans for publications, and in 1978 he wished to know more about the involvement of the American Friends of Cambridge University, and its director, Gordon Williams, in the Unit's fund-raising operations.<sup>24</sup> Unlike some scholars, he was always meticulous about giving credit for any assistance he had received and he specifically checked with me, not only once, how precisely this should be done. With regard to the use of Cambridge Genizah items in his *A Mediterranean Society*, he wrote: "Since, while ordering them, I noted 'for study and publication', I shall remark, as usual, 'with the permission of the Syndics of the CUL', but would like to add 'and thanks to the Genizah Research Unit for their good services'. Is this the proper form?".<sup>25</sup> In the matter of citing Genizah fragments, there was something of a confusion among scholars until I tried to regularise it soon after my appointment. Obviously, SDG wished to follow the correct procedure but by that time he had published so many items that it was difficult for him to change the systems. He therefore continued to use "TS" instead of "T-s" and to use "f." before the fragment number when it should simply have been a full-stop followed by a running number.<sup>26</sup> When the Unit obtained funds for descriptions of the medical fragments, he made an excellent suggestion as to

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21 SDG to SCR, 06.05.75.

22 SDG to SCR, 22.08.73.

23 Reif 1997, 32.

24 SDG to SCR, 09.10.78.

25 SDG to SCR, 21.12.84.

26 See his explanation in SDG to SCR 11.08.78.

who might be a suitable appointee: "It occurred to me that the Iraqi Jewish physician who published Israeli's *Hummayāt* together with Derek Latham at Manchester might be willing to have a look at the medical fragments, perhaps to do the job himself."<sup>27</sup> He was referring to Dr Haskell Isaacs who did in fact come to Cambridge, spending a number of happy retirement years there and completing the required volume shortly before he died.<sup>28</sup>

In order to allow the senior researchers who came to the Library to work on the sorting of the fragments, and to access the closed area of the Manuscripts Stacks, the Library appointed them as temporary members of staff. This was part of the more formal and better-administered procedures that had been adopted with the establishment of the Genizah Research Unit and that were intended to bring an end to the careless arrangements of earlier times that had led to all manner of problems.

SDG, who had always been most correct in how he dealt with the Library and its holdings, was a little surprised by this: "Eighteen times I have visited and used ULC's treasures and have also contributed a little bit to their accessibility (*Religion etc.*, pp. 145–146), but I have never heard such formal parlance before."<sup>29</sup> When we applied, on an annual basis, for funding from the British Academy, SDG kindly and regularly provided one of the necessary academic references but, having done so for a number of years, he opted out after 1982 because "rubber-stamped recommendations make a poor impression."<sup>30</sup> When time was pressing for him, he regretted that he could not help, as with my request for data in connection with the Unit's major bibliographical project.<sup>31</sup> When asked in 1983 for a contribution to the Unit's newsletter *Genizah Fragments* he expressed a preference for waiting until a future visit when he could write an assessment of all the new developments of the 1970s and early 1980s: "I still hope to do work in Cambridge and then to be able to appreciate the tremendous changes made based on my own experience. During my visit in 1975, I was exclusively occupied with the AS fragments, as you might remember, and had no opportunity to use the newly treated main section of the TS Collection."<sup>32</sup>

27 SDG to SCR, 28.09.82.

28 Isaacs 1994.

29 SDG to SCR, 19.03.75.

30 SDG to SCR, 15.03.82.

31 SDG to SCR, 19.02.81: "To convert my card indexes into [bibliographical] lists would require much time and money, which I do not have."

32 SDG to SCR, 02.06.83.



## 5 Criticism and Praise

When copies of our publications were sent to SDG, he always replied with comments, some of them critical and some adulatory. With regard to the booklet *A Guide to the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Collection*, he welcomed it as my first accomplishment and noted that scholars and students would be grateful. At the same time, he drew attention to the importance of his own publications that should have been mentioned in the brief bibliography and thought the comments about the New Series “hazy”.<sup>33</sup> Even the little pamphlet that we produced in the context of our fund-raising campaign, and that was intended for popular dissemination and not for specialist scholars, attracted his favourable comment: “... let me congratulate you on the grant from the British Academy and, even more, on *Priceless Collection*, which is a masterpiece of conciseness.”<sup>34</sup> He described Simon Hopkins’s *Miscellany*<sup>35</sup> as “beautiful and most useful”, a publication for which “everyone in Geniza [*sic.*] research will be grateful” but also pointed out that the attribution on p. 46 to Abraham b. Nathan was incorrect since the scribe was actually Abraham b. Yijū.<sup>36</sup> Although he was glad to see Malcolm Davis’s *Hebrew Bible Manuscripts*<sup>37</sup> (“this new fruit of your initiative and resourcefulness”) he was disappointed with what he regarded as errors in transcription and sent a long, hand-written list of suggested corrections.<sup>38</sup> I thanked him for all of these and explained or challenged only a few of them. In August 1975, he made some unfavourable remarks about a few photostats that he had received from the Library but a month later was gracious enough to regret that he had used “too harsh language” in this connection.<sup>39</sup> He obviously perused everything I sent him with a scholar’s eagle eye. Of a review of mine he remarked that he was impressed and that it was “well balanced and competent”.<sup>40</sup> When he read a piece I had written for the *Cambridge Review*, he remarked that I “should have mentioned Creswick who initiated the NS Series”. I responded that the topic was the conservation process and not the history of the various sections of the Collections.<sup>41</sup>

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33 SDG to SCR, 11.02.74.

34 SDG to SCR, 27.06.78.

35 Hopkins 1978.

36 SDG to SCR, 09.10.78.

37 Davis 1978.

38 SDG to SCR, 16.11.78.

39 SDG to SCR, 19.08.75 and 22.09.75.

40 SDG to SCR, 22.08.73.

41 SDG to SCR, 15.03.82; SCR to SDG, 31.03.82.

I was twenty-nine years old when I took charge of the Cambridge Genizah Collections, with only five years of academic experience behind me. It was therefore of great importance to me to have the support and encouragement of such a major figure as SDG in the plans I was making for rectifying the Library's failure over a number of decades to meet the extensive needs of those many thousands of precious Genizah items.<sup>42</sup> Like another distinguished scholar, Raphael Loewe, who saw the swift achievements of the Genizah Research Unit as an indication "that the scales" had "at last fallen from the university's eyes",<sup>43</sup> SDG was much pleased by the developments within the Unit and was not averse to expressing his approval in many of his letters. He was anxious for good Arabists to remain in the Unit and for me to be promoted. In that latter connection, he added handwritten notes in Hebrew inquiring about the progress being made<sup>44</sup> and when it occurred, he wrote: "I congratulate you and all the users of the ULC Collection on your important promotion. Please convey our good wishes also to Mrs. Reif."<sup>45</sup> He knew that the University Librarian, Eric Ceadel, had been instrumental in approving and supporting the Unit's plans and was much saddened by his untimely death: "I was shocked to learn ... that Mr. Ceadel has died. Such a nice, and comparatively young man!"<sup>46</sup>

Towards the end of 1974, I invited the Genizah master to deliver a lecture on the Genizah's contribution to Jewish learning at a seminar being planned and sponsored by the British Academy and the Jewish Historical Society of England for the autumn of 1975. He replied that he could not commit himself to speaking in London at that time but generously added the following comment: "It is, however, my considered opinion that there is no better candidate for delivering a paper on the contribution of Geniza [*sic.*] research to general human knowledge than Dr. Stefan. C. Reif. You are now in the midst of things and it is my experience that a man like you, who is both outside and inside, is best fit to provide a general survey of the state of the subject. A scholar, who like myself, specialises in one compartment of the subject, is always inclined to be one-sided. You will be able to give just appreciation of the entire work done."<sup>47</sup> Gratified as I was by his remarks, I nevertheless felt that a more senior scholar than I should undertake the task and prevailed upon Professor Shelomo Morag, then on sabbatical at St John's College, Cambridge, to give the required paper.

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42 For details, see Reif 2021, 171–187.

43 Loewe 1979.

44 SDG to SCR, 01.12.75 and 09.06.76.

45 SDG to SCR, 22.06.76.

46 SDG to SCR, 10.10.80.

47 SDG to SCR, 12.10.74.

What I did not appreciate when I wrote a piece for the *Festschrift* prepared for him and published in 1981,<sup>48</sup> was that SDG had completed a dissertation on the subject of *Prayer in the Qur'an* almost sixty years earlier. Unsurprisingly, therefore, he could relate closely to the liturgical topic with which I had chosen to offer in his honour. He thanked me for what he kindly described as an “intriguing and deep searching contribution” and made an important point about fragments in this field: “... it is surprising how many variants are provided by the Geniza [*sic.*] even for the most common prayers. One finds occasionally copies of prayers on the reverse side of letters and mostly somewhat different from the ‘official’ text (if there exists such a thing).”<sup>49</sup>

## 6 Personal Remarks

SDG very much enjoyed Cambridge, which he once praised to me as “so civilised” a place, and which he often described as the Mecca of Genizah scholarship. He liked to take walks in and around the city. I accompanied him on one of these and asked him what his plans were for future scholarly work. He gave me a list of these that was bound to take many years to complete and this was a remarkable statement on the part of a man who was already in his seventies. His knowledge not only of ancient languages but also of modern ones was deeply impressive, although I must confess to an inner amusement when he assured me, in the delightful cadences of a true “Yekke”, that he spoke them all without an accent. He would also often complete his oral comments on a fragment he was examining with the German phrase “und so weiter” (= “and so on”). My late wife, Shulie, and I entertained him to dinner at home and also arranged there a sherry party at which he could meet a number of Cambridge scholars. He thoughtfully thanked us afterwards for “the enjoyable hours I spent in your hospitable home”<sup>50</sup> and did not fail to “extend greetings” to all those who had been present.<sup>51</sup> What is more, he had met our children Tanya and Aryeh, and made a point of sending regards to them and to Shulie in subsequent correspondence. He not only pleased us by referring to them as “lovely children”<sup>52</sup> but also made use of learned sources to describe them. In one letter they were

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48 Reif 1981.

49 SDG to SCR, 25.03.81.

50 SDG to SCR, 28.07.75.

51 SDG to SCR, 19.08.75.

52 SDG to SCR, 21.03.79.

the *צנתרות הזהב* (as in Zechariah 4:12)<sup>53</sup> and in another he asked us to “kiss for me the eyes of your *חמודים* (as we say in the Geniza [*sic.*]).”<sup>54</sup>

When he heard that I was coming to New York in 1977, he expressed the hope that we could meet again personally but it turned out that my time there was limited and too full of other lecturing and fund-raising commitments to make that possible.<sup>55</sup> When his book *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders* was published,<sup>56</sup> he told me which publications had been furnished with review copies and suggested that I write one of the reviews.<sup>57</sup> His concern for individuals was also manifest in some of his letters. Concerning Alexander Scheiber in Budapest, he informed me: “I wrote him repeatedly and received no answer, and I am disquieted”<sup>58</sup> and he wrote of A.L. Motzkin: “He rarely answers letters, even mine; so do not despair if you remain without answer.”<sup>59</sup> He also inquired whether I had “heard anything from Dr Lebedev of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Leningrad.”<sup>60</sup> SDG often shared with me his plans and his progress. In 1982 he wrote: “These days I am working day and night to ready vol. iv of *A Medit. Soc.* (900 pp.) for the U Cal. P. Vol v (and definitely the last!) is well progressed.”<sup>61</sup> He poignantly stated a few months later: “My state of health forces me to concentrate on my work and to cut back with my correspondence.”<sup>62</sup> A few weeks before he passed away, he wrote: “Yesterday I sent the Ms of the fifth and last volume of *A Mediterranean Society* to my publisher and am now free to turn to my study of the Jewish India trade of the Middle Ages.”<sup>63</sup> Alas, that planned study was not destined to reach fruition.

## 7 Conclusion

What emerges from this brief examination of what probably represents only a tiny part of his extensive sets of correspondence with friends and colleagues worldwide is that SDG was not only an outstanding and innovative scholar

53 SDG to SCR, 01.05.76.

54 SDG to SCR, 27.11.77.

55 SDG to SCR, 25.02.77.

56 Goitein 1973.

57 SDG to SCR, 26.03.74.

58 SDG to SCR, 29.07.74.

59 SDG to SCR, 04.09.74.

60 SDG to SCR, 29.10.82.

61 SDG to SCR, 07.02.82.

62 SDG to SCR, 28.09.82.

63 SDG to SCR, 21.12.84.

but also, to use the Yiddish expression, a true *mensch*, and one who cared about people. He generously shared his time, his expertise, and his experience with colleagues, as well as supporting and encouraging younger scholars to make progress with their plans and projects. He criticised constructively and praised magnanimously. His suggestions about the future of Genizah research and the directions to be taken by the Genizah Research Unit were of inestimable value. There is no doubt that he deserves considerable credit for standing with the Unit from the very outset, while others either took their time in offering support or were sceptical and even at times less than helpful. In this celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Unit's establishment, we should recall with gratitude the important part he played in ensuring its success.

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