# Some Observations on Genizah Fragments of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in Arabic Letters

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# 1. Preface

There can be no doubt that Rav Saadiah Gaon's Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Pentateuch ranks among the most important and influential texts composed in this language. This is clearly reflected by its abundant representation in manuscripts, which were written in different centuries and in widely varying locations. It was quickly disseminated throughout the Jewish communities of the Near East, North Africa and Muslim Spain. This text, which enjoyed the prestige of the highest Geonic authority, was immensely influential in several respects. Its language and its system of transcribing Arabic into Hebrew characters became exemplary and authoritative. This translation enterprise, by virtue of its preeminent authority, also superseded — at least among Rabbanite Jews — all pre-Saadianic traditions of rendering the Holy Scriptures and their characteristic features. In addition, Saadiah's translation

- 1 This article is an abridged version of one chapter of my M.A. thesis *The Transmission of the Judaeo-Arabic Pentateuch Translation of Rav Saadiah Gaon in Arabic letters: A Case of Textual Diffusion*, submitted to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in February 2007. Thanks are due to my supervisor Prof. S. Hopkins. In addition I would like to express my gratitude to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Library for granting me permission to publish the images of two fragments preserved in the Taylor-Schechter Collection.
- 2 Cf. J. Blau and S. Hopkins, "On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography", in J. Blau, Studies in Middle Arabic and its Judaeo-Arabic Variety, Jerusalem 1988, pp. 381–400.
- 3 See the review article by M. Polliack, "Arabic Bible Translations in the Cairo Genizah Collections", in *Jewish Studies in a New Europe*, Copenhagen 1998, pp. 595–620.

had a considerable impact on later Rabbanite renderings of the Holy Scriptures into Arabic.

Nevertheless, various aspects of the transmission of this central text are still obscure. Two basic questions remain unresolved. The first concerns the number of books on which Saadiah commented or which he translated into Arabic. There is no consensus among modern scholars as to the scope of Saadiah's works in this area. It must suffice here to note that he most certainly did *not* translate the entire Hebrew Bible.<sup>4</sup> The second question concerns the emergence and early transmission of the *tafsīr*. A notable aspect of this issue is the confusion that prevails with regard to the script in which Saadiah initially penned his translations. Hence, the main aim of the present study is to present some new items of evidence concerning the dissemination of Saadiah's *tafsīr* in Arabic characters and to evaluate their nature and possible origin. This evidence has some implications for our understanding of the early stages of transmission of Saadiah's work and suggests, as we shall see, some unexpected aspects of the textual diffusion of this text among a non-Rabbanite readership.

The most prominent source with regard to the original script of the  $tafs\bar{\imath}r$  is a passage in Ibn Ezra's commentary on Genesis 2:11, in which he informs his readers that Saadiah "rendered the Pentateuch into the language and the script (?) of the Ishmaelites". This statement was echoed by Issachar ben Shushan, active in Zefat in the  $16^{th}$  century, who was the most notable representative of the genre of adaptations of Saadiah's  $tafs\bar{\imath}r$ . In the preface to his adaptation,

- 4 For a survey of scholarly opinions on this question see E. Schlossberg, *Concepts and Methods in the Commentary of R. Saadia Gaon on the Book of Daniel* (Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University 1988) [Hebrew], pp. 1–65.
- 5 בעבור שתרגם התורה בלשון ישמעאל ובכתיבתם.
- These versions are neither new translations nor simple copies of Saadiah's version, but rather a carefully considered mixture of both. See D. Doron, "From the Tafsir of R. Saadya Gaon to the translation of R. Mordechai Hai Dayyan of Tunis" [Hebrew], in *Sefunot NS 5* (1991; *Proceedings of the Second conference of the Society for Judeao-Arabic Studies*), pp. 171–180, as well as Y. Avishur, "The Adaptations of R. Saadya Gaon's Bible Translation in the East" [Hebrew], in the same volume, pp. 181–202. The manuscript published by

he mentions having consulted copies of Saadiah's translation written in Arabic letters.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, some other works of the Gaon — parts of his halakhic compositions,<sup>8</sup> as well as translations of his *baqqashot*<sup>9</sup> — were copied in that script. These findings are confirmed by Judaeo-Arabic fragments found in the Genizah which present an account of the weekly *majlis* of the famous Fatimid vizier of Jewish origin, Ya'qūb ibn Killis.<sup>10</sup> The vizier is described as using a copy of Saadiah's *Siddur* in Arabic letters to mock Jewish prayers and beliefs, an activity in which he was joined by the Muslim participants. Such a copy was apparently prepared for him specifically for use in an interreligious *majlis*. The interfaith polemics which were part of such gatherings between Muslims, Christians and Jews would provide a natural *Sitz im Leben* for a copy written in Arabic letters.

The combined evidence of these testimonies led some scholars to the conclusion that the Gaon actually composed his translations in Arabic script. In addition, occasional errors in the manuscripts, allegedly due to the process of transliteration into Hebrew characters, were adduced as evidence of an original in Arabic script written by Saadiah himself.<sup>11</sup>

It is true that such instances occur sporadically. On the whole, however, strong

- J. Hirsch, Fragment einer arabischen Pentateuch-Übersetzung, Leipzig 1900, must also be assigned to the genre of adaptations.
- 7 However, his intention is not very clear. The note, penned as an extension on the margins of his autograph MS British Library Or. 10402 A fol. 1v, appears corrupted and is partly illegible. He states: של איך [...] של איך [...] עלי איך אמרו לי מימיהם [ביניהם?] שלו כולו ומי א"ל על קצת סדרים ממנו איפשר את שיצאו בערבי האלנחוי בכתיבתם יש לו חצי [...] יש לו כולו ומי א"ל על קצת סדרים ממנו איפשר את שיצאו מדערבי האלנחוי בתיבתם ונשאר ביני מאותו זמן.
- 8 T-S 12.73 on the laws of *trefot*, published by S. Schechter, *Saadyana*, Cambridge 1903, pp. 131–133.
- 9 See Siddur R. Saadja Gaon: Kitāb Ğāmi' aṣ-Ṣalawāt wat-Tasābih (eds. I. Davidson, S. Assaf and B. I. Joel), Jerusalem 1941, p. 47.
- 10 Published by M. Cohen and S. Somekh, "In the court of Ya'qūb ibn Killis: A fragment from the Cairo Genizah", *JQR* 80 (1990), pp. 283–314.
- 11 Compare the references given by J. Blau, *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic*, Jerusalem 1999, p. 39, no. 1, and p. 244, note to p. 40.

objections to this theory arise. The earliest manuscripts are written exclusively in Hebrew characters and completely free of putative transliteration errors. The recently discovered manuscript St. Petersburg RNL Yevr. II C1 contains the earliest datable copy of the complete Pentateuch translation of Saadiah. 12 It was not only copied about sixty years after the demise of the Gaon, but also contains the most precise and accurate version of his translation, both in wording and in language. It is likely that some Genizah fragments written on vellum in plain square script antedate even this splendid manuscript. 13 Yet neither the St. Petersburg manuscript nor the early Genizah fragments exhibit any evidence whatsoever of having been transliterated from a *Vorlage* written in Arabic letters. The same is true for the later stages of transmission of the *tafsīr* — there are no known manuscripts of Jewish origin in Arabic characters.

In contrast, Saadiah's translation of the Pentateuch is extant in many Christian manuscripts in Arabic letters which were used by Monophysite communities, i.e. the Coptic and Syriac Orthodox Churches. However, it goes without saying that the reason they were written in Arabic script is their Christian provenance.

The additional evidence for the transmission of Saadiah's tafsir in Arabic letters presented in this article emerges from four early Genizah fragments which contain parts of Saadiah's translation in Arabic letters. An edition and description of the fragments — the only such fragments known to date —

- 12 J. Blau, "Saadya Gaon's Pentateuch translation in the Light of an Early-Eleventh-Century Egyptian Manuscript", *Leshonenu* 61 (1998), pp. 111–130 [Hebrew].
- 13 They constitute an early stage of transmission and are therefore of special interest. E.g. the Cambridge University Library fragments T-S Ar. 1a.19, T-S Ar. 1a.104, T-S Ar. 1a.143, T-S Ar. 25.164, T-S Ar. 27.2, T-S Ar. 27.6, T-S Ar. 27.105, T-S Ar. 28.13, T-S Ar. 28.37, T-S Ar. 28.157; Oxford MS Heb. c 19 fol. 31–34, Oxford MS Heb. d 56 fol. 1–8; Institute de France MS 3381.6.2, etc.
- 14 This is not the place to discuss the dissemination of the *tafsīr* among the Christians. I hope to deal with this topic on another occasion. For present purposes it will suffice to note that the manuscripts of Christian provenance can clearly be divided into a Coptic and a Syrian-Orthodox branch. For the dissemination among the Copts cf. J.F. Rhode, *The Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch in the Church of Egypt*, St. Louis 1921.

are provided. Their content ranges from single words and verses to entire continuous folio pages in Arabic script. The majority of these pieces are preserved in the Taylor-Schechter Collection of the Cambridge University Library (henceforth CUL), but one comes from the Genizah collection of the British Library (henceforth BL).

Judaeo-Arabic was by definition written in Hebrew letters.<sup>15</sup> In Blau's opinion it "clearly shows the barrier that separated the bulk of the Jewish population from Arab and Islamic culture".<sup>16</sup> This statement holds for Rabbanite Jewry with almost no exceptions.<sup>17</sup> Arabic letters remained, it appears, a foreign medium, despite the scarce evidence in the Genizah that they were at least to some degree included in the Jewish curriculum.<sup>18</sup>

The linguistic setting of Karaite texts, as is well known, was essentially different. Judaeo-Arabic texts in Arabic script almost automatically suggest

- 15 Compare Blau (n. 11 above), pp. 34–44, 241–247.
- 16 Ibid., p. 35.
- 17 Rabbanite Jews may have used Arabic script precisely when crossing this barrier, as exemplified in texts addressed to an Arab or Muslim readership. See G. Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections*, Cambridge 1993. Only a very small proportion of the extant correspondence among Jews is in Arabic letters, see for example R. Gottheil and W.H. Worrell, *Fragments from the Cairo Genizah in the Freer Collection*, New York 1927, fragment no. XVI (entirely in Arabic script); CUL Or 1080 6.25 and T-S 13 J 17.16, a letter addressed to the Gaon Nathan ben Abraham, published by M. Gil, *Palestine during the First Muslim Period*, Tel Aviv 1983 [Hebrew], pp. 340–345; S. Assaf, *Gaonic Responsa fron Genizah MSS*, Jerusalem 1928 [Hebrew], pp. 132–134.
- 18 The preference for Hebrew letters is attested in a letter from the Genizah dated 1058 C.E., in which the author Mūsā ibn Ya'qūb gives precise instructions for the written response ינכון אלכט עברני, see CUL Or. 1080 J 42, published by Gil, ibid., pp. 300–305. On the teaching of Arabic script see Sh. D. Goitein, Jewish Education in Muslim Countries, Jerusalem 1962 [Hebrew], pp. 35, 43, 57. In addition the Genizah reveals numerous writing exercises, some of which contain Arabic and Hebrew script side by side, e.g. T-S Ar. 34.29, T-S Ar. 34.96–97, T-S Ar. 34.101, T-S Ar. 42.3, T-S NS 297.54, T-S NS 305.59, T-S NS 395.139 and T-S AS 181.76. Of special interest is T-S AS 178.219, which gives the names of Arabic letters in Hebrew script next to the Arabic characters. This fragment was doubtless used to teach students to write and read Arabic script. Such lists appear to be connected to the very beginnings of Judaeo-Arabic writing, see the papyrus (text XVII) published in Blau and Hopkins (n. 2 above).

a Karaite provenance. Not only was a large proportion of original Karaite compositions written in that script, but even the Holy Scriptures were transcribed into it from Hebrew script.<sup>19</sup> This Karaite custom is documented in al-Qirqisānī's discussion of Hebrew written in Arabic script in his *Kitāb al-Anwār wa-l-Marāqib*;<sup>20</sup> considerable portions of this work are also extant exclusively in that script. It was composed in the fourth decade of the tenth century, probably in Iraq. The use of Arabic script appears to have been a well-established custom at this time and place.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of Karaite emigration to Palestine it was thereafter transmitted to the Jerusalem circle of scholars. The compositions of outstanding members of that circle, such as Yefet ben 'Elī,<sup>22</sup> his son Levi ben Yefet,<sup>23</sup> Abū al-Faraj Hārūn,<sup>24</sup> David ben Bo'az<sup>25</sup> and Yeshu'ah ben Yehudah<sup>26</sup> were written in Arabic script; some of

- 19 See. G. Khan, "The Medieval Karaite Transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic Script", Israel Oriental Studies 12 (1992), pp. 157–176; idem, Karaite Bible Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah, Cambridge 1990, and H. Ben-Shammai, "Hebrew in Arabic Script Qirqisānī's View", in Studies in Judaica, Karaitica and Islamica Presented to Leon Nemoy on his Eightieth Birthday (ed. Sh. Brunswick), Ramat Gan 1982, pp. 115–126.
- 20 Edited by L. Nemoy, *Kitab al-Anwār wal-Marāqib: Code of Karaite Law*, vol. 1–5, New York 1939–1945; the passage under discussion is on pp. 553–555. Cf. Ben-Shammai (n. 19 above).
- 21 See ibid., p. 122.
- 22 See inter alia BL Or. 2547, BL Or. 2548, BL Or. 2554, BL Or. 2581 fol. 31–46; for their description see R. Hoerning, Six Karaite Manuscripts of Portions of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic Characters, London 1889. Parts of Yefet's commentary on Ruth were edited by S. Butbul in her M.A. thesis (Hebrew University 2002), למגילת רות פירושו הערבי של יפת בן עלי הקראי.
- 23 E.g. BL Or. 2564, BL Or. 2563 fol. 90-100.
- 24 BL Or. 2561 fol. 96–111; see also N. Bassal, "Excerpts from the Abridgment of al-Kitāb al-Kāfī by Abū Farağ Hārūn in Arabic script", IOS 17 (1997), pp.197–225; idem, "Judeo-Arabic in Arabic Script: al-Kitāb al-Mushtamil by Abū Faraj Harūn", *Bein 'Ever la-'Arav* 3 (2004), pp. 31–34 [Hebrew].
- 25 E.g. BL Or. 2403, BL Or. 2561 fol. 1-74, BL Or. 2563.
- 26 For example BL Or. 2544, BL Or. 2545, BL Or. 2559; compare the list given by G. Khan, "On the Question of Script in Medieval Karaite Manuscripts: New Evidence from the Genizah", Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 75 (1993), pp. 133–141, esp. 137.

these manuscripts are autographs.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it appears that the practice of writing in Arabic characters is to be associated first and foremost with Karaite scribal circles of Palestine of the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, the custom spread to other communities which fell within their sphere of influence, e.g. Egypt. That this was the case is abundantly documented in the Karaite material in Arabic letters in the Genizah corpus, as well as in the autographs of 'Alī ben Sulaymān, stretching over the years 1045–1093 C.E. The use of Hebrew script became prevalent only after the dispersal of the Palestinian Karaite community in the wake of the First Crusade.

Although the primary motive for depositing papers in the Genizah was the use of Hebrew script, the Genizah fragments provide a comprehensive sample of Bible translations in Arabic script current in that period. All traditions are represented to some degree: Samaritan<sup>29</sup> and Karaite translations,<sup>30</sup> as well as Christian versions<sup>31</sup> based on the Septuagint or Coptic versions. Fragments of the New Testament in Arabic are also to be found.<sup>32</sup> Such versions are likewise

- 27 Compare H. Ben-Shammai, "Some Judaeo-Arabic Karaite Fragments in the British Museum Collection", BSOAS 38 (1975), pp. 126–132, especially p. 128.
- 28 These circles are discussed by Ben-Shammai (n. 19 above), pp. 115–126; Khan (n. 19 above); idem, *Karaite Bible Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah*, Cambridge 1990.
- 29 T-S Ar. 41.122 (Genesis) and T-S Ar. 1a.136 (Genesis, with *incipits* in Samaritan letters).
- 30 T-S Ar. 1b.10 (Yefet's translation of Daniel), T-S Ar. 41.18 (Leviticus, with commentary), T-S Ar. 42.41 (Psalms), and T-S Ar. 39.283 (Numbers, Hebrew *incipits* are partly transcribed into Arabic), which belongs with T-S Ar. 39.479 (Numbers) and T-S NS 327.92 (Exodus).
- 31 T-S Ar. 41.129 (Genesis); contrary to the description in C. Baker and M. Polliack, Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Arabic Old Series, Cambridge 2001, p. 373, the fragment is doubtless of Christian origin, as indicated by the transcription of proper names in accordance with the Greek and the division of pericopes. Additional examples: T-S NS 297.258–259 (Exodus), belonging with T-S NS 327.128 (Exodus), as well as T-S NS 305.131 (Psalms), belonging with T-S NS 327.20 (Psalms) and ULC Or. 1080 6.21 (Psalms). MS Mosseri III, 212 contains a section in Coptic accompanied by Arabic glosses.
- 32 E.g. T-S Ar. 52.219 (three folios of a Coptic-Arabic lectionary containing portions of the New Testament). See the discussion by K. Szilágyi, "Christian Books in Jewish Libraries: Fragments of Christian Arabic Writings from the Cairo Genizah" in *Ginzei Qedem* 2 (2006), pp. 106–162. The translation units are identical with the so-called Egyptian Vulgate which

mentioned in booklists from the Genizah.<sup>33</sup> These findings clearly indicate a shared interest in Bible versions in Arabic, as well as a certain mobility of translation traditions irrespective of their origin. It is not surprising that the translations of Saadiah, which are intrinsically connected to the translation endeavors of this period, are also represented among the group of fragments in Arabic letters.

# 2. Edition of the Fragments

### Notes on the edition:

For the sake of clarity I have added diacritical signs, which are marked in the manuscripts only sporadically, in accordance with standard Classical Arabic orthography. I have also indicated verse numbers. Vowel signs are rendered as found in the fragments. Fragments of the Pentateuch were collated with MS St. Petersburg Yevr. II C 1<sup>34</sup> (a) and MS Oxford (Bodleian) Poc. 395–396<sup>35</sup> (n). The sections of Proverbs were compared with the Derenbourg<sup>36</sup> (n) and Kafih<sup>37</sup> (p) editions. In addition, the following early fragments of the *tafsīr* were consulted:

- has been published on many occasions, e.g. by P. de Lagarde, *Die vier Evangelien arabisch aus der Wiener Handschrift hsg.* (Leipzig 1864).
- 33 One fragment mentions the translation of Ḥunain Ibn Isḥāq, who is reported by al-Mas'ūdī to have rendered the entire Septuagint into Arabic, cf. N. Allony, *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages: Booklists from the Cairo Genizah*, eds. M. Frenkel and H. Ben-Shammai, Jerusalem 2006, no. 4, lines 24–25. Karaite translations are referred to in fragment no. 30, lines 12, 17 and 24; no. 97 line 65; no. 99 passim; no. 105, line 9.
- 34 On this manuscript see Blau (n. 12 above).
- 35 A trilingual codex, copied in Hamat in 1449. Despite its relative lateness, ¬¬ preserves valuable early readings, cf. H. Ben-Shammai, "New and Old: Saadya's Two Introductions to his Translation of the Pentateuch", *Tarbiz* 69 (2000), pp. 199−210 [Hebrew].
- 36 J. Derenbourg, Version Arabe des Proverbes, Paris 1894. This edition is primarily based on MS Oxford, Bodleian Library Poc. 70 (12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century), supplemented by the MSS BL Or. 2375 (15<sup>th</sup> century) and Berlin Or. 1203 (copied 1598 C.E.).
- 37 Mishley 'im Targum u-Perush Rabbeinu Se'adyah ben Yosef Fayyumi, ed. Y. Qafih, Jerusalem 1973.

### ห: T-S Ar. 27.105

Contents: Translation of Exodus 23:5–24:6; Numbers 23:21–26; 28:29–30, 31:15–32:31

Hebrew *incipits*; Oriental square script; vellum, 7 leaves, slightly stained; 17.7 x 16.3 cm.; 23–28 lines.

### ם: T-S Ar. 1a.44

Contents: Translation of Numbers 30:16-31:17; 32:32-33:5

Hebrew *incipits*; Oriental semi-cursive script; sporadic Arabic vocalization; rubricated; paper, 2 leaves; mutilated and slightly stained; 13.1 x 20 cm.; 17–19 lines.

In my analysis I have made use of various additional manuscripts. Their shelf marks and folio numbers are given wherever possible.<sup>38</sup>

Biblical verses are referred to in the conventional manner. Line numbers of manuscripts are indicated. In the edition of the texts I have employed the following symbols:

- [...] Square brackets indicate sections where the text is missing owing to a lacuna or badly faded portions.
- Text in square brackets represents a completion of the missing text on the basis of the parallel manuscripts in Hebrew script. If the completion diverges for any reason from these manuscripts, I have added a comment in a footnote.
- (!) sic!
- رثين Words deleted by the scribe.
- < > Words written incorrectly. The corrected form is given after the brackets.

<sup>38</sup> I have been dependent on the microfilms of the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Jerusalem. Folio numbers are not always identifiable in the microfilms, especially in manuscripts of the British Library.

### 2.1. British Library MS Or. 5562 B.1

### Description:

Contents: Translation of Genesis 4:24 and Exodus 21:8–19

Hebrew incipits; Hebrew Oriental square script and Arabic naskhī, sporadic Arabic vocalization; paper; 1 leaf, recto 13 lines, verso 4 lines and 5 additional lines in Arabic letters separated from the Hebrew portions by a heavy line. The first two lines give Saadiah's translation of Genesis 4:24 in Arabic letters. The following lines are illegible. They may contain another biblical verse, as the name Yuval is mentioned. Both portions were written by the same hand, using the same pen and ink. The manuscript is stained, rubbed and slightly mutilated.<sup>39</sup> The text in Hebrew letters stops abruptly in the middle of Exodus 21:19. Apparently the scribe decided to exploit the remaining half of the page for some writing exercises in Arabic letters. His reason for linking the portion he had just copied with Genesis 4:24 may have been the shared topic of manslaughter.

Genesis 4:24

2v

 $^{42}$ ان  $^{43}$  کان کثیر فلیقاد  $^{41}$  بقاین فبلامخ اكثر واكثر

40 וו: פאן

<sup>39</sup> The measurements are given neither in the microfilm nor in the catalogue.

## 2.2. Cambridge University Library T-S Ar. 21.21

### Description:

Contents: Translation of Numbers 8:1–4, 13:1–4, 16:1–4 and 30:1–8 (giving the first verses of the respective *parashot* of the book of Numbers).

No *incipits*; Hebrew Oriental square script and Arabic clumsy *naskhī*, the *ihmāl* sign<sup>43</sup> in the form of a slanted line is placed sporadically above  $\omega$ ; paper; 2 leaves, 17.3 x 25 cm., 17–18 lines, slightly mutilated, stained and rubbed.<sup>44</sup> Jottings are found in the margins. The text on 1r is written vertically. 2v contains several words written in Arabic script, beginning with Numbers 30:5 (line 8).

The distinctive writing of the scribe who copied this fragment is also attested in a number of additional fragments, largely of Karaite content: T-S Ar. 1b.70<sup>45</sup> (Karaite Bible commentary, containing midrashic passages), T-S Ar. 22.81<sup>46</sup> (Karaite exegesis, commenting on Deuteronomy 24:7), T-S Ar. 31.37<sup>47</sup> (grammar), T-S NS 227.17<sup>48</sup> (commentary on Exodus 21:3–8) and T-S NS 312.1<sup>49</sup> (a Karaite halakhic work). His script is fairly thick and he is inclined to make full use of the margins, often filling them horizontally, vertically and upside down alternately. These fragments seem to be private copies written for the

- 43 On the use of these differential signs see A. Gacek, "Technical practices and recommendations recorded by classical and post-classical Arabic scholars concerning the copying and correction of manuscripts", in *Les manuscrits du Moyen Orient*, ed. F. Déroche, Paris 1989, pp. 51–60, esp. 57, as well as A. Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, Wien 1971, vol. 2, p. 42.
- 44 Compare Baker and Polliack (n. 31 above), p. 89, no. 1195.
- 45 Compare Baker and Polliack, p. 17, no. 227, and Khan (n. 28 above), p. 2.
- 46 Baker and Polliack, p. 107, no. 1440.
- 47 Ibid., p. 214, no. 2943.
- 48 A. Shivtiel and F. Niessen, *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Taylor-Schechter New Series*, Cambridge 2006, p. 281, no. 4306.
- 49 Ibid., p. 478, no. 7325.

scribe's personal use, rather than professional work. They all display the scribe's habit of switching to Arabic script within a continuous text written in Hebrew letters.

Text: Numbers 30:5–8<sup>50</sup> 2v

פסמע<sup>15</sup> פסמע<sup>15</sup> אביהא נדרהא ועקדהא וונט בשני <sup>52</sup> עלי נפסהא אביהא נדרהא ועקדהא וונט בשני <sup>52</sup> עלי נפסהא 10 פאמסך ענהא פקד תבת<sup>53</sup> גמיע נדורהא וכל עקד עקדתה עלא<sup>54</sup> נפסהא (6) ואן אנתהרהא אביהא<sup>55</sup> שנ<sub>י</sub> שמש בוצ פכל נדורהא פבשנ אלדי עקדתהא<sup>65</sup> גיר תאבת ואללה יגפר להא אד אנתהרהא אביהא<sup>57</sup> (7) ואן צארת לרגל ונדורהא עליהא או לפץ<sup>58</sup> שפתיהא וונט בשני בשני שונט בשני שונט בשני (8) פסמע בעלהא שונט אי יום שמש פמסד<sup>65</sup> (!) ענהא פקד תבתת<sup>60</sup> נדורהא

### 2.3. T-S Ar. 42.148

### Description:

Contents: Translation of Numbers 29:3-29; 30:14-31:14

No *incipits*, rather informal *naskhī*, often inclining to cursive. There is sporadic Arabic vocalization, frequently added in order to avoid false readings of homographs, e.g. to distinguish عثر from عثر

- 50 The relevant portion with Arabic words starts with Numbers 30:5 on line 8.
- פסמע] פ: פיסמע 51
- عقدت] ח: עקדתה 52
- תבת] ח: תבתת 53
- עלא] ח: עלי 54
- אביהא] פ, ח: אבוהא 55
- עקדתהא] פ, ח: עקדתהא עלי נפסהא
- 57 אביהא] פ, ח: אבוהא
- לפץ'] פ, ח: לפט' 58
- פמסך] פ, ח: ואמסך
- תבתת] פ: תבתתת 60

Diacritical points are generally omitted, but the writer frequently employs differential signs:  $^{61}$   $_{\mbox{\ }}$  is distinguished from  $_{\mbox{\ }}$ , by the  $ihm\bar{a}l$  sign in the form of a slanted line above the letter. The  $ihm\bar{a}l$  of  $_{\mbox{\ }}$  is distinguished from  $_{\mbox{\ }}$  by a crescent above the letter.  $\mbox{\ }$  occasionally exhibits a small hamza on the outer left edge, as in  $\mbox{\ }$   $\$ 

Paper; 2 leaves, 19 x 29 cm, 11 lines, slightly mutilated and rubbed. The leaves seem to be the second bifolium of the quire.

There are illegible jottings on the margins of 1v, as well as an interlinear addition between lines 4 and 5 on the same page.

The present fragment clearly seems to be intended as a private copy. It exhibits numerous slips of the pen, e.g. 1v lines 2, 5 and 2v line 11, some of which were corrected by the scribe himself. In some cases he omits parts of the translation, as in Numbers 29:5 and 29:16. His tendency to slip from an elegant handwriting into a rather hasty one may also be due to the private nature of this copy. However, his handwriting — in all of the peculiarities described above — closely resembles another group of fragments of Karaite content, <sup>62</sup> some of

- 61 Compare Grohmann (n. 43 above), vol. 2, pp. 42–48. Their employment resembles that found in early Arabic papyri, see idem, *Allgemeine Einführung in die Arabischen Papyri*, Wien 1924, p. 72, and for examples see idem, *Chrestomatie de Papyrologie Arabe*, Leiden 1993, plates VI and VIII.
- 62 T-S Ar. 1b.10 (Karaite transcription accompanied by Yefet ben 'Elī's translation of and commentary on Daniel 7), T-S Ar. 25.70 (Karaite commentary on Deuteronomy 30:1 and Ecclesiastes 12:13), T-S Ar. 34.164 (Karaite treatise with transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic, from the same MS as the previous fragment), T-S Ar. 34.307 (Karaite work with transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic), T-S Ar. 39.201, T-S Ar. 41.132, T-S Ar. 42.72, T-S

which were written by the very same scribe. This is certainly the case for the fragment T-S Ar. 30.277, apparently part of a longer Karaite florilegium on halakhic portions of Numbers. The fragment is in fair condition; it preserves a quotation of Saadiah's translation on Numbers 29:12 (1r, left column, 1. 5), dealing with the offerings for the festival of Sukkot. The quotation is preceded by a transcription of the corresponding biblical commandment into Arabic letters according to Karaite practice (1r, right column, 1. 6) and a largely illegible commentary. It stands to reason that the writer's purpose in transcribing a portion of Saadiah's translation into Arabic script was to prepare a kind of draft in order to facilitate the incorporation of selected verses into his comprehensive treatise.

The fragment was probably written at the very beginning of the eleventh century. <sup>63</sup> On the whole it does not exhibit many deviations from corresponding manuscripts in Hebrew script of the same period, such as the St. Petersburg manuscript or early Genizah fragments. This may serve as additional evidence of its early date. Many deviations are due to a slight shift towards proper Middle Arabic.

Numbers 29:3–20 1r

Ar. 42.127, T-S Ar. 52.241 and T-S NS 327.50 (all of these contain Karaite commentaries with transcriptions of Hebrew into Arabic).

- 63 It represents the *naskhī* style current in this period. Compare manuscripts XLVLL (copied 1008 C.E.) and XCVII (copied 1004–5 C.E.) in *Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions* (*Oriental Series*) of the *Paleographical Society*, ed. W. Wright, London 1875–1883.
- للرث] א, ח: ללרת 64
- מצאָה ח: לכבש 65
- וועש**בה** א: אלז' 66
- ולחושנ] א: אלמעז ח: אלמעז ללדכוה 67
- ومزاجاتهم] ח: ומזאגתהם 68

1v

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مرضية مُقربة [[له] (7) وفي العاشر 69 منه اسم مرضية مُقربة [[له] (7) وفي العاشر 69 منه اسم مقدس يكون<sup>70</sup> لكم وتجوعوا 71 انفسكم وكل عمل لا تعملو [ا] (8) وقربوا 7<sup>72</sup> صعيدة شه مقبولة مرضية شه رثا واحدا وكبشا واحدا وسبع 7<sup>74</sup> حملان ابني 7<sup>75</sup> سنة صحاحاً (9) ومعهم من البُر سمدا 7<sup>76</sup> ملتوتا 7<sup>77</sup> بدهن ثلث 7<sup>88</sup> عشور للرث و عشرين للكبش (10) و عُشر لكل حمل من الرسب]عة (11) [عتود] من الماعز 7<sup>79</sup> للذكوة ما خلا ذكوة الغفر [ان ق]ربان الدايم وبُرها ومزاجها (20) وفي اليوم الخمسة 80 عشر 81 منه اسم مُقدس يكون 82 لكم
```

و كل  $^{83}$  صنعة $^{84}$  مكسب لا تعملوا $^{85}$  وحجوا جحاً لله سبعة $^{86}$  ايام (13) وقربوا صعيدة مقبولة مرضية $^{87}$  لله < ورئين  $^{88}$  رثا من البقر وكبشين  $^{89}$  واربع عشر  $^{90}$  حملا بنو  $^{19}$  سنة صحاحاً (14) ومعهم من

```
(ב) א: אלי' 69 א: אלי' 69 א: אלי' 70 א: יכן 7
```

- 71 אגיעו א, ח: אגיעו
- 72 פ**וֹ**ענעפו] א, ח: וקרבו
- واحدا] ٢: ١٦/ 73
- وسبع] ١٤: ٢٦ / 74
- ابني] א: בנו, ח: בני 75
- א, ח: סמד 76 ₪
- אניניו] ח: מלתות 77
- تلث] א: ג' 78
- א, ח: אלמעז 79 **וו**
- الخمسة ] ח: אלכאמס 80
- اليوم الخمسة عشر] ١٤ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١ ١
- 82 א: יכן
- פ≥ט] א, ח: כל 83
- 84 א, ח: צנאעה
- נשחפון א, ח: תעמלו 85
- سبعة] ١:١ 86
- מושענة مقبولة مرضية] א, ח: צעידה קרבאנא מקבולא מרצ'יא 87
- 88 Added above the line; מני א: יג', ח: תלתה עשר
- وكبشين] م: اددهما 89
- واربع عشر] א: ויד', ח: וארבעה עשר 90
- 91: בני 91

البُر سمد ملتوت بدهن لكل رث من الثلثة عشر ثلثة عشور وعشرين لكل كبش من العُشرين (!) <sup>94</sup> (15) وعُشر لكل حمل من الاربعة عشر <sup>95</sup> (16) وعتودا <sup>96</sup> من الماعز <sup>97</sup> غير <sup>89</sup> قُربان الدايم وبُره ومزاجه (17) وفي اليوم الثاني اثنى عشر رثا من البقر وكبشين واربع عشر <sup>99</sup> حملا بنو <sup>100</sup> سنة صحاحا (18) برهم <sup>101</sup> ومزاجهم للرثوث وللكبشين <sup>102</sup> وللحملان <sup>103</sup> باحصايهم كالسبيل <sup>104</sup> ومزاجهم (19) وعتودا من الماعز <sup>105</sup> للذكوة [غير ق]ربان <sup>106</sup> الدايم وبُره ومزاجه (20) وفي اليوم الثالث <sup>107</sup> احد عشر <sup>108</sup> رثا وكبشين

### Numbers 30:14-31:12

110 (פ: אלנפס ח, פ: אלנפס <u>וויפעש</u> א: יבטלהא ווו <u>ויישלא</u> א: יבטלהא וווים א, ח, פ: אלדי

1 (14) وكذاك كل نذر وكل يمين 109 بعقد لعذاب النفوس 110 بعا[ها] يُثبت ذلك وبعلها يُبطله 111 (15) وان امسك عنها من يوم الى يوم فقد تثبت جميع نذور ها وع[قد]ها التى 112 عليها تثبتها لما امسك عنها في يوم سمع بذلك (16) فاإن فساخ ذلك بعد ما سمع به فقد حمل

2r

```
92
    ملتوت] ח: מלתותה
    וצל כבי מי וואו בי מות מוד ביית מוד ביית מו אליד (וי), ח: תלתה עשור לכל רת מן אליג׳
    וلعشرين] א, ח: אלכבשין
    וער עשה שמת ] א, ח: אליד'
    وعتودا] به, ח: الإرالة
96
97
    الماعِز] ל, א, ח: אלמעז ללדכוה
    בעו א. ח. פ: סוי
    פונא שלת] ח, פ: וארבעה עשר א: אליד'
بنو] פ, ח: בני 100
וע מן פ: וברהם 101
פווצאייני] א, פ: ואלכבשין 102
ם (!) ואלחמלין א, פ :ואלחמלאן, ח: ואלחמלין (!)
א, ח: עלי אלסביל 104
ונחופנ] א, ח, פ: אלמעז 105
[غير ق]ر بان א, ח, פ: סוי קרבאן 106
ונונה] ח: אלג' 107
108 'א' וו: ואל
פצל נאני] א: וימין 109
```

و [زرته] (17) هذه الرسوم التي امر الله بها موسى فيما بين الرجل [وز]وجته دايماً و فيما بين الاب وابنته في حال صبايها و هي في منز له 113 (1) ثم كلم الله موسى تكليماً (2) انتقم نقمة بنى اسراييل 114 من المدينيين وبعد ذلك تتضم الى قومك (3) فقال موسى لقومه جردوا 115 منكم رجالاً لل[ج]يش يغزوا 116 الى مدين ويحلوا 117 نقمة الله بهم (4) الف 118 من كل سبط [م]ن اسباط بني اسراييل 119 تبعثوا 120 به 121 في الغزو 221 (5) فتجردوا 123 من الوف اسراييل 124 الف من كل سبط

2v

1 فصاروا <sup>125</sup> الاثنين عشر <sup>126</sup> الفا <sup>127</sup> مجردين للغزو (6) فبعث بهم موسى وبفنحاس <sup>128</sup> بن العاز الو<sup>129</sup> بن اهرون <sup>130</sup> الامام للغزو وانية القدس وابواق التجليب بيده (7) فغزوا لمدين كما امر الله موسى وقتلوا <sup>131</sup> كل رجل (8) وقتلو <sup>133</sup> خمس <sup>133</sup> ملوك مدين [مع قت] لايهم أوي وراقم <sup>134</sup>

```
هو في منزله ] ۵: Omitted
ווע (ועל) ב: אסר' 114
א, ב, ח, פ: ג'רדו 115 Art
يغزوا] ٥: المال, ב: المال 116
פגבלפון ח, פ: ויחלו, ב: ויחל 117
וני ווי פ: אלפא 118
ווע (ועל) ב: אסר' 119
יישים ב, ח, פ: תבעת'ו 120
121 ב, פ,ח: בהם
في الغزو] ב, פ, ח: ללגזו 122
123 ב, פאנמאז ב, פאנמאז
וערויים ב: אלאסראיליה 124
ב, ח, פ: פצארו 125
الاثنين عشر ] ב: "ב" 126
127 שון ב: אלף
פ עניבות ב, פ: ובפינחס, ח: ופינחס
ושונוכ] ב, ח, פ: אלעזר 129
بن اهرون] ב, ח, פ: Omitted. بن اهرون]
פמופון ב, ח, פ: וקתלו 131
, פולו וב, ח, פ: וקתלו 132
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خمس] ב: ח, פ: כמסה 133 وراقم] ח, פ: الجمو 134

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5 وصور وحور ورابع وايضا بلعام بن بع[ور قتلوه] بالسيف (9) وسبو 137 بنو اسراييل نسا مدين واطفالهم وجميع بهايمهم ومواشيهم واثاثهم غنموا 108 (10) وجميع قراهم من مساكنهم 139 وقصور هم 140 احرقوها بالنار (11) واخذوا 141 جميع السلب والغي من النا[س والبهايم (12) وجاوا] الى موسى والعاز ار 142 الامام وجماعة بني اسرائيل 143 بالسبي بالسيف وسبو بنو اسرابيل 144
```

2.4. T-S Ar. 40.20

Description:

Contents: Translation of Proverbs 23:5-24:6

*Incipits* in Hebrew letters, *nashkī* script with sporadic vocalization and Hebrew Oriental square script. The translation is in Arabic script, except for Proverbs 23:5, which is in Hebrew letters with sporadic Arabic vocalization.

Paper, 2 leaves, mutilated, partly badly rubbed and stained, 15.2 x 22.4 cm, 12 lines. This is apparently the inner bifolium of a quire.

The script bears great similarity to that of T-S Ar. 42.148.<sup>145</sup> Although it may not have been written by the same scribe, it was definitely produced in the same scribal circle. T-S Ar. 25.70, containing a Karaite commentary on Deuteronomy 30:1 and Ecclesiastes 12:13, was undoubtedly produced by the same scribe. It exhibits the same handwriting; paper, ink and measurements are identical.

144 A repetition of verse 8, cancelled by the scribe.

145 The usage of differential signs in the two fragments is also very similar.

Compared with the previous fragments T-S Ar. 40.20 gives much less of an impression of a hastily made private copy, although several slips of the pen and nonsensical readings are found, e.g. (1v, l. 1) or وتسك (2r, l. 12). It contains unambiguous evidence that it was copied from a text in Hebrew letters: in 1r line 8 the scribe first wrote تزيح and subsequently corrected it to تزيخ. The yā fell victim to this correction. As the Hebrew letter is used as an equivalent for both Arabic على and خ, depending on the diacritical point, the scribe's slip of the pen clearly attests that he was copying from a *Vorlage* written in Hebrew letters with only sporadic diacritical pointing.

Text:

Proverbs 23:5-24:6

لأنّ وليّهُم شديد [وهو] يخصمك خصو متهم 157 10 (12) הביאה ميل قلبك الى الادب واذنك الى اقوال المعرفة (13) אל תמנע ע [تمنع من ا]لصبي الا

1v

10

و لاضريه 158 بالقضيب لا يموت منه (14) אתה فانك تضربه 1 بالقضيب 159 و تخلص نفسه من الهلاك (15) قدر يا بُني ان تحكم قلبك يفرح 160 قلبي انا ايضا (16) الالأثادة وتطرب احشاي ويفرح بواطني  $^{161}$  اذا تكلمت شفتاك مستقيما (17) אל יקנא لا بغار <sup>162</sup> قلبك على الخطاس 5 بل بتقوى 164 الله طول الزمان (18) تر ١٨ فانه موجود لك اخرة 165 ورجًاوك 166 لا ينقطع (19) שמע اسمع انت دب يا بني وتحكم وارشد في المذاهب قلبك אל תהי و  $^{167}$  تكون $^{168}$  من المفرطين في الخمر و  $^{167}$  من المُسرَ فين

يفتقرون 169 (!) في اللحم (21) 2 مادي الن المفرط و المسرف

اقبل من ابا  $|^{170}$  الذي اولدك و  $|^{171}$  ولا تزدر  $|^{171}$  بامك ان شاخت

يفتقر ان وكثرة النوم يلبس الخلقان (22) שמע

בשפחים ק: כ'צומאתהם 157 و (צמע בי די ואן תצ'רבה ק: 158 ק: פאנך תצ'רבה קיבות מולרבה בי 158 بالقضيب] ٦: בקצ'יב 159 يفرح] ד: פרח 160 وتطرب لحشاي ويفرح بواطني] ج, ד: الالم دالالالا 161 يغار] ٦: 'גר 162 ולבלויין ק: אלכ'אטיון, ד: אלכ'טאין 163 אָל אָמּפ פין ק, ד: אלא פי תקוי 164 لخرة] ק, ד: עאקבה 165 ورجَاوك] ק: الد'هر 166 פצן ק: לא 167 268 בעני] ד: תכן يفتقرون] ج, ٦: Omitted.

170 ין ד: אביך **ווי** 

```
2r
                (23) אמת اشترى 173 حقا و لا تبيع 174 الحكمة و الادب و الفهم
                                                                                  1
                 (24) لاز سرور وقيل غبط يغبط يُسر 175 ابو الصالح ووالِد
                      الحكيم يفرح به (25) تعما اذا قبل له يفرح اباكَ 176
                 وامك ويطرب 177 اجدَادك (26) الله رُدّيا بني بالك الي
                   وعيناك تحفظ طرقى (27) در שاחה فان الزانية هو [تة]
                                                                                   5
                         عميقة و الغربية كبير ضيقة (28) ١٦٨ ايضا هي
                              الوسواس 179 تكمن وفي الناس تزيد 180 غدارين
         (29) למי אוי لمن الويل لمن <sup>181</sup> العويل ولمن <sup>182</sup> الصخب ولمن <sup>183</sup>
الهذيان و لمن 184 الشجج 185 فجانا و لمن 186 سخنة العين 187 (30) למאחרים
                        للمغتبطين 188 على الخمر والمقبلين لاستبرا المزاج
                                                                                 10
               (31) אל תרא لا ترى <sup>189</sup> الخمر الذي <sup>190</sup> بتحمر وبعطيك في
                    الكاس لونه و تسلك 191 (!) مُستقيما (32) الا الا فان
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```
174 יינא ד: תבע
سرور وقيل غيط يغبط يُسر ] ج: סרור יסר, ד: סרורא יסר 175
176 אַבון ד: אבון
ويطرب] ק: יסר, ד: ויסר 177
ונים (ד: והי איצ'א 178
ולפושפוש] ק, ד: כאלוסואס 179
وفي الناس تزيد] ק, ד: ותזיד פי אלנאס 180
181 [אני] ד: ולמן
פלמין ק: למן 182
ولمن] ק: למן 183
פלחט ק: למן 184
וו אבה] ק: אלשג'אג' 185
פלמי] ק: למן 186
וلعين] ד: אלעיון 187
וلمغتبطين] ק, ד: ללמגתבקין 188
ترى] ד: תר 189
الذي] ج, ד: אד' 190
وتسلك] ק, ד: ויסלך 191
```

173 אשתר ק, ד: אשתר

# 3. Discussion

# 3.1. Interchange of Script

In BL MS Or. 5562 B.1 the copyist switches freely between Hebrew and Arabic letters. Likewise, in T-S Ar. 21.21 a given expression may appear

both in Hebrew and in Arabic letters, e.g. אקדהא (Numbers 30:5) and עקדהא (Numbers 30:6). Additional fragments written by the same scribe show a similar practice. In T-S Ar. 40.20 the *incipits* are generally written in Hebrew letters. The translation of Proverbs 23:5 is, exceptionally, written entirely in Hebrew script, perhaps by a kind of attraction to the Hebrew *incipit*. <sup>207</sup> In this respect the fragments conform to the usage of Karaite manuscripts in Arabic script, which shift to Hebrew letters for *incipits* or quotations, and clearly indicate the writers' proficiency in both scripts. Their habit of employing Hebrew and Arabic interchangeably supports the supposition that they were in fact Karaites.

### 3.2. Literalist Tendencies

Fragment T-S Ar. 42.148 contains several cases of adjusting the determination of nouns to the Hebrew source text in contrast to Saadiah's usage, e.g. Numbers 29:3 לכבש for לכבש for אלכבשין ואלחמלאן. A similar tendency is found in the reading of Numbers 29:18 אלי אלסביל for אלסביל and Numbers 29:18 עלי אלסביל for אלסביל for אלסביל for אלסביל וואלחמלאן. These changes mimic the Hebrew text. The fourth verbal form אג'יעו as attested in manuscripts in Hebrew characters, was replaced by the second (i.e. وتجوعوا) in Numbers 29:7. Although this substitution is frequent in Middle Arabic, timight reflect the copyist's tendency towards literalness in this case, since in Hebrew too the second verbal form is used.

T-S Ar. 40.20 exhibits an even stricter literalism. The scribe's unconditional adherence to the Hebrew original is felt throughout. For example, it impelled him to change the word order, e.g. וְבִּישׁ replacing הֵי הי איצ'א in Proverbs 23:28, and to adjust number, e.g. בהע מוֹשְּׁ in place of בבומאתהם in Proverbs 23:11.

<sup>207</sup> For examples see Khan (n.19 above), p. 162, no. 29.

<sup>208</sup> J. Blau, *Diqduq ha-'Aravit ha-Yehidit*, Jerusalem 1980, p. 74; idem, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic*, Louvain 1967, vol. 1, p. 157.

### 3.3. Variants displaying indebtedness to Karaite lexicography

A tendency to literalism may be also seen in the lexicon. The examples provided by T-S Ar. 40.20 are once again particularly striking. Saadiah commonly renders Biblical עאקבה as אחרית, literally "consequence", going beyond the narrow semantic field ('end') in order to convey the metaphorical meaning. However, the fragment reads اخرة. Karaite translations likewise employ אכ'רה, adhering to the Arabic cognate; cf. Yefet ben 'Elī on Proverbs 23:18, 24:14 and 24:20.<sup>209</sup>

In contrast to the variant כֿנע  $\mathfrak{z}$  as a translation of Hebrew בזה in Proverbs 23:9, manuscripts in Hebrew script and numerous additional verses attest Saadiah's predominant tendency to use the fourth verbal form. However, in all of these instances Karaite scholars, as represented by Yefet ben 'Elī<sup>211</sup> and David al-Fāsī, unanimously prefer the eighth verbal form אזדרי.

Furthermore, Saadiah employs Arabic סר to render the Biblical root גיל to render the Biblical root וות contrast, T-S Ar. 40.20 uses טרב to translate that root in Proverbs 23:25. This is in line with regular Karite usage, as exemplified by Yefet ben 'Elī on Proverbs, 213 as well as Salmon ben Yeruhim on Psalms 214 and David al-Fāsī. 215

Similarly in Proverbs 23:24: Hebrew לב (lit. heart) is translated in different ways in Saadiah's translations. In this verse, he rendered it קאעה, which appeared to him appropriate to convey the meaning of "depths" and accords with the context. Whereas the Gaon saw no need to render consistently a Hebrew lemma occurring in two distinct semantic fields, the employment of Arabic غلب in our fragment reflects a tendency to imitate the underlying

<sup>209</sup> MS BL Or. 2402, fols. 126a, 130b, 132a.

<sup>210</sup> Proverbs 14:2, 15:20, 19:16; Psalms 22:7, 22:25, 51:19, 69:34, 73:20, 102:18.

<sup>211</sup> Compare his translation of Proverbs 14:2, 15:20 and 19:16 in MS BL Or. 2402, fols. 57b, 66b and 94b.

<sup>212</sup> The Hebrew Arabic Dictionary of the Bible Known as Kitāb Jāmi al-Alfāz (Agrōn) by David ben Abraham al-Fasi the Karaite (10 cent.), ed. S. L. Skoss, New Haven 1936, vol. 1, p. 204.

<sup>213</sup> BL Or. 2402 and BL Or. 2553.

<sup>214</sup> L. Marwick, The Arabic Commentary of Salmon ben Yeruham, Philadelphia 1956, p. 41 (Psalms 51:10); for other instances see MS RNL Yevr. Arab. I:1345.

<sup>215</sup> Ed. Skoss (n. 212 above), vol. 1, p. 320.

lexical patterns of the Hebrew source. This is a salient characteristic of Karaite tradition, and this particular variant is paralleled in an identical manner in Karaite translations.

### 3.4. Transcription of proper names

Another noteworthy feature of the present fragments is the transcription of proper names. A translator facing the problem of rendering proper names has several options at his disposal. 216 Translators differ considerably in this regard, so that the rendering of proper names may serve as a distinctive hallmark in identifying the provenance of a certain version and its Vorlage, as well as in attributing them to a community or a particular translator. For names of persons it seems natural to use the original Hebrew form, especially in cases where no Arabicized forms are available. Personal names which have such a form are regularly given in Arabicized fashion, e.g. מוסי as אברהם , מוסי as אברהים or יצחק as אסחק as אסחק. This feature is very common in the translations of Saadiah<sup>218</sup> and the Karaite Yeshu'ah ben Yehudah. Yefet ben 'Elī, on the contrary, consistently employs the original Hebrew forms. Toponyms and names of peoples may be identified with those of contemporary geographic settings, an option predominantly attested in the translation of Saadiah. To a far lesser degree a tendency to translate names freely into Arabic may be detected. Within the translation of the Gaon this occurs solely with regard to the components of Hebrew toponyms which bear a meaning in Hebrew, e.g. באר לחי ראי (Genesis 16:14) is rendered as באר לחי אלנאט'ר. In the old

- 216 For a comprehensive treatment of Karaite practice in comparison to Saadiah's the reader is referred to M. Polliack, *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation*, Leiden 1997, pp. 200–207.
- 217 It should be noted that there is total confusion in the manuscript tradition with regard to the use of various forms of names. Copyists may switch from the original Hebrew form to the Arabicized form in the very same manuscript or fragment. At times one even finds hybrid forms composed of Hebrew and Arabicized components, such as אצחק.
- 218 T-S Misc. 5.16 shows that Hebrew names such as רבקה and לבן were intended to be read in their Hebrew forms, as they are written with *rafe* signs corresponding to Tiberian orthography.

Arabic translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch, on the contrary, this tendency constitutes a salient feature with regard to all sorts of proper names.<sup>219</sup> It is also found as an idiosyncratic feature in pre-Saadianic traditions, as שאכר for for חכם of חרב for חכם חכם הודה.

An additional difficulty arose when copying a translation in Arabic script, particularly in Karaite circles, since Hebrew names had to be transcribed into Arabic letters. As stated above, the Karaites had developed strict rules for writing Hebrew texts in Arabic script. Manuscripts of Karaite provenance show that they relied on this well-established custom and applied the same procedure to original Hebrew proper names in continuous Arabic translations. The occurrence of this distinctive practice in our fragments may serve as a further indication of their origin.

Fragment BL MS Or. 5562 B.1 provides us with the forms فاين for Cain and الامخ for Lamech. In Muslim tradition the Biblical figures Abel and Cain are known as المناف and قابيل. It is obvious that this form of Cain's name emerged through the antithetic parallel with Abel, a phenomenon well attested in other pairs of names, e.g. ماروت مالوت and ماروت المالوت and ماروت المالوت and ماروت المالوت والمالوت المالوت ا

<sup>219</sup> Comp. H. Shehadeh, The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1989), pp. 510–511.

<sup>220</sup> See Y. Tobi, "Translations of Personal Names in Medieval Judeo-Arabic Bible Translations" [Hebrew] in *These are the Names*, ed. A. Demsky, vol. 3, Ramat Gan 2002, pp. 77–85.

<sup>221</sup> For example, in the translation of al-Harith ibn Sinān, as preserved in MS Paris Arabe 13.

<sup>222</sup> See Khan (n. 19 above), p. 12.

(transcriptions of Numbers  $24:22^{223}$ ). For Lamech the case seems clearer. The name occurs as  $\frac{1}{2}$  in its Arabicized form in Muslim and Samaritan tradition. The representation of stressed segol by an  $alif^{224}$  and of the spirant kaf by Arabic  $\dot{z}^{225}$  is unique to Karaite transcription practice, cf. BL Or. 2556 fol. 87v (1 Chronicles 1:3).

T-S Ar. 42.148 provides many similar examples. The form פּיבורט (2v line 2) corresponds to the common Karaite transcription of פּינוּחט. The yōd in an unstressed syllable disappeared, while the qamaz is represented by an 'alif. 227 In the Samaritan tradition the name is found as פּיבורט, a simple transliteration of the Hebrew spelling. The same Karaite rule is applied to אלעזר, which consequently appears as العازل (compare also 2v line 10). In contrast, the Samaritan translation gives العازل whereas Muslim sources present the corrupt forms العازل or عازر or عازر or عازر see in addition Numbers 32:2 in T-S Ar. 52.242.230

The same is the case for اهرون (2v line 3). As opposed to the regular form مرون that probably entered Arabic via Syriac ('Ahrōn > Harūn), Karaite transcriptions attest اهرون, e.g. BL Or. 5563 D fol. 41v,<sup>231</sup> and throughout in BL Or. 5540.<sup>232</sup> The names of the Midianite kings, أوي وراقم والمور وحور ورابع واليضا بلعام بن بعال....], also have their origin in Karaite transcription practice, compare the transcription of this verse into Arabic in BL Or. 2542. For بلعام بن بعالم or Numbers 22:28 by

<sup>223</sup> Unfortunately the British Library manuscripts acquired by Shapira and the fragments published by G. Khan do not cover the first chapters of Genesis.

<sup>224</sup> Khan (ibid.), pp. 8, 12.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., pp. 8, 11-12.

<sup>228</sup> A. Jeffery, The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān, Baroda 1938, p. 55.

<sup>229</sup> Hoerning (n. 22 above), fol. 18a.

<sup>230</sup> Khan (n.19 above), p. 35.

<sup>231</sup> Leviticus 7:10, ibid., p. 91.

<sup>232</sup> As published by Hoerning.

Yeshu'ah ben Yehudah (BL Or. 2560 fol. 70a), David ben Bo'az (BL Or. 2562 fol. 3a) and 'Alī ben Sulaymān (BL Or. 2563 fol. 48b).

### 3.5. Alternative Renderings

As we have seen, the scribes who wrote these fragments did not hesitate to incorporate distinctive features of the Karaite lexicon in place of Saadianic ones. Fragment T-S Ar. 40.20 exhibits the peculiarity of inserting them as explicit alternative renderings. It is particularly striking that they are introduced by the formula  $q\bar{t}la$ , in keeping with Karaite translation practice. A good example is in Proverbs 23:16. The repetition in translation is due to the writer's introduction of an alternative rendering, offering synonyms for two words in the Hebrew source text. This technique, foreign to Saadiah's translation approach, is common in Karaite tradition.  $^{233}$ 

Similarly to the previous example, an alternative rendering of the Hebrew root ترا is given in the phrase سرور وقيل غبط يغبط يُسر (Proverbs 23:24). It is introduced by wa-qīlā as in Karaite tradition and inserted between Saadiah's words. This placement suggests that the writer added the alternative renderings ad hoc while copying from his *Vorlage*.

Furthermore, according to the manuscripts in Hebrew script the genuine Saadianic translation in Proverbs 23:33 is אלאנהפאכאת. It has been shown that Saadiah, in sporadically using this homophonic equivalent, relied on an older tradition. <sup>234</sup> However, in most occurrences of Hebrew in Proverbs he used Arabic תקלב. The transmission in Hebrew characters attests that copyists preserve this rendering reliably. The scribe of our fragment took issue with this rather peculiar new coinage and replaced it by its usual rendering in Karaite

<sup>233</sup> Polliack (n. 211 above), pp. 181-199.

<sup>234</sup> See J. Blau, "On a fragment of the oldest Judaeo-Arabic Bible translation extant", in Genizah research after ninety years, eds. J. Blau and S. C. Reif, Cambridge 1992, pp. 34; idem, A Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts, Jerusalem 2006, p. 734.

tradition, القلبات, as known from Yefet ben 'Elī<sup>235</sup> and David al-Fāsī.<sup>236</sup> Saadiah's translation was demoted to the status of an alternative rendering.

# 4. Conclusions

It has been shown that each fragment in Arabic characters edited here is clearly of Karaite provenance. Since these are the only such fragments known, the employment of this script should be considered a distinctive feature of the Karaite branch of transmission.<sup>237</sup> No evidence of involvement on the part of Samaritans or Christians, who might also hypothetically have transferred Saadiah's translation into Arabic script, was discerned. The total absence of Rabbanite copies of the *tafsīr* in Arabic letters up to the present day may be considered an established fact. The transfer into Arabic script has been shown to be a distinctive trait of cross-cultural transmission. Arabic script came into play in the diffusion of Saadiah's translation beyond the Rabbanite communities. There is no evidence that Saadiah might have composed the *tafsīr* in Arabic letters.

This finding is diametrically opposed to Ibn Ezra's statement, which misled generations of scholars into proclaiming that Saadiah composed his translation in Arabic letters. In fact, the use of Arabic script in copying his translations emerged among the Karaite community only after his demise. It is questionable whether Ibn Ezra might have had Christian copies in mind, as proposed by Blau with some hesitation.<sup>238</sup> If Ibn Ezra had examined even a single exemplar, he would certainly have noticed numerous explicitly non-Saadianic readings in comparison with the manuscripts in Hebrew script. More convincing is A. Geiger's suggestion that בכתיבתם should be understood as "according to their

<sup>235</sup> MSS BL Or. 2402 and BL Or. 2553.

<sup>236</sup> Ed. Skoss (n. 212 above), vol. 1, p. 450.

<sup>237</sup> More, however, may yet be discovered in the Firkovich material. A comprehensive investigation of that material was beyond the scope of this work.

<sup>238</sup> Blau (n. 11 above), p. 40.

style [of writing]".<sup>239</sup> It is not at all unreasonable to suppose that the Hebrew כחיבה reflects the Arabic notion of *kitāba*, which may refer to a style or a certain habit in writing. This suggestion also appears plausible in light of Ibn Ezra's discussion preceding this obscure statement, which elaborates on the Gaon's identification of geographical realia according to Arabic geographic literature. Saadiah's reliance on that literature demonstrates nothing else than pure indebtedness to 'Ishmaelite' *kitāba*. Ibn Ezra was surely well aware of the introduction of new literary models into Rabbanite literature accomplished in Saadiah's exegetical and translation work. That they were in some sense to be accredited to Arabic-Muslim precedents may have led him to phrase his statement as it stands: בלשון ישמעאל ובכתיבתם, i.e. "into Arabic language and according to their style".

It stands to reason that the writers of our Genizah fragments copied selected passages from a *Vorlage* in Hebrew letters. The case of T-S Ar. 40.20 attests to this. Though the other fragments do not exhibit such clear evidence, one may assume that their writers followed the same practice.

The practice of writing in Arabic script, as discussed above, emanated from conservative Karaite scribal schools and was current among limited circles in Palestine in the tenth century, until the dispersion of the Karaite community by the Crusaders in 1099 CE.<sup>240</sup> One may conclude with some degree of certainty that the Genizah fragments published in this article are the work of scribes associated with that circle. They, along with the other fragments related to them, often closely resemble the handwriting of a number of codices in the British Library or Firkovich collections.<sup>241</sup> The employment of Hebrew script alongside Arabic is also an outstanding feature of both groups. It has been

<sup>239</sup> He assumes "daß מריבה hier nicht Schrift, sondern Schreibart heißt". Cf. A. Geiger, "Jüdische Geschichte", Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie 1 (1835), pp. 169–192, esp. pp. 188–189.

<sup>240</sup> Ramle may have been a center of this activity. The only dated manuscript, BL Or. 2554, was copied in Ramle in 395 A.H. (1004/5 C.E.). Compare Ben-Shammai (n. 19 above), p. 120, no. 35.

<sup>241</sup> E.g. BL Or. 2403 or RNL Arab. Yevr. 80.

shown that other fragments of the Genizah corpus likewise emerged from this scribal circle.<sup>242</sup>

In addition to their unique use of Arabic script, they all reveal features that go far beyond a simple transcription into Arabic letters. On the one hand, the writers applied their scribal habits of copying manuscripts in Arabic script to these transcriptions of the *tafsīr*. As against Judaeo-Arabic usage, the *alif otiosum* is consistently spelled out. On the other hand, and far more interestingly, the transfer into Arabic letters apparently involved some degree of adaptation to Karaite tradition. This is especially noticeable in the transcription of proper names, a tendency towards strict literalism and a fondness for the Karaite lexicon. As for proper names, this usage is directly connected to the Karaite practice of transcribing the Biblical scriptures as a whole, since the same established rules were applied both to continuous books of the Hebrew Bible and to sporadic Hebrew elements, i.e. proper names within the running translation.

The strong literalist tendencies reflected in these fragments are paralleled by the earliest evidences of exegetical activities in Palestine, as embodied, for example, in the oeuvre of Salmon ben Yeruḥim (a contemporary of Saadiah) and the linguistic and exegetical works of Yefet ben 'Elī and David al-Fāsī (both active in the latter half of the tenth century). It may not be coincidental that the textual modifications exhibited in the fragments are first and foremost associated with these scholars. The literalism featured in these texts appears slavish and ungrammatical, in contrast to the more expository and idiomatic flow of Saadiah's translation.

At least for T-S Ar. 40.20 the copyist was faithful to the Karaite tradition insofar as he marked variant translations by the formula  $wa-q\bar{\imath}la$ . In this he conformed to the usage of Yefet and his contemporaries, in contrast to later Karaites such as Yeshu'ah and his circle, who preferred 'aw or  $wa-yuq\bar{\imath}al$ .<sup>243</sup>

It should also be noted that there is a slight polemical tenor inherent

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Genizah MS 2 in Khan (n. 28 above).

<sup>243</sup> See Polliack (n. 216 above), pp. 191–192.

in the selection of primarily halakhic portions in the first three fragments. This is similarly perceptible in the last fragment's unrestricted 'corrections' to Saadiah's version, which must have appeared to the Karaite reader to demonstrate nothing less than a clear case of Rabbanite corruption of the Biblical text.<sup>244</sup>

Taken together these considerations support the dating of the fragments around the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries. They may have been produced in Palestine or in Egypt, by scribes under the direct influence of Palestinian circles.

Finally, we must ask how these documents found their way into the Genizah of the Palestinian Rabbanite community of Fustat. The presence of Karaite fragments in the Genizah is unexpected, since the Karaites had a separate synagogue, and is surely due to the existence of social contacts between Rabbanites and Karaites. Despite the utterly hostile and polemical tone that prevailed in the literary works of both communities, everyday intercourse appears to have been less fraught with tension. Examples of intermarriage are frequently found,<sup>245</sup> and conversions from Karaism to Rabbanism are also documented.<sup>246</sup> It is possible that those people who moved between Karaite and Rabbanite circles were primarily responsible for the presence of Karaite manuscripts in the Genizah.

<sup>244</sup> With regard to this claim see Khan (n. 19 above), pp. 172–175.

<sup>245</sup> See S. D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society, vols. 1–6, Berkeley 1967–1993, vol. 3, pp. 26, 158, and more recently J. Olszowy-Schlanger, Karaite Marriage Documents from the Cairo Genizah: Legal Tradition and Community Life in Mediaeval Egypt and Palestine, Leiden 1998, p. 7.

<sup>246</sup> Goitein, ibid., p. 199.



Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar. 42.148 (1r and 2v)



Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar. 42.148 (1v and 2r)



Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar. 40.20 (1r and 2v)



Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar. 40.20 (1v and 2r)