manuscript cultures

DOI: 10.15460/mc eISSN 2749-1021

Saadiah Gaon and the Transmission of His *Tafsīr*

Ronny Vollandt
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
ronny.vollandt@lmu.de
DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

Peer-reviewed article
Submitted: 10 October 2023 | Accepted: 22 March 2024 | Published: 19 December 2024

Recommended citation:
Ronny Vollandt (2024), 'Saadiah Gaon and the Transmission of His *Tafsīr*', *manuscript cultures*, 24: 141–193.

CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF MANUSCRIPT CULTURES
OPEN ACCESS
Sponsored by: DFG
Hosted by: Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky
Hamburg University Press
Verlag der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky

Article

Saadiah Gaon and the Transmission of His *Tafsīr*

Ronny Vollandt | Munich

Abstract

Saadiah Gaon (882–942 CE) is counted among the most influential scholars of Judaeo-Arabic culture. His translation of the Tora into Arabic, which was produced in the first third of the tenth century initially as part of a commentary and is known as the *Tafsīr* (Ar., literally 'commentary'), is in the centre of this contribution. It examines what happened to the *Tafsīr* as it moved further from its context of origin. It is, thus, concerned with the transmission of the text, through Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and Muslim branches, with further geographical and chronological sub-divisions. This contribution investigates the changes that occurred both in the physical appearance of manuscripts and also in the text and its contexts of use.

Keywords

Saadiah Gaon, *Tafsīr*, Arabic Tora translation, Judaeo-Arabic culture, Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and Muslim transmission

1. Introduction

Few books in the history of Jews writing in Arabic have been read with greater vigour, by pre-modern and modern readers alike, than Saadiah Gaon's Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Tora. The *Tafsīr*, the name by which his translation became known, means literally commentary and it designates a translation that can function as a commentary to the Holy Scriptures. It spread quickly through the Jewish communities of the Near East, North Africa, and Muslim Spain and, indeed, well beyond these. The *Tafsīr* did not only have Jewish readers, it was also read, copied, and transmitted by Samaritan, Christian, and Muslim scholars in the Middle Ages.

The *Tafsīr* had an afterlife, as it were, a life of its own that is independent from its author: a reception history. The material evidence consists of hundreds of full manuscripts, of which about two dozen are examined here. Some of them are fragmentary, such as the ones from the Cairo Genizah, while others exhibit the full five books of the Hebrew Tora. Some are on parchment commissioned from famous scribes by wealthy patrons; others are on paper and produced by their users for their own consumption. They were used by quite different types of readers, diverse not only in their religious affiliations but also in their social and scholarly backgrounds. The arrangement of the text, its *mise en texte* and *mise en page*, changes diachronically but also synchronically. All these sources are intimately connected, yet characteristically distinct. They form in their sum what we might call the 'work'.[1] For our purpose here, the 'work' is the *Tafsīr* in the entirety of emanations of the text in all

[1] In its conceptional framework, this contribution relies on the discipline of *L'histoire du livre* or the History of the Book, heavily influenced by the French *Annales* school of historians since the 1950s, which offers a constantly refined interdisciplinary model for the production, circulation, and reception of books. Leading works in the History of the Book – Martin and Febvre 1957; Chartier 1987; 1992; 1993; Cavallo and Chartier 1999; Darnton 1982; and others – have focused primarily on the cultural and social functions of Western printed books and Latin manuscripts. The research questions and methods of these cultural book historians, however, may also be applied to Jewish book production.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

its different contexts.[2] We can also distinguish additional layers of transmission: the 'text' and the 'artefact'. The former refers to the specific text types that are attested. To anticipate the structure of this contribution, the texts can be classified into a taxonomy consisting of Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and Muslim branches, with further geographical and chronological sub-divisions.

The 'texts' are read and consumed in their physical forms, the 'artefacts'. Each of the artefacts – that is, each of the material embodiments of the text in manuscript – reflects a particular perception of the text and a conscious or unconscious adjustment to the scribe's environment. The text has been transmitted in manuscript copies and therefore exposed to considerable modification over time, in terms of both the text itself and its physical form.[3] Thus they represent an entire community of contemporaneous readers, and therefore interpreters, who sit behind the scribe. The work, in the definition just proposed, acquires new meaning, indeed a new purpose, in each of these communities. McKenzie has argued that 'meanings are not […] inherent, but are construed by successive interpretive acts by those who write, design and print [or in our context, copy by hand] books and by those who buy and read them'.[4] The mere act of copying the *Tafsīr* during a long span of time and across geographical regions attests to this: meaning and purpose are created and defined anew in each of these contexts. The text comes alive only through the act of someone reading it.

The present study therefore is linked with the discipline of historical-critical philology, but is not an endeavour in textual criticism. Normally, the product of such an endeavour would be an edited text that is believed to represent the 'lost original' – the assumed archetype – as closely as possible. This, however, is beyond the scope of my interest here. I intend to take an opposing perspective and to examine what happens to the *Tafsīr* as it moves further from, not closer to, its context of origin. Such considerations are particularly relevant for Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, whose transmission stretches across a period of over a thousand years temporally, across the entire Arabic-speaking world geographically, and through a variety of communities in terms of religious background. This contribution is deeply indebted to the idea that a text and the history of its transmission are inextricably connected, since one could not exist without the other.

2. Saadiah Gaon and the *Tafsīr*

Saadiah Gaon (882–942 CE) was the most important and influential scholar of Judaeo-Arabic culture in the tenth century. He spent the first part of his life in Egypt and Palestine.[5] By around 921 CE,

[2] This would, in principle, also include the printed versions of the *Tafsīr*, which I have excluded from the discussion here. See, however, Vollandt 2012b; forthcoming-a.

[3] This approach follows what is called 'critical bibliography' for printed books in the History of the Book. In the words of Greg 1914, 39, critical bibliography is 'the science of the material transmission of literary documents'. See also Howard-Hill 2009; Bowers 2002.

[4] McKenzie 2002, 268. This brings to mind the concept of 'interpretive communities' in Fish 1980; and the concept of 'contextual meaning' in Pollock 2009, 954–956.

[5] His *nisba*, i.e. part of his name that indicates his place of origin, al-Fayyūmī, meaning coming from the Fayyum district. It remains unclear, however, whether he himself or his father hailed from the Fayyum district. The most recent accounts of his biography are Brody 2013 and Stern 2019.

he had moved to Babylonia and gained status within the Babylonian Talmud academies. In 928 CE, Saadiah was appointed the *gaon* (head) of the Academy of Sura, which had by this time moved to Baghdad, the political centre of the Abbasid caliphate. With a short intermission, he held that post until his death in 942 CE. Saadiah was an important communal leader of Rabbanite Babylonian Jewry, who followed the doctrines of Rabbinic Judaism. He dedicated considerable energies to polemics against the Qaraites, a group that rejected central beliefs of Rabbinic Judaism, and other non-Rabbanite movements. Furthermore, he made groundbreaking advances in multiple scholarly fields that, with few exceptions, had received scant systematic treatment prior to him, including compendious legal writing, liturgy, philosophy, grammar, and exegesis. Innovative literary models, textual practices, and genres, as well as new forms of discourse, started to emerge in the Jewish literature of his time. Prior to this shift, Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the rabbinic period (70–*c.*700 CE) were produced not by an 'author', but rather over generations of partly anonymous and collective scholarship, extending not infrequently over several centuries.[6] Rabbinic texts circulated orally and may have been edited orally. The *geonim* (the heads of the Jewish academies) followed an oral mode of transmission, and composition remained an act of oral study or recitation.[7] As Arabic became more widely used, writers and readers embraced new concepts of authorship characterized by individual authorship and monothematic treatises, that is, texts composed by one author, at one particular moment in time, and intended from the beginning to be transmitted through written copies – something not attested in Jewish literature since the Hellenistic age.

Saadiah's Judaeo-Arabic Bible translation, the *Tafsīr*, is undoubtedly one of the most influential texts produced in that language.[8] Asserting his authority as gaon, he set out to produce a uniform and codified Judaeo-Arabic translation of the biblical text. He was not the first translator of the Hebrew Bible into Arabic, and a careful re-examination of his writings finds occasional allusions to translation traditions that preceded him.[9] An autobiographical note in the longer preface to his translations reveals his aspirations as an ardent young scholar to embark upon an Arabic translation of the Tora:

> Ever since I dwelt in my country [*baladī*] it had been my desire for a long time that among the people of our belief a translation of the Tora, composed by my own hands, shall be found, done appropriately […]. I hesitated to take this task upon myself […], as it seemed to me that there must be clear and well-arranged translations in the hands of those living in distant countries.[10]

---

[6] See Jaffee 1994; 2007; Alexander 2006; 2007; Rosen-Zvi 2008.

[7] Brody 1998.

[8] Saadiah did not translate the Hebrew Bible into Arabic in its entirety, but he produced translations of Isaiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, and the whole Pentateuch. The Arabic version of Ecclesiastes that has been transmitted among the Yemenites in Saadiah's name, is in fact by Ibn Ghayyāth; see Abramson 1977. The attribution to Saadiah of a translation of the Song of Songs is debatable as well. It is mentioned neither in Ibn Nadīm's *Fihrist* nor in the *Fihrist* by his sons; see Mann 1921 and Poznański 1923.

[9] On translations that quite likely preceded Saadiah or emerged in parallel to his, see Vollandt 2018b.

[10] The Judaeo-Arabic text is found in Ben-Shammai 2000a; the translation into English here is my own.

The meaning seems clear: translations existed, but he found them inadequate. In his preface Saadiah states that he was asked to compile the plain text of the Pentateuch (*basīṭ naṣṣ al-tawrāh*) into a separate book (*fī kitāb mufrad*).[11] This statement does not leave any doubt about chronology: first, he compiled a comprehensive commentary, including a translation;[12] then, in response to popular demand, he himself separated the translation from the commentary. The Genizah fragments which contain Saadiah's translation of the Pentateuch accompanied by his commentary reflect the original stage, in which both components were regularly copied side by side. That this was Saadiah's general habit is also clearly manifest in manuscripts of his other commentaries, such as those on the books of Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Isaiah, and Daniel.

With Saadiah, and through his work, Arabic biblical translations became part of the new Jewish literary system described above.[13] What is more, Saadiah's famed Judaeo-Arabic translation, which circulated beyond just a Jewish readership, reached the status of the Arabic version of the Bible par excellence among Jews, becoming a standard, almost canonical, version, to such an extent that it obscured other existing translations.

3. The transmission of the *Tafsīr*

3.1 St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1

The manuscript St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1 contains the earliest known complete copy of the *Tafsīr* (Fig. 1). Not only was this manuscript copied about sixty years after the demise of the Gaon, it also preserves his translation in the most precise and accurate language.[14] It contains 528 paper folios, measuring 32.0 × 19.7 cm.[15] A rather large portion of text is missing, so that it would have

[11] Derenbourg, Derenbourg and Lambert 1893–1899, 1:4:ואנמא ארסמת הדא אלכתאב לאן בעץ אלראגבין סאלני אן אפרד בסיט נץ אלתורה פי כתאב מפרד. One might compare here the introduction of Yeshuʿah b. Yehudah's short commentary, in which he describes a similar process; see Ben-Shammai 1987, 6–7. It appears that the arrangement of these early Judaeo-Arabic commentaries, at least to a certain extent, followed the wishes of commissioners.

[12] Large parts of the first half of Genesis have been edited in Zucker 1984; but see the criticisms of it in Ben-Shammai 1986–1987. Additional fragments of Saadiah's Pentateuch commentary are found in Ratzaby 1998 (the book of Exodus) and Zucker 1955–1956 and 1957–1958 (Leviticus). An edition of the first half of Exodus is currently being prepared by Haggai Ben-Shammai. It should also be mentioned that Saadiah habitually revised his writings; see Malter 1921, 137 n. 293. His *Kitāb uṣūl al-shaʿr al-ʿibrānī* is extant in two recensions; see Allony 1969, 19–22. So are his *Sefer ha-galūi*, see Malter 1921, 269; his commentaries on the book of Psalms, see Simon 1991, 1–2; and the book of Job, see the editor's preface in Derenbourg, Derenbourg and Lambert 1893–1899, vol. 5. Most likely the different manuscripts of *Kitāb al-amānāt wal-iʿtiqādāt* represent different authorial editions; see Ben-Shammai 2003, 36 n. 9.

[13] The use of the term 'Jewish literary system' to describe the situation at the beginning of the tenth century was introduced by Drory 1988; 2000.

[14] For this study, I have been dependent on the reproduction of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (no. 69069). It can be seen at <https://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/digitallibrary/pages/viewer.aspx?&presentorid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990000989500205171-1#|FL49803584> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

[15] For further information, see SfarData, record key YZ022, at <https://rosetta.nli.org.il:443/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE30059288> (accessed on 22 August 2024). Based on the measurements provided in Beit-Arié, Glatzer, and Sirat 1997, Masoretic codices vary between 42 and 32 cm in height and between 44 and 26 cm in width. The codex is thus congruent in height to the smaller codices in this group of manuscripts, with slightly more oblong dimensions.

Fig. 1: The National Library of Russia, MS EVR II C 1, paper, Egypt, (very probable) Cairo (Fusṭāṭ), beginning of 11th c., fols 1v–2r. © From the collections of The National Library of Russia, "Ktiv" Project, The National Library of Israel, CC-BY-NC 4.0.

been even more voluminous in its original state.[16] The manuscript contains a full Masora Magna and Parva. It contains Masoretic notes, however, as shown by Yosef Ofer, these notes are quite distinct, as they refer to the *Maḥberet* of Menahem b. Saruq, a tenth-century grammarian active in Cordoba, and his discussion of the meaning of many words in the text.[17]

Unlike Masoretic codices, the text in this manuscript is not arranged in columns. Hebrew and Arabic verses alternate, each page covering three to five verses on average. The Hebrew text is presented in large oriental square letters with full Tiberian vocalization beneath the letters. Saadiah's translation is found in smaller semi-cursive letters and does not exhibit vocalization. The manuscript was copied by Samuel b. Jacob, a distinguished producer of Masoretic model codices, who also copied, vocalized, and equipped with cantillation notes the grand Leningrad Codex (St

[16] The first chapters of Parashat Bereshit and Parashat Toldot, as well as nearly the first half of Leviticus, are missing.

[17] See Ofer 2018, 229–231; 1999; 2001.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. I B 19a) in Fusṭāṭ, i.e. Old Cairo, in the year 1008–1009 CE.[18] Although no date is given in St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1, it seems that the manuscript was copied around the time of the Leningrad Codex. The Genizah contains two additional fragments – Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.38 and T-S AS 72.79 – in the same hand.[19] They are virtually identical, but only cover the book of Exodus, and apparently indicate that Samuel b. Jacob produced a separate copy of that book for another unknown purchaser. Another fragment is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. b. 9.4, recto (Fig. 2). Samuel was a sought-after, expert scribe, whose clients ranked among Fusṭāṭ's upper class and included community leaders, in particular of the Palestinian congregation, and affluent merchants.[20]

St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1 opens with an ownership note, which is repeated at the beginning of every book. It states that the codex was commissioned by Solomon b. Abraham. Evidence from the Genizah indicates that he was involved in trading with the Levantine coast, particularly with the city of Tyre.[21] His engagement in commerce and his consequent prestigious status – as indicated by the honorary title *ha-paqīd* in the manuscript – allowed him to commission the codex. His profile is comparable with Samuel's other clients.[22]

There is also a second ownership note, which points directly to Tyre. Though partly illegible, it appears that Solomon ha-Kohen, brother of – and *av bet din* (i.e. chief of the court) under – Evyatar (Abiathar) ha-Kohen Gaon, acquired the codex.[23] His father, Elijah ha-Kohen Gaon, was responsible for moving the Palestinian academy to Tyre as a result of the Turkoman conquest of Palestine. The date of purchase associated with this second ownership note is given as 1084, and the transfer of ownership must therefore have taken place immediately after the appointment of Evyatar ha-Kohen as *gaon*.[24]

The unique significance of St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1 has already been noted.[25] However, its discovery led to a certain amount of confusion. The manuscript exhibits numerous alternative renderings, where two – or even three – translation equivalents are used for one unit of the source

[18] Samuel b. Jacob is mentioned in three colophons: fols 1^{r}, 474^{r}, and 479^{r}. In addition to St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. I B 19a, he copied St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. Arab. II 750 and Cairo, Qaraite Synagogue, 14 and 27; see Gottheil 1905, nos 14, 27.

[19] On these fragments, see Vollandt 2009. Beiler 2022 has recently suggested that the fragments not necessarily must stem from another codex but could originally have been part of Yevr. II C 1 and then replaced with the current leaves.
For other fragments of the *Tafsīr* in the hand of Samuel b. Jacob, see Zewi s.a.; 2021. As Beiler 2022, I find the attribution to Samuel b. Jacob far from certain.

[20] See Outhwaite 2018.

[21] See Goitein 1967–1993, 1:362; Bareket 1995, 155–157, document no. 88.

[22] See Outhwaite 2018. Salāma ibn Saʿīd ibn Ṣaghīr commissioned a codex containing the Prophets and Writings modelled on that for Solomon. He was a 'leading financier and philanthropist in Fusṭāṭ in the first quarter of the 11th century'.

[23] See Mann 1920–1922, 178–201; 1931–1935, 1:249–251; Gil 1992, 744–776. A conflict with the Egyptian David b. Daniel b. Azariya over spiritual leadership is present in the ownership note: Solomon ha-Kohen is addressed as *av bet din* of all Israel, שלמה הכהן אב בית דין שלכל ישראל.

[24] It is worth noting that the far more famous Leningrad Codex was acquired in 1135 by Solomon's son, Maṣliaḥ ha-Kohen b. Solomon ha-Kohen; see the colophon on fol. 1, published in Harkavy and Strack 1875, 269. It seems that this family had a certain interest in acquiring the model codices of Samuel b. Jacob.

[25] See Blau 1998. The manuscript will constitute the basis of a new edition, currently being prepared by Eliezer Schlossberg at Bar-Ilan University; see Schlossberg 2011.

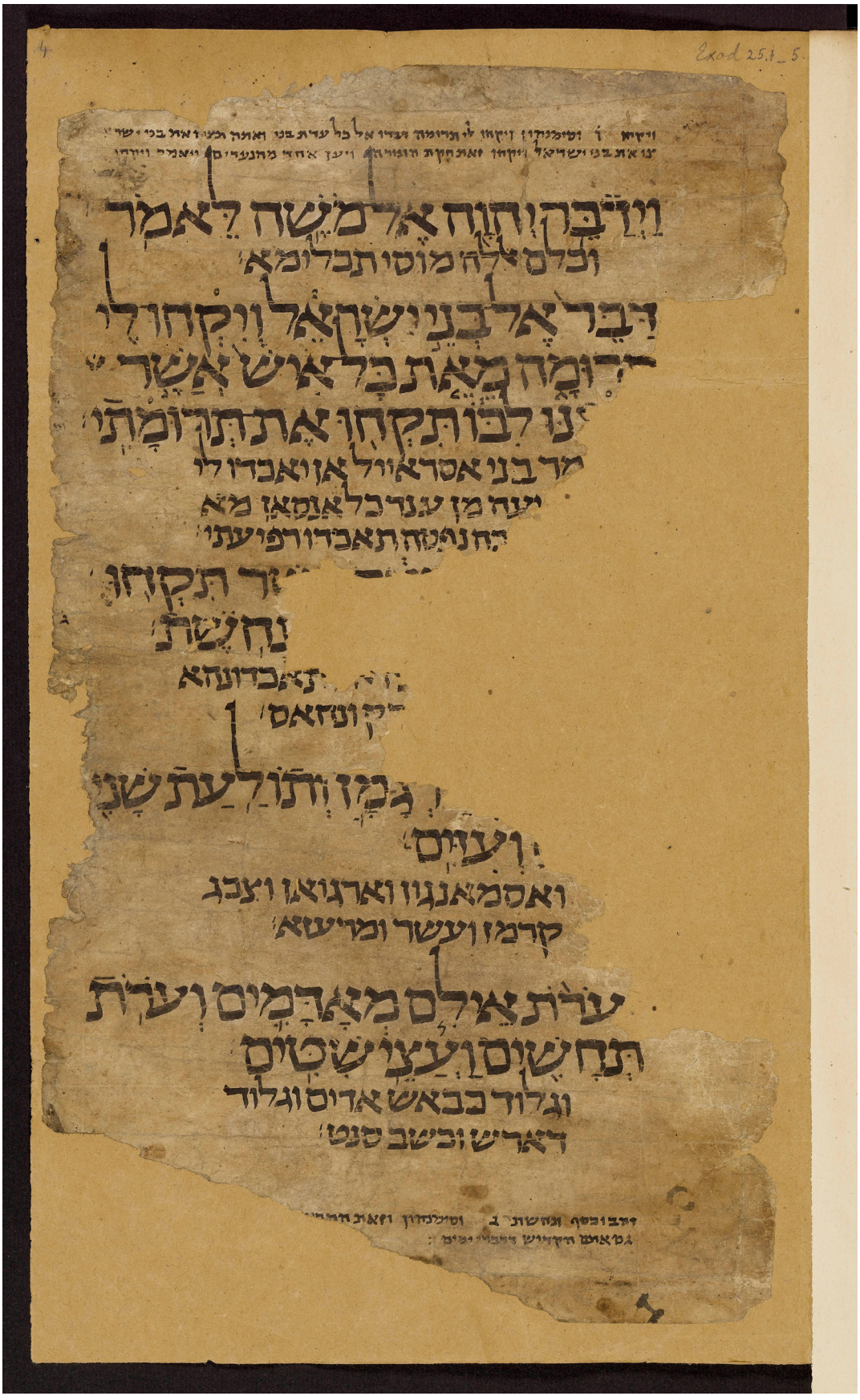


Fig. 2: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. b. 9.4, recto, paper, Genizah fragment, Egypt, (very probable) Cairo (Fusṭāṭ), beginning of 11th c. © Bodleian Libraries, CC-BY-NC 4.0.

text, introduced by the Arabic terms *wa-qīl* 'and it was said' or *wa-yuqāl* 'and it is said'. This custom is unknown in connection with Saadiah, and actually contradicted his own concept of scriptural translation.[26] It is noteworthy that these only occur in the book of Exodus, in particular after Parashat Mishpatim, where they can be found in almost every verse or even twice in a single verse. Prior to the analysis of this manuscript, alternative renderings were considered an exclusive hallmark of early non-Saadianic and Qaraite translation traditions.[27] The total absence of this feature through the entire bulk of the Genizah material, as well as its absence from later manuscripts of the *Tafsīr*, strongly suggest that the alternative renderings were introduced as internal glosses by the scribe Samuel b. Jacob himself. This hypothesis is further supported by additional Genizah fragments in his hand, where alternative renderings appear in the same manner. There is also internal evidence of this in St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1, in the translation of Exodus 29:9. In the first half of the verse, which reads ואשדדהם וקיל בזנאניר 'and you shall gird them and it is said with girdles' the copyist apparently forgot to provide the gloss. In the second half, פתציר להם פתכון 'and it shall be for them, and they shall have', he omitted וקיל, which was subsequently added over the line. Both instances suggest that the glosses were inserted in the actual process of copying.

Close scrutiny of later manuscripts of the *Tafsīr* – whether of early Near Eastern or relatively late Yemenite provenance – reveals, however, that occasionally readings akin to the glosses of St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1 are in fact attested. The alternative rendering of מִמֶּנּוּ קַרְנֹתָיו in Exodus 30:2, 3, and 9, ארכאנה מנה וקיל ושרפה 'its corners shall be of one piece with it and it is said its rafters', is featured in the Genizah fragments Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.8 and Budapest, MTA, Kaufmann, Genizah 386, which read ושרפה. One of the glosses in Exodus 21:19, וכאיה ויקאל ומתוכאה 'his staff and it is said his couch' for מִשְׁעַנְתּוֹ, appears as the main reading in Oxford, Bodl., Poc. 395–396.

This fact poses a pivotal question: on which traditions did Samuel b. Jacob rely? Could it be that the glosses do in fact draw upon genuine Saadianic material that resurfaced in the margins of the standardized transmission of the short *Tafsīr*? The presence of alternative renderings in Exodus 23:1 and 29:20 suggest this might indeed be the case.[28] In one of the fragments of his commentary on Exodus, published by Ratzaby, Saadiah informs the reader about his difficulties in translating אַל־תָּשֶׁת יָדְךָ עִם־רָשָׁע לִהְיֹת עֵד חָמָס in Exodus 26:1.[29] He proposes two options in Arabic, which agree with the two variants of the St Petersburg manuscript. It stands to reason, therefore, that the glosses were introduced by the scribe Samuel b. Jacob, incorporating material of Saadiah's commentary on Exodus.[30]

---

[26] In the opinion of Blau 1998, 127, the alternative renderings are to be understood as extra-textual glosses that entered the text at a later stage. See also Ben-Shammai 2000, 197–199.

[27] See Polliack 1997, 181–200; 1993–1994. For alternative renderings in early non-Saadianic translations, see Tobi 1993, 98; 1996, 488–489.

[28] As already conjectured by Ben-Shammai 2000.

[29] Ratzaby 1998, 326.

[30] It has to be noted that this assumption will be worth reconsidering with the appearance of a comprehensive critical edition of Saadiah's commentary on Exodus.

In a similar although less distinctive way, alternative renderings attested in the commentary were occasionally preserved in the later course of transmission. This has already been seen in the few examples above. However, this assumption is also confirmed by additional fragments of the *Tafsīr* in the Genizah, which occasionally illustrate a connection with Saadiah's longer commentary. For example, in his commentary Saadiah adds מאעפא to his translation of Genesis 3:22: '[…] and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever *in well-being*'.[31] In contrast to the large bulk of manuscripts which do not feature this exegetical extension, it is found in Oxford, Bodl., Poc. 395–396, as well as in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.25.17 and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.23. עֵץ הַחַיִּים in Genesis 3:24 is rendered as שגרה אלעאפיה 'the tree of well-being' in the commentary, although when detaching the translation Saadiah revised it to the more literal שגרה אלחיוה 'the tree of life'. Nevertheless, שגרה אלעאפיה is found in London, BL, Or. 5556 C.1.

What this lengthy excursus shows is that St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1 was destined for a scholarly reader, who had an interest in alternative translations and the relationship of the detached translation to its original place within the commentary. The inclusion in the manuscript of the Masora, whose perusal and comprehension required certain skills, strengthens this impression.

3.2 Genizah fragments of the Tafsīr

A stage of transmission connecting the three to four centuries between the St Petersburg manuscript and later Near Eastern and Yemenite manuscripts is captured in the vast material of the Cairo Genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, also known as *kanīsat al-shāmiyīn*, which functioned as the Palestinian Rabbanite synagogue of Old Cairo.[32] The *Tafsīr* is proportionally the most common Arabic version of the Bible to appear in this corpus;[33] the majority of Saadianic translation fragments survived as bifolia[34] Although fragmentary and scattered, the material from the Cairo Genizah

[31] Zucker 1984, 78.

[32] On the discovery of the Cairo Genizah, see Jefferson 2009; 2010; 2018; 2019. The earliest among later Near Eastern manuscripts is New York, JTS, L 647, which was copied in Egypt in the fourteenth century. The earliest representative of the tradition of the Yemenite *tāj* is found in Oxford, Bodl., Opp. Add. Q4.98. See Avishur 1992, and also section 3.3 below.

[33] It has been estimated that Saadiah's version constitutes a third of all Arabic Bible translation fragments in the Cambridge University's T-S Arabic series; see Baker and Polliack 2001, xiii; Polliack 1998. The Arabic translation fragments in that library are mostly found in the binders classified as containing 'Bible: Arabic translations (or versions) and commentaries' within the Old Series, New Series, and Additional Series of the Taylor-Schechter collection and the Oriental collection. In total, there are 3,229 fragments (I thank Ben Outhwaite for providing me with this number in March 2021), of which two-thirds belong to the binders T-S Ar.1a-1c and T-S Ar.21–28 while the remaining third are in the New Series boxes 33, 38, 105, 185, 188–189, 227, 255, 260–261, 263, 285, 293, 303, and 318 or in boxes 69–72 of the Additional Series. Further fragments of Saadiah's translation are also found strewn among other Genizah material classified as Rabbinica, Geonica, liturgy, grammar, and philosophy in the various series. At a rough estimate, I would suggest there are around 1,000 fragments of the *Tafsīr* in Cambridge alone. As the collections there contain two-thirds of all known Genizah fragments, the overall total would lie around 1,500.

[34] Some fragments in Cambridge University Library, especially in the New and Additional Series, may contain one leaf, or even less. Occasionally, entire quires are found, with up to ten leaves, such as Cambridge, CUL, T-S Misc.7.132, and there is even one fragment with nineteen leaves, Budapest, MTA, Kaufmann, Genizah 386. It is sometimes possible to reconstruct entire codices, for example Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.18, T-S Ar.22.41, T-S Ar.24.4, T-S Ar.24.177, T-S Ar.25.130, T-S NS 263.42, T-S NS 263.43, T-S NS 263.96, T-S NS 285.141, T-S NS 303.53, and T-S NS 303.79, and New York, JTS, ENA 2710.21 and ENA 2946.2–3, which all belong to the same manuscript.

is of crucial importance for understanding the early transmission of the *Tafsīr*, since it provides valuable insight into the immediate use of the manuscripts – and therefore of the translation as such – during the period soon after Saadiah wrote it.

Saadiah's separation of the plain text of the *Tafsīr* (*tafsīr basīt naṣṣ al-tawrāh*, i.e. the separated translation) from the original long *Tafsīr* (*tafsīr at-tawrāh al-kabīr*, i.e. the translation within the commentary) is well reflected in the Genizah fragments. There are fragments which contain his translations alongside his commentary; however, fragments in which the *Tafsīr* is detached from the commentary are attested in far greater numbers. According to their textual structure, Saadianic Genizah fragments may be classified as follows:

1. *Tafsīr* with commentary[35]
2. *Tafsīr* without commentary
   2.1 *Tafsīr* with Hebrew verses or *incipits*[36]
   2.2 Trilingual fragments: Hebrew, Aramaic (Targum Onkelos), and Judaeo-Arabic (the *Tafsīr*)[37]
   2.3 *Tafsīr* without Hebrew verses or *incipits*[38]
3. Shorthand fragments, Saadianic glosses, and glossaries[39]

Some surviving fragments on parchment are calligraphic in nature.[40] Only a few fragments contain colophons, such as Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.183.[41] This exceptionally formal fragment was

[35] The translation is sporadically distinguished from the commentary by using terms such as *naṣṣ* 'text' in the margins to indicate the beginning of a section containing the translation (see London, BL, Or. 5562 C.16–19; Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.49 and T-S Ar.22.99) or *sharḥ* 'interpretation' (see Cambridge, CUL, T-S B1.7 and T-S Misc.5.84) to indicate that of the commentary.

[36] Hebrew verses or *incipits* are sometimes written in a calligraphic oriental square script with full Tiberian vocalization and cantillation signs, while the Judaeo-Arabic is exhibited in a smaller semi-cursive script. Deviations from standard Tiberian orthography do occur, in particular in the more informal fragments. On this feature, see Khan 1990–1991; the most comprehensive treatments are found in Arrant 2020 and Blapp 2017.

[37] E.g. Cambridge, CUL, T-S B1.3, belonging with T-S B1.5, T-S B1.6, T-S B1.7, T-S NS 263.20, T-S NS 285.17, and T-S NS 319.45, and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.21A. Further, T-S NS 221.50, T-S NS 285.76, T-S AS 70.117, T-S AS 70.208, and T-S AS 71.29, and New York, JTS, ENA 598, and others.

[38] Proportionally this group is the smallest. It includes, e.g. Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.165, T-S Ar.26.101, and T-S AS 69.16.

[39] A number of fragments exhibit shorthand copies, abbreviating repetitive parts of entire verses with the term *mithla dhālika* 'and so forth'; e.g. Cambridge, CUL, T-S AS 70.167, T-S NS 221.30, and T-S Misc.5.77, and London, BL, Or. 5562.C.39. Saadianic glosses in the margins of calligraphic Bible fragments are found in Cambridge, CUL, T-S A29.21, T-S A29.34, T-S A29.101, T-S NS 52.3, TS NS 57.36, T-S NS 67.23, T-S NS 74.27, T-S AS 8.37, and T-S AS 17.210. In addition, there are glossaries which are virtually identical to Saadiah's translation and which might have been prepared in the context of Jewish learning in the synagogue and schoolrooms, e.g. Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.30.316, T-S NS 260.57, and T-S AS 70.98.

[40] For example, Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.143, T-S Ar.19.145, T-S Ar.1a.150, T-S Ar.25.150, T-S Ar.27.62, T-S Ar.27.92, T-S Ar.28.7, T-S Ar.28.28, T-S Ar.28.56, T-S Ar.28.58, T-S Ar.28.72, T-S Ar.28.92, T-S Ar.28.105, T-S Ar.28.115, T-S Ar.28.127, T-S Ar.28.144, T-S Ar.28.150, T-S Ar.28.161, T-S AS 72.109, T-S AS 72.125, T-S AS 72.132, Westminster College, Arabica I.14, and Westminster College, Arabica I.83. All these fragments belong to one ancient parchment codex, written in formal oriental square letters with sixteen lines per page. The calligraphic nature can be seen, for example, in the scribe's employment of graphic fillers in parts of the Hebrew letters *ʾalif* and *shin* to produce even alignments of the margins. Some fragments from the Cairo Genizah are known to contain manuscripts copied by distinguished scribes; see Zewi and Ashur 2020; Ashur and Zewi 2019.

[41] This was noted by Zucker 1959, 310–313. That manuscript belongs with Cambridge, CUL, Or. 1080 C6.6, T-S Ar.21.116, T-S Ar.22.51, T-S NS 285.54, T-S AS 71.22, and Mosseri VI.73. Other fragments exhibiting short colophons include T-S Ar.1a.55, T-S Ar.24.4, and T-S NS 312.66.

Fig. 3: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar.21.183, recto, paper, Genizah fragment, Egypt, 1012 CE. © Cambridge University Library. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

probably part of a copy that included the entire Pentateuch and was copied on 28 Nisan 4772 (4 April 1012 CE) for Saadiah b. Sahl al-Manbijī al-Ṣayrafī (Fig. 3). His epithets suggest that he, or his ancestors, arrived from the city of Manbij, north-east of Aleppo, and that he was engaged in money-changing, a profession that would allow him to commission such a copy from a professional scribe. It is difficult to determine how much such a commissioned copy would have cost. In the twelfth century, the scribe Zakkay b. Moshe from Maḥallah complained that he was only paid two dinars and a half for copying an Arabic *Tafsīr* of the Tora, even though the task was as challenging as producing a fully vocalized Hebrew Bible manuscript;[42] the scribe of the famous Leningrad Codex, in comparison, received a remuneration of twenty-five dinars.

The great majority of fragments of the *Tafsīr* in the Cairo Geniza, though, originate from informal codices, copied or written by untrained scribes for private consumption.[43] Almost none

[42] See Goitein 1967–1993, 2:238, 574. This codex would thus be on the lower end of rates for commissioned books, based on those presented in Olszowy-Schlanger 2016, 84–85.

[43] As the various medieval book lists published by Allony 2006 indicate, not all copies of the *Tafsīr* encompassed all five books of the Tora: e.g. a bound copy (Allony 2006, 3) contained Saadiah's translation of 'half of the Tora', while another contained only the book of Genesis in the form of a *daftar* (Allony 2006, 16) – a *daftar* (or *diftar*), an Arabic word borrowed from Greek, denotes a partial or unbound book type, that is, one that is in fascicles or quires; see Outhwaite 2020, 70. There are even copies of single *parashot*, i.e. the weekly Jewish reading portions of the Bible, attested, e.g. of Parashat Noaḥ and Parashat Lekh-Lekha (Allony 2006, 28).

of them can be compared to the grand codex by Samuel b. Jacob described above, except for the two fragments in his hand.

The importance of the Genizah corpus, however, lies in its attestation of copies of the *Tafsīr* from heterogeneous societal levels, but mostly pertaining to a common demographic. First, this can be seen in the material aspects of these copies. The fragments are usually copied on paper and not on parchment. This textual abundance is the result of an unprecedented explosion in the availability of books after the introduction of paper.[44] They are usually small, around 17 cm in height and 14 cm in width, on average. Furthermore, their script is not calligraphic but semi-cursive or cursive. The use of both paper and cursive (or semi-cursive) script made the production of such manuscripts cheaper and faster, and enabled the rapid dissemination of Saadiah's translation. One particular type of fragment is the the *rotulus*, the vertical scroll, made up of cheap writing materials (Fig. 4).[45] It gives further evidence of the production of low-cost copies of the *Tafsīr*. A number of rotuli fragments of the *Tafsīr* use lesser-quality writing materials, often composed of strips of leftover or reused parchment, and may be considered the cheapest way of obtaining a copy of the work. Some fragments even stem from codices that reused paper as the writing material.[46] A small number of copies of the *Tafsīr* from the Cairo Genizah, however, are written on vellum in square script.[47]

Fig. 4: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S Ar.27.117, recto, parchment, Genizah fragment, Egypt: Saadiah's translation of Exodus 23:31–24:11 with Hebrew *incipits*. © Cambridge University Library. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

[44] Yeivin 1980, 30–31, also connects the appearance of common Bibles in Hebrew to the introduction of paper. He states: 'Such MSS are generally less carefully written than complete ones. Some use extra vowel letters, ignoring the Masoretic spelling; some use vowel signs differently from the received tradition from ignorance, or to represent the local pronunciation; and such MSS show many textual variants. Such texts, known as 'vulgar' texts, were meant for private use or for study. They are commonly written on paper. Most known examples come from the Geniza, where they are the most common type of Biblical text' (p. 12).

[45] E.g. Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.27.117, which belongs with T-S NS 188.31, T-S NS 189.26, T-S NS 254.95, and T-S NS 285.160, Philadelphia, Penn CAJS, Halper 44 and New York, JTS, ENA 3830.1–2. These fragments cover the book of Genesis and seem to have come from a formerly intact *rotulus* encompassing the entire book. Other examples include T-S NS 173.59 (trilingual); T-S Ar.28.22 and T-S Ar.1a.92; and T-S Ar.28.59. For an in-depth study of *rotuli* fragments from the Cairo Genizah, the reader is referred to Olszowy-Schlanger 2016.

[46] Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 221.12, which contains Saadiah's translation of Gen. 26:25–27:4, 27:14–28, reuses an Islamic decree (late Fatimid, Ayyubid, or Mamluk). The fragment is 22 cm wide and given that sellers of scrap paper would usually cut decrees into two halves, the original decree must have measured at least 44 cm in width. In the 18 cm length of the fragment, only one line of the original Arabic writing can be found (which is, of course, precisely what made it valuable to resell). If we assume a minimum of twenty lines, the decree was more than 3 m long. For reuse of documents of this kind, see Rustow 2020; I thank Marina Rustow for discussing this fragment with me.

[47] These constitute an early stage of transmission and are therefore of special significance. They include Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.19, T-S Ar.1a.104, T-S Ar.1a.143, T-S Ar.25.164,

In terms of their *mise-en-page*, these fragments differ from the codex described above. With minor exceptions, they lack Masoretic notes and even Masoretic vocalization and cantillation signs,[48] and they are usually written in Hebrew script.[49]

Second, the bulk of Genizah fragments indicate a clear linguistic shift from Saadiah's post-Classical Arabic towards a lower standard of Judaeo-Arabic. This may be seen in deviations from Classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography toward a more phonetic spelling.[50] In the fields of morphology and syntax, tendencies toward a lower Judaeo-Arabic standard are also noticeable.[51]

Another striking feature, and perhaps the more interesting one, is textual and concerns a systematic re-approximation of the Saadianic text toward the Hebrew Bible. Saadiah's not always literal translation was thus reconciled with its Hebrew source. As a consequence, Saadiah's translation techniques, which attempted to convey the meaning rather than to render the Hebrew text literally, were considerably deconstructed in the course of the transmission of the translation.

To begin with, Saadiah's exegetical additions ceased to be copied. For example, וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה 'but there went up a mist' in Genesis 2:6 is translated as ולא בכאר כאן יצעד 'and no mist ascended' in the *Tafsīr*. In his commentary, Saadiah informs us that this is the intended meaning, since the negation of the previous verse has to be extended to the following.[52] Although doubtlessly the original reading, it is omitted in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.25.154 and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.23, and replaced by a literal ואלבכאר כאן יצעד 'and the mist ascended'.

Furthermore, whereas Saadiah's translation omitted the repetition of certain words or expressions, subsequent copyists did not hesitate to reintroduce them. This is illustrated in the translation of Genesis 1:7, פצנע אללה אלגלד ופצל בין אלמא אלדי מן דונה ובין אלמא אלדי מן פוקה 'and God made the firmament, and divided the water which was under it and the water which was above it', in which the reference to the firmament is substituted by suffixes in the second part of the verse. However,

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, and T-S Ar.28.157, Oxford, Bodl., Heb. c. 19, fol. 31–34 and Heb. d. 56, fol. 1–8, and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.6.2.

[48] In this, they are similar to common Bibles in Hebrew; see Arrant 2021.

[49] There are, however, Genizah fragments of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in Arabic script. They belong to the Christian branch of transmission, discussed in section 3.5 below. For example, Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.51.147 (Gen. 6:9–7:14) belongs to the Syriac Orthodox branch, and T-S Ar.42.148 (Num. 29:3–29, 30:14–31:12) belongs to the Coptic branch. Although Vollandt 2008 identified this latter as a Qaraite copy of the *Tafsīr*, the new evid-ence presented in this paper strongly indicates a Christian provenance and my previous interpretation needs to be revised; see Vollandt forthcoming-b. A number of fragments exhibit words in Arabic script interspersed in a predominantly Hebrew-script text; see Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.21, which belongs with T-S Ar.21.31 and T-S Ar.21.110.

[50] Examples are found in abundance; suffice it to note the phonetic spellings of שיגרה for Classical Judaeo-Arabic שגרה 'tree' (Gen. 1:12, 2:9, 3:6, and 3:12) in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Misc.5.51; אנפצת for Classical אנפטת '[their eyes] were opened' (Gen. 3:7) in T-S Ar.1a.62, T-S Ar.24.129, T-S Misc.7.90, and T-S Misc.7.132, New York, JTS, ENA 2160.21–22, and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.23; as well as פכייטא for Classical פכיטא 'they sew' (Gen. 3:7) in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Misc.7.132 and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.23.

[51] For example, the accusative *ʾalif* is often omitted. Further, the dual was dropped, as can be seen with Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.25.78 and T-S NS 164.161, which have וגעלהם for וגעלהמא 'and he made them both [i.e. the great lights]' in Gen. 1:17. In Gen. 2:25, T-S NS 164.165 reads וצארו for וכאנא 'and they [Adam and Eve] were'; and Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 164.165, T-S Misc.5.129, T-S Misc.7.90, and T-S Misc.7.132, New York, JTS, ENA 2160.21–22, and Paris, Institut de France, 3381.23 feature עראיא instead of the dual עריאנין 'naked'.

[52] This interpretation is, for example, also found in Ibn Ezra's and David Qimḥi's commentaries, often presented in the name of Saadiah.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.32 and T-S Ar.25.83 read דון אלגלד 'under the firmament' and פוק אלגלד 'above the firmament' in imitation of the source.[53]

Likewise, prepositions, suffixes, relative pronouns, and word order were readjusted in accordance with the Hebrew text. The adjustment of prepositions is illustrated in the rendition of בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה '[to regulate] day and night' in Genesis 1:18, which is featured as פי אלנהאר ואללייל in early fragments. Later texts, however, exhibit באלנהאר ובאלליל (בליל); this is seen, for example, in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.163, T-S NS 285.99, and T-S NS 285.137. Whereas the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר remains uninflected in the source, the *Tafsīr* as a rule employs *alladhī* in its inflected form according to the context. Some Genizah fragments nevertheless employ the unchangeable form under influence of the Hebrew.[54] In translating וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה 'and the earth was' in Genesis 1:2, the *Tafsīr* reads וכאנת אלארץ, according to the Classical Arabic standard of opening a clause with the verb. But Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.163, T-S Ar.25.83, T-S NS 52.16, and T-S Misc.5.51 and New York, JTS, ENA 3123.7–8 feature ואלארץ כאנת in agreement with the word order of the Hebrew source.

There were also certain characteristics of Saadiah's style that were often considered appropriate to alter. For example, his tendency to translate subordinate clauses in the biblical narrative as co-ordinated ones in order to create a more prosaic cohesion in the *Tafsīr* was not accepted by all scribes, and later copies frequently restore a structure that is closer to the biblical one.[55] Substitutions of 'difficult' language with more facile translation equivalents can also be observed. Although, as noted, the fragments generally have a fairly informal character, these textual replacements clearly attest to the difficulty that ordinary people had with the high standard of the language of Saadiah – a language that was not always accessible to them. The inclination to adjust Saadiah's *Tafsīr* to contemporary needs that is exhibited in the Genizah fragments anticipates a method which crystallized later as a characteristic feature of the adaptation genre (on this, see section 3.3 below).

It is evident that the Genizah material constitutes our primary source for the study of the early stage of transmission of the *Tafsīr*. The abundant number of fragments of this work attests to the authoritative status bestowed upon Saadiah's translation. However, what can we determine about the uses to which these copies were put?

One clue to this comes from the trilingual versions, in which Saadiah's Arabic version was copied alongside Targum Onkelos. These fragments indicate that the *Tafsīr* served a broad Arabic-speaking Jewish public in synagogues and schoolrooms to render the Scriptures comprehensible via an Arabic rendition. Saadiah's translation was studied alongside the Hebrew and the Aramaic

---

[53] לילא 'and the darkness night' in Gen. 1:5 omits the verb in the second part of the verse in Saadiah's translation, since it is already found previously. Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.21.163, T-S Ar.25.83, T-S NS 285.99, and T-S Misc.5.51 reintroduce it, reading סמאהא ליל אלטלאם ואוקאת 'and the darkness he called night'. Similarly, בחארא 'sea' in Gen. 1:10 lacks the verb 'to call' in the second part of the verse. It is attested as בחארא (סמי, סמאה) סמא in T-S Ar.24.100, T-S Ar.25.32, T-S Ar.25.78, T-S Ar.25.83, T-S Misc.7.132, and Mosseri III.194.1.

[54] E.g. Gen. 1:21 אלדי אלדאבה אלחיוה אלנפוס 'living creatures that creep' in Cambridge, CUL, T-S AS 71.90 for אלנפוס אלחיה אלדאבה אלתי; or Gen. 3:11 אלדי אלשגרה 'the tree that' in T-S Ar.25.17 and T-S AS 71.45. Further, compare אלדי אלארץ 'the earth that' in Gen. 3:19 for אלתי אלארץ, as found in T-S Ar.25.83 and T-S Misc.7.132, and New York, JTS, ENA 2160.21–22.

[55] See Zewi 1997. For example, Saadiah's translation of Gen. 1:13, ולמא מצי מן אלליל ואלנהאר יומא תאלת 'and *when* the night and the day passed, it was the third day', is changed to ומצי מן אלליל ואלנהאר יום תאלת 'and the night and the day passed, the third day' in Cambridge, CUL, T-S Ar.1a.140.

texts in the didactic context of scriptural study, as also indicated by the Saadianic glosses and glossaries.[56] Similarly, it fulfilled the crucial needs of the general Jewish public by providing proper instruction in a more private framework.[57]

The features described above enable a reconstruction of how the Hebrew Bible was studied and learnt during this period. It appears that the Hebrew text was studied verse by verse, or at times even word by word, accompanied by an Arabic translation, as is also known from later periods.[58] Despite our limited knowledge of the medieval Jewish curriculum and the way it was conducted, more recent comparisons indicate that following basic instruction in passive Hebrew reading skills, the Bible must have been taught by means of Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic translations. The instruction primarily took place in the house of learning (Hebr. *ḥeder*; Arab. *kuttāb*) and was provided by a professional (Hebr. *melammed*, *ḥakham*; Arab. *muʿallim*, or *mārī* in Yemen). The prevailing didactic mode was oral: the teacher recited a verse in Hebrew, the pupils memorized it through supervised repetition; then Targum Onkelos and Judaeo-Arabic translations of the same verse were provided and studied by repetitive memorizing in the same manner.

The sorts of modifications to the Saadianic text discussed above correspond to this didactic context. Structural equivalence between the translation and the Hebrew, shaped on syntactic and lexical analogy to the audited biblical verse in its source language, is essential in the context, and it therefore needed to be restored by the scribes in order to ensure that the *Tafsīr* could meet the prerequisites of 'semantic transparency'.[59] Moreover, it is likely that the oral culture standing behind the actual act of copying was in fact the main motive for the relaxation of Classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography and other linguistic features, leading to an approximation with the spoken language.

A good example showing that Saadiah's translation was used in this didactic context is found in Philadelphia, Penn CAJS, Halper 43. In this fragment, the text of the *Tafsīr* was largely adjusted to correspond directly to the Hebrew source text. In addition, above the Judaeo-Arabic translation the equivalent biblical text was copied in a much smaller script.

Evidence from New York, JTS, ENA 3123.7–8 indicates that the *Tafsīr* was used in primary education. That manuscript contains the first three verses of Saadiah's translation of Genesis, written twice by two different scribes. The first exhibits a trained hand, whereas the second – facing the other – is clumsy, and it would appear that this was produced as a pupil's exercise. Similarly, Cambridge, CUL, T-S NS 70.59 and T-S NS 141.63 (Fig. 5) exhibit writing exercises based on parts of Saadiah's translation, and the latter gives both the Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic texts in the inexperienced hand of a pupil and in an unconfident orthography.

---

[56] On the didactic dimension of glossaries, see Polliack and Somekh 2001, 16 and 42.

[57] Regarding education around the time of the Genizah, see Goitein 1967–1993, 2:171–261, especially 173–182; 1962, 2–56; 1971; Olszowy-Schlanger 2003.

[58] The educational context of Judaeo-Arabic translations in more recent times is discussed in a number of works. For the Yemeni context, see Goitein 1953, especially pp. 119, 138; 1983, 261; Qafih 2002, 84–85; Brauer 1934, 294. For North African contexts, see Bar-Asher 1988a, 3–34; Zafrani 1969.

[59] On the term 'semantic transparency', see Tené 1983.

Fig. 5: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, T-S NS 141.63, paper, Genizah fragment, Egypt: Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic writing exercises based on parts of Saadiah's translation. © Cambridge University Library. Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

3.3 Later Jewish branches of transmission

The vast majority of fragments from the Cairo Genizah date from between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. The transmission of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* did not, however, cease following this period; rather, the contrary occurred. Two major subsequent traditions of transmission within Jewish communities can be distinguished, which may be termed the Near Eastern and the Yemenite, due to the geographical provenance of the relevant manuscripts. There must also have been North African and Hispanic traditions, but there are no known copies of North African provenance and only a single identified copy of the *Tafsīr* of Hispanic provenance, Madrid, BNE, 5475 (Fig. 6).[60] However, Sephardic scholars frequently quote Saadiah's composition and criticize his translations. For example, the treatise known as the *Book of the Responses of Dunash b. Labrat on Rabbi Saadiah Gaon* – composed at the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century by an otherwise unknown Adoniyya (Hebr. אדניה), according to an acronym in the text – contains an substantial number of criticisms of the *Tafsīr*.[61] Other scholars, such as Abū al-Walīd Marwān b. Janāḥ (*c*.990–1050), Yehudah b. Balʿam (*c*.1000–1070),

[60] See Remiro 1922, 354; del Valle Rodriguez 1986, 85–87; Vollandt 2012a.

[61] See Hazon 1995; 2005.

Fig. 6: Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS 5475, parchment codex, 14th c., fols 40v–41r: End of Genesis and beginning of Exodus. © Biblioteca Nacional de España, CC-BY.

and Abraham b. Ezra (1089–1164), also frequently refer to Saadiah's composition.[62] Equally, later Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Tora in North Africa and Spain, usually classified under the term *shurūḥ*, exhibit great familiarity with Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, indicating that it was disseminated widely and studied habitually.[63]

In Avishur's brief examination of the Near Eastern tradition of copies of Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, most of the manuscripts discussed – some of Egyptian and some of Syrian provenance – feature variants similar to those found in the Cairo Genizah material, such as attempts by scribes to adjust the translation to make it closer to the Hebrew source text and a shift towards a lower-status form of Judaeo-Arabic.[64] In terms of orthography, there is an even greater tendency towards phonetic

[62] Ibn Janāḥ frequently refers to the *Tafsīr* in his *Kitāb al-uṣūl*; see Neubauer 1875. Saadiah, commonly introduced *as al-mufassir*, is often cited in Yehudah b. Balʿam's *Kitāb al-tarjīḥ*; see Fuchs 1893. On Ibn Ezra's use of Saadianic material, see Avishur 1990.

[63] On North African *shurūḥ*, see Avrahami 1994; Bar-Asher 1998b; Doron 1991; 1995; Maman 2000; Zafrani 1980. The only published North African sharḥ to date is found in Bar-Asher 2001.

[64] Avishur 1992; 1998.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

spelling.[65] A notable exception is found in the manuscript Oxford, Bodl., Poc. 395–396.[66] That trilingual codex (Hebrew *incipits*, Targum Onkelos, and Saadiah's *Tafsīr*) was copied in 1449 in Ḥamāt, Syria. It not only revealed Saadiah's forgotten longer preface to his Pentateuch translation (discussed above), but also preserved the text in an excellent and faithful manner in spite of its relatively late date (Fig. 7).[67]

The broad circulation of Saadiah's translation up to five centuries after it left the hands of the *gaon*, as well as the total absence of other Rabbanite translations into Judaeo-Arabic, testify to its enduring high popularity and authoritative status until well into the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, a certain unease towards the *Tafsīr* was felt after the passage of time. Saadiah's Arabic, with its high standard, became incomprehensible and was regarded as unsuitable to serve the educational framework of schoolrooms and synagogues. In order to adjust the *Tafsīr* to contemporary cultural and linguistic settings, a genre of Saadianic adaptations emerged among Palestinian, Syrian, and Iraqi Rabbanite communities from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.[68] These adaptations may be defined neither as simple copies of Saadiah's version nor as new translations, they rather constitute a mixture of both: whereas complete verses and passages of the *Tafsīr* are found copied unaltered and concord with older manuscripts, more difficult portions were changed or entirely replaced with a new translation.

The clearest testimony of this custom comes down to us from Issachar b. Shushan, active in Zefat in the sixteenth century.[69] In the preface to his composition, which is known as אלשרח אלסוסאני ל כמסת גזא אלתורה ('Ibn Shushan's commentary on the five parts of the Pentateuch'), he informs the reader that most scholars have severe difficulties in understanding the words of the Gaon.[70] Consequently, believing that the translation was in serious danger of slipping into oblivion, he proceeded to adapt Saadiah's language. Terming Saadiah's prose ערבי האלנחוי ('classical, grammatically correct Arabic'), Issachar reworked it into the vernacular of his time, ערבי צח הנהוג ('the idiomatic Arabic used by the people'). Issachar b. Shushan assigns great importance to the applicability of the *Tafsīr*

---

[65] The following examples of phonetic spellings from the first verses of Genesis in Oxford, Bodl., Hunt. 463 may serve as an illustration: Gen. 1:1 ולארץ׳ for Classical Judaeo-Arabic ואלארץ; 1:2 וצלאם for וטלאם, האבבה for האבה; 1:3 לעלם for למא עלם; 1:4 נהארה for נהארא, לילה for לילא, ולנהאר for ואלנהאר, מצה for מצי; 1:5 וצט for וצט, פאצלן for פאצלא. It seems that the scribe was deeply influenced by the orthography of Judaeo-Arabic texts written after the time of Saadiah.

[66] See Neubauer and Cowley, 1886–1906, 1:6, nos 28–29; and also the description in Ben-Shammai 2000a.

[67] The manuscript resembles the text of the St Petersburg manuscript to a large degree, with the exception, naturally, of the alternative renderings. An ownership note on fol. 244^{v} indicates that in 1612 the codex came into the possession of Abraham Dīqnīs (דיקניש), a figure known from other Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. He bequeathed a large number of manuscripts that originated from the family library of Maimonides's successors to the Jewish communities of Aleppo. Edward Pococke later acquired the codices and brought them to Oxford; see Ben-Sasson 2009, 80. When Pococke was charged with the improvement of the Arabic version of the Paris Polyglot, he collated it with this manuscript, as well as the Constantinople Polyglot, and furnished the variants in Vol. 6 of the London Polyglot, and his notes are still found in the margins of Oxford, Bodl., Poc. 395–396: readings of the Paris Polyglot are introduced in the margins by the letter 'P', while those of the Constantinople Polyglot have the siglum 'C'.

[68] See Doron 1991; Avishur 1989; 1991; 1998. Note that the origin of the manuscript published in Hirsch 1900 has to be sought in the adaptation genre.

[69] See Doron 1985. The preface was published in Sassoon 1932, 1:63–68.

[70] His arguments reflect those in similar introductions, e.g. the preface of Mordechai Ḥai Diyyan (Doron 1995) and the preface of the Samaritan Abū Saʿīd (partial edition in de Sacy 1808, 79).

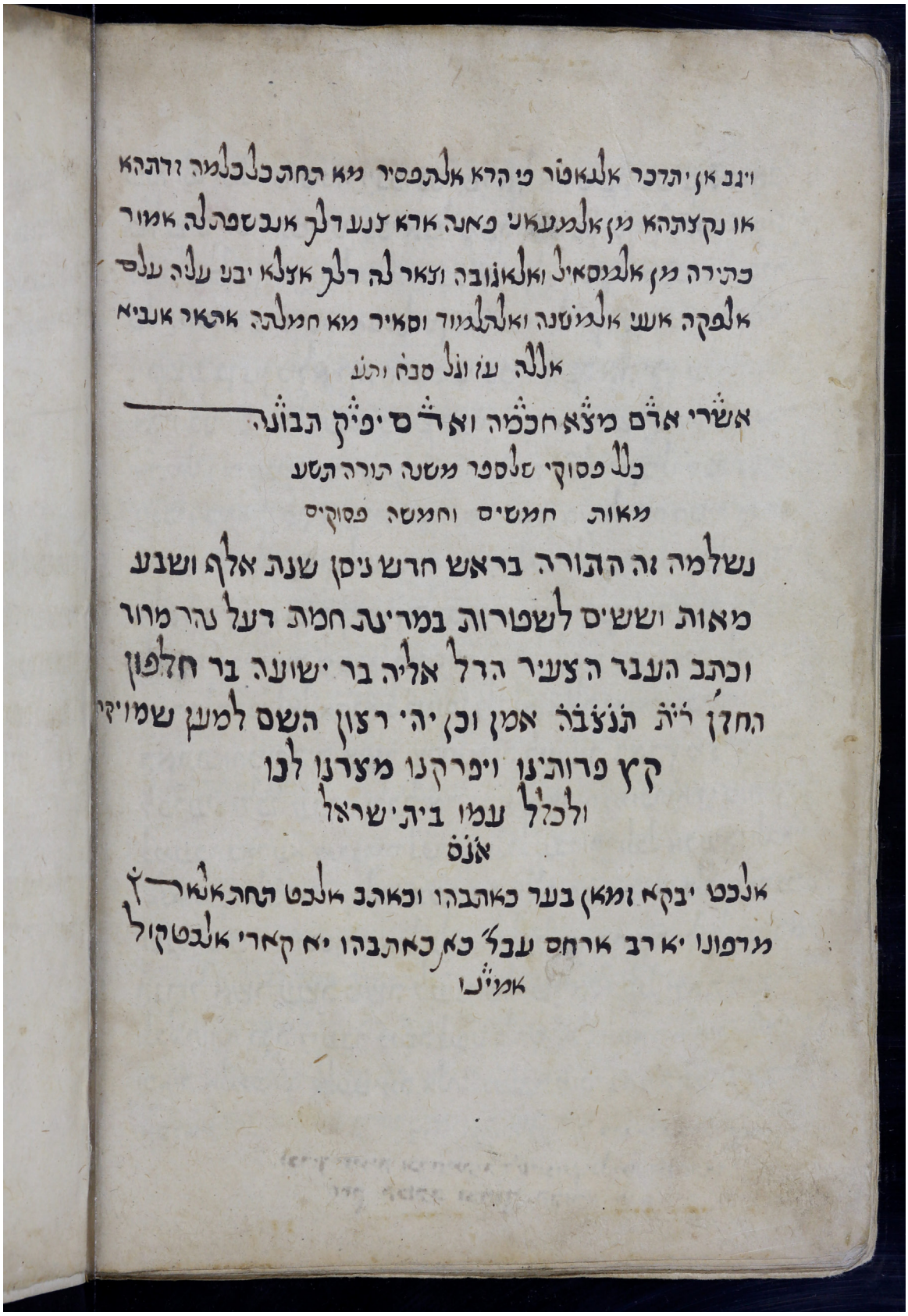


Fig. 7: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Pococke 396, Ḥamāt (Syria), 1449, Hebrew Pentateuch with Targum Onḳelos and Saadiah Gaon's Arabic translation after each verse, fol. 592ᵛ: colophon. © Bodleian Libraries, CC-BY-NC 4.0.

in Jewish education, which prompted him to arrange the text in a literal fashion wherever possible. Readjusting it to the Hebrew original ensured the understanding of the Hebrew original when studied side by side with his adaptation. He states:

> I shall compose an explanation [*sharḥ*] of the Torah to enable the masses [to study it], an explanation of its words in the clearest, most common Arabic to our understanding today, according to the order and the meaning they were written in Hebrew. […] From now on there will be no more excuse for any teacher to explain the sharḥ [the explanation of Scriptures] to his pupils in Arabic, whilst they are studying the Torah.[71]

Features found in this adaptation, such as the alteration of Saadiah's post-Classical Arabic to a lower standard and the shift toward a more literal translation, are also displayed to some extent in the Genizah material, as noted above: the writers were motivated by the same circumstances. It may therefore be assumed that the emergence of the adaptation genre was gradual and peaked into independent composition at a relatively late date.[72]

Nearly all Arabic-speaking Rabbanite communities developed an adaptation genre around Saadiah's *Tafsīr*. However, this is not the case in Yemenite scholarly circles, which adhered to Saadiah's translation until recently.[73] The Yemenites never abandoned the *Tafsīr*, and it occupied a central position in their reading tradition. This quasi-canonical position is epitomized in trilingual Yemenite codices containing the Hebrew text, Targum Onkelos, and Saadiah's translation side by side, which became known as *tījān* (sg. *tāj*) 'crowns'. It is reasonable to assume that these preserved the tradition of synoptical study attested already in some Genizah fragments. Early representatives of the *tāj* are Oxford, Bodl., Opp. Add. Q4.98, copied in Sana'a in the fourteenth century (Fig. 8), and New York, JTS, L 647, copied in the fourteenth century probably in Egypt. More recently Yemenite *tījān* have been edited and published on several occasions.[74]

Saadianic adaptations also existed beyond the Rabbanite community – for example, in Qaraite circles. A Qaraite branch of transmission is represented in the manuscript Paris, BnF, Heb. 79. This codex, probably copied in the fourteenth century, contains an attempt to merge the translation of Saadiah and that of Yefet b. ʿElī. It opens with two prefaces, the first written by the Gaon and the second from the unknown copyist.[75] The prefaces are followed by a full translation of the

---

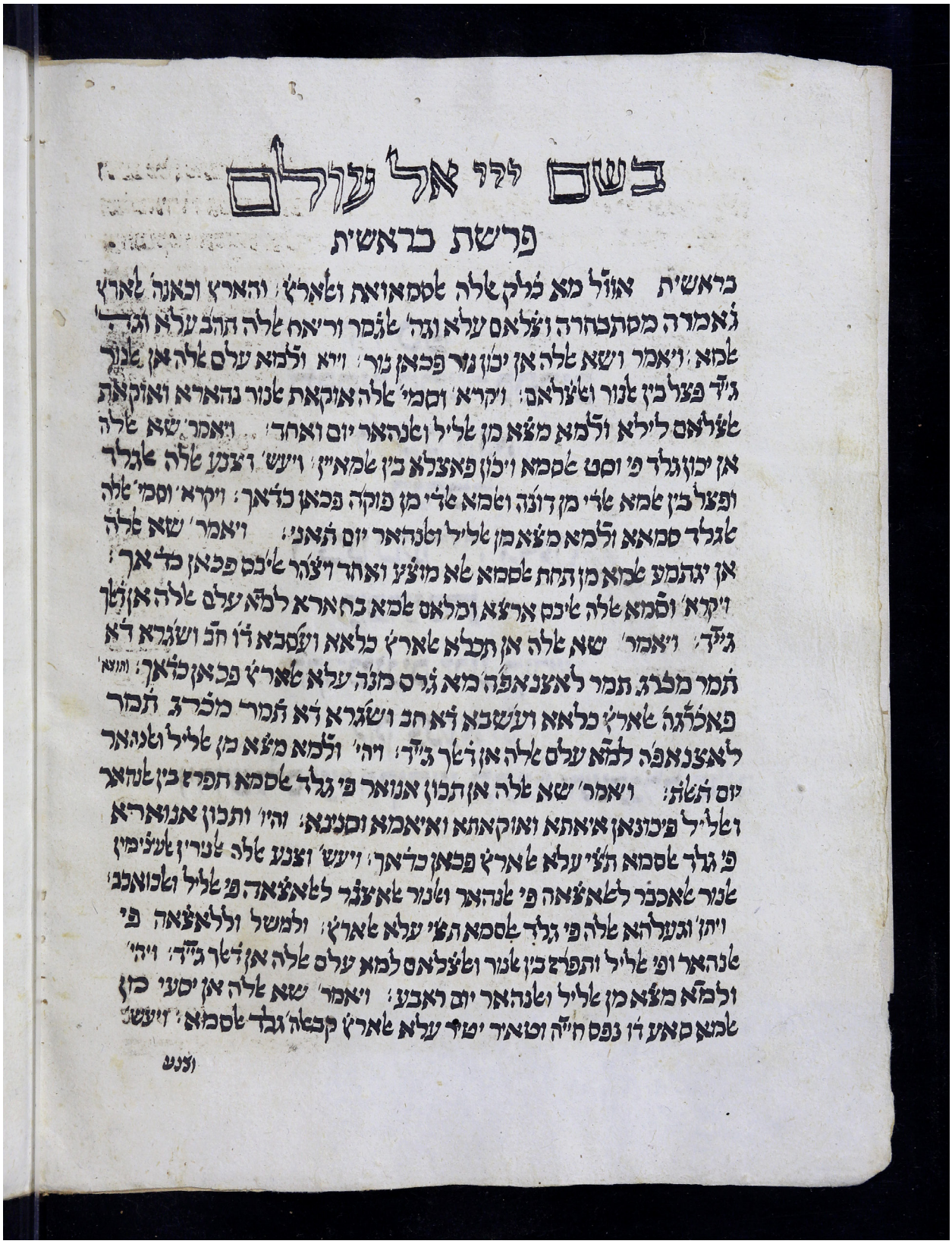
[71] Sassoon 1932, 1:66–67.

[72] This observation is opposed to the assumption of Kahle and his pupils, which holds that the *Tafsīr* was adapted to a standardized version, considerably distinct from the original version, in the generation following Saadiah's death. The versions in Samaritan and Arabic scripts therefore hold, in Kahle's view, particular importance in the reconstruction of the alleged original text. This view is in particular expressed in Katten 1924.

[73] Tobi 1991. He, however, stresses a certain restriction: the *Tafsīr* was not used for the instruction of children but studied exclusively among adults (p. 131). On the reading tradition of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* among the Yemenites, see Morag 1962. See also Ya'akov 2019; he estimates that there are 10,000 Yemenites copies of the *Tafsīr*, a number I cannot corroborate.

[74] On the different *tījān*, see the survey of Kessar 2004. The first published *tāj* to contain the *Tafsīr* was the two-volume תאג ירושלים 'the Jerusalem *tāj*', printed in Jerusalem in 1894–1901. It was reprinted by J. Hasid in 1968 and is still the most current edition.

[75] Saadiah's introduction is complete, but unfortunately a large part of the copyist's preface is missing. It contains some remarks on the elegance of Classical Arabic, but no useful information about the copyist or their intention is preserved.



בשם ידיד אל עולם

פרשת בראשית

Fig. 8: Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Oppenheim Add. 4° 98, probably Egypt, 14th c., fol. 3v: beginning of Genesis. © Bodleian Libraries, CC-BY-NC 4.0.

Pentateuch according to Saadiah in the first chapters, though difficult words or even entire verses are at times replaced with Yefet's translation. In later chapters, Yefet's version dominates, albeit intertwined with Saadianic elements.

Certain Saadianic features became an inextricable part of oral Bible interpretation in schoolrooms throughout the entire Arabic-speaking Jewish world, and from there these features resurface in later traditions. Consequently, it is possible to trace the influence of Saadiah's translation in other translation traditions. As already noted, first and foremost, the *shurūḥ* traditions exhibit a clear influence from Saadiah's version.[76] In addition, non-Arabic translations may also display a certain indebtedness to this tradition, as shown for example in Judaeo-Spanish translations.[77]

3.4 The Samaritan branch of transmission

As Shehadeh has shown, the beginnings of the Samaritan traditions of Arabic Pentateuch translation are obscure. Earlier research, especially by Kahle and his school, regarded Samaritan translations into Arabic as directly dependent on a Saadianic *Vorlage*.[78] The Samaritan translations, however, survive in several distinct manuscript groups, among which genuine Saadianic adaptations are marginal.

The first group of manuscripts consists of trilingual or bilingual codices in Samaritan script, made before the second half of the thirteenth century. The version in them, virtually unknown to earlier scholars, predated the revised text of Abū Saʿīd. Although Shehadeh initially attributed this early version to Isḥāq ibn Faraj ibn Mārūth al-Ṣūrī – known as Abū al-Ḥasan (Aram. Ab-Ḥisdā) and active in the late eleventh century – his attribution has not won general acceptance.[79] Its provenance remains unknown. The translation technique is similar to that of early non-Saadianic translations; for example, the syntax usually follows the Hebrew in disregard of the rules of Classical Arabic.[80] This similarity implies that the older Arabic version of the Samaritan Pentateuch may have come into being in a didactic context similar to that described above. Saadiah's *Tafsīr* seems to have influenced this earlier Samaritan tradition significantly, given that in long passages the vocabulary and phrasing are identical. Be this as it may, there are extensive variations among the manuscripts, which indicates that no *textus receptus* ever emerged.[81]

---

[76] See the earlier note on North African *shurūḥ*. For Egyptian traditions, see Hary 2000; 2009. *Shurūḥ* of Syrian and Iraqi provenance are discussed in Avishur 1991b. It is generally accepted that Saadiah's *Tafsīr* influenced these traditions significantly.

[77] See Blondheim 1925.

[78] See Kahle 1904, x–xi; 1959, 54–55; Katten 1924; Algermissen 1933; Halkin 1943; Robertson 1943.

[79] Abū al-Ḥasan's son, Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Faraj ibn Mārūth, was Saladin's physician in Damascus in the twelfth century. Accordingly, Abū al-Ḥasan must have lived in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, probably in Damascus. Macuch 1991 conjectures that the translation was attributed to him because of his reputation among the scholars of his generation. There is no concrete evidence of his authorship, however.

[80] See Shehadeh 1989a, 510–511; 1989b, 184.

[81] The manuscripts attest to a rather fluid transmission, which led to a concurrence of distinct traditions in this group. For example, manuscript ה in Shehadeh's edition is closer to the *Tafsīr* than other manuscripts.

The second group of Samaritan manuscripts represents the version of Abū Saʿīd, active in thirteenth-century Egypt. He did not produce a new translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch into Arabic, but revised the earlier version found in the first group of manuscripts and added various scholia to his text.

Only the third group of manuscripts may properly be termed Saadianic adaptations. This group contains only a single manuscript, London, BL, Or. 7562, which exhibits the Hebrew original and Saadiah's Judaeo-Arabic translation, written in Samaritan script (Fig. 9); there are possibly also a number of other fragments that belong in this group.[82] At Kahle's request, the Arabic column of the codex was transcribed into Arabic script by Kohen Salāma ibn ʿImrān in 1908 and subsequently became Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Or. Quart. 1082. Although Kahle considered London, BL, Or. 7562 to be representative of the Samaritan tradition, and it is certainly an interesting document, it is now thought to be of marginal significance in comparison to the large number of genuine Samaritan translations.[83] It dates to the fourteenth century, by which time the Samaritans already had a thriving translation tradition of their own.

3.5 Christian branches of transmission

By their very nature, Jewish copies of the *Tafsīr* were disseminated in Hebrew letters. The precise date when the text was transcribed into Arabic letters and embarked on its successful parallel trajectory among Christian communities is difficult to determine. This wider reception and adaptation of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* was contingent on this transcription, since the factor of script reflects 'the barrier that separated the bulk of Jewish population from Arabic and Islamic culture', as Blau so tellingly puts it.[84] From the moment the Hebrew script is replaced by Arabic script, this barrier comes down and texts were likely to be transmitted beyond the Jewish community.

A change of script constitutes the most distinctive feature in cross-denominational transmission of works, and also applies to other originally Judaeo-Arabic texts that moved outside their original communal boundaries. Probably the most famous of these is Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed* (Arab. *Dalālat al-ḥāʾirīn*), and we know something of how it came to be transmitted beyond its original community, which may give clues as to the path taken by the *Tafsīr*. The transcription of Maimonides's work into Arabic script, and its subsequent transmission, are to be accredited to non-Jewish copyists. Of particular interest in this context is the Muslim scholar ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, who apparently learnt the Hebrew script precisely to be able to transcribe this work.[85] Maimonides's *Guide* was held in great esteem in non-Jewish circles as well as in Jewish

---

[82] See Harkavy and Strack 1875, 242–246; Jamgotchian 1991; Zewi 2015.

[83] Kahle 1959, 54.

[84] Blau 1999, 35.

[85] For details, the reader is referred to Schwarb 2007. On ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, see Hopkins 2005, 90–93. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Nihmī, the scribe of Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Carullah 1279 – on which the Arabic-script edition of the Guide produced by Atay in 1979 is based – apparently also had basic reading skills in Hebrew; see Rosenthal 1955, 20, no. XVI. Further, the Coptic scholar al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibatallāh b. al-ʿAssāl (see below) transcribed parts of Maimonides's Judaeo-Arabic writings into Arabic letters; see Graf 1940 and Abullif 1997, 86, no. 24.

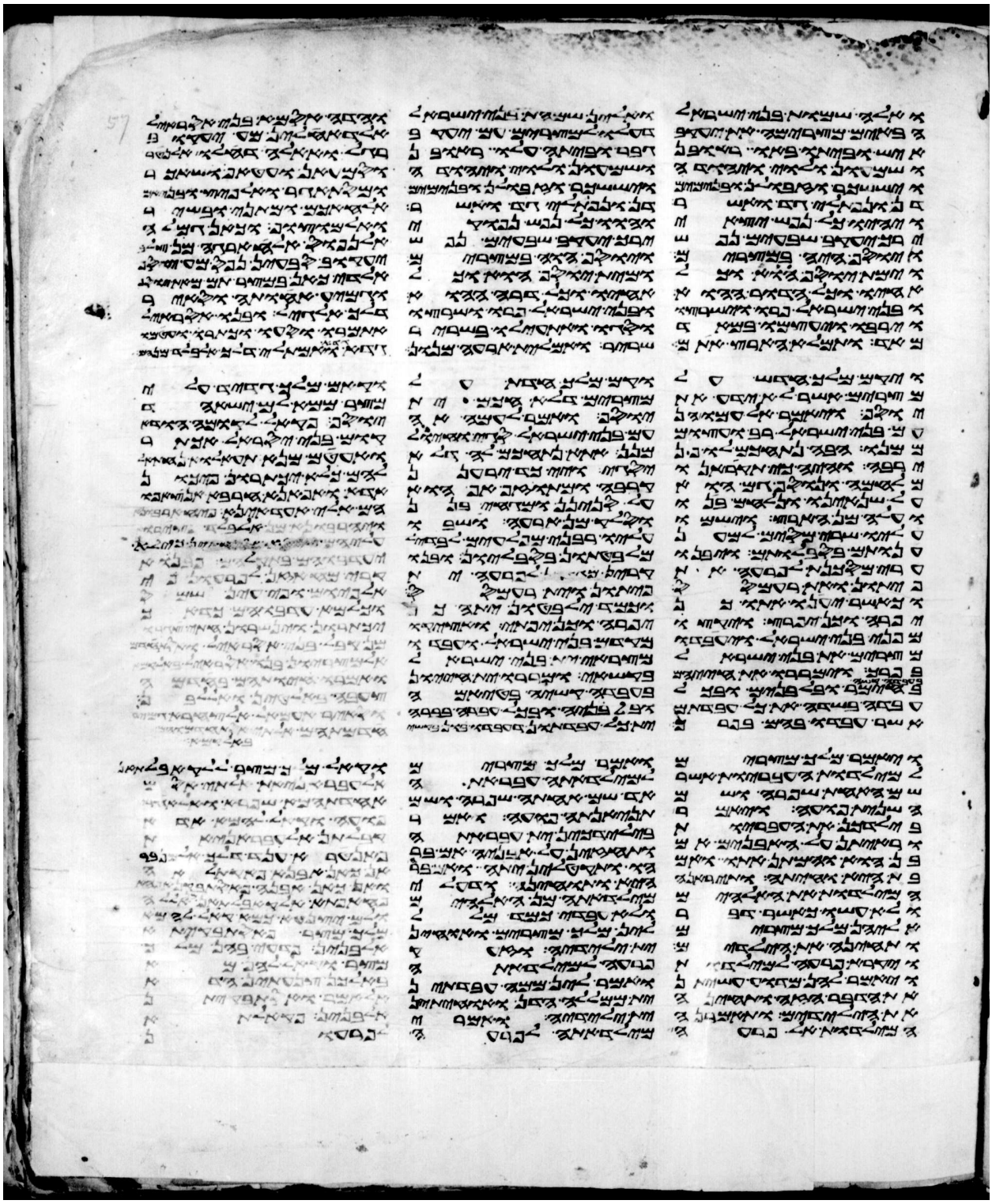


Fig. 9: London, British Library, Or. 7562, 14th c., Hebrew Tora and Saadiah's Judaeo-Arabic translation, written in Samaritan script. Fol. 57^{r}: Beginning of Exodus. The entire manuscript is badly damaged, many folios have been cut and the partial loss of text has been repaired by a later hand. Public Domain.

communities,[86] as can be seen from the fact that both Christians and Muslims read and quoted from it: the first to quote him were the Coptic scholars al-Asʿad b. al-ʿAssāl, his brother Muʾtaman, and Ibn Kātib Qayṣar. The scholarly circles around the ʿAssālids not only showed great interest in Maimonides's *Guide*, they also read and frequently quoted another work of Jewish provenance – *Sefer Joseph b. Gurion*, a medieval historiographical compilation in Hebrew that later came to be known as *Sefer Josippon*. Composed anonymously in southern Italy in the first half of the tenth century, it was soon translated into Arabic, as reflected in numerous fragments from the Cairo Genizah.[87] What is more, Sefer Josippon is extant in a great number of manuscripts in Arabic letters. Although more research is needed to determine when exactly the text was transcribed into Arabic and commenced being transmitted beyond Arabic-speaking Jewish communities, it is clear that also Coptic scribes copied, disseminated, and preserved the narrative during the Middle Ages.

3.5.1 The Syriac Orthodox branch of transmission

There are indications that the adoption of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* into Christian canons happened gradually. The chronologically first attested manuscript of Saadiah's version among Christians is London, BL, Add. 11855 (AM 740/1024 CE), one of an early group of manuscripts of West Syriac provenance that feature only his translation of the book of Genesis; the other books in this type of manuscript represent translations from the Syriac (Exodus and Numbers) and the Greek (Leviticus and Deuteronomy).[88] The West Syriac provenance of this group of manuscripts can be confirmed by close observation: Leiden, UBL, Or. 377 was copied by Salām b. Ismāʾīl al-Mardanī al-Yaʿqūbī, a Syriac Orthodox scribe from Mardin (Fig. 10);[89] and Paris, BnF, Ar. 4 contains many Syriac glosses.[90]

This group of manuscripts indicates sections in the narrative by rubricated headings; for example, Genesis 6:14 has قصة الطوفان 'the account of the deluge' and Genesis 9:8 has قصة العهد مع نوح 'the account of the covenant with Noah'. This practice is unusual in Jewish copies of the Bible, whereas it is found quite regularly in manuscripts of the Peshitta.[91] Nevertheless, some manuscripts retain the weekly *parashot* of the Hebrew Bible and occasionally even the *sedarim* according to the Palestinian triennial reading cycle.[92]

---

[86] As shown by Schwarb 2007; 2014.

[87] See Vollandt 2014; 2019.

[88] Further manuscripts in this group include Florence, BML, Or. 57; Oxford, Bodl., Hunt. 424; Leiden, UBL, Or. 377 (previously Warner 377); Paris, BnF, Ar. 4; and Cairo, COP, Bibl. 20, 22, 25. For the Syriac and Greek versions of the remaining pentateuchal books, see Vollandt 2015.

[89] On this manuscript, see de Lagarde 1867; Hughes 1914.

[90] As illustrated by fol. 1^{r}, which exhibits a list of the twelve gems of the breastplate, on which were engraved the names of the tribes of Israel, in Syriac. Similarly, fol. 113^{r} has a Syriac note on the chronology of the Israelites.

[91] On these, see Vollandt 2015, 154–158.

[92] The latter is exhibited in Copenhagen, DKB, Cod. Arab. 75.

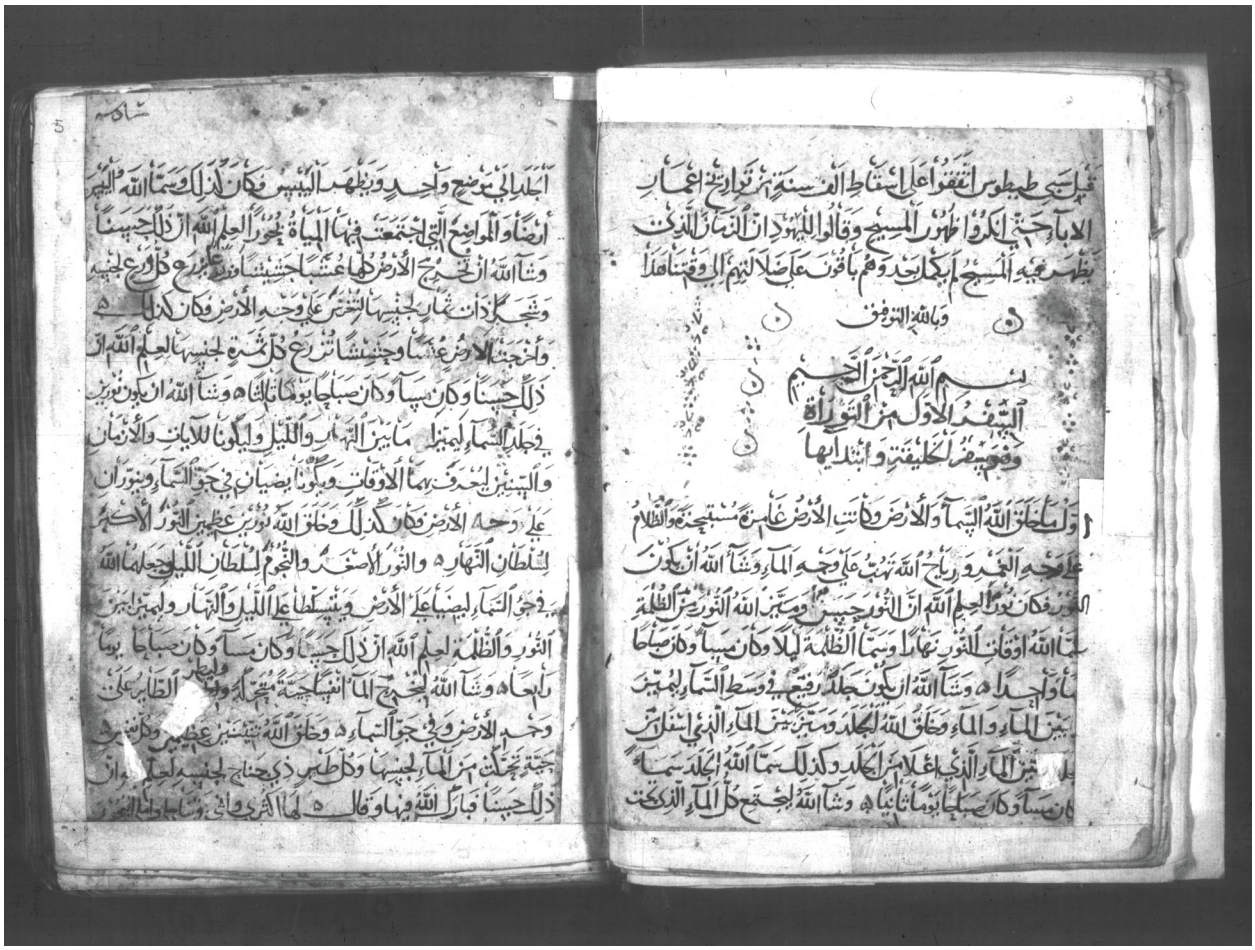


Fig. 10: Leiden, UBL, Or. 377, fols 4ᵛ–5ʳ. © Leiden University Libraries, Leiden University. Public Domain.

Despite the conservative nature of these manuscripts, an attempt to adapt the *Tafsīr* to the Peshitta is noticeable. Some imitative devices are evident and create a retroactive dependency on the Syriac text, especially in syntactical and lexical features. For example, a tendency to replace Saadiah's lexicon in favour of Syriac cognate roots can be observed: throughout the text, the word גַ'נאן, Saadiah's rendering of the biblical גַּן 'garden', was substituted by فردوس, mirroring Syriac ܦܪܕܝܣܐ; and in Genesis 2:7, the verbal form כַּ'לַק 'he created' was replaced by جبل in imitation of ܒܪܐ, the form which is found in the Peshitta.

3.5.2 The Coptic branch of transmission

A full set of pentateuchal books from Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in Arabic letters is only attested in manuscripts by Coptic scribes. It appears that the text was already available to Coptic scholars some time before the Coptic-Bohairic Pentateuch was rendered into Arabic, since the latter exhibits a striking familiarity with the former.[93] From the first half of the thirteenth century onwards, however, the *Tafsīr* can be found in a large number of copies, all of them on paper and usually comprising the

[93] Compare the remarks of Livne-Kafri 2002; 2007.

five books of the Tora. The transmission of the *Tafsīr* among Coptic communities is complex and textual witnesses branch out in a number of different manuscript types: the basic type, the revised type, and the extended type.

The first, and most basic, type takes the form of a running translation, without additions. We may assume that this type antedated the revised and extended types, not only because this is indicated by dated manuscripts, but also since it is implied by their textual basis. The codices usually make explicit that the text contained is محررة من نقل سعيد الفيومي من العبراني إلى العربي ('accurately copied from the translation of Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī [Saadiah Gaon], from the Hebrew into Arabic').[94] Despite this attestation of accuracy, however, this text type exhibits a fairly significant revision which allows us to speak of a distinct Coptic adaptation: the chapter division follows the Coptic tradition, but in addition retains an indication of the Hebrew *parashot*[95] The earliest dated manuscript of this type is Florence, BML, Or. 112 (previously 21), copied in 1245–1246 CE.[96]

Then there is a revised version of this work, based on the earlier basic type.[97] It is represented by copies of an exemplar achieved through a Coptic-Jewish collaboration (Fig. 11). In Shawwāl of the year H 639 (1242 CE), a Coptic scholar and his Jewish collaborator sat facing each other and studied the text jointly. The name of the Jewish collaborator, whom the author of the preface describes as أحد أفاضل الإسرائليّين ('one of the most notable Israelites'), is unfortunately omitted in the two manuscripts that contain the preface. Fortunately, however, a colophon survives in Cairo, COP, Bibl. 21 (fol. 147ʳ) and provides a name and a date.[98] On this basis, the Jew can be identified as Abū al-Majd ibn Abī Manṣūr ibn Abī al-Faraj al-Isrāʾīlī. Abū al-Majd is known from a number of documents of the first half of the thirteenth century, preserved in the various Cairo Genizah collections.[99] He served as cantor and treasurer of the Babylonian congregation of Old Cairo at the time of the nagid Abraham b. Maimon (1186–1237). Most of the documents in which he appears, frequently in connection to the distribution of alms, date to 1208–1219. As the preface relates, each of the two scholars held his own copy of the *Tafsīr*. But while the Copt referred to a manuscript of Saadiah's translation that was written in Arabic script, elaborating on its content and characteristic features, the Jew read aloud from a manuscript that contained the same Arabic text in Hebrew letters. The Copt duly noted all textual variants between the two versions on his own copy and incorporated his collaborator's explanations in the form of a sophisticated interlinear apparatus as well as marginal glosses. The whole enterprise was prompted by the wish to return to the *Tafsīr*'s original Judaeo-Arabic character.

---

[94] Florence, BML, Or. 112, fol. 1ʳ.

[95] On the Coptic division, see Rhode 1921, 111–113.

[96] Further copies are Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Guelf. 33 Gud. graec.; Vatican, BAV, Vat.ar. 2; Birmingham, Mingana, Christ. Ar. 7; Cairo, CM, Bibl. 1; Cairo, COP, Bibl. 24, 51, and 184; Vienna, ÖNB, Mixt. 664; and London, BL, Harl. 5475.

[97] This type is extant in three manuscripts: Paris, BnF, Ar. 1; Cairo, COP, Bibl. 21; and Cairo, COP, Bibl. 31. They all go back to a shared *Vorlage*; see Vollandt 2016; 2018a.

[98] I have relied on the BYU microfilm. The quality is too bad to attempt a full transcription here.

[99] See Goitein 1967–1993, 6:5. One fragment, Cambridge, CUL, T-S 13J15, which gives his patronymic as Ibn Abī al-Faraj, leaves no doubt that we are dealing with the same person.

Fig. 11: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cod. Arab. 1, Egypt, 1584–1585, fol. 3ᵛ: beginning of Genesis. © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Public Domain.

The third group of manuscripts, the extended type, supplements the basic text of the *Tafsīr* with a set of additional texts. These manuscripts fall into two sub-groups. In the first, the translation is preceded by an edificatory proem which elaborates on the place of Mosaic Law (*al-sharīʿa al-musawiyya*, i.e. the Tora) in the face of the New Testament.[100] Each book of the Pentateuch is also preceded by a short summary of its contents, referred to as the *dallāl* ('study guide'); and the manuscripts close with *al-khātima* ('epilogue'), an account of how the Hebrew Scriptures were handed down in an authoritative, unbroken line of transmitters, until they were eventually translated into a variety of languages and thus became corrupted. In the second sub-group of manuscripts, Saadiah's *Tafsīr* is interspersed with the commentary of Mark b. al-Qunbar.[101]

Given the existence within the Coptic Church of these various types of manuscript based on the *Tafsīr*, it is not farfetched to conclude that it was in heavy use, even quite recently.[102] That Saadiah's version was granted a canonical status of some sort becomes obvious not only in the sheer number of preserved manuscripts, but also – and all the more so – in light of the textual creativity with which it was revised, augmented, and appended with thematically related introductory prefaces, short treatises, and commentaries by Coptic scholars. These manuscripts, of which only a very small number have been subjected to a thorough investigation, give evidence that the *Tafsīr* was a popular object of study and its transmission carefully safeguarded. The function that the *Tafsīr* fulfilled in the Coptic Church – and the reason why it had to be studied and transmitted meticulously – finds an expression in the aforementioned accompanying texts of the revised and extended text types.

Looking at the various artefacts of the *Tafsīr* from this particular branch of transmission, who produced and owned copies of the text? Florence, BML, Or. 112 (previously 21), the earliest copy of the *Tafsīr* of Coptic provenance, was produced by 'the monk Gabriel'[103] Before his elevation to patriarch of the Church of Alexandria, as Gabriel III, he had been the preceptor of al-Amjad al-ʿAssāl and a secretary to the al-ʿAssāl family.[104] The ʿAssālids were one of the distinguished families (Arab. *buyūtāt*) who, often over several generations, attained high positions in the civil service as well as ecclesiastical prominence, and exerted a profound influence on the internal affairs of the community[105] The father was a high-ranking government official; one of the brothers, al-Amjad Abū al-Majd ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. after 1270), was secretary to the diwan of the army. Al-Amjad's position required him to travel back and forth between Cairo and Damascus, which ensured a steady influx of books not previously available in Egypt, notably those by East and West Syriac

[100] This group is represented by Cairo, COP, Bibl. 15, 16, 18, 19, 23, 28, and 183.

[101] Found in Cairo, COP, Theol. 3, 5, and 11; Cairo, COP, 5-1 (according to the reels of Brigham Young University); and Cairo, CM, Theol. 193.

[102] For example, a fairly recent copy is Cairo, COP, Bibl. 51 (copied 23 Bābah 1527 AM = 1 November 1810 CE). The later restorations of Cairo, CM, Theol. 193 used paper with watermarks of the Kingdom of Egypt, which shows that the codex was still in use for a certain time after 1922.

[103] As pointed out in Dikken 2012, 71–72. Not much is known about Gabriel III. For his life and a list of known manuscripts produced by him, see Swanson 2017; Hunt 2009.

[104] See MacCoull 1996; Graf 1932, 52–54; Samir 1985, 624–628; Swanson 2010, 97–100.

[105] On these, see Sidarus 2013.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

and Melkite authors.[106] Gabriel accompanied al-Amjad and his brothers during their travels to Damascus in search of manuscripts and transcribed many texts by them or important for their literary work. Another manuscript (Vienna, ÖNB, Mxt. 664), also an early Coptic copy of the *Tafsīr*, was in al-Amjad's personal library, *al-khizāna al-amjadiyya*. These copies seem to indicate that the ʿAssālids actively promoted the inclusion of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in their studies. They, through their travels and active acquisition of manuscripts, provide the missing link between the Syriac Orthodox and the Coptic branches of transmission.

3.5.3 Vatican, BAV, Borg.ar. 129

The manuscript Vatican, BAV, Borg.ar. 129 does not belong to any of the previous groups.[107] Its date and provenance are unknown.[108] The codex was formerly part of the collection gathered by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide), situated in the Museo Borgiano in Rome. There, the manuscript – still bearing its old shelf mark Rom N. 20 B. 6 – was consulted by Adler and described in detail.[109] At a later stage, the entire collection was transferred to the Vatican, where it is at present.

Two distinctive hands were involved in creating the final shape of this manuscript. The first scribe copied the entire text of the Pentateuch in *maghribī* (or *andalūsī*) script. The Hebrew *incipits* are given in Hebrew letters, although they are often omitted, especially in large portions of the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, where they are missing over successive folio pages. The text is divided according to Hebrew *parashot*. Fol. 1 contains an ownership note, stating that the manuscript was copied on behalf of a certain schoolmaster (*faqīh*), ʿĪsā b. Ibrāhīm, likely a Christian. Each book closes with a small colophon. As pointed out by Adler, the headings opening the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers contain a transcription of their Hebrew names into Arabic letters: fols 63 and 104 have الى شموت, fol. 104 has ויקרא, fol. 140 has بمدبار سيناي, and fol. 188 has الى هدباريم. These transcriptions have led several scholars to claim that the copyist was in fact Qaraite.[110] It should nevertheless be noted that they by no means represent the strict Qaraite transliteration practice, which would for example have ايلا شموث rather than الى شموت.[111] The transcriptions are rather semi-phonetic transliterations and seem to have their origin in Erpenius's *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè* (1622), which also exhibits these headings.

Saadiah's translation is featured faithfully and presents itself as a strict transcription of a Judaeo-Arabic *Vorlage* into Arabic letters, with no attempt to adapt the text to any biblical tradition.

---

106 Abullif 1997, 66 n. 73.

107 Several pages have been published in facsimile. See Tisserant 1914, 53; Hiat 1987, 94.

108 Tisserant dates it to the fourteenth century. This date, however, is unlikely: the codex would seem to have been produced in the seventeenth century, as discussed below.

109 See Adler 1783–1784, 173–176.

110 See Edelmann 1953, 74. This was reiterated by Blau 1999, 40 n. 4; Chiesa 1991, 206.

111 London, BL, Or. 2540, fol. 3^{v}, as published in Hoerning 1889.

Of special interest are a few instances which clearly indicate that the scribe copied from a manuscript in Hebrew letters.[112] Saadiah's translation of כְּתוֹעֲפֹת 'like the lofty horns [of the wild ox]' in Numbers 23:22 and 24:8 as כארק, which consists of the particle of similitude and the rarely attested plural form of *rawq* 'horn', led the scribe into confusion. Misinterpreting the form as an active participle, he transcribed it as خارق (fol. 152) in both verses.[113] In Numbers 24:9 he copied the apparently undotted ג׳ת׳א 'knelled', which translates כָּרַע, as غثا (fol. 152) due to the similarity of the letters *jīm* and *ghā* in Judaeo-Arabic.[114]

A later hand added corrections and supplements to the body of the text. This second scribe filled the opening page of the codex (left blank by the first writer) with the Arabic text of several versions of *surat al-baqarah* (Q 2:139) and *surat al-fātiḥah*, both accompanied by a transcription into Latin characters. In addition, he added in the Hebrew *incipits* that were omitted by the first copyist and added a continuous chapter and verse division according to modern usage, using Greek and Latin numerals. It is possible that the decorations marking the Hebrew *parashot* are also from his hand. He divided the entire Pentateuch into liturgical divisions, which do not correspond to any known pericopic system. Each section is called *bāb* ('gate'), a rather uncommon denotation of biblical divisions in Arabic. Furthermore, the second writer added numerous glosses in Greek. His writing in Greek and Latin characters is fluent, unlike the portions of text he wrote in Hebrew and Arabic letters, which display a clumsy and inexperienced flow, indicating that both scripts were foreign to him.

The text type of the *Tafsīr* exhibited in this manuscript diverges in its wording from both the Coptic and the Syrian branches of transmission. The peculiar appearance of the manuscript suggests a completely different background. With regard to the first textual layer, namely that of the *Tafsīr*, its time and place of composition are unknown. The *maghribī* hand, however, indicates a North African provenance. Moreover, the book headings, which the copyist took over from Erpenius's *Pentateuchus Mosis Arabicè* (1622), constitute a *terminus post quem*. It also seems certain that he used a Vorlage in Hebrew letters. As to the second layer, namely that of the later additions, the writer's interest in Jewish translation traditions into Arabic, alongside Muslim sacred texts, as well as his apparent knowledge of Greek, may place his provenance among the polymaths of Early Modern Europe. From his hands, the manuscript passed down to Propaganda Fide, which is known to have had a keen interest in Arabic translations of the Bible for missionary purposes.

3.6 The Muslim branch of transmission

Muslim scholars were quite well informed about the *Tafsīr* and its author. Al-Masʿūdī (896–956 CE), in his historiographical work *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf* ('the book of notification and verification'), furnishes important information on Saadiah's biography, including the name of his teacher, Abū

[112] As noted in Adler 1783–1784, 176.

[113] Adler's reading خارك should be corrected to خارق.

[114] Adler reads غشا.

 DOI: 10.15460/mc.2024.24.1.7

Kathīr Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyā al-Kātib.[115] Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 995 or 998 CE), in a section in his famous Fihrist devoted to the biblical books and their interpreters, calls Saadiah 'the most accurate of the translators from the point of view of translation, also the best of them for style and diction'.[116] Ibn Ḥazm (b. 994 CE), a prolific author, included a large number of quotations of a Jewish version of the Pentateuch in Arabic in his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī-l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal* ('book of opinions on religions, sects, and heresies'), which expanded his earlier *Kitāb al-uṣūl wa-l-furūʿ* ('book of roots and branches').[117] It includes a polemic on the 'alteration by the Jews and Christians' (*Iẓhār tabdīl al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā*), which was initially written as an independent treatise but later incorporated into the larger work by the author himself.[118] Most scholars, for example Hirschfeld, Di Matteo, Zucker, Tritton, and Adang, point to the striking similarity of the quotations from the Pentateuch in the works of Ibn Ḥazm to the corresponding verses in Saadiah's *Tafsīr*.[119]

However, is there concrete manuscript evidence for a transmission of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* among Muslims? The manuscript Istanbul, Topkapi, 3522 may be relevant here.[120] This encompasses 192 paper folios and was copied on 2 Ramaḍān 649 (17 November 1251 CE; the date is on fol. 192r). It contains the *Tafsīr* in a text type that does not correspond to those in Arabic script presented above. What is more, it preserved Saadiah's own preface to the translation, usually exclusively preserved in copies in Hebrew script. The formulas used in the colophon (fol. 192r), in particular the phrase لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله, as well as the use of Hijri dates, suggest that the copyist was a Muslim.

4. Conclusion

Saadiah Gaon's *Tafsīr* was transmitted both in Hebrew script and in Arabic script. Although similar factors shaped the final form and content of the *Tafsīr* in both scripts, the paths taken by the two are quite distinct, and so they will be discussed separately, beginning with the Hebrew-script transmission before moving on to discuss Arabic-script manuscripts.

Those manuscripts written in Hebrew letters remained, naturally enough, within Jewish communities: mostly Rabbanite, but also Qaraite. This means that the transmission of these versions of the translation is diachronic, that is, it involves its diffusion over time. As has been shown, it is reasonable to divide the Jewish transmission of the *Tafsīr* primarily into an early stage and a late stage. The early stage of transmission is represented in the manuscript St Petersburg, NLR, Yevr. II C 1, as well as in early Genizah fragments that are written on parchment. There is an intermediate transitional stage, represented by the bulk of the Genizah fragments of the *Tafsīr*,

---

115 Goeje 1894, 112–113. On the identification of Abū Kathīr Yaḥyā al-Kātib, see Polliack 1997, 12 n. 39.

116 Dodge 1970, 1:46.

117 The most detailed account of Ibn Ḥazm's intellectual biography is found in Asín Palacios 1927–1932, vol. 1; also see Adang, Fierro, and Schmidtke 2012.

118 On the book's complicated textual history, see Kaddouri 2013.

119 See Hirschfeld 1901; Di Matteo 1923; Zucker 1937; Tritton 1958; Adang 1996, 136; Vollandt 2015, 105–108.

120 I am dependent for this manuscript on the microfilm at the Dār al-Kutub, Cairo; see Sayyid 1954–1960, 1:5. My thanks go to Vevian Zaki, who helped me to obtain a digital copy.

which predate many of the characteristic features exhibited in later manuscripts. Then the later stage of transmission in Jewish communities is seen in the comparably late codices of Near Eastern and Yemenite provenance, as well as in Saadianic adaptations.

The textual modifications that occurred in the diachronic transmission of the *Tafsīr* in Jewish communities respond to two specific sets of circumstances. The first of these is associated with the dissemination of different stages of Saadiah's translation. It is reasonable to assume that the glosses found in the manuscript NLR, Yevr. II C 1, and comparable variants in the Genizah material, have their origin at least in part in the detachment of the translation from the associated commentary. Saadiah's revision of the text of the *Tafsīr* which encompassed this detachment led to the circulation of the two textual units side by side, and, as is so often the case, the creation of the shorter work initiated the near extinction of the longer original. While his translation was widely diffused both in temporal and geographic terms, Saadiah's commentary fell into oblivion and ceased being copied: already in the Genizah corpus, the proportion of fragments containing the commentary is modest.[121] As Saadiah authorized the second recension of the translation in his introduction, there were, in a sense, two separate authorized versions. However, manuscripts occasionally present a merger of the two. Therefore, despite the disappearance of the commentary itself, distinctive readings of it were preserved at the margins of transmission, and owe much to the editorial activity of educated scribes.

As all extant manuscripts of the *Tafsīr* postdate the life of Saadiah by decades or even centuries, the manuscripts should be recognized as places of fluent contingencies, with scribes considering the *Tafsīr* to some degree as a progressive, open text. The many variants in which Saadiah's translation has been transmitted attest that medieval Jewish scribal culture is not simply characterized by diversity, but indeed often cultivated it deliberately. Through the act of copying, the scribe supplanted the original author and to some extent appropriated the authority inherent in the creation of a text. Modifications of the lexicon or word order of the *Tafsīr*, and the omission of some elements and the addition of others, are all indications of this. As noted above, such alternations resulted from changes in the linguistic and functional setting between the time of production of the original text and the time when it was copied. In other words, these amendments were neither accidental nor haphazard, but reveal what readers expected from Saadiah's translation and how they interpreted it in relation to their own specific cultural context. In this contribution, we have observed the effects of two distinct groups of readers: learned, scholarly readers and less learned readers who depended on the *Tafsīr* in a didactic context.

The second circumstance to which the textual modifications respond also encompasses the fluid nature of manuscript production and the different levels of scribal re-creation of copied texts. Rather than reflecting different stages of the *Tafsīr*'s transmission, this factor concerns the constant updating of the text based on the needs of readers. Medieval Jewish readers who wished to obtain or use a copy of the *Tafsīr* could purchase one from a private owner or hire a professional scribe to produce a copy. However, if they lacked the financial means to do this, they could also copy the

[121] This fate was shared by other geonic commentaries on the Scriptures, such as those of Samuel ben Ḥofnī and Aharon Sarjado.

book themselves, and such user-produced manuscripts of Saadiah's translation appear to constitute the large majority of Genizah fragments. They are usually copied on paper rather than parchment, and occasionally reuse writing material. Furthermore, they are smaller than the professionally commissioned copies (around 17 cm in height and 14 cm in width on average), and their script is not calligraphic like the latter but semi-cursive or cursive.

In contrast to the Hebrew-script manuscripts, the transmission of the *Tafsīr* in Arabic script (as well as in Samaritan script) was, as a rule, connected to cross-cultural dissemination, that is, to the transfer of the translation into different cultural and denominational contexts. The *Tafsīr* was used and read by Samaritan, Syriac Orthodox, Coptic, and Muslim readers. The socio-historical conditions of the time allowed for the presence and flourishing of texts and textual practices in one religious community that had originated within another. We can understand the transmission of texts underlying this phenomenon as a 'migration' of texts, in which the *Tafsīr* was passed on to and took root in contexts different from those in which it emerged, and thereby assumed new meanings without being completely cut off from the original context. Textual migration is thus characterized by both rupture and continuity in the transmission of texts. Among Christian communities, most clearly in the Coptic branch of transmission, the *Tafsīr* functions as a point of comparison to the Jewish Bible in Hebrew that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

It has also become clear that the diffusion of the *Tafsīr* into its new cultural contexts involves different levels of modification and deconstruction. Features which were not relevant to the new contexts were modified, and these modifications bear the characteristic marks of a retroactive adjustment to the absorbing culture. This appropriation is especially evident in regard to several aspects of Saadiah's translation practice, such as his lexicon and syntax; and it is particularly noticeable in the Syriac branch of transmission, where Saadiah's translation was adapted in accordance with the Peshitta. One may say that in appropriating the *Tafsīr* the scribes of manuscripts in Arabic script bridged the gap between textual 'deficiencies' resulting from the transfer and the new cultural context. Part of this bridging has also been to introduce a number of accompanying texts that deal with the handing down of the biblical text in various languages and Mosaic Law.

Returning to the notions of 'work', 'text', and 'artefact' introduced at the beginning of this paper, one can argue that the propensity of the *Tafsīr* to adapt and change at the levels of 'text' and 'artefact' ensured its enduring transtemporal, transregional, and transdenominational transmission in manuscript copies. To some extent, the destabilization of the text into a plurality of variants challenges the classical notion of a critical edition and calls for a re-examination of the premises and presuppositions of transmission and diffusion of the *Tafsīr*. This present attempt has been to historicize and contextualize how the *Tafsīr*, as a 'work', acquires meaning precisely through plurality and its inherent variation.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg for supporting this research during my fellowship in 2020. The Centre is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's

Excellence Strategy – EXC 2176 'Understanding Written Artefacts: Material, Interaction and Transmission in Manuscript Cultures', project no. 390893796.

Manuscripts

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek SPK
Or. Quart. 1082

Birmingham, Birmingham University Library
Mingana, Christ. Ar. 7

Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia
MTA, Kaufmann, Genizah 386

Cairo, Coptic Museum (CM)
CM, Theol. 193
CM, Bibl. 1

Cairo, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate (COP)
COP, 5-1
COP, Bibl. 15
COP, Bibl. 16
COP, Bibl. 18
COP, Bibl. 19
COP, Bibl. 20
COP, Bibl. 21
COP, Bibl. 22
COP, Bibl. 23
COP, Bibl. 24
COP, Bibl. 25
COP, Bibl. 28
COP, Bibl. 31
COP, Bibl. 51
COP, Bibl. 183
COP, Bibl. 184
COP, Theol. 3
COP, Theol. 5
COP, Theol. 11

Cairo, Qaraite Synagogue
Qaraite Synagogue, 14
Qaraite Synagogue, 27

Cambridge, Cambridge University Library (CUL)

Mosseri III.194.1
Mosseri VI.73

T-S 13J15

T-S A29.21
T-S A29.34
T-S A29.101

T-S Ar. 1a.18
T-S Ar. 1a.19
T-S Ar. 1a.32
T-S Ar. 1a.38
T-S Ar. 1a.49
T-S Ar. 1a.55
T-S Ar. 1a.62
T-S Ar. 1a.92
T-S Ar. 1a.104
T-S Ar. 1a.140
T-S Ar. 1a.143
T-S Ar. 1a.150
T-S Ar. 19.145
T-S Ar. 21.8
T-S Ar. 21.21
T-S Ar. 21.31
T-S Ar. 21.110
T-S Ar. 21.116
T-S Ar. 21.163
T-S Ar. 21.165
T-S Ar. 21.183
T-S Ar. 22.41
T-S Ar. 22.51
T-S Ar. 22.99
T-S Ar. 24.4
T-S Ar. 24.100
T-S Ar. 24.129
T-S Ar. 24.177

T-S Ar. 25.17
T-S Ar. 25.32
T-S Ar. 25.78
T-S Ar. 25.83
T-S Ar. 25.130
T-S Ar. 25.150
T-S Ar. 25.154
T-S Ar. 25.164
T-S Ar. 26.101
T-S Ar. 27.2
T-S Ar. 27.6
T-S Ar. 27.62
T-S Ar. 27.92
T-S Ar. 27.105
T-S Ar. 27.117 <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-AR-00027-00117/1> (accessed on 22 August 2024).
T-S Ar. 28.7
T-S Ar. 28.13
T-S Ar. 28.22
T-S Ar. 28.28
T-S Ar. 28.37
T-S Ar. 28.56
T-S Ar. 28.58
T-S Ar. 28.59
T-S Ar. 28.72
T-S Ar. 28.92
T-S Ar. 28.105
T-S Ar. 28.115
T-S Ar. 28.127
T-S Ar. 28.144
T-S Ar. 28.150
T-S Ar. 28.157
T-S Ar. 28.161
T-S Ar. 30.316
T-S Ar. 42.148
T-S Ar. 51.147

T-S AS 8.37
T-S AS 17.210
T-S AS 69.16
T-S AS 70.98
T-S AS 70.117
T-S AS 70.167
T-S AS 70.208
T-S AS 71.22
T-S AS 71.29
T-S AS 71.45
T-S AS 71.90
T-S AS 72.79
T-S AS 72.109
T-S AS 72.125
T-S AS 72.132

T-S B1.3
T-S B1.5
T-S B1.6
T-S B1.7

T-S Misc.5.51
T-S Misc.5.77
T-S Misc.5.84
T-S Misc.5.129
T-S Misc.7.90
T-S Misc.7.132

T-S NS 52.3
T-S NS 52.16
T-S NS 57.36
T-S NS 67.23
T-S NS 70.59
T-S NS 74.27
T-S NS 141.63
T-S NS 164.161
T-S NS 164.165
T-S NS 173.59
T-S NS 188.31
T-S NS 189.26
T-S NS 221.12
T-S NS 221.30
T-S NS 221.50

T-S NS 254.95
T-S NS 260.57
T-S NS 263.20
T-S NS 263.42
T-S NS 263.43
T-S NS 263.96
T-S NS 285.17
T-S NS 285.54
T-S NS 285.76
T-S NS 285.99
T-S NS 285.137
T-S NS 285.141
T-S NS 285.160
T-S NS 303.53
T-S NS 303.79
T-S NS 312.66
T-S NS 319.45

Or. 1080 C6.6

Cambridge, Westminster College
Arabica I.14
Arabica I.83

Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek (DKB)
Cod. Arab. 75

Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (BML)
Or. 57
Or. 112 (previously 21)

Leiden, Universitaire Bibliotheken Leiden (UBL)
Or. 377 (previously Warner 377)

London, British Library
Add. 11855
Harl. 5475
Or. 5556 C.1
Or. 5562 C.16–19
Or. 5562.C.39
Or. 7562

Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE)
MSS 5475
<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000255398&page=1> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

New York, Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS)
ENA 598
ENA 2160.21–22
ENA 2710.21
ENA 2946.2–3
ENA 3123.7–8
ENA 3830.1–2
L 647

Oxford, Bodleian Old Library (Bodl.)
MS. Oppenheim Add. 4° 98
<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/07935b10-1c8f-49a3-969c-faaf89c77a0d/> (accessed on 22 August 2024).
Heb. b. 9.4
<https://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/volume_20> (accessed on 22 August 2024).
Heb. c. 19, fol. 31–34
<https://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/volume_30> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
Heb. d. 56, fol. 1–8
<https://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/volume_79> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
Hunt. 424
Hunt. 463
Poc. 395–396
<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/90a088d1-08ca-48be-8970-470466lcc1e1/> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)
Arabe 1
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110045111> (accessed on 22 August 2024).
Arabe 4
Hébreu 79

Paris, Institut de France
3381.6
<https://www.bibliotheque-institutdefrance.fr/sites/default/files/volume1-genizah-caire-manuscrit.pdf> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
3381.21A
<https://www.bibliotheque-institutdefrance.fr/sites/default/files/volume2-genizah-caire-manuscrit.pdf> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
3381.23
<https://www.bibliotheque-institutdefrance.fr/sites/default/files/volume2-genizah-caire-manuscrit.pdf> (accessed on 5 December 2024).

Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, Center for Advanced Judaic Studies (CAJS)
Halper 43
<https://colenda.library.upenn.edu/catalog/81431-p3tm72k17> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
Halper 44
<https://colenda.library.upenn.edu/catalog/81431-p3pv6br7g> (accessed on 5 December 2024).

St Petersburg, National Library of Russia (NLR)
Yevr. I B 19a
<https://www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH990001516230205171/NLI#$FL38629479> (accessed on 5 December 2024).
Yevr. II C 1
<https://www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH990000989500205171/NLI#$FL49803584> (accessed on 22 August 2024).
Yevr. Arab. II 750
<https://www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH990001600170205171/NLI#$FL48150070> (accessed on 5 December 2024).

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV)
Borg.ar. 129
<https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.ar.129> (accessed on 5 December 2024)
Vat.ar. 2
<https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.2>

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (ÖNB)
Cod. Mixt. 664

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek (HAB)
Guelf. 33 Gud. graec.

References

Abramson, Shraga (1977), לפירוש רב יצחק בן גיאת לקהלת 'On Isaac ibn Ghayyat's Commentary to Kohelet', *Kiryat sefer*, 52: 156–172.a

Abullif, Wadīʿ (1997), دراسة عن المؤتمن بن العسال وكتابه مجموع أصول الدين وتحقيقه *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin b. al-ʿAssāl wa-kitābihi 'Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn' wa-taḥqīqihi*, Cairo: Franciscan Printing Press.

Adang, Camilla (1996), *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden: Brill.

—— , Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke (eds) (2012), *Ibn Hazm of Cordoba: The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, Leiden: Brill.

Adler, Jacob Georg Christian (1783–1784), *Kurze Übersicht seiner biblisch-kritischen Reise nach Rom*, Altona: J.D.A. Eckhardt.

Alexander, Elizabeth Shanks (2006), *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alexander, Elizabeth Shanks (2007), 'The Orality of Rabbinic Literary Activity', in Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 38–57.

Alexander, Tamar, Ephraim Hazan, Galit Hasan-Rokem, and Abraham Haim, יצירה ותולדות בקהילות ישראל בספרד והמזרח *History and Creativity in the Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Communities*, Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalaym, 73–88.

Algermissen, Ernst (1933), *Die Pentateuchzitate Ibn Ḥazms: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, Münster: s.n.

Allony, Nehemia (2006), הספרייה היהודית בימי הביניים: רשימות ספרים מגניזת קהיר *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages: Book Lists from the Cairo Genizah*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

—— (ed.) (1969), האגרון לרב סעדיה גאון *Ha'egron: Kitāb ʾuṣūl al-shiʿr al-ʿibrānī by Rav Sĕʿadya Ga'on; critical edition with introduction and commentary*, Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language.

Arrant, Estara J. (2020), 'An Exploratory Typology of Near-model and Non-standard Tiberian Torah Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah', in Aaron D. Hornkohl and Geoffrey Khan (eds), *Studies in Semitic Vocalization and Reading Traditions* (Semitic Languages and Cultures), Cambridge: University of Cambridge & Open Book Publishers, 467–547.

—— (2021), *A Codicological and Linguistic Typology of Common Torah Codices from the Cairo Genizah*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

Ashur, Amir and Tamar Zewi (2019), 'A Genizah Fragment of Saadya Gaon's Bible Translation Copied by Mevōrākh b. Nāthān in the 12th Century', *Astarté: Estudios del Oriente Próximo y el Mediterráneo*, 2: 113–120.

Asín Palacios, Miguel (1927–1932), *Abenházam de Córdoba y su historia crítica de las ideas religiosas*, Madrid: Tip. de la Revista de archivos.

Atay, Hüseyin (ed.) (1979), *Maimonides, Delaletü'l-Hairin*, Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi.

Avishur, Yitzhaq (1989), '"Difficult Words" ("מילים קשות") בתרגום רס"ג לתורה וגלגוליהן בנוסחאות התרגומים במזרח' in Saadia's Translation of the Torah and Modern Translations', *Massorot*, 3–4: 131–146.

—— (1990), 'The Attitude of R. Avraham ibn Ezra to the Translation and Commentary of R. Saadiah Gaon', in Fernando Díaz Esteban (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra y su tiempo*, Madrid: Asociación Española de Orientalistas, 17–24.

—— (1991a), 'The Adaptations of R. Saadya Gaon's Bible Translation in the East' העיבודים של תרגום רס"ג לתורה במזרח, *Sefunot*, 20: 181–202.

—— (1991b), 'Targume ha-tana"kh ba-ʿaravit ha-yehudit (ha-sharḥ) be-ʿiraq' תרגומי התנ"ך בערבית היהודית ("השרח") בעיראק, *Meḥqarim be-toldot yehude bavel u-ve-tarbutam* מחקרים בתולדות יהודי בבל ובתרבותם, 6: 16–139.

—— (1992), 'Some New Sources for the Study of the Text and Language of Saadya's Translation of the Pentateuch in Judaeo-Arabic', in Joshua Blau and Stefan Reif (eds), *Genizah Research after Ninety Years, the Case of Judaeo-Arabic: Papers Read at the Third Congress of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5–13.

—— (1998), 'Hitmodedut me-targume ha-tora le-ʿaravit yehudit ʿim leshoni shel targum R. Saadiah Gaon' התמודדות מתרגמי התורה לערבית יהודית עם לשונו של תרגום ר' סעדיה גאון, *Ben ʿever la-ʿarav* בין עבר לערב, 1: 129–144.

Avrahami, Y. (1994), 'המקשיה תרגום המקרא לערבית יהודית של תוניס מאת ר' מרדכי חי דיין' "Ha-moqshiya" targum ha-miqra le-ʿaravit yehudit shel Tunis me-et Mordekhai Hay Dayyan', in Baker, Colin F. and Meira Polliack (2001), *Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections: Arabic Old Series* (T-S Ar.1a-54) (Cambridge University Library Genizah Series), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bar-Asher, Moshe (1988a), 'השרח המערבי למקרא ולספרות יהודית אחרת. טיבו ודרכי גיבושו' Ha-sharḥ ha-maʿaravi la-miqra u-le-sifrut yehudit aḥaret: Ṭivo ve-gibbusho', in Moshe Bar-Asher (ed.), מחקרים בלשונות היהודים *Studies in Jewish languages*, Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalaym, 3–34.

—— (1998b), *Traditions linguistiques des Juifs d'Afrique du Nord* מסורות ולשונות של יהודי צפון-אפריקה, Jerusalem: Academy of Hebrew Language.

—— (ed.) (2001), *Le commentaire biblique Leshon limmudim de rabbi Raphaël Berdugo* לשון לימודים לרבי רפאל בירדוגו, 3 vols, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University.

Bareket, Elinoar (1995), *The Jews of Egypt 1007–1055*: יהודי מצרים 1007-1055 על פי ארכיון התעודות של אפרים בן שמריה, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

Beiler, Vince (2022), 'Genizah Fragments of Saadiah's tafsīr by Samuel ben Jacob: T-S AS 72.79 and T-SAr.1a.38 Revisited', Genizah Research Unit: Fragment of the Month (October 2022), Cambridge University Library, <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2022/fragment-9> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

Beit-Arié, Malachi, Mordechai Glatzer, and Colette Sirat (1997), *Codices hebraicis litteris exarati quo tempore scripti fuerint exhibentes*, vol. 1 (Monumenta palaeographica medii aevi: Series hebraica), Turnhout: Brepols.

Ben-Sasson, Menahem (2009), 'ספריות בית הרמב"ם בין קאהיר לחלב' Sifriyat bet ha-Rambam ben Qahir le-Ḥalav', in Yom Tov Assis, Miriam Frenkel and Yaron Harel (eds), *Aleppo Studies, vol. 1, The Jews of Aleppo: Their History and Culture*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 51–105.

Ben-Shammai, Haggai (1986–1987), 'Review of Zucker, Moshe (1984), פירושי רב סעדיה גאון לבראשית: Saadya's commentary on Genesis, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America', *Kiryat sefer*, 61: 601–602.

—— (1987), 'ישועה בן יהודה: לדמותו של חכם קראי ירושלמי במאה הי"א' Yeshuah Ben Yehuda: A Characterization of a Karaite Scholar of Jerusalem in the Eleventh Century', *Pe'amim*, 32: 3–20.

—— (2000a), חדשים גם ישנים: "ההקדמה הגדולה״ו" ההקדמה הקטנה לתרגום רס״ג לתורה ‘New and Old: Saadiah Two Introductions to His Translation of the Pentateuch’, *Tarbiẓ*, 69: 199–210.

—— (2000b), עיונים במסורות הנוסח של תרגומי יפת בן עלי למקרא ‘Reflections on the Transmission Tradition of Yefet ben ʿEli’s Bible Translations’, in David Sklare, Haggai Ben-Shammai et al. (eds), *Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in the Firkovitch Collection: Yefet ben Eli al-Basri, Commentary on Genesis*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 181–206.

—— (2003), ‘The Tension between Literal Interpretation and Exegetical Freedom: Comparative Observations on Saadia’s Method’, in Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry Walfish and Joseph Ward Goering (eds), *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 33–50.

Blapp, Samuel (2017), *The Non-standard Tiberian Hebrew Language Tradition according to Bible Manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

Blau, Joshua (1998), עיונים בכתב-יד מזרחי מתחילת המאה הי״א של תרגום רס״ג לתורה ‘Saadya Gaon’s Pentateuch Translation in Light of an Early-Eleventh-Century Egyptian Manuscript’, *Leshonenu*, 61: 111–130.

—— (1999), *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic: A Study of the Origins of Neo-Arabic and Middle Arabic*, 3rd edn, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

Blondheim, D. S. (1925), ‘Influences arabes dans les versions bibliques judéo-romanes’, in *Les parlers judéo-romans et la ‘Vetus latina’*, Paris: É. Champion, 140–155.

Bowers, Fredson (2002), ‘Bibliography, Pure Bibliography and Literary Studies’, in David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (eds), *The Book History Reader*, Abington: Routledge, 27–34.

Brauer, Erich (1934), *Ethnologie der jemenitischen Juden*, Heidelberg: C. Winter.

Brody, Robert (1998), *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

—— (2013), *Saʿadyah Gaon*, tr. Betsy Rosenberg, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

Cavallo, Guglielmo and Roger Chartier (eds) (1999), *A History of Reading in the West*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Chartier, Roger (1987), *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d’Ancien régime*, Paris: Le Seuil.

—— (1992), *L'ordre des livres: Lecteurs, auteurs, bibliothèques en Europe entre XIVe et XVIIIe siècle*, Aix-en-Provence: Alinea.

—— (ed.) (1993), *Pratiques de la lecture*, Paris: Payot.

Chiesa, Bruno (1991), 'Un testimone della traduzione araba del Pentateucho di Saadia', in Giuliano Tamani and Angelo Vivian (eds), *Manoscritti, frammenti e libri ebraici nell'Italia dei secoli XV–XVI*, Rome: Carucci, 203–213.

Darnton, Robert (1982), 'What is the History of Books?' *Daedalus*, 111: 65–83.

Derenbourg, Joseph, Hartwig Derenbourg, and Mayer Lambert (eds) (1893–1899), *Saadia ben Joseph: Œuvres complètes de R. Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyoûmî*, Paris: E. Leroux.

Di Matteo, Ignazio (1923), 'Le pretese contraddizioni della S. Scrittura secondo Ibn Ḥazm', *Bessarione*, 39: 77–129.

Dikken, Berend Jan (2012), 'Some Remarks about Middle Arabic and Saʿadya Gaon's Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch in Manuscripts of Jewish, Samaritan, Coptic Christian, and Muslim Provenance', in Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers (eds), *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony*, Leiden: Brill, 51–81.

Doron, David (1985), 'Arabic Translation of the Torah by Issachar ben Susan Hamma'ravi', *Sefunot*, NS 3: 279–298. על תרגום התורה לערבית של ר' יששכר בן-סוסאן המערבי

L'ordre des livres (1991), 'From the "Tafsir" of R. Saadya Gaon to the Translation of R. Mordechai Hai Dayyan of Tunis', *Sefunot*, NS 5: 171–180. מתפסיר רס"ג לתרגומו של ר' מרדכי חי דיין מתוניס

L'ordre des livres (1995), 'Haqdamato shel R. Hayy Mordekhai mi-Tunis le-targum sefer bereshot le-ʿaravit yehudit', *Mi-mizraḥ u-mi-maʿarav*, 6: 131–160. הקדמתו של ר' מרדכי חי דיין מתוניס לתרגום ספר בראשית לערבית-יהודית ממזרח וממערב

Drory, Rina (1988), *Reshit ha-maggaʿim shel ha-sifrut ha-yehudit ʿim ha-sifrut ha-ʿaravit ba-meʾah ha-ʿasirit*, Tel Aviv: Ha-kibuts ha-meʾuḥad. ראשית המגעים של הספרות היהודית עם הספרות הערבית במאה העשירית

—— (2000), *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture*, Leiden: Brill.

Edelmann, R. (1953), 'On the Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch', in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen*, Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 71–75.

Fish, Stanley (1980), I*s There a Text in This Class?*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fuchs, Salomon (1893), *Studien über Abu Zakaria Jachja (R. Jehuda) ibn Balâm*, Berlin: H. Itzkowski.

Gil, Moshe (1992), *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goeje, Michael Jean (ed.) (1894), المسعودي: كتاب التنبيه والاشراف *al-Masʿūdī: Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-al-ishrāf* (Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum), Leiden: Brill.

Goitein, Shlomo Dov (1953), 'Jewish Education in Yemen as an Archetype of Traditional Education', in C. Frankenstein (ed.), *Between Past and Future: Essays and Studies on Aspects of Immigrant Absorption in Israel*, Jerusalem: Henrietta Szold Foundation for Child and Youth Welfare, 109–146.

—— (1962), סדרי חינוך בימי הגאונים ובית הרמב"ם: מקורות חדשים מן הגניזה *Jewish Education in Muslim Countries: Based on Records from the Cairo Geniza*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

—— (1967–1993), *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

—— (1971), 'Side Lights on Jewish Education from the Cairo Geniza', in Isidore D. Passow and Samuel T. Lachs (eds), *Gratz College: Anniversary Volume on the Occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of the College; 1895–1970*, Philadelphia: Gratz College, 82–110.

—— (1983), התימנים *The Yemenites: History, Communal Organization, Spiritual Life*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

Gottheil, Richard (1905), 'Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 17: 609–655.

Graf, Georg (1932), 'Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie der Aulād al-ʿAssāl und ihr Schrifttum', *Orientalia*, 1: 34–56, 129–148, 193–204.

—— (1940), 'Ein Traktat über die Seele verfasst von Hibatallāh ibn al-ʿAssāl', *Orientalia* 9 :374–377.

Greg, W. W. (1914), 'What is Bibliography?', *Transactions of the Bibliographic Society*, 12: 39–53.

Halkin, Abraham S. (1943), 'The Relation of the Samaritans to Saadia Gaon', in Boaz Cohen (ed.), *Saadia Anniversary Volume*, New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 271–325.

Harkavy, Albert and Hermann Leberecht Strack (1875), *Catalog der hebräischen Bibelhandschriften der Kaiserlichen-öffentlichen Bibliothek in St. Petersburg*, St Petersburg: C. Ricker.

Hary, Benjamin H. (2000), 'Egyptian Judeo-Arabic "Sharh": Bridging the Cultures of Hebrew and Arabic', in Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes and Fred Astren (eds), *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction*, Leiden: Brill, 395–407.

—— (2009), *Translating Religion* (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval, 38), Leiden: Brill.

Hazon, Rayah (1995), בעיית זהות המחבר של התשובות על רס״ג ועל מנחם *On the Authorship of the 'Responses' to Saadia and to Menahem*, MPhil dissertation, Tel Aviv University.

—— (2005), תורתו הבלשנית של מחבר התשובות על רב סעדיה גאון, PhD dissertation, Tel Aviv University.

Hiat, Philip (1987), *A Visual Testimony: Judaica from the Vatican Library*, New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Hirsch, J. (1900), *Fragment einer arabischen Pentateuch-Übersetzung*, Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz.

Hirschfeld, Hartwig (1901), 'Mohammedan Criticism of the Bible', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 13: 222–240.

Hoerning, Reinhart (1889), *British Museum Karaite MSS. Descriptions and Collation of Six Karaite Manuscripts of Portions of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic Characters*, London: Williams & Norgate.

Hopkins, Simon (2005), מהדורה שלמה של התרגום הערבי לתורה נוסח שומרון 'Mahadurah shelemah shel ha-targum ha-ʿaravi la-Torah nusaḥ Shomron', *Cathedra*, 115: 217–221.

Howard-Hill, T.H. (2009), 'W.W. Greg as Bibliographer', *Textual Cultures*, 4/2: 63–75.

Hughes, John Caleb (1914), *De Lagardes Ausgabe der arabischen Übersetzung des Pentateuchs (Cod. Leiden arab. 377)*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.

Hunt, Lucy-Anne (2009), 'A Christian Arab Gospel Book: Cairo, Coptic Museum MS Bibl. 90 in Its Mamluk Context', *Mamluk Studies Review*, 13/2: 105–132.

Ibn al-Nadīm, Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq (1970), *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, ed. and tr. Bayard Dodge, New York: Colombia University Press.

Jaffee, Martin S. (1994), 'Writing and Rabbinic Oral Tradition: On Mishnaic Narratives, Lists and Mnemonics', *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 4: 123–146.

—— (2007), 'Rabbinic Authorship as a Collective Enterprise', in Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 17–37.

Jamgotchian, Haroutun S. (1991), 'Fragments inconnus de la traduction arabe du Pentateuque par Saʿadya al Fayyoumi dans une adaptation samaritaine', in Abraham Tal and Moshe Florentin (eds), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of the Société d'Études Samaritaines*, Tel Aviv: Chaim Rosenberg School for Jewish Studies, Tel Aviv University, 225–243.

Jefferson, Rebecca J. W. (2009), 'A Genizah Secret: The Count d'Hulst and Letters Revealing the Race to Recover the Lost Leaves of the Original Ecclesiasticus', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 21/1: 125–142.

—— (2010), 'The Cairo Genizah Unearthed: The Excavations Conducted by the Count d'Hulst on Behalf of the Bodleian Library and Their Significance for Genizah History', in Ben Outhwaite and Siam Bhayro (eds), *'From a Sacred Source': Genizah Studies in Honour of Professor Stefan C. Reif*, Leiden: Brill, 171–200.

—— (2018), 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah": A Fresh Look at Genizah Manuscript Discoveries in Cairo before 1897', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 108/4: 422–448.

—— (2019), '"What Cannot Often be Obtainable": The Revd Greville John Chester and the Bodleian Genizah Collection', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 31/2: 271–289.

Kaddouri, Samir (2013), *Le livre décisif sur les religions et les sectes d'Ibn Hazm: Entre l'histoire du texte et la critique textuelle*, PhD thesis, Leiden University.

Kahle, Paul (1904), *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen: Texte mit Glossar und Literaturübersicht*, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.

—— (1959), *The Cairo Genizah*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Katten, Max (1924), *Untersuchungen zu Saadja's arabischer Pentateuchübersetzung*, Giessen: s.n.

Kessar, Tsemaḥ (2004), על מהדורת התאג׳ תורה קדומה 'Torah Qedumah ed. J. P. Halevy', *Leshonenu*, 66: 163–169.

Khan, Geoffrey (1990–1991), 'Standardization and Variation in the Orthography of Hebrew Bible and Arabic Qur'an Manuscripts', *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 5: 53–58.

de Lagarde, Paul (1867), *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, 2 vols, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.

Livne-Kafri, Ofer (2002), על ערבית וקופטית בכתב יד דו-לשוני של התורה 'A Note on Coptic and Judaeo-Arabic on the Basis of a Bilingual Manuscript of the Pentateuch', *Massorot*, 12: 97–101.

—— (2007), 'Appendix II: Some Notes Concerning the Arabic Version', in Ariel Shisha-Halevy (ed.), *Topics in Coptic Syntax: Structural Studies in the Bohairic Dialect*, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 685–694.

MacCoull, L. S. B. (1996), 'A Note on the Career of Gabriel III, Scribe and Patriarch of Alexandria', *Arabica*, 43: 357–360.

Macuch, Rudolf (1991), 'On the Problems of the Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch', in Abraham Tal and Moshe Florentin (eds), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of the Société d'Études Samaritaines*, Tel Aviv: Chaim Rosenberg School for Jewish Studies, Tel Aviv University, 147–173.

Malter, Henry (1921), *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America.

Maman, Aharon (2000), השרח המוגרבי למקרא 'Ha-sharḥ ha-mugrebi la-miqra', *Pe'amim*, 83: 48–56.

Mann, Jacob (1920–1922), *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fāṭimid Caliphs: A Contribution to Their Political and Communal History Based Chiefly on Genizah Material Hitherto Unpublished*, London: Oxford University Press.

—— (1921), 'A Fihrist of Sa'adya's Works', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 11: 423–428.

—— (1931–1935), *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, 2 vols, Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press.

Martin, Henri-Jean and Lucien Febvre (1957), *L'apparition du livre*, Paris: A. Michel.

McKenzie, D.F. (2002), 'What's Past Is Prologue', in Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez, *Making Meaning: 'Printers of the Mind' and Other Essays*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 259–275 [1st edn: 1992].

Morag, Shlomo (1962), מסורות הדרות בכפיפה אחת 'Masorot ha-darot be-khefifa aḥat', in Yosef Tobi (ed.), מסורות הלשון העברית והלשון הארמית שבפי יהודי תימן *Traditions of Hebrew and Aramaic of the Jews of Yemen*, Tel Aviv: Afikim, 53–61.

Neubauer, Adolf (ed.) (1875), *The Book of Hebrew Roots by Abu'l Walid Marwan ibn Janah*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—— and Arthur Ernest Cowley (1886–1906), *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, and in the College Libraries of Oxford*, 3 vols, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Ofer, Yosef (1999), עיבוד מסרני של ערכים ממחברת מנחם בידי שמואל בן יעקב 'A Masoretic Reworking of the Maḥberet of Menaḥem', *Leshonenu*, 62: 189–255.

—— (2001), הערות מסורה בענייני דקדוק בכתב-יד לנינגרד עם תרגום רס״ג (ל (ס)) 'Masoretic Comments on Grammar in MS לס (A Manuscript from St Petersburg Containing the Tafsīr of Saadia Gaon)', *Language Studies*, 8: 49–75.

—— (2018), *The Masora on Scripture and Its Methods*, Berlin: De Gruyter.

Olszowy-Schlanger, Judith (2003), 'Learning to Read and Write in Medieval Egypt: Children's Exercise Books from the Cairo Geniza', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 48: 47–69.

—— (2016), 'Cheap Books in Medieval Egypt: Rotuli from the Cairo Geniza', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 4: 82–101.

Outhwaite, Benjamin M. (2018), 'Beyond the Leningrad Codex: Samuel b. Jacob in the Cairo Genizah', in Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, Nadia Vidro, Ronny Vollandt and Miriam Wagner (eds), *Studies in Semitic Linguistics and Manuscripts: A Liber Discipulorum in Honour of Professor Geoffrey Khan*, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 320–340.

—— (2020), 'The Sefer Torah and Jewish Orthodoxy in the Islamic Middle Ages', in B. Anderson (ed.), *From Scrolls to Scrolling: Sacred Texts, Materiality, and Dynamic Media Cultures*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 63–89.

Polliack, Meira (1993–1994), 'Alternative Renderings and Additions in Yeshu'ah ben Yehudah's Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 8: 209–226.

—— (1997), *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation: A Linguistic and Exegetical Study of Karaite Translations of the Pentateuch from the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries C.E.* (Études sur le judaïsme médiéval), Leiden: Brill.

—— (1998), 'Arabic Bible Translations in the Cairo Genizah Collections', in U. Haxen, Hanne Trautner-Kromann and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (eds), *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*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 595–620.

—— and Sasson Somekh (2001), שני גלוסרים מקראיים עבריים-ערביים מגניזת קהיר 'Two Hebrew–Arabic Biblical Glossaries from the Cairo Geniza', *Pe'amim*, 83: 15–47.

Pollock, Sheldon (2009), 'Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World', *Critical Inquiry*, 35: 931–961.

Poznański, Samuel (1923), 'A Fihrist of Saadya's Works', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 13: 369–396.

Qafih, Yosef (2002), הליכות תימן: חיי היהודים בצנעא ובנותיה *Jewish Life in Sana*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute.

Ratzaby, Yehudah (ed.) (1998), פירושי רב סעדיה גאון לספר שמות: מקור ותרגום *Rav Saadya's Commentary on Exodus*, Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook.

Remiro, M. Gaspar (1922), 'Los manuscritos rabínicos de la Biblioteca Nacional', *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 9: 345–358.

Rhode, Joseph Francis (1921), *The Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch in the Church of Egypt: A Study from Eighteen Arabic and Copto-Arabic MSS (IX–XVII Century) in the National Library at Paris, the Vatican and Bodleian Libraries and the British Museum*, Leipzig: W. Drugulin.

Robertson, E. (1943), 'The Relationship of the Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch to that of Saadya', in Erwin Isak Jakob Rosenthal (ed.), *Saadya Studies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 166–176.

Rosenthal Rosenthal, Franz (1955), 'From Arabic Books and Manuscripts V: A One-volume Library of Arabic Philosophical and Scientific Texts in Istanbul', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 75: 14–23.

Rosen-Zvi, Ishay (2008), 'Orality, Narrative, and Rhetoric: New Directions in Mishnah Research', *AJS Review*, 32: 235–249.

Rustow, Marina (2020), *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

de Sacy, Silvestre (1808), *Mémoire sur la version arabe des livres de Moise à l'usage des Samaritains et sur les manuscrits de cette version* (Mémoire de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 49). Paris: E. Duverger.

Samir, Samir Khalil (1985), *Brefs chapitres sur la trinité et l'incarnation*, Turnhout: Brepols.

Sassoon, David Solomon (1932), *Ohel Dawid: Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the Sassoon Library, London*, London: Oxford University Press.

Sayyid, Fuʾād (1954–1960), فهرس المخطوطات المصورة *Fihris al-makhṭūṭāt al-muṣawwara*, 3 vols, Cairo: Dār al-Riyād lil-Ṭabʿ wa-al-Nashr.

Schlossberg, Eliezer (2011), 'Towards a Critical Edition of the Translation of the Torah by Rav Saadia Gaon', *Judaica*, 67: 129–145.

Schwarb, Gregor (2007), 'Die Rezeption Maimonides' in der christlich-arabischen Literatur', *Judaica*, 63: 1–45.

—— (2014), 'The Reception of Maimonides in Christian-Arabic Literature', in Yosef Tobi (ed.), *Maimonides and His World* (Ben ʿEver la-ʿArav: Contacts between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times, 7), Haifa: University of Haifa, 109–175.

Shehadeh, Hasib (1989a), 'The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch', in Alan David Crown (ed.), *The Samaritans*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Siebeck, 481–516.

—— (1989b), התרגום הערבי לנוסח התורה של השומרונים: מבוא למהדורה ביקורתית *The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch: Prolegomena to a Critical Edition*, PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Sidarus, Adel (2013), 'Families of Coptic Dignitaries (*Buyūtāt*) under the Ayyūbids and the Golden Age of Coptic Arabic Literature (13th Century)', *Journal of Coptic Studies*, 15: 189–208.

Simon, Uriel (1991), *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms: From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham Ibn Ezra*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Stern, Sacha (2019), *The Jewish Calendar Controversy of 921/2 CE*, Boston: Brill.

Swanson, Mark N. (2010), *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt (641–1517)*, Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

—— (2017), ‘Gabriel III, Patriarch’, in *Claremont Coptic Encyclopedia*, Claremont Graduate University, <https://ccdl.claremont.edu/digital/collection/cce/id/2154/rec/1> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

Tené, David (1983), השוואת הלשונות וידיעת הלשון באזור הדיבור הערבי במאות הי׳ והי״א למניין המקובל ‘Hashwaʾat ha-leshonot be-ʾezor ha-dibbur ha-ʿaravi ba-meʾot ha-ʿaserit we-aḥat-ʿesreh la-minyan ha-mequbal’, in Moshe Bar-Asher, Aron Dotan, D.B. Sarfatti and David Tené (eds), *Hebrew Language Studies: Presented to Professor Zeev Ben-Hayyim*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 237–287.

Tisserant, Eugène (1914), *Specimina codicum orientalium*, Bonn: A. Marcus and E. Weber.

Tobi, Yosef (1991), בין תפסיר לשרח: תפסיר רב סעדיה גאון למקרא בקרב יהודי תימן ‘Between Tafsir and Sharh: Saadia Gaon’s Translation of the Bible among the Jews of Yemen’, *Studies on the History of Iraqi Jewry and their Culture*, 6: 127–138.

—— (1993), שרידי תרגום ערבי לתורה קודם לתפסיד רב סעדיה גאון ‘Pre-Sa’adianic Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch’, *Massorot*, 7: 87–127.

—— (1996), תרגום ערבי-יהודי עממי נוסף לתורה ‘Another Popular Judaeo-Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch’, in Moshe Bar-Asher (ed.), מחקרים בלשון העברית ובלשונות היהודים/*Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shlomo Morag*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 481–501.

Tritton, Arthur Stanley (1958), ‘The Old Testament in Muslim Spain’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 21: 392–395.

del Valle Rodriguez, Carlos (1986), *Catalogo descriptivo de los manuscritos hebreos de la Biblioteca Nacional*, Madrid: Ministerio de Cultura.

Vollandt, Ronny (2008), ‘Some Observations on Genizah Fragments of Saadiah’s Tafsīr in Arabic Letters’, *Ginze Qedem: Genizah Research Annual*, 6: 9*–44*.

—— (2009), ‘Two Fragments (T-S AS 72.79 and T-S Ar.1a.38) of Saadiah’s *Tafsīr* by Samuel ben Jacob’, Genizah Research Unit: Fragment of the Month (November 2009), Cambridge University Library, <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fragment-month-12-4> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

—— (2012a), ‘1.1.5. Biblia judía en árabe. Localización: Madrid, BNE, MS 5475’, in Javier del Barco (ed.), *Biblias de Sefarad: Vidas cruzadas del texto y sus lectores*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional de España, 198–201.

—— (2012b), 'The Arabic Pentateuch of the Paris Polyglot: Saadiah Gaon's Advent to the Republic of Letters', in Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (eds), T*ranslating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-critical, and Literary Aspects* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, 131), Beirut: Orient Institut Beirut, 19–35.

—— (2014), 'Ancient Jewish Historiography in Arabic Garb: *Sefer Josippon* between South Italy and Coptic Cairo', *Zutot*, 11: 70–80.

—— (2015), *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources*, Leiden: Brill.

—— (2016), 'Making Quires Speak: An Analysis of Arabic Multi-block Bibles and the Creation of a Canon', *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 4: 173–209.

—— (2018a), 'Flawed Biblical Translations into Arabic and How to Correct Them: A Copt and a Jew Study Saadiah's Tafsīr', in David Bertaina, Sandra T. Keating, Mark N. Swanson and Alexander Treiger (eds), *Heirs of the Apostles: Studies on Arabic Christianity in Honor of Sidney H. Griffith*, Leiden: Brill, 56–90.

—— (2018b), 'Translations as Linguistic Commentaries? On the Exegetical Dimension of Early Bible Translations into Judaeo-Arabic', in Islam Dayeh (ed.), *Commentary Cultures: Technologies of Medieval Reading*, special issue of *Philological Encounters*, 3/3: 253–274.

—— (2019), 'Maccabees: Arabic', in Frank Feder and Matthias Henze (ed.), *The Textual History of the Bible, vol. 2, The Deuterocanonical Scriptures*, part 2B, Leiden: Brill, 167–171.

—— (forthcoming-a), 'Editions of Saadiyah Gaon's Arabic Translations', in Richard D. Weis (ed.), *Textual History of the Bible*, vol. 3B. Leiden: Brill.

—— (forthcoming-b), 'More on Christian Books in Jewish Libraries: Biblical Translations into Christian-Arabic Preserved in the Cairo Genizah Collections', in María Ángeles Gallego and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (eds), *The Semitic Languages of Jewish Intellectual Production*, Leiden: Brill.

Ya'akov, Doron (2019), 'The Yemenite Branch of Manuscripts of Sa'adia Gaon's Tafsīr', in Meira Polliack and Athalya Brenner-Idan (eds), *Jewish Biblical Exegesis from Islamic Lands: The Medieval Period*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 89–100.

Yeivin, Israel (1980), *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, tr. and ed. E.J. Revell, Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature.

Zafrani, Haim (1969), *Pédagogie juive en terre d'islam: L'enseignement traditionnel de l'hébreu et du judaïsme au Maroc*, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient.

—— (1980), *Littératures dialectales et populaires juives en occident musulman: L'écrit et l'oral*, Paris: Geathner.

Zewi, Tamar (1997), 'Relative Clauses in Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Pentateuch', *Annali (Istituto Universitario Orientale)*, 57: 426–449.

—— (2015), *The Samaritan Version of Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Pentateuch: Critical Edition and Study of MS London BL OR7562 and Related MSS*. Leiden: Brill.

—— (2021), 'MS St. Petersburg NLR Yevr. II A 640: A Possible Remnant of Another Copy of Saadya Gaon's Tafsīr by Samuel ben Jacob', *Vetus Testamentum*, 71/1: 120–132.

—— (s.a.), 'Early Genizah Fragments of Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Pentateuch in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg', blog post, Biblia Arabica, <https://biblia-arabica.com/early-genizah-fragments-of-saadya-gaons-translation-of-the-pentateuch-in-the-russian-national-library-in-st-petersburg> (accessed on 22 August 2024).

—— and Amir Ashur (2019), 'Early Genizah Fragments of Saadya Gaon's Bible Translation Copied by Samuel b. Shechaniah b. Amram', *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 65: 435–472.

Zucker, Moshe (1937), 'Berurim be-toledot ha-wiqquḥim ha-datiyim she ben ha-yahadut we-ha-islam', in *Festschrift Armand Kaminka zum siebzigsten Geburtstage*, Vienna: Verlag des Wiener Maimonides-Instituts, 31–48.

—— (1955–1956), מפרושו של רס״ג לתורה 'Meperusho shel Rasa"g', *Sura*, 2: 313–355.

—— (1957–1958), מפרושו של רס״ג לתורה 'Meperusho shel Rasa"g', *Sura*, 3: 151–164.

—— (1959), *Rav Saadya Gaon's Translation of the Torah: Exegesis, Halakha, and Polemics in R. Saadya's Translation of the Torah*, New York: Feldheim. על תרגום רס״ג לתורה: פרשנות, הלכה ופולמיקה בתרגום התורה של ר סעדיה גאון

—— (1984), *Saadya's Commentary on Genesis*, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America. פירושי רב סעדיה גאון לבראשית