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translation, the interchange of letters and the vocabulary. He discusses some of the characteristic features in the translation of the Latter Prophets such as interpretation and grammar, alternative translations, and people and periods in the translation. Moreover, he tries to determine the translation's relationship to Targum Yonathan. In the introduction, Avishur talks at length about the identity of the author of the translation and his whereabouts. Having failed to see a possibility to identify the person, he goes on to individuate the place. The way the author translated the names of the towns of Iraq shows that he was an Iraqi from Baghdad or Basra, the use of Persian words is also frequent in Iraqi dialects. These features added to the Syrian dialecticisms leads him to believe that the translator was from an Iraqi family residing in Syria.

After the text of the translations of Isaiah (pp. 45-114) and Jeremiah (pp. 115-190) into Arabic, with notes added to Isaiah (pp. 191-222) and Jeremiah (pp. 223-236), the editor ends with a list of bibliographical abbreviations (pp. 237-241). According to Schlossberg (see Pe'amim 83), Avishur did not take into consideration that the translations are a reworking of the Qaraite translator Yefet ibn 'Ali ('Eli), the greatest Prophets ever. Avishur did not identify the author: some thought it was Saadya Gaon, why it was Saadya Gaon, or why it was not written by him, but influenced by or based on him.

Paltiel Birnebaum was the first to attribute the twelve Minor Prophets to Yefet ibn 'Ali. He edited the long commentary by Yefet on Hosea. In his foreword he analyses the likeness between the commentary in question and our present Huntington 206 manuscript and concludes that it must be by Yefet. Schlossberg agrees with Birnebaum because comparisons of our manuscript with the recently edited Nahum and Habakkuq (by Livneh-Kari) prove that they are clearly those of Yefet, with all the changes due to time. This supposition can be based upon the edition of Isaiah 47 which Haggai ben-Shammari made for a study on differences of translation in the work of Yefet ibn 'Ali. Ben-Shammari compares the text of manuscript Huntington 60b with the text of three other manuscripts namely British Library Or. 2548 (112a-119a), and London Or. 2502 (37b-45bl and Petersborg Yevr. 1: 569 (165a-172a).

It can now also be explained that the first three translations of the Huntington manuscript (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) are the fruit of the pen of Yefet. The author also used non-Qaraite translations.

The bibliographer of the writings of Yefet, Giuliano Tamani, unequivocally classifies the translation of the Latter Prophets between the translations of Yefet. Comparisons with the Huntington Isaiah and other Yefet Isaiah manuscripts reveal that what we have here is a reworking of the Isaiah by Yefet. There seems to be no doubt that the Huntington manuscript belongs to Yefet. However, the text is far from the original, because the copyist made a reworking on his own and changed the text in a number of places.

Concluding, I should like to thank Avisihur for making all this material accessible and hope that he will publish the remaining texts, in order to provide us with more insight into the nature of the Arabic of the Jews which was a tool for them to make the Hebrew Bible comprehensible.

Amsterdam, December 2000

Arie Schippers


Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes, professor emeritus of the University Complutense of Madrid, has been for years the most important founder of this field of study, namely the Spanish-Arabic literature in Arabic script written by the Moriscos — the Muslims who remained in Spain after the Reconquista. This Spanish literature in Arabic is, as we know, called "Aljamiado" literature. A few of these Aljamiado manuscripts are to be found in the collection of 58 manuscripts, some of them fragmentary, made by Pascual de Gayangos (1809-1897) and endowed to the Spanish Royal Academy of History.

The manuscripts described in this collection concern topics ranging from poems to history, legends, novellas and religious literature. The author decided to catalogue the manuscripts because the index by Eduardo Saavedra is merely a list which did not merit the title of catalogue. The thematic classification of the manuscripts, however, is difficult, since there are many codices which are miscellaneous or comprise various materials. But the author has made a uniform system for describing the codices, following a sequence in which he gives the name of the author or declares the work anonymous

3) Schlossberg agrees with Birnebaum because comparisons of our manuscript with the recently edited Nahum and Habakkuq (by Livneh-Kari) prove that they are clearly those of Yefet, with all the changes due to time.

4) This supposition can be based upon the edition of Isaiah 47 which Haggai ben-Shammari made for a study on differences of translation in the work of Yefet ibn 'Ali. Ben-Shammari compares the text of manuscript Huntington 60b with the text of three other manuscripts namely British Library Or. 2548 (112a-119a), and London Or. 2502 (37b-45bl and Petersborg Yevr. 1: 569 (165a-172a).

5) Compare e.g. Jeremiah Z Huntington with BM Or. 2549 (11th Century) written in Arabic letters which is the oldest remaining comment by Yefet on Jeremiah. Sometimes in Huntington Ms there is a concession made for the vernacular, where it says 'es al-bajah bik' instead of the classical 'ma lak'. In other verses of the Huntington manuscript parts of the commentary are added, comprising identifications of places and rivers, etc.

6) Kees de Vreugd (Faculty of Mathematics, University of Amsterdam) is working on one of these texts of the twelve Minor Prophets.
As well as religious debates, there are more belletristic genres such as the love story about Paris and Viana, the story about al-Hajjaj b. Yucuf with a lad, the story of the doncella Arcayona, and El poema de Yucuf. Galmes provides all the items with the necessary information, but nevertheless for the English reader, I should like to refer to the introductory work by Anwar G. Chejne, Islam and the West: the Moriscos. A Cultural and Social History (Albany NY 1983). This work is not referred to by Galmes, although it contains special chapters dealing with secular literature, poetry, history and legends.

At the end of the book, Galmes provides many useful indices, such as an index of authors and quoted personal names, and indices of place names, titles of works referred to, modern authors, and a glossary of Arabic words and phrases. There are also 16 plates with reproductions from various manuscripts from this collection. All in all, the catalogue is a useful tool for those researchers who want to pay a visit to the Fascul de Gayangos collection, or to keep themselves informed about it.

Amsterdam, December 2000
Arie SCHIPPERS

This book deals with the comparison of early Arabic mathal (Arabic for ‘proverb’ and ‘proverbial expressions’) and early Arabic verse. The first part is devoted to definitions. The Arabic mathal may differ from our proverb. The characteristics of proverbs are investigated, as is why they are so representative to be included in verses. Opinions on proverbs by Ancient Arab critics are quoted in order to individuate the principal elements of the definition of mathal (Part I, 2.1). For instance, there is a classical definition by al-Nazâz (d. 845) who defines the mathal as containing brevity of formulation, concision, to-the-pointness and well-chosen comparison: other theoreticians claim that there are also incorrect mathal, i.e. when a verb is omitted or a word changed or expression modified. The wordings of the mathal may very well have aesthetic values, because of the relation between the idea and the efficiency of its expression. She quotes many other medieval definitions, such as those mentioned by Ibn Rabih (d. 1065), for example: ‘They said: it was called mathal because it is always a mathal’. Then, proverb-like verses are mentioned from classical sources, especially in view of the closure of the verse line. The closure of the verse is seen as one of the characteristics of Arabic poetry. There has also been a debate among orientalists on the possible coherence of a whole qasida and the molecular structure of the lines. The problem of the closure of the verse should perhaps be placed in the context of oral production as exemplified in The Oral Tradition of Classical Arabic Literature in Spanish and Aljamiado.