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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 Yo Nathan. In the introduction, Avisshur 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 dialectics 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 Pet’amin 83), Avisshur did not take into consideration that the translations are a reworking of the Qaraite translator Yefet ibn ‘Ali (‘Eli), the greatest interpreter of the Bible of the Qaraites in the Middle Ages. The Huntington manuscript on which the work is based has been known in academic circles for more than 300 years, but scholars have been more interested in the twelve Minor Prophets than in the other parts. However, those scholars did not identify the author: some thought it was Saadya Gaon, while others thought 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.\(^3\)

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. Perhaps the translator also used non-Qaraite translations.

The bibliographer of the writings of Yefet, Giuliano Tamani, unhesitatingly 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.\(^3\) 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.\(^3\) Schlossberg concludes that Huntington must be one of the early reworkings of the translations of the Prophets by Yefet. Avisshur individuated the author of the translations as someone from Iraq residing in Syria, but did not want to conclude that the author could be identified with the important Qaraite translator Abu ‘Ali al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali al-Baṣrī alias Yefet ibn ‘Eli (Hasan=Yefet, “beautiful”) who came from Iraq and lived in Jerusalem, where he died ca. 1000. However, comparisons between the twelve Prophets as represented in Huntington 206, reveal that there are in the British Library manuscripts of Qaraite translations ascribed to Yefet, which are textually almost identical to the ones in Huntington 206.\(^3\)

A final remark about the so-called Judeo-Arabic language of the published text: it is very close to literary Arabic and hardly dialectal. This is a feature the text shares with Saadya Gaon’s translations. It is certainly not Middle Arabic, which should be a mixture of the vernaculars and the Classical language. The situation in this manuscript is quite the opposite of the later šfi‘rātī genres in Morocco, which are totally in vernacular and exhibit no knowledge at all of written Arabic. Concluding, I should like to thank Avisshur 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

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Álvaro Galmés de Fuentes, professor emeritus of the Universidad 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

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

\(^3\) This supposition can be based upon the edition of Isaiah 47 which Haggai ben-Shammai made for a study on differences of translation in the work of Yefet ibn ‘Ali. Ben-Shammai compares the text of manuscript Huntington 60b with the text of three other manuscripts namely British Library Or. 2548 (112a-118a), and London Or. 2502 (37b-45b) and Petersborg Yevr. 1: 569 (165a-172a).

\(^3\) Compare e.g. Jeremiah 2 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.

\(^3\) 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 bellettristic genres such as the love story about Paris and Viana, the story about al-Hajjaj b. Yu'uf with a lad, the story of the doncella Arcayona, and El poema de Yu'uf. 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 Pascual 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-Nazzam (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 Rushd (d. 1065), for example, "They said: it was called mathal because it is always a sign (mathal) for the mind of somebody who is consolated by it and counselled, admonished and commanded, and the sign is in front of somebody because they say: 'Ruins that stand before him (tatal mathil), i.e. towering up before him.'"

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...