

Christian Palestinian Aramaic

New Perspectives on Language and Texts

edited by
Emiliano Fiori and Mara Nicosia



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Christian Palestinian Aramaic

Syriaca

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Abstract

At the time of its discovery, Christian Palestinian Aramaic suffered from its proximity to Syriac and from the fact that its literary production encompassed mostly translations from Greek. Spanning inscriptions, magical texts, and many literary genres, the Christian Palestinian Aramaic corpus has recently gained scholarly attention and is now recognised for its historical value. This shift has fostered a deeper understanding of the linguistic, textual, and cultural history of Melkite Christians in Syria and Sinai. This volume presents a selection of studies in Christian Palestinian Aramaic linguistics, epigraphy, and literature, complemented by a comprehensive bibliography of the field.

Keywords Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Syriac Christianity. Linguistics. Language Contact. Epigraphy. Psalms. Monastic Apophthegms.

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Christian Palestinian Aramaic

New Perspectives on Language and Texts

Prefazione

Emiliano Fiori

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Questo volume inaugura una collana che intende farsi espressione dell'omonima Associazione Italiana di Studi Siriaci, *Syriaca*. L'Associazione ha celebrato nel 2024 i primi 25 anni di vita ed è ormai entrata nel suo secondo quarto di secolo. Nata nel 1999 da un piccolo gruppo di appassionati e studiosi di varia estrazione accademica, laici e religiosi, *Syriaca* ha sempre rappresentato un raro spazio di libero scambio di idee e progetti, e anche di amicizia, al di là di ogni divisione gerarchica. Negli anni, ha sempre continuato a crescere e, dopo aver conosciuto fasi alterne di vitalità, è oggi in una fase di impressionante espansione. Segno, questo, della salute di cui godono gli studi siriaci in Italia, oggetto in questi anni nel nostro Paese di un fervore forse più intenso che in ogni altra parte del mondo – certo grazie a una favorevole congiuntura storica, in cui diverse forze giovani sono recentemente entrate a far parte dell'accademia italiana, potendo così formare una nuova generazione allo studio della lingua e della cultura siriane. Lo studio del siriano, tuttavia, cresce anche a causa dell'intrinseco interesse e della ricchezza di questi studi, che si sono rivelati cruciali per la comprensione di fenomeni storici, culturali e religiosi di grande portata, quali la storia intellettuale e religiosa della tarda antichità, le interazioni tra cristiani e musulmani in Medio Oriente nei primi secoli dell'Islam (e ben oltre), gli scambi culturali e religiosi sulle Vie della Seta. Per questi stessi motivi, lo studio del siriano è in crescita in tutto il mondo: i quadriennali simposi siriani internazionali registrano un'affluenza sempre maggiore. L'Italia rappresenta, però, un caso di vitalità eclatante.

È dunque tempo che *Syriaca* si doti di un proprio organo scientifico riconoscibile. Le iniziative dell'Associazione nei suoi venticinque anni di vita sono state numerose e spesso di alto profilo, ma solo occasionalmente si sono tradotte in pubblicazioni dedicate. In anni passati, e ancora in tempi recenti, diversi volumi hanno raccolto, in Italia e fuori, il risultato dei lavori di *Syriaca*. Ricordiamo la collana *Ecumenismo e dialogo* del Centro Ambrosiano, che ha ospitato sei volumi di atti (apparsi tra il 2003 e il 2012) dei convegni che *Syriaca* ha organizzato alla Biblioteca Ambrosiana tra il 2002 e il 2007, curati da Emidio Vergani e Sabino Chialà. Più di recente, l'editore Bulzoni prima e poi di nuovo il Centro Ambrosiano presso l'editore ITL sono andati pubblicando gli atti dei Dies Academics della Classis Orientalis dell'Accademia Ambrosiana, dei cui membri fa parte anche un'ampia rappresentanza di soci di *Syriaca*; ogni anno, il Dies Academicus ospita una sezione siriana che confluisce poi negli Atti via via pubblicati (10 volumi finora). Uno dei convegni di maggior successo tra quelli organizzati da *Syriaca*, tenutosi a Roma nel 2018 e dedicato al cristianesimo siriano in Asia Centrale, ha in parte dato origine a un fortunato volume edito nel 2021 dall'Accademia delle Scienze di Vienna (*Iranianate and Syriac Christianity in Late Antiquity and Early Islamic Period*, edited by Chiara Barbati and Vittorio Berti). Anche gli atti del convegno tenutosi nel 2019 alla Biblioteca Vaticana e al PIO per i 300 anni dalla pubblicazione della *Bibliotheca Orientalis* di Assemani, editi da Željko Paša (in *Parole de l'Orient* 47, 2021), hanno visto il contributo di diversi soci di *Syriaca*, che aveva partecipato all'organizzazione del convegno. Non va dimenticato infine, il fondamentale lavoro collettivo di traduzione delle Esposizioni di Afraate da parte delle socie e dei soci di *Syriaca*, confluito in due volumi (*Afraate. Le esposizioni*. A cura di Giovanni Lenzi. Brescia: Paideia, 2012). Malgrado questi ottimi risultati è tuttavia mancato, finora, uno spazio editoriale specifico che potesse rispecchiare la fervida attività scientifica dell'Associazione.

Con questa collana ci auguriamo allora di poter colmare una lacuna divenuta ormai anomala. Iniziamo un nuovo percorso che auspichiamo duraturo e fecondo: lo vogliamo inaugurare dedicando questo volume a tutte le socie e a tutti i soci di *Syriaca*, che hanno dato vita all'associazione nei suoi primi venticinque anni e che la animeranno ancora per lunghi anni a venire.

Christian Palestinian Aramaic: An Introduction

Mara Nicosia

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Christian Palestinian Aramaic (henceforth CPA) is not one of the best-known, let alone studied, among the varieties of Late Aramaic.¹ The language developed around the provinces of *Palaestina Prima*, *Palaestina Secunda* and the *Provincia Arabia*² around the fifth century (or earlier)³ and got standardised into a literary and liturgical language by a community of Melkite Christians. CPA is one of the six communal literary languages spoken between 200 CE and 1200 CE in the Syrian and Mesopotamian regions, alongside Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (JBA), Samaritan Aramaic (SA), Mandaic (MA), and Syriac. CPA belongs with JPA and SA to the Western subbranch, while MA and JBA belong

1 A label applied to Aramaic varieties employed from 200 to 700 CE, or 1200 according to other studies, e.g., Butts 2019, 273 fn. 9. Butts applies this periodization to the case of Syriac, which did not die out as a consequence of the Arab conquests of the seventh century, and has witnessed the production of many original texts not only during the Arab period (eight-to-tenth century), but also during the Mongol period, a time known as ‘Syriac Renaissance’ on account of a revamping of Syriac original literary production. In the case of CPA, manuscripts were produced until the thirteenth century, well into the Arab period.

2 These regions correspond to an area stretching from South-Eastern Syria to the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula.

3 Müller-Kessler 1991, 1.

to the Eastern one. Syriac was originally considered to be part of this latter group, but recent scholarship places it now in a central position.⁴

CPA literary production is usually divided into two periods: an earlier phase (fifth to eighth century), when CPA was still spoken, and a later phase (tenth to thirteenth century), a period of cultural revival during which new CPA texts were copied for liturgical reasons.⁵ In between these two moments, we find what Müller-Kessler proposed to call the ‘medium’ phase, identified on palaeographical grounds.⁶

Originally labelled ‘Palestinian Syriac’, CPA suffered from its proximity to the best-known Late Aramaic variety, which lent it its script and some of its features, and from the fact that most of its literary production encompasses translations from Greek texts. Even though CPA detached itself from Syriac through the creation of its own version of the *estrangela* abjad⁷ and the development of several distinctive features (e.g., the loss of distinction between absolute and emphatic states or the peculiar ways in which infinitives are created),⁸ it is nonetheless true that the only original documents produced directly in CPA are a group of inscriptions (incisions, graffiti, and mosaics) scattered over a large area,⁹ and a handful of magical texts and amulets, written on parchment or metal.¹⁰ This corpus of original texts usually suffers from a poor state of preservation, obscure language or references (which is fairly common for texts of magical content), and a general lack of scholarly interest.

The texts in CPA that were transmitted on manuscripts – mostly translations of the Old and New Testament, apocrypha, homilies, and hagiographies¹¹ – are equally problematic, being frequently written on the upertext or undertext of palimpsests. All these difficulties, alongside the greater popularity of other coeval Aramaic varieties, most notably Syriac, contributed to the slowness with which the earliest necessary learning tools appeared. The first modern

⁴ Already, for instance, Boyarin (1981) and Contini (1995, 90-2), more recently Butts (2019, 224). See Nicosia 2021, 178, fn. 11, for a discussion on the current scholarly debate on the topic.

⁵ Morgenstern 2011, 629-31.

⁶ Müller-Kessler 1999.

⁷ See Desreumaux 1987.

⁸ See the list of “notable morphological features” in Morgenstern 2011, 633-4.

⁹ See the map created by Alain Desreumaux in this volume.

¹⁰ See Abudraham 2017; Baillet 1963; Puech 1996; 2007; 2012.

¹¹ See Díez Merino 2003 for an overview of CPA texts, and Desreumaux 2015, 132-6 for a codicological study on CPA manuscript production.

grammar of CPA was published in 1991 by Christa Müller-Kessler,¹² while the first comprehensive dictionary was published by Michael Sokoloff in 2014.¹³ Previously, even though some scholarly attention had been paid to the language and its literature, thanks to the contribution of illustrious scholars such as the Scottish twins Agnes Smith Lewis (1843-1926) and Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843-1920) (e.g., Lewis 1897; 1900; Lewis, Gibson 1899; 1912),¹⁴ CPA was often neglected.

The first collection of texts and fragments was published by Hugo Duensing (1906), and other fragments had already appeared in 1905 thanks to Frederich Schulthess. Still, it was thanks to Sebastian Brock, many decades later, that we have a catalogue of the fragments preserved in the Sinaitic monastery of Saint Catherine (Brock 1995, 79-91; 121-8), where the vast majority of CPA manuscripts were either found or originally kept (before they were illicitly relocated).¹⁵ It is thanks to the painstaking work of Christa Müller-Kessler and Michael Sokoloff that we can rely on published corpora of CPA texts (Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1997-1999; Sokoloff 2014b), and thanks to the publication of single texts in isolated publications (e.g., Baarda 2005; Brock 1971; Capron 2010; 2019).

In light of the new scholarly tools that are now at our disposal, our collective volume aims to infuse further energy to the study of this Aramaic variety by offering five papers, which touch upon the rich array of CPA-related topics. The volume opens up with a contribution discussing the language, its history and development, and offering new hints on its positioning within the Late Aramaic group. Its author, Christian Stadel (Ben Gurion University of Negev), proposes a new selection of morphological, morphosyntactic, and

12 CPA had already been the object of a first dedicated study by Bar-Asher in 1977.

13 Some previous (and partial) attempts had been made by Miniscalchi Erizzo (1861, 1-47), who published a glossary of the Gospels, Land (1875, 217-24), Schwally (1893, who created a glossary of unknown words in CPA texts known at the time), and Schulthess (1903). For a brief history of CPA lexicography see Sokoloff 2014a, xiii-xiv

14 Lewis and Gibson travelled to Sinai six times. During one of those travels, in 1892, they discovered the so-called *Syriac Palestinian Gospel*, which was published under the names of three other scholars (males and more prominent at the time): Robert L. Bensly, James Rendel Harris, and Francis C. Burkitt (1894). See Soskice 2010, 133-45 for an account of how they stumbled upon the manuscript. The twins were also the ones who purchased the manuscripts containing the *Codex Climatici rescriptus* in 1905 (in England) and 1906 (in Port Tewfik) from manuscript dealers. For an account of these purchases, see Soskice 2010, 285 and the narration provided by Lewis herself in the introduction of her edition of the *Codex* (1909, xi-xvi). For a list of the works authored by the sisters, see Whigham Price 1987, 236-40.

15 In 2011, Brock authored a brief but thorough account about Syriac, CPA, and Arabic manuscripts in Saint Catherine's Monastery, which also features an abridged history of scholarship and some black and white pictures. I am grateful to Jacob Lollar for drawing my attention to the volume hosting this publication.

lexical elements in support of the attribution of CPA to the Western branch of Late Aramaic varieties, and its relevant differences from Syriac. The paper also includes a discussion on some selected features that are exclusive to CPA and proposes a new hypothesis about the possible place of birth, the so-called ‘cradle’, of CPA.

The second paper of this collection, written by the author of this introduction, offers a first overview of the borrowing strategies employed in CPA to acquire Greek (and Latin) loanwords. Through a selection of meaningful examples, the paper provides a first look into the subject, which will hopefully be expanded into a complete list of Greek loanwords in CPA comparable to that of Greek loanwords in Samaritan Aramaic published by Stadel and Shemesh in 2018. A study of borrowing strategies from Greek in CPA, whose foundations are laid in this paper, will contribute to bringing the field closer to the level of investigation on the topic reached by other Late Aramaic varieties.

The third paper of the volume proposes a detailed overview of the available inscriptions in CPA, and it is written by Alain Desreumaux (CNRS, Paris).¹⁶ The contribution offers the first mapping of these inscriptions, a categorisation of their provenance, type and topic, and proposes some new considerations about the social setup as it can be inferred from such documents. The paper is equipped with pictures of the discussed material, some of which appear here for the first time.

The fourth paper, composed by Sebastian Brock (Oxford University), deals with the Psalter that was brought to light from Saint Catherine's Monastery, written on a fragment labelled *Sparagma* 12. The paper details the content of the Psalter and compares it with the other known Psalms translated into CPA and preserved elsewhere (notably in the *Horologion*). Brock also discusses some previously unknown CPA words that appear in the Psalter and publishes the upper text of *Sparagma* 12.

The last paper, written by Laurent Capron (CNRS, Paris), offers new insights into the collection of *apophtegmata* preserved in Saint Catherine's Monastery manuscripts M58N, M59N, CPA *Sparagma* 5 and 14. According to Capron's analysis, this collection seems to belong to a part of the so-called “Sabaite-type collection,” and presents a rich array of new vocabulary and texts. Particularly, Capron discusses the possible etymology of some unclear loanwords from Greek, as well as some CPA words which were not attested elsewhere.

16 The author had already contributed to the topic on many occasions throughout his career. See, as an example, Desreumaux 1996; Bazou et al. 1998.

The collection of studies offered by this volume is complemented by a bibliography of CPA studies, which will hopefully assist those who wish to tackle the language and its literature for the first time. The present volume is the development and expansion of an international online workshop on *Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Not quite the right 'Syriac'*, organised by Riccardo Contini and Emiliano Fiori for *Syriaca – The Italian Association for Syriac Studies* in July 2021.¹⁷

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17 The editors of this volume are grateful to *Syriaca* and, in particular, to Vittorio Berti (University of Padua, currently *Syriaca*'s president), Riccardo Contini (University of Naples "L'Orientale", who presided *Syriaca* in 2021, when the project of this CPA volume was born), Giovanni Gomiero (Ghent University, *Syriaca*'s secretary), Alberto Camplani (University of Rome "La Sapienza", *Syriaca*'s treasurer), Margherita Farina and Marianna Mazzola (CNRS, Paris and University of Pisa, respectively, members of *Syriaca*'s directive committee). I am particularly grateful to Riccardo Contini for sharing his annotated bibliographies of Aramaic and CPA, a treasure trove for the history of Aramaic studies and linguistics, and for gifting me copies of *The Ladies of Castelbrae* and *Sisters of Sinai*.

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The Formative Milieu and Linguistic Profile of Christian Palestinian Aramaic

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Abstract In this article, I offer a possible answer to the question of the origins of CPA by reassessing the formative milieu of the dialect: Who wrote (and spoke) in CPA, where and when? And what could be a possible scenario for the adaption of an Estrangelo-based script? In addition, I describe the linguistic profile of CPA, including features that distinguish it from Syriac and Eastern Aramaic dialects, its common Western Aramaic traits, and linguistics characteristics that are distinctive of CPA.

Keywords Inscriptions. Dialect geography. Morphological features. Western Aramaic lexical items.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The formative milieu of Christian Palestinian Aramaic. – 2.1 Christian Palestinian Aramaic and previous language stages. – 2.2 The Emergence of Christian Palestinian Aramaic: Time and Place. – 3 The linguistic profile of Christian Palestinian Aramaic. – 3.1 Morphology and Morphosyntax. – 3.2 Lexicon.

1 Introduction

Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA) is a Late Western Aramaic dialect that was used by some members of Melkite Christian communities in the provinces of *Palaestina prima*, *Palaestina secunda*, and *Arabia* (and adjacent areas) in Late Antiquity.¹ It is known from a small number of inscriptions and from fragmentary translations of Greek religious literature in manuscripts. The language is written

1 I extend my thanks to Ohad Abudraham, Riccardo Contini, and Matthew Morgenstern for their help in bibliographical matters.

in a unique offshoot of the Syriac Estrangelo script.² Hence, we have in CPA a Western Aramaic dialect that was put to writing in an alphabetic script that originated in the east. It is not clear which historical circumstances account for this situation.

In section 2 of this article, I shall offer a possible answer to the question of the origins of CPA by reassessing the formative milieu of the dialect: Who wrote (and spoke) in CPA, where and when? And what could be a possible scenario for the adaption of an Estrangelo-based script? In section 3, I shall describe the linguistic profile of CPA, including features that distinguish it from Syriac and Eastern Aramaic dialects, its common Western Aramaic traits, and linguistics characteristics that are distinctive of CPA.

2 The formative milieu of Christian Palestinian Aramaic

2.1 Christian Palestinian Aramaic and previous language stages

In the three thousand years of attested Aramaic language history, the most pivotal and formative event has been the promotion of an Aramaic dialect from Mesopotamia to serve as the quasi-universal administrative language in the Persian Empire. Prior to this fateful decision of Darius I, the use of Aramaic in writing was essentially limited to the core Aramaic-speaking areas in Syria, and later in Mesopotamia. In contradistinction, the standardized Official Aramaic of the Achaemenid chancellery was written throughout the vast Persian Empire, from Egypt in the west to Afghanistan in the east.³ And this Aramaic literary standard did not vanish with the demise of the empire that had brought it to life. Rather, it shaped the new regional languages of the Hellenistic and early Roman Near East that are commonly labelled Middle Aramaic, viz. Qumran Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Old Syriac, and Hatra Aramaic. All of these adhere to some degree to the Official Aramaic literary standard but also show influence from local spoken Aramaic dialects.⁴ Most of these Middle Aramaic dialects, e.g. Nabataean and Palmyrene, vanished with the local kingdoms that had promoted them initially.

² For an overview of the Syriac script, which first developed in the Osroene, see, e.g., Briquel-Chatonnet 2018.

³ For an overview of these early phases of Aramaic language history see Stadel 2020a, 320-7.

⁴ Gzella (2015, 212-80) offers a succinct sketch of these post-Achaemenid Official Aramaic dialects.

However, in a number of cases – Syriac being the most prominent example – the Middle Aramaic languages continued to be written and gradually adopted more and more vernacular features, whereas the scribal conventions inherited from the Official Aramaic literary standard gradually faded out, leaving only faint traces in the new literary idioms of the Late Aramaic period.⁵ Such residues of earlier scribal practice are important for assessing whether the precursors of the attested Late Aramaic dialects were continually used in writing since the Middle Aramaic phase. This must have been the case with Syriac, and to some extent also with Mandaic.⁶ The Jewish dialects from Palestine and Babylonia are *sui generis* in this respect, since the Jews canonized religious texts in the Official Aramaic literary standard (viz. Biblical Aramaic) and in a form of Middle Aramaic that has preserved features of this standard (viz. the language of Targum Onkelos and of legal deeds in rabbinic literature), and these prestige languages could potentially interfere with the written form of the Late Aramaic dialects.⁷

It is only CPA and Samaritan Aramaic that lack any traces of the Official Aramaic literary standard (that is reflected in various historical orthographies in other Aramaic dialects),⁸ and there are two possible explanations for this state of affairs. One may either assume written predecessors in which the process of fading out the earlier standard had already been completed before the principles for writing CPA and Samaritan Aramaic as literary languages were fixed. In this scenario, the standard for writing CPA would have developed similarly to Classical Syriac. Or one may alternatively assume that CPA had no written predecessor but was rather a spoken local dialect that was at some point in time promoted to a literary language. In this scenario, too, the written standard of CPA would of course not have been created *ex nihilo*, but neither would it have been the outcome of a natural and gradual development. Rather, one could hypothesize that basic orthographic principles (such as the use of *matres lectionis* or the use of a single grapheme for a lengthened consonant) would have been borrowed from Syriac together with the script,⁹ but apart from that written CPA would essentially reflect a local spoken dialect.

⁵ For Syriac, the standard treatment of these developments is Beyer 1966.

⁶ A residue of the Official Aramaic standard accounts for three archaic orthographic practices (and related hypercorrections) in Mandaic (mentioned by Abudraham 2022, 97-9; 152-3; 174-5), even though in this case the Middle Aramaic forerunner is difficult to pinpoint. Beyer (1984, 44; 62) thinks of Arsacid Aramaic.

⁷ Cf. Stadel 2020b, 105-9, *mutatis mutandis*, for the processes involved.

⁸ As noted by Beyer 1984, 67-8 and Gzella 2015, 317. For the situation in Samaritan Aramaic cf. Stadel 2020c, 133.

⁹ As suggested by Beyer 1984, 67-8.

It is impossible to tell which of the two scenarios is historically correct. However, the basic fact that CPA does not display influence from the Official Aramaic literary standard is noteworthy, especially in comparison with the other Late Aramaic dialects. Thus, while it cannot be proven that CPA as a literary language was shaped by other processes than Syriac, such a possibility should at least be considered. Incidentally, it would also fit in nicely with a peculiarity of the CPA literary corpus, which is restricted to translations from Greek Christian literature. Lack of an indigenous tradition of how to compose longer texts in Aramaic could well account for this state of affairs.¹⁰

2.2 The Emergence of Christian Palestinian Aramaic: Time and Place

The general time frame and place of origin of CPA are undisputed: The dialect was used in Late Antiquity in Palestine and surrounding areas. However, there is considerable variation in earlier attempts to narrow down the time when it was first committed to writing and to locate it more precisely on the map.¹¹ In the case of the CPA chronology, at least, we are on relatively secure ground. Since the early manuscript evidence – almost all in palimpsests – is notoriously difficult to date,¹² all agree that only datable provenanced inscriptions can provide a firm *terminus ad quem* for the dialect. This is provided by a short CPA inscription in a mosaic pavement of a church at Evron in north-western Israel, which can be securely dated to 415 CE.¹³ The proposal by Müller-Kessler, who dates the beginning of CPA writing to the 5th century while allowing for spoken forerunners in the 3rd and 4th centuries, is thus reasonable in general terms.¹⁴ However, one should also take into account that our epigraphic findings are subject to the whims of time (and modern archaeologists) and hardly ever provide the full picture. Hence, I am inclined to hypothesize that CPA writing started already in the 4th century.

10 But other reasons, theological or pastoral, for example, are also possible.

11 Cf. Rosenthal 1939, 153-9, for some early hypotheses.

12 This also holds true for the recently published epigraphic fragments from Nessana, for which Hoyland (2021, 35*) can offer only a very rough date of 500-700 CE.

13 Jacques 1987 provides an edition. It is evident from the adjacent Greek inscription that the CPA epigraph belongs to the first phase of the building, as Di Segni (2009, 354-5) points out.

14 Müller-Kessler 1991, 1. Incidentally, the epigraphic evidence thus confirms Nöldeke's (1868, 525) guess, who suggested a time frame of 300-600 CE. Bar-Asher (1988, 28) has suggested a later date, but he, too, maintains that spoken forerunners must have existed in the preceding centuries. Cf. also Díez Merino 2003, 124-5.

Establishing the location where CPA was originally spoken is even more challenging. Again, it is agreed that the geographical distribution of the epigraphic evidence rather than the manuscripts should inform our hypothesis. But additional factors should be accounted for as well. The cradle of CPA must have been located within the confines of the Western Aramaic dialect area in broad terms, in a location with a sizable Christian population. And since CPA is written in an offshoot of the Estrangelo script, one must assume that this location was exposed to the Syriac language and script as early as the 4th century. In addition, the choice of Aramaic over Greek points to an area where knowledge of the latter language was not well entrenched in the populace. Based mainly on the interpretation of the epigraphic evidence, many scholars have tied the dialect to the environs of Jerusalem.¹⁵ I disagree and would like to propose a different origin for CPA, based on an examination of the above-mentioned factors.

It is difficult to delineate the exact area where Western Aramaic dialects were spoken in Late Antiquity. It certainly comprised all of Palestine, from the northern Negev to the Galilee, as well as the Lebanon and Antilebanon mountain ranges.¹⁶ In addition, Western Aramaic was presumably spoken in the arable stretches of land east of the Dead Sea, the Jordan river, the Golan, and the Qalamun mountains.¹⁷ Since it is generally assumed that in Late Antiquity Aramaic formed a dialect continuum stretching from Palestine to Mesopotamia,¹⁸ one may presume that further to the north, in the Orontes valley and in the villages of the Limestone Massif of northern Syria, dialects of Aramaic were spoken as well. However, lack of evidence makes it impossible to establish whether these dialects would have belonged to the Western Aramaic group.¹⁹

15 Desreumaux 1987, 102; Bar-Asher 1988, 29; Müller-Kessler 1991, 2; Díez Merino 2003, 120; Morgenstern 2011, 630; Lipiński 2014, 187-90.

16 This is borne out by the Western Neo-Aramaic dialects of the Qalamun mountains in Syria, the last remnants of what had once been – according to historical sources and substrate in the Lebanese Neo-Arabic dialects – a larger Aramaic-speaking enclave. Contini (1999) offers a general conspectus.

17 Direct evidence for this is sparse. It is usually assumed that a local Aramaic dialect was spoken by the inhabitants of the Hawran in Roman times (Contini 1987-90, 34), which might be reflected in inscriptions in a special script (Macdonald 2021). That north-western Jordan was once inhabited by speakers of Aramaic is clear from toponyms (Ababneh 2009, esp. 77-82). The Aramaic captions (in Greek script) from the murals of a recently discovered Roman-era tomb at Bayt al-Ras in Jordan also attest to this, Aliquot et al. 2022.

18 See the programmatic study by Boyarin (1981).

19 Taylor (2002, 304-17) has assembled the meagre linguistic evidence.

Most of the provenanced CPA epigraphic material comes from within the confines of the Western Aramaic dialect area.²⁰ But as mentioned above, I do not think that the epigraphic remains suggest interpreting the environs of Jerusalem as the cradle of CPA. Rather, most of the find spots of CPA inscriptions are concentrated in the Northern Jordanian Highlands and the steppe region to the east.²¹ Progressing roughly from north to south, CPA inscriptions have been found in the northern part of the Decapolis around Irbid, in el-Burz, Qam, and Dayr el-Sa'neh; In Wadi Rājib west of Ajloun and in Jerash/Gerasa, as well as in the steppe region east of Jerash in Riḥāb, Ḥayyān el-Mušrif, and Ḥirbet el-Samrā; In the southern part of the Decapolis in the environs of Amman, in el-Quwaysmeh and Ḥirbet el-Kursi; And still further to the south in 'Uyūn Mūsā and Ḥirbet el-Muḥayyaṭ in the area of Mount Nebo. The Hospital inscription of unknown provenance might also be from the Northern Jordanian Highlands region.²² In addition, the inscriptions from 'Uyūn Umm el-ʿAẓām (south of Hippos on the southern Golan) and Dayr el-ʿAdas in Syria (to the east of the Golan) can be interpreted as northern outliers of this well-defined cluster.²³ Three additional find spots in Jordan are removed from this cluster: The graffiti from the vicinity of Qaṣr al-Burqu' in the Basalt desert,²⁴ rock inscriptions from the monastic complex Qaṣr el-ʿAbyaḍ on the Lisān peninsula,²⁵ and a tiny parchment fragment from the pilgrimage center of Lot's cave at 'Ayn 'Abāṭah,²⁶ the latter two from the south-eastern end of the Dead Sea. One may hypothesize that CPA

20 I exclude the inscriptions from Egypt: The CPA caption from a painting on a wooden board (Desreumaux 1996), for which emigré monks might be responsible, and graffiti left by pilgrims in a valley on the Sinai peninsula (Puech 2014).

21 My analysis draws on the combined lists of inscriptions given by Hoyland (2010, 37-9), Desreumaux (2016), and Puech (2011). I have excluded the inscriptions from Tell Masos and Deir Makir, which are in Syriac, as well as inscriptions on small portable objects (the Tel Yunis and Umm el-Raṣāṣ shards and the lamps). The unprovenanced amulets are also irrelevant for our purpose. For additional new material, I will refer to the relevant publications. In previous studies, the Arabic names of the findspots are often given in impressionistic transcription. In order to remedy this situation and facilitate locating them on Arabic-language maps of the area (or Google Maps with Arabic captions), I provide scholarly transcriptions for all Transjordanian findspots.

22 Puech 2011, 79-80.

23 The inscription from the hinterland of Hippos (Dvorjetski et al. 2022) is located at a distance of roughly 30 kilometers as the crow flies from the published inscriptions from northern Jordan and could thus be interpreted as part of the Northern Jordanian Highlands cluster. Be that as it may, it definitely links the Dayr el-ʿAdas inscription more closely with this cluster. Arguably, the site of Ḥirbet el-Mird in the Judean Desert could also be interpreted as such an outlier of the Northern Jordanian Highlands cluster.

24 Harahsheh, Desreumaux 2016.

25 Puech 2011, 91-3; Holmgren, Kaliff 2012, 61-63 with photographs and Puech's drawings.

26 Puech 2011, 93. The fragment has been edited by Brock (in Politis 2012, 418).

was imported to these remote places (the Basalt desert in particular) from the Northern Jordanian Highlands cluster.

A few inscriptions come from the environs of Jerusalem:²⁷ from Ḥirbet el-Mird and ʿĒn el-Šuwaynīt to the east in the Judaeen Desert, and from Umm el-Rūs and Mevo Modiim²⁸ to the west at the foot of the Judaeen hill country.²⁹ To the south of Umm el-Rūs, in the northern Negev, four additional find spots are known: Ḥirbet Qaşra (south of Bet Guvrin/Eleutheropolis), Giv’ot Bar (south of Rahat),³⁰ ʿAnab al-Kabīr, and Ḥūrah.³¹ The papyrus fragments discovered at Nessana provide additional evidence for the use of CPA in the Byzantine settlements of the Negev.³² Three more find spots cluster in the coastal plain of the Upper Western Galilee: Evron, Shlomi,³³ and Kabri/Ḥirbet el-Ḥazneh. Another inscription from Ḥirbet Qastra on the Carmel is best grouped together with these.

All in all, the Northern Jordanian Highlands region has not only the largest number of find spots and individual CPA inscriptions (even excluding Ḥirbet el-Samrā), the epigraphic material is also more diverse than in other areas, featuring inscriptions on stone and mosaic from churches and monasteries as well as gravestones. The find spots form a clear cluster: All sites are within a maximum distance of approximately 30 km as the crow flies from the next one. Though less clearly defined internally (and comprising less inscriptions), the string of find spots in the Judaeen Desert, the environs of Jerusalem, and the northern Negev connects with this Northern Jordanian Highlands cluster according to the same criterion: The next site is hardly ever more than 30 kilometers away.³⁴ All other find spots,

27 Pace Puech (2001, 70-2, hesitatingly followed by Hoyland in Cotton et al. 2012, I.2: 213-14), I am not convinced that the cryptogram from the Bethany cave should be read as a CPA inscription. Milik (1953, 530) and Di Segni (in Cotton et al. 2012, I.2: 538) have wondered whether a now effaced inscription in a tomb in the Silwan neighborhood of Jerusalem was in CPA, but this is a moot question.

28 Abudraham 2020.

29 Another inscription from ʿAbūd in the Samaritan hill country (recently treated by Puech 2020) can be connected geographically to this cluster, but it is evidently late and hence not indicative of the formative stage of the dialect.

30 A fragmentary graffiti that was scratched on what perhaps was once a building block with one flat surface. The inscription remains unpublished. I thank Ohad Abudraham for bringing it to my attention.

31 Vainstüb, Sokoloff, Varga 2016.

32 Hoyland 2021.

33 Dauphin, Kingsley (2003, 68) as well as Desreumaux (2016, 94) provide some details. For a full publication, see now Puech 2024.

34 But in some cases, notably when looking at Ḥirbet el-Muḥayyaṭ and Ḥirbet el-Mird, the actual distance to be covered by anyone traveling from one site to the other could have been much longer.

and notably the inscriptions in the Upper Western Galilee, are at a distance of at least 60 kilometers from the nearest other CPA site.³⁵

I surmise that a spoken Aramaic dialect of the Northern Jordanian Highlands region served as the basis for the CPA literary language.³⁶ Such a hypothesis not only fits the geographical distribution of the epigraphic remains, it can also account for additional characteristics of CPA. On a general level, the choice of Aramaic as a Christian literary language points to an area where Greek was not widely spoken. This basic tenet is reflected in the micro-distribution of the CPA inscriptions, which all come from rural churches and monastic estates in peripheral areas, not from the big urban centres.³⁷ Locating the origin of CPA in the rural areas of the Northern Jordanian Highlands and the bordering steppe region in particular also accounts for a morphological and syntactical peculiarity of the dialect, which can then be interpreted as an instance of contact-induced interference from Arabic.³⁸ In addition, it is reasonable to assume that some inhabitants of this region were acquainted with the Syriac Estrangelo script as early as the 5th or 4th century, which they could then adapt to write CPA. The Syriac language and script, originally from the area around Edessa, is epigraphically attested in Christian contexts west of the Euphrates from the early 5th century onward, mainly in the villages of the Limestone Massif of northern Syria.³⁹ Similar inscriptions are occasionally found further south as well: close to Ḥnayder, southwest of Homs,⁴⁰ and in Dayr Māker, east of the Golan,⁴¹ though the latter inscription cannot predate the late 6th century. There are also a few 6th- and 7th-century Syriac

35 Dayr el-ʿAdas is ca. 65 km away from al-Burz, the northernmost site of the Northern Jordanian Highlands cluster, and Qaṣr el-ʿAbyad on the Lisān peninsula is ca. 60 km south of Ḥirbet el-Muḥayyaṭ. Nessana is at a distance of ca. 70 km from Ḥurrah in the Northern Negev. Ḥirbet Qastra on the Carmel, the southernmost site of the Galilee cluster, is ca. 70 km away from Qam in the Northern Jordanian Highlands and ca. 90 km from Mevo Modiim. The graffiti from the vicinity of Qaṣr al-Burquʿ in the Basalt desert is at a 170 km distance from Riḥāb.

36 Thus also Beyer (1984, 68-9; 1995, 243).

37 Thus, e.g., Gzella 2015, 318.

38 Stadel 2021. Admittedly, the Arabic influence alone can also be accounted for by assuming an origin in the northern Negev, for example. In fact, the only CPA find spots that are removed from the steppe regions usually associated with Arabic-speaking nomadic populations comprise the Upper Western Galilee cluster and the area west of Jerusalem. Desreumaux (1987, 104; also in Desreumaux et al. 2011, 296) has also toyed with the hypothesis of an admixture of an Arabic population among the speakers of CPA. See now also Gzella (2025, 759-63), who finds that Arabic influence on the CPA lexicon is more extensive than generally acknowledged.

39 Briquel-Chatonnet 2013; Briquel-Chatonnet, Desreumaux 2011.

40 Kassis, Yon, Badwi 2004, 32.

41 Naveh 1978, 102-3.

manuscripts that were copied in the Damascene, including one that might originate in Dayr Māker.⁴² But further to the south, in modern day Israel and Jordan, evidence for the use of the Syriac script is conspicuously absent prior to the 8th century.⁴³

To sum up: The cradle of CPA is in all likelihood to be sought in the peripheral rural areas of the Northern Jordanian Highlands and the bordering steppe region. Beginning in the 4th and 5th centuries, this region saw the christianisation of Arabic speaking-nomads⁴⁴ that intermingled with the Aramaic-speaking sedentary population.⁴⁵ In these newly emerging congregations, Greek was not widely spoken, and this state of affairs gave rise to the promotion of a local Aramaic dialect to the CPA literary (and presumably liturgical) language. Since other Aramaic-speaking religious groups in Palestine, viz. Jews and Samaritans, had started to use their distinctive scripts as socio-religious markers,⁴⁶ the promoters of CPA took recourse to the only Semitic script that had by then come to be associated with Christianity – the Syriac Estrangelo – and adopted it for writing CPA.

3 The linguistic profile of Christian Palestinian Aramaic

In the preceding section, I have presupposed that CPA is a Western Aramaic dialect. I shall substantiate this classification in what follows by exemplifying morphological features that distinguish CPA from Eastern Aramaic dialects and Syriac, and by pointing to common morphological and syntactic traits shared by CPA, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), and Samaritan Aramaic (SamAr), but absent from the Eastern Aramaic dialects and Syriac. In using the terms Eastern and

⁴² Hoyland 2009, 130.

⁴³ Desreumaux (2016, 90-1) has collected the sparse evidence. The sole exception is the recently published early fifth-century Syriac funerary inscription from Zoar (Al-Shdeifat et al. 2023).

⁴⁴ Cf. Hamarneh 2012, 281 and Bianchi 2021, 21 for the general time frame of these developments and their connection with the building of monastic complexes.

⁴⁵ Cf. Stadel 2021, 298-301 for a possible contact scenario. In that article (295-8), I also presented evidence for contact between CPA and Arabic in pre-Islamic and early Islamic times. To the list of sites that yielded both CPA and Arabic epigraphic material (297), one may now add Nessana and 'Ayn 'Abāṭah. Boudier (2016, 281, 286) is to be counted among those scholars who had previously considered such contact (Stadel 2021, 297 n. 100). Additional evidence for the very early adaption by the Melkite communities of Arabic as a literary language (297-8) is also to be found in Muslim writings from the Umayyad period, as demonstrated by Baumstark (1932; for a recent treatment of the Arabic text cf. Anthony 2016, 257-66 and Conrad 2002, 129).

⁴⁶ The use of script (and language) as an identity marker is evident, e.g., from the Christian and Jewish tombstones from ancient Zoar (Stern 2017, 158-9). For a similar use of the Samaritan script cf. Stadel 2020c, 145.

For each feature discussed in the following, I shall provide a CPA example and the corresponding Syriac form, since in the relevant cases Syriac sides with the Eastern Aramaic dialect group. In addition to the Western Aramaic features, I shall also point out a distinctive trait of CPA and thereby sharpen previous descriptions of the linguistic profile of the dialect.⁴⁷

Of the two Late Aramaic dialect groups, Eastern Aramaic is clearly the more innovative. Hence, one way to define Western Aramaic dialects is negative: by their lack of Eastern Aramaic morphological innovations, which – to put it the other way around – are retentions from previous language stages in Western Aramaic.⁴⁸ The following comparison of the CPA and Syriac versions of Mark 2:20 demonstrates two such retentions in CPA.

ጽሁፉ ወደ ላቲን ቋንቋ ተተርጎሞ በጽሁፍ ላይ ለመጻፍ ሲያስችል
የጽሁፉ ዋና ዋና ክፍሎችም ሲሆኑ

ප්‍රධාන අමාත්‍යවරයාගේ මාධ්‍ය සම්මුතියේදී ප්‍රධාන අමාත්‍යවරයාගේ මාධ්‍ය සම්මුතියේදී

⁴⁷ This section is based on the most recent grammatical descriptions of CPA: Müller-Kessler 1991, for the phonology and morphology, Li 2013, for the syntax, and Sokoloff 2014a for the lexicon. Recent overviews of CPA include Morgenstern 2011 and Li 2017, but these are not tuned towards classificatory features.

49 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 82. For CPA quotations, I retain the manuscript sigla from this edition. My English renderings are based on the *New English Translation*. They are intended as aids for understanding the Aramaic, not as precise translations of the CPA or Syriac.

The first retention is evident in the 3m Imperfect prefix, which is *y-* (ܝܢܝܬܝܬܝܬ and ܝܢܝܬܝܬܝܬ), as in Imperial Aramaic, not *n-*, as in Syriac (ܢܝܬܝܬܝܬ and ܢܝܬܝܬܝܬ; or *l-*, as in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic).⁵⁰ In addition, one also notes that CPA, like earlier Aramaic and unlike Syriac, retains a morphological distinction between definite (ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ for Greek ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) and indefinite nouns (ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ for Greek ἡμέραι).⁵¹

Another retention pertains to the masculine plural ending of the *status determinatus*, which is spelled *-yʿ* in CPA, presumably reflecting the original pronunciation *-ayyā*, not *-ē* as in Syriac.⁵² This is exemplified by the CPA rendering ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ “Pharisees” (CCR1) in Mark 2:18,⁵³ as against Syriac ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ.

Similarly, the 1cs pronominal suffix is usually reconstructed as *-ī* in CPA, whereas it was reduced to zero in pronunciation in the Eastern dialects and in Syriac.⁵⁴ Since Syriac retains the morpheme in spelling, this difference in pronunciation is not reflected in the traditional orthography, as in the versions of Matthew 26:26:

CPA (CCR1):⁵⁵

ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ [ܝܬܝܬܝܬ]

Peshitta:

ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ

“Take, eat; this is my body”

Another trait common to all Eastern Aramaic dialects is the generalization of Imperfect forms without *-n-* before object suffixes.⁵⁶ This is not an innovation *stricto sensu*, since forms with and

50 Western Neo-Aramaic also retains this feature, Arnold 1990, 72.

51 In the case of ܠܝܬܝܬܝܬ, the use of the anarthrous form might not be idiomatic in the Aramaic and could have been triggered by the Greek. The fact remains, however, that CPA marks definiteness morphologically.

52 Cf. the (archaic?) Western Neo-Aramaic variant ending *-ōya*, Arnold 1990, 289. However, the etymology of the form is contested, see Spitaler 1938, 105.

53 Müller-Kessler; Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 82.

54 Probably a retention rather than an innovation in the Western group (*pace* Gzella 2015, 288). Similarly, I would classify the form *ʿattī* of the 2fs independent pronoun as a retention, but the evidence from JPA is ambiguous (cf. Kutscher 1976, 31; Fassberg 1990, 111-2; Heijmans 2015, 19) and therefore the form cannot be characterized as Western Aramaic.

55 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 34.

56 Boyarin 1981, 615; Gzella 2008, 104-5.

without *-n-*, reflecting the regular and the short Imperfect/Jussive respectively, are attested in earlier forms of Aramaic.⁵⁷ However, it is nevertheless a morphological trait that can be reconstructed to proto-Eastern Aramaic. In CPA, on the other hand, as in the other western dialects, the object suffix on Imperfects is always preceded by *-n-*. Each of the two dialect groups generalized a different form.⁵⁸ The contrast comes to the fore in the CPA and Syriac translations of Luke 20:3.

CPA (Dam^c):⁵⁹

ܠܐܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ

Peshitta:

ܠܐܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ

“Me, too, I’ll ask you a question”

But Western Aramaic is not only defined by the absence of eastern innovations. There are also a number of common Western Aramaic traits that are typical of the group, in contradistinction to Eastern Aramaic. A notable morpho-syntactical feature is the direct object marker *yt*, a retention from earlier language stages that is not attested in the eastern dialects (except for remnants in early Syriac).⁶⁰ In CPA, it is only used with pronominalized objects.⁶¹ Syriac usually suffixes the object pronouns directly to the verbal form, as in the following rendering of Matthew 27:35.

CPA (CCR8):⁶²

ܡܬܬܐܢܐ ܕܥܡܐܢܐ

57 For Biblical Aramaic: Rosenthal 2006; For Qumran Aramaic: Muraoka 2011, 142-3.

58 Even Western Neo-Aramaic retains this feature, Arnold 1990, 207-12.

59 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 165.

60 Beyer 1984, 601 s.v.

61 Sokoloff 2014a, 168. The CPA tendency to avoid object suffixes on verbal forms (Müller-Kessler 1991, 259; “Unparalleled Variant Readings”, 364) might well be due to translation technique, mimicking the Greek, where pronominalized objects constitute separate words.

62 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 19.

وَجِبَّ الْمَخْلُوفُ

Κόλπος Πόδα, $\rightarrow$ ΠΟ

နည်းစာ, ကဏ္ဍ

[illegible]

Syriaca 1 | **25**
Christian Palestinian Aramaic, 13-46

Peshitta:

מא דנשאל דאדא רבב חסא חזינא דאדא רבב סלף . מחבירי לך

“he sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them”

In CPA, this usage is not attested in sources that reflect the early stage of the language,⁶⁷ and a similar tendency has been observed for SamAr as well.⁶⁸ This would imply that the feature developed over time and cannot be reconstructed for proto-Western Aramaic.

Another morphological innovation pertains to the cardinal numbers 3-10.⁶⁹ When preceding a definite noun, they appear in a special ‘construct’ form ending in *-ty/’* (*-tē*). This can be observed in the CPA version of Exodus 26:9 (where the definite nouns mirror the Greek τὰς πέντε δέρρεις... τὰς ἑξ δέρρεις).

CPA (Vat)⁷⁰

ጽሑፍ ለወጪው ጥሬ ህጻን ጽሑፍ [ለ]ህግ ጥገና
ጥሬ ህጻን

Peshitta:

א.ב.מ. שחזר מלחמ'ה ארבעה עשר יום

“and you shall join the five curtains by themselves and the six curtains by themselves”

67 Müller-Kessler 1991, 161 lists ten examples. Note, however, that in all three examples from early manuscript the participle has nominal properties. This is obvious in Acts 27:14 (CCR2) ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲱ “a blowing wind” (Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996–99, 2B: 44) for Greek ἀνεμὸς τυφωνικός as well as in the Acts of St. Adrian ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲛ “a nation of murderers” (Sokoloff 2014b, 4). In Titus 3:2 (CCR2) ⲛⲟⲩⲟⲩ ⲛⲟⲩⲱⲛ “they must not slander anyone, or be quarrelsome” (Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996–99, 2B: 186), the form need not be understood as a participle with verbal properties (*pace* Bar-Asher 1988, 54, who pointed to the seeming parallel in the preceding phrase), but could as well be nominal, especially in light of the Greek *Vorlage* ἀμάγων εἶναι, where it is paralleled by an adjective.

68 Tal 1998, 357-60. A few early attestations of the verbal use have been noted by Stadel (2013a, 158-9). However, the situation in JPA does not seem to suggest a chronological development, cf. Kutscher 1976, 30; Tal 1998, 362-3; Heijmans 2015, 85.

69 Bever 1984, 458.

70 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 1: 40.

The 3fp Perfect ending *-ī/-ē(n)* has also been classified as a Western Aramaic morphological innovation, which replaced earlier *-ā*.⁷¹ Like other unstressed long vowels in word final position, the ending was reduced to zero in Syriac, as can be seen in the rendering of parts of Matthew 25:3.

CPA (CSRO^e)⁷²

ܕܠܗܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ

Peshitta:

ܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ

“but they (viz. the bridemaids) that were foolish took...”

Even though Syriac (in its western tradition) also evinces spellings of the 3fp Perfect with final *-y*, these are best interpreted as an orthographic feature unrelated to the Western Aramaic forms.⁷³

The nominal pattern *maqṭōlī* is also typical of the Western Aramaic dialect group.⁷⁴ Usually it functions as verbal noun of the G-stem or designates the place where an action takes place, as in the rendering of Matthew 23:2.

CPA (CCR1)⁷⁵

ܕܠܗܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ

Peshitta:

ܕܠܗܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܡܠܚܝܬܝܢ

“The scribes and Pharisees have seated themselves on the chair of Moses”

⁷¹ Sokoloff 2011, 615; Gzella 2015, 288.

⁷² Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 64.

⁷³ With, e.g., Gzella 2015, 288-9 n. 962; Brock 2003, 99. But cf. Boyarin 1981, 623-6 for a divergent view. Note that even if one interprets the Syriac orthography as reflecting final *-ī*, the virtual absence of the form in early manuscripts would suggest a diachronic development in Syriac. Hence, the form cannot have been inherited, but (if connected to Western Aramaic) has to be seen as an areal feature that spread over time.

⁷⁴ Sokoloff 1974.

⁷⁵ Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2A: 25.

In addition, the Western Aramaic dialects share a syntactic innovation: They employ the preposition *mn* followed by a participle to express simultaneity.⁷⁸ Syriac and other forms of Aramaic usually use the conjunction *kd* instead, as can be seen in the example from Galatians 6:9.⁷⁹

CPA (CCR2)⁸⁰[illegible]

Peshitta:

۱۰۰. حبیب الرحمن لکھنؤ

“while doing good, we must not grow weary”

To sum up the Western Aramaic linguistic profile so far: While Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Samaritan Aramaic lack the innovations of the Eastern Aramaic subgroup and share a number of additional linguistic traits, positive evidence for a distinct Western Aramaic dialect group is restricted to four traits. The only shared innovations are the new series of demonstrative adjectives, the construct forms of the cardinals 3-10, and the 3fp Perfect ending (in the realm of morphosyntax) as well as the syntagma *mn* + participle which expresses simultaneity.

While in general they are very similar to each other, the languages that comprise the Western Aramaic group differ from one another by

76 Cp. Biblical Aramaic מְשֻׁקֵּיחָה “the musical pipe” (Daniel 3:5). The pattern is also found in Syriac: Sokoloff 1974, 74 n. 8; Duval 1881, 231.

77 In Western Neo-Aramaic, the nominal pattern is restricted to *nomina instrumentalis*, Arnold 1990: 359.

78 Sokoloff 2014a, 235-6 s.v. *mn* (note that Sokoloff has conflated two different uses of *mn* and some of his examples are irrelevant for the present discussion, e.g., those listed in sections b. and i.); Stadel 2013a, 147; Bunis 2018, 205-6; 210-1; 213.

⁷⁹ Müller-Kessler (2020, section 1.4.9.5) has noted that the CPA syntagma is often employed to render Greek participles and has suggested that it developed under Greek influence. There is no evidence to support her suggestion. The similarity between the Greek and CPA constructions is restricted to the use of a participle, but the same verbal form is also found in the functionally equivalent Syriac syntagma (cf. the example above). On the other hand, recourse to Greek cannot explain the use of the preposition *mn*.

80 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2B: 118.

dictionary of CPA;⁹⁰ Then I have checked the dialectal distribution of the item in S. Kaufman's *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* website;⁹¹ And in a last step, I have reviewed the printed dictionaries of the relevant dialects.

Identifying lexical items unique to CPA is straight forward and only subject to the general *caveat* that our knowledge of all Aramaic dialects is very partial and determined by chance, viz. the number and nature of the texts that have come down to us.⁹² Apart from this general constraint, anyone trying to identify Western Aramaic lexical items meets additional difficulties. A Western Aramaic item can be identified with certainty wherever its distribution is restricted to CPA, JPA, and SamAr. However, attestations of lexical items in three other dialects are ambiguous for matters of classification.

Targumic Aramaic, the dialect of Targum Onkelos and Jonathan, evinces a mix of western and eastern features.⁹³ While most scholars agree on a Palestinian origin of the Targum, which shows in a number of lexical isoglosses with Western dialects,⁹⁴ one cannot exclude the possibility of Eastern Aramaic lexical material in Targumic Aramaic. Hence, I provide a separate list for lexemes attested in the Western Aramaic dialects as well as in Targumic Aramaic.

Due to its intermediate position between the Eastern and Western dialect groups, Syriac is also problematic. Generally, I have treated Syriac attestations of a lexeme as an indication that it is not Western Aramaic. Hence, I have excluded such cases from the lists below. However, there are a number of otherwise typical western lexical items that are only marginally attested in Syriac, often in early texts. Prominent examples include the direct object marker *yt*, the verb *ṽhmy* G "to see", the noun *ṭwr*² in the sense "field", and the verb *ṽgwb* C "to answer". The interpretation of these lexemes in Syriac is contested, and this has implications for their classification. Joosten has argued that lexical items from the Old Syriac Gospels and Syriac Ben Sira represent literary loans from Western Aramaic

90 Sokoloff 2014a. In addition, I have perused recent text editions, but only Müller-Kessler 2019 contains a new lexical item.

91 *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* (<http://cal.huc.edu>), henceforth cited as Kaufman, CAL. The CAL searches have been performed in January and February 2022. I quote the website explicitly wherever Kaufman provides additional relevant information for the headword, e.g., by classifying it as Western Aramaic.

92 This is nicely illustrated by the recent publication of a CPA section from Leviticus, which has furnished the first Western Aramaic attestation of the verbal root *ṽšmd* "to destroy", Müller-Kessler 2021b, 364. On a more general level, Mutzafi 2022 demonstrates that today's Neo-Aramaic dialects preserve authentic Aramaic lexical items that are unattested in the ancient dialects.

93 Cf. the *status quaestionis* on the classification of Targumic Aramaic provided in Kutý 2010, 6-12.

94 Tal 1975, 103-23.

Vorlagen, implying that the respective lexemes are pure Western Aramaic.⁹⁵ But Van Rompay has suggested an alternative explanation for some of the words, viz. that these are inherited common Aramaic lexemes which gradually fell out of use in Syriac.⁹⁶ Hence, it is only after the loss that these lexemes would have become typical for Western Aramaic. In addition, some lexemes might also represent diffusion of original Western Aramaic elements to Syriac in a dialect continuum.⁹⁷ Another group of lexeme than do not necessarily defy a classification as Western Aramaic are those that are only known from the indigenous lexicographical tradition and have not – to the best of our knowledge – been employed in Syriac literature.⁹⁸ Such lexical items with a marginal attestation in Syriac are also excluded from the lists below.

Though an Eastern Aramaic dialect in the strict sense, Jewish Babylonian Aramaic may also include Western Aramaic vocabulary. These western lexemes are for the most part literary loans (often with a technical meaning) from two other Jewish literary languages: Rabbinic Hebrew (with its numerous Aramaic loanwords) and Targumic Aramaic.⁹⁹ Western elements in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic are difficult to identify with certainty, but a western origin should be considered in the case of marginally attested lexemes and words with a technical meaning. I have included a few such items in the lists, always accompanied by a short discussion of the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic evidence.

I shall present the lexical material in four separate sections: 1) Western Aramaic lexemes *strictu senso* (according to the criteria outlined above); 2) Western Aramaic lexemes with partial attestation, i.e. lexemes shared by CPA with either JPA or SamAr, but not with both; 3) Western Aramaic lexemes also attested in Targumic Aramaic; and 4) unique CPA lexemes. I have excluded Greek loanwords, Arabic loan- or substrate words,¹⁰⁰ and nouns of the *maqṭōlī* nominal pattern

95 E.g., Joosten 1991; 2007.

96 Van Rompay 1994, 81-2, who is followed, e.g., by Brock 2003, 107-8 and Meehan 2007.

97 But one would rather expect these to cluster in later, not early Syriac manuscripts. Alas, the CPA use of *√ntl* “to give”, not *√ntn*, in Imperfect forms is perhaps better accounted for as due to diffusion in a dialect continuum than as a literary loan from Syriac (*pace* Müller-Kessler 1991, 6, 197; Sokoloff 2014a, 273).

98 Relevant items include: *√ngs* “to dine” and derivations (Sokoloff 2014a, 256, and in JPA) with the cognate noun ܢܝܢܐ recorded only by Audo 1897, 2: 34; *√šm* G “to force, compel” (Sokoloff 2014a, 317, and in SamAr and JPA), attested only in the lexicon of Bar Ali (cf. Sokoloff 2009, 1127); *√šyr* C “to sing” (Sokoloff 2014a, 428, and in JPA [Polell]), references only by Bar Bahlul (cf. Sokoloff 2009, 1554).

99 On Hebrew vocabulary in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic cf. Breuer 1999.

100 For the latter cf. Stadel 2021, 295.

(which I have discussed in the morphology section above). Also excluded are nominal derivations of common Aramaic roots, even if the combination of such a root with a specific nominal pattern is unique to Western Aramaic.¹⁰¹

In order to catch the Western Aramaic and CPA lexical characteristics more precisely, I have classified the material into the following categories: A) Phonological peculiarities: These include cases in which the CPA or Western Aramaic form has obvious cognates in Eastern Aramaic and Syriac, from which it differs by sound changes such as assimilation or metathesis; B) Morphological peculiarities: These include the use of distinct nominal patterns in obvious synonyms or of distinct stems in verbal roots. I have only included cases that are well attested in both dialect groups; C) Semantic peculiarities: These include cases in which CPA or Western Aramaic evince a different meaning for a common Aramaic word. Usually, the peculiar meaning is related to the meanings attested for the cognates from other dialects. Hence I have restricted myself to cases of non-trivial semantic developments; D) Collocations; and E) Words and verbal roots.

For each lexical item, I give the respective CPA base form and its meaning. Related forms or other derivations (including nouns derived from verbal roots) are not mentioned separately, but I indicate their existence in CPA. In brackets I provide the respective page number in Sokoloff's CPA dictionary. Pertinent information on a possible Canaanite origin, on the distribution, or on contrastive forms from other dialects follows. Any additional information or detailed discussions will be relegated to the footnotes. References to dictionaries of other dialects will only be provided if not mentioned in the CPA dictionary, or – for Targumic Aramaic – in Kaufman's CAL.

3.2.1 Western Aramaic Lexical Items

- a. Phonological peculiarities: ܬܠܬ "blood" (5; elsewhere without prosthetic vowel); ܠܡܝ "moon" (108; elsewhere with *s* [*< š*]); ܠܫܝܬ G "to be unclothed, strip off" (131; elsewhere ܠܫܠܝܬ); ܠܩܕ G "to bow down" (318; Syriac ܠܩܕ); ܠܪܒܝܬ "to mix" (319; elsewhere ܠܪܒܝܬ).¹⁰²
- b. Morphological peculiarities: ܠܬܝܪܬܝܬ "herd of cattle" (58; elsewhere without *o/u*); ܠܢܝܪ C "to know" and derivations

101 E.g., ܠܬܝܪܬܝܬ "object of derision" (Sokoloff 2014a, 5) from the common root ܠܓܪܝ "to incite", and ܠܬܝܪܬܝܬ "passion" (Sokoloff 2014a, 215) from the common ܠܫܝܬ "to suffer".

102 I interpret the rare Jewish Babylonian Aramaic attestations (Sokoloff 2002, 880) as literary loans from Tannaïtic Hebrew.

- (265; common in the sense “to be alien”);¹⁰³ √pwg polel stem “to provide enjoyment” and derivations (324; elsewhere without reduplication).
- c. Semantic peculiarities: ܐܬܬܐܢܐ “uncle” (117; elsewhere “beloved” in general);¹⁰⁴ ܠܚܝܬܐ “incense burner” and related nouns (209; elsewhere derivations of the root carry more general meanings associated with coal);¹⁰⁵ ܬܬܐܬܐ “thing, matter” (245; elsewhere meanings clearly reflect the basic “to stand”); ܠܬܐ “lot” (255; Imperial Aramaic “receipt”); √smt D “to gather” and derivations (356; Syriac and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic “to inhibit, close”);¹⁰⁶ √qsr “to be short” and derivations (380; < Canaanite?; elsewhere “to be sick”);¹⁰⁷ ܠܥܝܐ “immediately” (415; elsewhere “equally”).¹⁰⁸
- d. Collocations: none
- e. Words and verbal roots: √bld “to frighten, upset” and derivations (49); √glg D, Dt “to chatter, boast, praise” (73); ܠܐܢܐ “loaf, cake” (129); √hps G “to search, dig” (136);¹⁰⁹ ܬܬܐܬܐ “upright” and derivations (168; < Canaanite); ܬܬܐܬܐ “something” (175); √lhš G “to press” and derivations (198);¹¹⁰ ܠܬܐ “fate, share” (255); √shn C “to possess, hold” (282);¹¹¹ √yny “to guard, watch” (307); √psql “to make an agreement” (336);¹¹² √šwq G “to be distressed” and derivations (351; < Canaanite); √qrš G “to rise early” (384); ܠܬܐܢܐ “lamb” and feminine equivalent (388); derivations of √šgg G “to err” (413);¹¹³ ܬܬܐܬܐ “pustule” (431).

103 Attestations in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic are restricted to the Gt stem Participle (Sokoloff 2002, 755); The meaning “to know” is not securely attested in Syriac, cf. Sokoloff 2009, 921.

104 JPA and SamAr also attest to the feminine counterpart “aunt”.

105 The hapax attestations in both Qumran Aramaic and Nabataean demonstrate that the meaning existed in previous language stages of Aramaic. However, they can also be interpreted as colloquial (viz. Western Aramaic) intruders in these post-Achaemenid Official Aramaic idioms.

106 Attestations of √smt D “to gather” in bSanh 109b belong to a quote from a Palestinian source, cf. Sokoloff 2002, 967.

107 Note that in SamAr the root is restricted to the Targum, perhaps suggesting a literary loan, cf. Tal 2000, 793-94.

108 Syriac attests to the Western Aramaic meaning, but adds an adverbial affix, ܬܬܐܬܐ (Sokoloff 2009, 1526).

109 An attestation in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Sokoloff 2002, 478) is best booked as a literary loan from Mishnaic Hebrew.

110 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 1: 216 on a form of the root.

111 The basic root is Western Aramaic, but it is not productive in CPA, which rather uses the variant √swšn, see below section 3.2.4.

112 Müller-Kessler 1991, 6.

113 Sokoloff 2017, 618 s.v. *šggh*; Tal 2000, 871 s.v. *šgy*.

3.2.2 Western Aramaic Lexical Items with Partial Attestation

I distinguish between items unattested in the third dialect (indicated by Ø) and cases in which the third dialect attests to a different form (viz. where the item is not representative of the Western Aramaic group as a whole).

- a. Phonological peculiarities: ܐܠܫܐ “also” (8; SamAr and elsewhere ܐܬܐ *af*);¹¹⁴ ܐܬܝܢ C “to come” (34; SamAr and elsewhere ܐܬܝܢ);¹¹⁵ ܠܝܢ “but” (63; against ܠܝܢ in JPA and elsewhere); ܠܝܢܐ “perhaps” (89; JPA and elsewhere ܠܝܢܐ); ܠܝܢܐ “to strengthen” (124; against JPA ܠܝܢܐ, Syriac ܠܝܢܐ); ܠܝܢܐ “spider” (173; SamAr Ø; Syriac with *g*);¹¹⁶ ܠܝܢܐ C “to testify” (281; JPA and elsewhere ܠܝܢܐ); ܠܝܢܐ “to destroy” (421; JPA and elsewhere with *y*).
- b. Morphological peculiarities: ܠܝܢܐ “if (counterfactual)” (17; < *ʔillū* + *ʔit*, paralleled by SamAr ܠܝܢܐ “if” < *ʔin* + *ʔit*; unattested in JPA);¹¹⁷ ܠܝܢܐ “gift” (252; JPA and elsewhere without *o/u*).
- c. Semantic peculiarities: ܠܝܢܐ D “to adorn, embroider” (266; JPA and elsewhere “to be spotted”); ܠܝܢܐ “floor, storey, roof” (399-400; root in SamAr and elsewhere “to bind”, in other contexts).¹¹⁸
- d. Collocations: ܠܝܢܐ + ܠܝܢܐ “to be patient” (9; JPA Ø);¹¹⁹ ܠܝܢܐ “until, as far as” (301; SamAr Ø);¹²⁰ ܠܝܢܐ + ܠܝܢܐ G “to meet” (366; SamAr Ø).¹²¹
- e. Words and verbal roots: ܠܝܢܐ “time, period” (31; SamAr Ø);¹²² ܠܝܢܐ “hunchbacked” (67; SamAr Ø);¹²³ ܠܝܢܐ C “to sweat” (83; SamAr Ø; Syriac and Jewish Babylonian Aramaic

¹¹⁴ Tal 2000, 55.

¹¹⁵ In CPA the form with *t* is common, whereas it is rare in JPA. Note that SamAr also attests to a single form with *t*, Tal 2000 342.

¹¹⁶ Sokoloff 2017, 271; *SL*, 211.

¹¹⁷ For the SamAr form cf. Stadel 2014, 170. The CPA form provides another piece of evidence for the semantic bleaching of *ʔit* in Western Aramaic, cf. Stadel 2013b, 340.

¹¹⁸ But the meaning “to cover” is marginally attested in SamAr, though not in an architectural context, cf. Tal 2000, 836.

¹¹⁹ For SamAr cf. Tal 2000, 62. The collocation is also attested in the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes 7:8 and Sirach 5:11.

¹²⁰ In SamAr, the form ܠܝܢܐ “as far as” seems to be restricted to word-for-word translations in the Targum, cf. Tal, *DSA*, 463.

¹²¹ Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2B: 219.

¹²² Possibly a Hebraism, according to Kaufman, *CAL*, s.v.

¹²³ JPA also attests to a variant with *ʔ*. SamAr ܠܝܢܐ “hunchbacked” (Tal 2000, 155) could possibly be related.

have √dʾt);¹²⁴ ܡܢܬܐ “outer garment” (130; SamAr Ø); √trs G “to encircle” (154; SamAr Ø);¹²⁵ ܥܝܬܐ “sprout” (160; SamAr Ø);¹²⁶ ܥܝܬܐ “gnat” (169; SamAr Ø); √kwʿ Gt “to feel sorrow” (176; JPA Ø);¹²⁷ ܥܝܬܐ “hard biscuit” (183; SamAr Ø);¹²⁸ √lwk D “to soil” (196; JPA has the variant √lklk; SamAr Ø);¹²⁹ ܥܝܬܐ “cedar” (201; JPA ܥܝܬܐ “pine needle wool”; SamAr Ø);¹³⁰ ܥܝܬܐ “blow, stroke” (238; SamAr Ø; elsewhere the root has the general meaning “to put aside” etc.);¹³¹ ܥܝܬܐ “column, standing stone” (243; JPA Ø);¹³² ܥܝܬܐ “patch, piece of cloth” and variant form (248; SamAr Ø); √cup “cup” (286; SamAr Ø);¹³³ √dr “to hoe” (SamAr Ø);¹³⁴ ܥܝܬܐ “darkness” (321; JPA Ø); √pry G “to run, hurry” (340; SamAr Ø); ܥܝܬܐ “morsel of bread” (345; SamAr Ø); ܥܝܬܐ “gravel, pebbles” (359; < Canaanite; SamAr Ø);¹³⁵ √qrʿi “to leap” (382; SamAr Ø); ܥܝܬܐ “dust” (387; JPA Ø);¹³⁶ √šnʿ Gt “to be restricted” (438; SamAr Ø).¹³⁷

124 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 210.

125 Pace Kaufman, CAL, s.v., I do not think that the dubious attestation of the verbal root in SamAr (Tal 2000, 325) should be counted as cognate.

126 Sokoloff 2017, 254.

127 Following Kaufman, CAL, s.v., I take SamAr √kwʿ Gt “to be rebuked” (Tal 2000, 383) to be cognate with the CPA form.

128 For JPA, cf. the attestation in yPes 2:2 (28d), in Aramaic context.

129 Müller-Kessler 1991, 8. For JPA, cf. Sokoloff 2017, 306-7. The only attestation in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Sokoloff 2002, 583) is conjectural and could be influenced by Mishnaic Hebrew.

130 Sokoloff 2017, 299.

131 I assume that the word was present in JPA since it is attested in the Amoraic Hebrew of the Tanḥuma (שנה חיי, paragraph 3).

132 The noun is also attested in earlier dialects.

133 The word is known from Qumran Aramaic, where it could be interpreted as an intruder from the Western Aramaic vernacular. The noun survives as a substrate word in Arabic dialects of Syria-Palestine, cf. Hopkins 1995, 41-3.

134 For CPA, the root is only attested in the recently published sections of Proverbs, Müller-Kessler 2019, 160. For JPA, cf. Sokoloff 2017, 446-7.

135 Also a substrate word in Arabic dialects of Syria-Palestine, cf. Hopkins 1995, 43-9 and al-Salameen, 2016, 58 with an additional attestation from Wādī Mūsā in Jordan.

136 Müller-Kessler 1991, 6.

137 I interpret the rare Jewish Babylonian Aramaic verbal form (Sokoloff 2017, 1166) as a denominization (D-stem!) of ܥܝܬܐ < Rabbinic Hebrew ܥܝܬܐ.

3.2.3 Western Aramaic Lexical Items also Attested in Targumic Aramaic

Some of the lexemes are unattested in either SamAr or JPA. As in the previous section, I use Ø to indicate this.

- a. Phonological peculiarities: ܐܒܒܐ *'abbā* “my father, the father” (1; SamAr Ø; Western Aramaic with /bb/, elsewhere /b/);¹³⁸ ܒܫܪܐ *ʾbšr* D “to announce, bring good tidings” and derivations (54; Syriac ܒܫܪܐ); ܝܠܕܐ *ʾylḏ* “storm” (261; SamAr Ø; Syriac with *m*); ܨܕܩ *ʾṣḏq* “to be just” and derivations (348; Syriac and Mandaic ܨܕܩ);¹³⁹ ܪܩܢ *ʾrḡn* “to empty” (395; elsewhere ܪܩܢ).
- b. Morphological peculiarities: ܪܡܢ *ʾrwmn* “pomegranate” (403; < Canaanite; elsewhere *rwmn*’).
- c. Semantic peculiarities: ܡܗܝܐ *ʾmhy* G “to weave” (216; SamAr Ø; elsewhere “to strike”);¹⁴⁰ ܢܗܡܐ *ʾnhm* D “to console” and derivations (260; Syriac only “to resurrect”); ܦܬܐ *ʾpṭ* “empty, lacking” (333).
- d. Collocations: ܦܬܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ *ʾpṭ d-ʿaynā* “quickly” and similar forms (58);¹⁴¹ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ *ʾd-ʿaynā d-ʿaynā* “crossroads” and similar forms (343; SamAr Ø).
- e. Words and verbal roots: ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* “swamps” (58; SamAr Ø);¹⁴² ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* “south” (92; < Canaanite);¹⁴³ ܨܨܐ *ʾṣṣ* G “to depart, turn aside” (110; JPA and SamAr Ø);¹⁴⁴ ܦܬܐ *ʾpṭ* “forest” (124); ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* G “to sink” and derivations (151);¹⁴⁵ ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* G “to die out” and derivations (153); ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* “neighbor” (209);¹⁴⁶ ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* “plain” (222); ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* “ladder” (282, < Canaanite?); ܨܬܐ *ʾṣṭ* G

138 The distinctive Western Aramaic pronunciation was identified by Breuer 2020. It survives in Western Neo-Aramaic *eppay* “my father”, cf. Fassberg 200, 109-10 for the development of the different forms of the noun in this dialect cluster. All other Neo-Aramaic dialects attest to reflexes of the form with simplex /b/, cf. Mutzafi 2018, 281.

139 ܨܨܐ in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic is a loan from Hebrew.

140 The general meaning is attested in Western Aramaic as well, where it also developed into the technical meaning “to weave” (< “to throw the shuttle” < “to strike”).

141 Ultimately derived from ܨܨܐ “to be unrestrained”.

142 A noun *plurale tantum*? The singular is unattested in CPA.

143 Müller-Kessler 1991, 8. The word also entered Middle Arabic texts, possibly deriving from a toponym, cf. Blau 2006, 212. Note also ܨܨܐ “north” and ܨܨܐ “east(wind)” in this section. Incidentally, ܨܨܐ in Exodus 26:27 is simply “the sea”, not “the west” (*pace* Sokoloff 2014a, 163), reflecting the Greek *Vorlage* (τῆ πρὸς θάλασσαν).

144 *Pace* Müller-Kessler 2003, 436 and with Tal 2000, 228, it is indeed likely that the SamAr attestations are literary loans from Targum Onkelos, since they are only found in marginal readings of MS M of the Samaritan Targum.

145 The form in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (bQid 20b, Sokoloff 2002, 507) can be parsed as Hebrew, especially in light of the following words.

146 Western Aramaic according to Kaufman, CAL, s.v.

“to count, finish” and derivations (288);¹⁴⁷ ܠܚܝܬ “branch, shoot” (302); ܠܚܝܬ “counsel” (307; < Canaanite; SamAr Ø);¹⁴⁸ √pšpš “to search, examine” (343); √šhb G “to quarrel” and derivations (352; SamAr Ø);¹⁴⁹ ܠܚܝܬ “few, a little, small amount” (353-4); √šlhb “to redden, burnish” and derivations (355; SamAr Ø);¹⁵⁰ ܠܚܝܬ “north” (358; < Canaanite);¹⁵¹ √qbl G “to become dark” (361);¹⁵² ܠܚܝܬ “east(wind)” (362; < Canaanite; SamAr Ø);¹⁵³ √qrš G “to rise early” and derivations (384); ܠܚܝܬ “winnowing fork” (399; < Canaanite; SamAr Ø; JPA ܠܚܝܬ/ܠܚܝܬ/ܠܚܝܬ);¹⁵⁴ ܠܚܝܬ “twisted” (424);¹⁵⁵ ܠܚܝܬ “song” (428);¹⁵⁶ ܠܚܝܬ “dawn, daybreak” (442; JPA and SamAr Ø);¹⁵⁷ ܠܚܝܬ “abomination” (443).¹⁵⁸

3.2.4 Unique Christian Palestinian Aramaic Lexical Items

The additional section F) *hapax legomena* contains forms of uncertain meaning that are attested only once. Since these could be corruptions, I indicate whether they come from a manuscript of the early or late phase of CPA.

147 I consider Jewish Babylonian Aramaic √skm C “to agree” (Sokoloff 2002, 810) to be a literary loan from Rabbinic Hebrew.

148 A literary loan from Hebrew in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, and possibly also in other Jewish dialects.

149 As per Kaufman, CAL, s.v. šhb, in Targumic Aramaic there is only one attestation of the variant root √šhb (which is also known from JPA).

150 Pace Tal 2000, 731, the SamAr forms contain no indication of the root √šlhb in that dialect. Synchronically, they are to be parsed as √šlb “to burn, be red, afflicted by disease”, viz. this might be another case of micro-variation in the dialect group.

151 Müller-Kessler 1991, 8. The noun is used in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic as a literary loan from Hebrew.

152 I assume that the single attestation in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (Sokoloff 2002, 980) is a literary loan, perhaps from Targumic Aramaic.

153 Müller-Kessler 1991, 8. Note that the CPA attestation in Jonah 4:8 does not mirror the meaning of the Greek (πνεύματι καύσωνος) and the Peshitta, but conforms to Targum Jonathan (and the Hebrew text). The attestation in bSanh 18b (Sokoloff 2002, 1010) appears in a passage with nouns in the absolute state and Imperfects with the y-prefix and is therefore hardly genuine Jewish Babylonian Aramaic.

154 Another case of micro-variation in the western dialect group. The JPA form survives as a substrate word in Arabic dialects of Syria-Palestine, cf. Neishtadt 2018, 231-5.

155 Western Aramaic according to Kaufman, CAL, s.v. The other dialects attest to additional derivations of the root.

156 In Syriac restricted to the name of Canticles.

157 Attested in Biblical Aramaic, Daniel 6:20.

158 The other Western Aramaic dialects attest to different derivations of the root. Jewish Babylonian Aramaic ܠܚܝܬ (Sokoloff 2002, 1040) is a literary loan from Hebrew.

- a. Phonological peculiarities: ܚܝܢܐ “hyena” (3; JPA and SamAr Ø; Eastern Aramaic with *p*); ܠܗܬܢ G “to embalm” and derivations (125; JPA, SamAr and elsewhere ܠܗܬܢ);¹⁵⁹ ܠܗܠܠܐ Gt “to respect” (173; JPA and SamAr Ø; Syriac ܠܗܠܠܐ);¹⁶⁰ ܠܫܠܬܐ “to possess, hold” (282; JPA and SamAr ܠܫܠܬܐ); ܠܫܪܦܝܡ “Seraphim” (292; JPA and Syriac without *w*);¹⁶¹ ܠܠܕܐ G “to remember” (302; JPA and SamAr Ø; Syriac ܠܠܕܐ); ܠܠܬܐ “family” (415; JPA and SamAr Ø; elsewhere ܠܠܬܐ);¹⁶² ܠܠܬܐ “to use” and derivations (425; JPA and SamAr Ø; elsewhere ܠܠܬܐ); ܠܠܬܐ “abyss” (451; elsewhere with *h*).
- b. Morphological peculiarities: ܠܠܬܐ “the thighs” (442; elsewhere plural ܠܠܬܐ);¹⁶³ ܠܠܬܐ “infant” (454; elsewhere ܠܠܬܐ);¹⁶⁴ ܠܠܬܐ “saw” (460; elsewhere with *m*- or *n*-).¹⁶⁵
- c. Semantic peculiarities: ܠܠܬܐ Gt “to contradict” and derivation (114; elsewhere “to be upright” and similar);¹⁶⁶ ܠܠܬܐ G “to forge metal” (197; elsewhere “to knead”);¹⁶⁷ ܠܠܬܐ “slope” (215; elsewhere ܠܠܬܐ “to stagger, leap for joy”);¹⁶⁸ ܠܠܬܐ “ship’s tackle” (430; elsewhere “completion” and similar).¹⁶⁹
- d. Collocations: ܠܠܬܐ “by means of, via” (65).
- e. Words and verbal roots: ܠܠܬܐ “a dish, bowl” (66); ܠܠܬܐ “mediation, chattering” (76); ܠܠܬܐ G “to dare, attempt” (94);¹⁷⁰ ܠܠܬܐ “ant” (129);¹⁷¹ ܠܠܬܐ “moisture” (199; < Canaanite); ܠܠܬܐ “clever” (218);¹⁷² ܠܠܬܐ “thicket, wood”

159 As Müller-Kessler 2003, 443 points out, ܠܗܬܢ might be attested once in SamAr.

160 Kaufman, CAL, s.v. has compared the Syriac ܠܗܠܠܐ, which is a better fit than ܠܗܠܠܐ (*pace* Sokoloff 2014a, 173). The categorization above follows this etymology. However, if the root was cognate with *mkyk* “low, humble”, one would have to assume a common root (and the entry should be delete from our list).

161 The nominal pattern of the CPA form is probably due to contamination from ܠܠܬܐ “cherubs”. But cf. the Samaritan Hebrew pronunciation *šārof* for the snake from Numbers 21, Ben-Ḥayyim 1977, 274.

162 ܠܠܬܐ is also the more common form in CPA, cf. Sokoloff 2014b, 422.

163 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 1: 216.

164 The common ܠܠܬܐ is also marginally attested in CPA, cf. Sokoloff 2014a, 164. Cp. also ܠܠܬܐ in Tannaitic Hebrew.

165 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 211; Müller-Kessler 2021a, 220.

166 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 209.

167 Müller-Kessler 1991, 6.

168 In CPA, the meaning of the root is restricted to downward movement.

169 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 2B: 220.

170 Müller-Kessler 2021a, 217.

171 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 210; Müller-Kessler 2021a, 220. The form is probably cognate with JPA ܠܠܬܐ “a disease” (Sokoloff 2017, 458). The Syriac ܠܠܬܐ also carries the meanings of both “ant” and “eczema”, Sokoloff 2009, 1538.

172 Probably not related to the common ܠܠܬܐ “to tremble”.

- (281);¹⁷³ √sl Dt “to be poured as libation” and derivations (288);¹⁷⁴ √plm Gt “to be amazed” (spelled with inverted 𐤌) and derivations (332);¹⁷⁵ 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “type of small boat” (371); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “self” (372);¹⁷⁶ √𐤌𐤍 “beam” (384; < Canaanite?);¹⁷⁷ 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “a kind of locust” (390); √šlp G “to urge, do previously” (435, < Arabic?);¹⁷⁸ √špt D “to trouble” (440); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “usage, service” (441);¹⁷⁹ √štr Dt “to remain” (447);¹⁸⁰ 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “furrow” (456; < Canaanite).
- f. *hapax legomena*: 𐤌𐤌𐤍𐤍 “a rough place” (7-8; early MS); √glr D “?” (74; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “young man(?)” (103; early MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍𐤍 “care, order” (137; early MS);¹⁸¹ √hṭp Gt “to benefit” (143; early MS); √y’r C “to be in danger” (164; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍𐤍 “beam (of light)” (200; early MS);¹⁸² 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “small vessel” (248; early MS); √mrš C “to become insensitive(?)” (249; early MS); √sym C “to be bright(?)” (285; late MS); √pwr Ct “to be enraged” (324; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “target” (349; late MS); √spd C “to jump(?)” (357; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “bridle” (360; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “tendril” (372; early MS);¹⁸³ 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “a kind of locust” (375; late MS); √rhṭ Gt “to be set over” (406; early MS);¹⁸⁴ 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “hotness” (414; late MS); 𐤌𐤌𐤍 “flood(?)” (426; early MS); 446) “(?)” 𐤌𐤌𐤍; late MS).

173 Perhaps a *plurale tantum* noun.

174 Müller-Kessler 1991, 6.

175 Pace Tal 2000, 100, a connection with the rare SamAr √blm “to be foolish(?)” is doubtful. Kaufman, CAL, s.v. considers the CPA root a variant of √blm “to muzzle, silence”.

176 Müller-Kessler 2021a, 217.

177 The noun is attested in Biblical Hebrew. If not a substrate word, one could think of a variant form of Syriac and JPA *gšwr* “beam”.

178 Müller-Kessler 1991, 7. For the possibility of early influence from Arabic cf. Stadel 2021, 295.

179 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 210; Müller-Kessler 2021a, 217.

180 This is a secondary root derived from an original t-stem of √šr. Kaufman, CAL, s.v. notes that the same root is also attested in the Late Jewish Literary Aramaic of Targum Job.

181 Müller-Kessler 2003, 436.

182 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996-99, 5: 210.

183 Müller-Kessler 2021a, 220.

184 Why this root was booked as √r’y escapes me.

Abbreviations

CAL = Kaufman, *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*
CPA = Christian Palestinian Aramaic
JPA = Jewish Palestinian Aramaic
SamAr = Samaritan Aramaic

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Graeco-Aramaica: A Look at Greek Words in Christian Palestinian Aramaic

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Abstract The contacts between Greek and Late Aramaic varieties have been the topic of lively academic discussions, which resulted in important studies on Greek loanwords in Syriac, Samaritan Aramaic, and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. The first study on Greek loanwords in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA) appeared at the end of the nineteenth century, but our knowledge of the language and its texts has considerably expanded since then. The present paper investigates Greek loanwords in CPA and offers a small sample of meaningful borrowed words.

Keywords Late Aramaic. Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Greek loanwords. Greek into Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Lexis.

Summary 1 Greek words in Late Aramaic dialects. – 2 *Comparanda* for the study of Greek words in CPA. – 3 CPA outcomes of Greek consonants and vowels. – 4. A corpus-based investigation. – 4.1 From Latin into Greek, from Greek into CPA. – 4.2 From Greek into CPA, via Arabic. – 5 Conclusions.

1 Greek words in Late Aramaic dialects

Greek and Aramaic have coexisted for many centuries in West Asian regions, from the time of the Achaemenid Empire.¹ From the fourth

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century BCE, Aramaic native speakers living in the Syrian and Mesopotamian areas found themselves under the ruling authority of the Seleucid Empire (321-64 BCE) and of its official language, Greek. After the fall of this empire, Greek was retained as the official language of communication used in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, whose rulers did not impose a restrictive language policy over the areas they controlled. Latin was used only as the official language of the military. Greek was the *lingua franca* and the language of prestige in Syrian and Mesopotamian regions, while Aramaic was the mother tongue of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the area. The consequence of the prolonged contacts between the two is that Aramaic borrowed a large number of words from Greek.²

The first instance of a loanword from Greek in a variety of Aramaic dates back to the Official Aramaic phase (700 BCE-200 BCE ca.), when, around 500 BCE, the word *statēr*, from Greek *στατήρ*, appeared on the Abydos lion weight, preserved today in the British Museum in London.³ The same Greek word is extant in one of the legal papyri from Elephantine, dated 402 BCE.⁴ Around the third century BCE, three Greek names of musical instruments entered the biblical *Book of Daniel*.⁵ Loanwords from Greek are extant as well in Middle Aramaic varieties (200 BCE-200 CE ca.), and are widely attested in all Late Aramaic varieties (200 CE-1200 CE ca.).⁶ These have not been equally impacted by the linguistic influence of Greek, as the eastern varieties (i.e., Jewish Babylonian Aramaic)⁷ appear to be the ones with the smaller number of loanwords, whereas the western group (Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, Samaritan, and especially Christian Palestinian Aramaic – henceforth CPA) shows a sensibly higher

² The linguistic situation of the Syrian and Mesopotamian regions has been described in several publications. See, among others, Butts 2016a, 25-30; Debié 2019; Gzella 2015; Millar 1993; Nicosia 2021, 176-7; Sartre 2005; and Taylor 2002.

³ Butts 2016a, 56.

⁴ Brock 1996, 251; Muraoka, Porten 2003, 350. For the text of the document, see Kraeling 1953, 270.

⁵ Butts 2016a, 56. Suchard (2022) proposes to consider these words not as loanwords but rather as instances of code-switching.

⁶ For discussions on Greek words in Middle Aramaic varieties, see Brock 2005; Contini, Pagano 2015; Gzella 2006; Healey 1995; Monferrer-Sala 2013; and the Greek words in Sokoloff 2003a. For the periodization of Aramaic employed in this paper, see Fitzmyer 1979; for a discussion on the definition of Middle Aramaic, see Moriggi 2021; for the periodization of Late Aramaic, see the remarks in Butts 2019, 224, who follows Folmer 1995, 1-5; and the comments in Nicosia 2021, 178, n. 11.

⁷ Even though Mandaic belongs as well to the group, Härbel 2021 highlights the presence of many loanwords from Greek (and other languages), which are unparalleled for an Eastern variety.

number of loanwords from Greek.⁸ Syriac, the only central variety of the Late Aramaic group, is certainly the language that features the largest number of Greek loanwords, and, as will be discussed in the next paragraph, its borrowing methods and adaptation strategies have been studied thoroughly.

A key aspect to take into account when surveying the history of Greek loanwords in Aramaic varieties is that Greek words were also transferred *between* these varieties; therefore, the exact identification of the moment at which some Greek words were originally borrowed is simply impossible. This is the case, for instance, of the loanword from Greek κατήγορος (the outcome of which is a secondary formation through root extraction in the D-Stem),⁹ which is invariably attested as *qṭrg* ('to accuse') in Syriac, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, Samaritan Aramaic, and CPA. Therefore, the word was borrowed first by one of these varieties or one of their forerunners, responsible for the metathesis between *r* and *g*, and circulated as such among the others.¹⁰

Due to the years that the Mesopotamian and Syrian regions spent under the control of the Eastern Roman Empire, a relatively rich array of Latin words entered Aramaic. However, virtually all of them arrived via a previous acquisition in Greek, which is why they are often tackled within the discussion on Greek loanwords in Late Aramaic.¹¹

2 **Comparanda for the study of Greek words in CPA**

A modern study of Greek loanwords in CPA does not exist. Our only source of information on the matter dates to 1893, when Friedrich Schwally published his *Idioticon des christlich palästinischen Aramaeisch*. The volume comprises ten pages listing the loanwords from Greek and Latin, their translation into German, and short notes on their occurrences. Based on the CPA texts that were known at his time, Schwally gathered 61 Greek words and 3 Latin words with their corresponding CPA outcomes. In 1991, Christa Müller-Kessler (1991, 104–5) devoted a section of her grammar of CPA to a short list of loanwords from Greek and Latin and their occurrences.¹²

Based on the amount of CPA texts that are known to us nowadays, I was able to gather a corpus of roughly 300 loanwords from Greek, among which 26 are loanwords from Latin through Greek.

8 Among these varieties, Samaritan Aramaic contains the lowest number of loanwords. See the discussion in Butts 2016a, 206–9 and the brief notes in Nicosia 2021, 178.

9 On this derivational strategy, see Brock 2004, 37 and Butts 2016a, 111–17.

10 Butts 2016a, 57–8.

11 See, for instance, the study on Latin words in Syriac in Butts 2016b.

12 For a short history of CPA lexicography, see Sokoloff 2014a, xiii–xiv.

My research has benefitted from several previous works that served as *comparanda* and, in some cases, additional sources. Particularly, one of the main reference tools that I employed was the study of Greek loanwords in Samaritan Aramaic published by Christian Stadel and Mor Shemesh (2018). The scholars published a list of 74 loanwords – which Stadel later updated to 76 –¹³ gathered through the study of the lemmas hosted in the dictionary published by Abraham Tal (2000). Other studies on Greek words in Late Aramaic varieties and other coeval Semitic languages used in the Palestinian region are the *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrash und Targum* by Samuel Krauss (1899) and *A Dictionary of Greek and Latin Legal Terms in Rabbinic Literature*, which was conceived by Daniel Sperber (1984) as a follow-up to Krauss' work.¹⁴ Another useful source is the extensive study on Greek loanwords in Syriac published by Aaron Butts (2016a). This capital study, which takes into account also a small sample of Greek loanwords in Late Aramaic varieties other than Syriac, established or perfected a set of rules to determine the morphological and phonetic integration of loanwords. Most of these rules have proven to apply as well to Greek loanwords in CPA.¹⁵ Butts' study incorporated and further developed the results obtained, for instance, by Anton Schall's *Studien über griechische Fremdwörter im Syrischen* (1960), and the series of papers written by Sebastian Brock on similar topics.¹⁶ There is one important methodological difference between Butts' monograph and any analogous investigation in CPA: Butts chose to study only the loanwords that are extant in Syriac texts which were not translated from Greek. A similar approach is simply unfeasible when dealing with the corpus of CPA texts, since the only extant documents that were not translated from Greek are inscriptions and a few magical texts.¹⁷

This paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive list of loanwords from Greek in CPA, but rather to offer a general introduction to the topic, with discussions and comments on a selected sample of words.

13 See the remarks in Stadel 2021, 356 on the word *ʾnqylh* and Stadel 2024, 207-8 on the word *ṣ*.

14 Sperber is also the author of the *Essays on Greek and Latin in the Mishna, Talmud and Midrashic Literature*, which appeared in 1982.

15 For an analysis of the merits of Butts' work and the usefulness of his results for future research, see Nicosia 2021.

16 Such as Brock 1990; 1996; and 2004.

17 Among others, Morgenstern (2011, 628) refers briefly to the fact that only epigraphical texts were composed directly in CPA, whereas the manuscripts host exclusively texts translated from Greek. It has to be taken into account that there are a handful of translations into CPA that do not employ loanwords from Greek, such as fragments from *Leviticus* and *Numbers* (see Müller-Kessler 2021), or feature only a few of them, such as the text of the *Dormition of Mary* (see the notes in Müller-Kessler 2019). For an overview of the literature written in CPA, see Díez Merino 2003.

This paper does not touch upon onomastics, but encompasses Greek (paragraph 4) and Latin (paragraph 5) loanwords in CPA, as well as Greek loanwords that entered CPA via Arabic (paragraph 6).

3 CPA outcomes of Greek consonants and vowels

Before addressing Greek loanwords in CPA, it is useful to provide a table of correspondences between Greek consonants and their representation in CPA:¹⁸

Greek	CPA	Greek	CPA
β	ⲓ	ξ	ⲙⲓ
γ	Ⲛ	π	ⲡ (rarely ⲣ)
δ	ⲛ	ρ, ρ̂, ϱ	ⲣ
ζ	ⲛ	σ	ⲓ, ⲙ, ⲛ (rare)
θ	ⲛ	τ	ⲛ, ⲛ
κ	Ⲛ, ⲛ	φ	ⲣ
λ	ⲛ	χ	ⲛ, Ⲛ (rare), ⲛ (rare)
μ	ⲛ	ψ	ⲙⲣ
ν	ⲛ		

A table with clear correspondences between Greek and CPA vowels is more complicated to build. For the time being, I will confine myself to very brief notes, to be expanded with further study.¹⁹ Greek α is usually represented with Ⲡ; Greek ε with ⲡ, Ⲡ, and ⲛ; Greek η with Ⲡ and ⲛ; Greek ι with ⲛ; Greek ο with Ⲡ and ⲛ; Greek υ with ⲛ, Ⲡ, and occasionally ⲛ; and Greek ω with ⲛ.²⁰ Occasionally, Greek vowels are represented with two CPA letters, such as initial-position Greek α, that can be represented with ⲛⲠ. This summary overlooks the presence of the *spiritus*, which in some instances causes a change in the representation of Greek vowels, e.g., in the case of initial-position Greek ἡ represented by ⲛⲡ in the word Ⲡⲓⲛⲛⲛⲛⲛⲛⲛ (< Gr. ἡγεμὼν, ‘prefect, governor’).

¹⁸ Some notes on the topic are included in Müller-Kessler 1991, 33.

¹⁹ Some notes on the topic are included in Müller-Kessler 1991, 40-1.

²⁰ The outcomes described here do not generally appear to be influenced by the position of the vowels within words.

4 A corpus-based investigation

As previously done in the study on Greek loanwords in Samaritan Aramaic,²¹ my investigation started from the words gathered in the most recent dictionary of CPA, published by Michael Sokoloff (2014a), and then took into account several other publications, such as Schwally's aforementioned *Idiotikon*, the corpus of inscriptions published by Robert Hoyland (2010) and Thomas Bauzou et al. (1998), the texts published by Klaus Beyer (1984, 402–5) – albeit briefly –, those in the series of the *Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*,²² the *Texts of Various Contents* published by Sokoloff (2014b), the amulets published by Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked (1953, 108–9) and Puech (2007),²³ and the magical booklet published by Maurice Baillet (1963). Moreover, the research encompassed the CPA words in the list of loanwords from Greek in Butts' monograph (2016, 212–22). A partial investigation has been conducted on the words gathered by Friedrich Schulthess (1903) in his dictionary of CPA, but prominence has been given to the more recent one by Sokoloff.

Semitic languages in general, and CPA in particular, employ various strategies to borrow foreign vocabulary, the most prominent of which is the mere transliteration of words which retain their original spelling, at least as far as the phonemic inventory of the recipient language allows. This is the case, for instance, of ܐܠܬܐܪܐ, a loanword from Greek βωμός, 'altar, raised platform'. Another common borrowing strategy is the extraction of a triconsonantal root. Usually, root extraction is described as a secondary formation strategy, according to which three consonants are extracted from an already borrowed noun. The result of the extraction is a denominative verb in the D-stem.²⁴ In CPA, we find instances of root extraction in the loanword ܐܠܬܐܪܐ from the Greek verb γλύφειν, 'to engrave';²⁵ ܐܠܬܐܪܐ from the substantive ܐܠܬܐܪܐ borrowed from Greek τάξις, 'order, rank';²⁶ ܐܠܬܐܪܐ from Greek εἰκόν, 'to make sure'. These roots are attested as well in other Aramaic varieties.

21 Stadel, Shemesh 2018.

22 Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1996; 1997; 1998a; 1998b; and 1999.

23 When I undertook this research, I didn't know about the existence of two additional amulets, published by Puech (2012) and Abudraham (2017). These two texts – which are however quite fragmentary – will be taken into account for the publication of the comprehensive list of Greek loanwords in CPA. I wish to thank Christian Stadel for filling this gap in my bibliographical knowledge.

24 See note 8 for references.

25 On this root, see the discussion in Nicosia 2019, 274–5.

26 See the notes in Butts 2016a, 221.

Once foreign words are acquired by the recipient language, they usually undergo various integration strategies, testifying to their active use in the language. Hence, they leave the state of *Fremdwörter* to enter that of *Lehnwörter*.²⁷ This is instantiated in ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, from Greek γλωσσόκομον, ‘money bag’;²⁸ ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, from Greek κάμπη, ‘caterpillar’; or ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, from Greek ύπηρέτης, ‘rower, sailor’, all equipped with Aramaic definite state suffixes. Another frequently employed integration strategy is the addition of Aramaic derivational suffixes, such as ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, used to create abstract nouns, or (ܠ)ܐ, to create adjectives. The first suffix is extant in words such as ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, ‘combat of athletes’ (created from ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ < Greek ἀθλητής, ‘athlete’, + ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ) or ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, ‘hospitality’ (created from ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ < Greek ξένος, ‘host, foreigner’ + ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ), and ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, ‘Christianity’ (created from ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ < Greek χριστιανός + ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ). The derivational suffix (ܠ)ܐ, also known as *nisba*, is extant in ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ, ‘(made of) ivory’, from Greek ἐλεφάντινος; (ܠ)ܐܝܬܝܬܐ, ‘barbaric’, from Greek βάρβαρος; or (ܠ)ܐܝܬܝܬܐ, ‘general; universal’, from Greek καθολικός. Apart from (ܠ)ܐܝܬܝܬܐ, which is an adjectival construction built on the word ܐܝܬܝܬܐ, ‘barbarian’, the other examples deserve to be discussed in more detail:

- ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ: The first problem with this word is in its spelling, as ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ is the reconstruction proposed by Schulthess (1903, 10) to emend the form ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ. The other Late Aramaic varieties do not seem to feature a loanword from Greek ἐλεφάντινος.²⁹ Moreover, there is no attestation of the word ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ*, ‘ivory’, to which the suffix could have been added to create the adjective. Therefore, this word could have been borrowed directly from a Greek adjectival form, which was paired with the derivational suffix (ܠ)ܐ- to make it resemble to other Aramaic adjectival forms.³⁰ Alternatively, CPA had a word ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ*, from Greek τό ἐλεφάντινον, to which the suffix has been added.

²⁷ Butts 2016a, 48. However, the identification of the status of *Fremdwort* or *Lehnwort* is not always straightforward in the cases of contacts between Greek and Aramaic. See Brock 1975, 80-1; Brock 1996, 261; and Butts 2016a, 48-50 for further discussion.

²⁸ The non-determined form of the loanword is ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ.

²⁹ For instance, ivory is called ܐܝܬܝܬܐ or ܐܝܬܝܬܐ in Syriac. Cf. CAL (*Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, http://cal.huc.edu/searching/CAL_search_page.html).

³⁰ Even though the *nisba* is usually added to nouns to create adjectival forms, it is not to be excluded that it is used here to “mimic” a derivation from a noun. Something similar regarding another derivational suffix (-wtʿ) has been noted, for instance, in loanwords from Greek vehiculated through Syriac into Arabic, such as ريطورية and ريطورية presented in Nicosia 2020, 77-80, or cases like Syriac ܠܬܝܡܝܬܐ described in Nicosia 2019, 276-7.

- **ܐܬܝܠܝܬܐ**: The word is attested both in CPA and Syriac only as an adjective. Whether the adjectival suffix has been employed due to analogy with other adjectives or as the outcome of Greek final *-ή*, implying that the input form was *καθολική* instead of *καθολικός*, is difficult to say. However, based on the wide range of attestations and occurrences that the word has in Syriac, it is likely the case that the derivational suffix has been attached to a substantive form.

A derivational suffix that is widely paired with Greek loanwords in Syriac is the adverbial ending **ܕܝܬܐ**,³¹ but I could not find a single occurrence of the derivational suffix **ܕܝܬܐ**- employed with Greek loanwords in CPA. Even in cases in which the adverbial form would have been necessary, such as the words **ܐܬܝܠܝܬܐ** (< Gr. ἑλληνιστί, 'in Greek'), **ܐܬܝܠܝܬܐ** (< Gr. Ῥωμαϊστί, 'in Latin'), and **ܐܬܝܠܝܬܐ** (< Gr. συριστί, 'in Aramaic'), no suffix is employed, and actually these three loanwords are mere replicas of their respective Greek input forms.³²

One of the most interesting sources of loanwords is a magical booklet kept in the library of the University of Leuven. The manuscript, which represents a fascinating and still rather obscure artifact, hosts one of the very few texts that were composed directly in CPA and is the longest extant example of a magical text in CPA.³³ The composition starts with an ink recipe and a list of ingredients and colors,³⁴ mentions some magical names, goes on with three prayers – one likely to be to Jesus, one for the scorpion and one for the viper –,³⁵ and ends with some incomprehensible invocations. The text has been tentatively dated to the 6th or 7th century.³⁶

Most of the names of the pigments and ingredients of the recipe are borrowed from Greek, and most of them are also extant in Syriac. These are some examples:

31 The status of the adverbial suffix *-yt* in CPA is debated, although Müller-Kessler ruled out the possibility that it entered CPA only as a consequence of Syriac influence. See Müller-Kessler 1991, 140-3.

32 This category of borrowed Greek adverbs has not been discussed in Müller-Kessler 1991, 142-3.

33 The other known texts are five amulets written on lead (Puech 2007 and Abudraham 2017), bronze (Naveh, Shaked 1993, 107-10), silver (Puech 1996, 299-302), and copper (Puech 2012).

34 See Desreumaux 2015a, 133. For a discussion on the inks used in Syriac manuscripts, see Boutrolle, Daccache 2015; Daccache, Desreumaux 2015; Desreumaux 2015b; and Pacha Miran 2020, 66-87.

35 Morgenstern (2011, 630) reads "against" the scorpion and the viper.

36 Baillet 1963, 401.

- ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘oak apple’, is a loanword from the genitive form κηκίδος of the Greek word κηκίς. The loanword can be found in Syriac as ܡܬܠܦܢܐ or ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, even though these two likely originated from the nominative form;³⁷
- ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘blue vitriol; copper sulfate’, is a loanword from the genitive form χαλκανθοῦς of the Greek nominative form χαλκανθές.³⁸ The Syriac corresponding word ܡܬܠܦܢܐ comes from the Greek input form χαλκίτις, meaning ‘containing copper’;³⁹
- ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘cinnabar, red lead’, comes from Greek συρικόν, maybe with the sense of ‘coming from the island of Syros’. Baillet (1963, 385-6) gives a detailed explanation of why the CPA loanword cannot be derived from the Greek word σιρικόν, ‘silk robe; silk’, but rather refers to the pigment known as *syricum* in Latin, which was employed as a substitute for cinnabar. However, with time, the words used to refer to this color or pigment started to be confused, hence the difficulty in retracing the original input form.⁴⁰ The word is attested in Syriac as ܡܬܠܦܢܐ or ܡܬܠܦܢܐ;
- ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘arsenic’, is a loanword from Greek ἀρσενικόν, and is attested in Syriac as ܡܬܠܦܢܐ;⁴¹
- ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘ceruse’, comes from Greek ψιμ(μ)ύθιον, and is attested as well in Syriac as ܡܬܠܦܢܐ.⁴²

Another interesting word used in the magical booklet is ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, ‘urn, vase; measure’, coming from Greek ξέστης,⁴³ or rather from the Greek adaptation of the Latin word *sextarius*, and extant in Syriac as ܡܬܠܦܢܐ. The regular Syriac outcome of Greek ξ would be the pair *ks* (ܡܬ), but the presence of the empathic velar stop *q* (ܡ) in this Aramaic word is a famous exception attested from Palmyrene (*qstʿwn*)

³⁷ Baillet 1963, 384.

³⁸ Baillet 1963, 385 states that the input form of the loanword is not χαλκανθοῦς, but rather the secondary form κάλκανθος. Considering the presence of *n* for Greek *χ*, this proposal is not to be excluded.

³⁹ The word is registered in Gignoux 2020, 66. Sokoloff (2009, 627) registers also the alternative orthography ܡܬܠܦܢܐ.

⁴⁰ Sokoloff (2014a, 1047) labels the word as a loanword from Greek σιρικόν. On the use of cinnabar in the preparation of inks, see Pacha Miran 2020, 72.

⁴¹ Gignoux (2020, 19) features the orthography ܡܬܠܦܢܐ. Interestingly, the Greek word ἀρσενικόν comes from the Old Persian word **zarnīk*, via a Semitic influence, visible in the Syriac word ܡܬܠܦܢܐ; cf. Chantraine 1968, 115-6. Thus, Syriac features two ways of calling the arsenic: the first one, ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, is a loanword from Persian, while the second one, ܡܬܠܦܢܐ, is a loanword from Greek.

⁴² Gignoux 2020, 21 and 24.

⁴³ Baillet (1963, 383-4) suggests that the word could also be a loanword from Greek κίστη.

to Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (*qsyt*), Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (*qistʿ, qystʿ*), CPA, and Syriac.⁴⁴

On the seventh page of the booklet, we find an odd word employed in the prayer for (against?) the viper. The animal is called 𐤓𐤁𐤏𐤏𐤏, ⁴⁵ and Sokoloff's dictionary labels it as a loanword from Greek *εχίνος*. However, the spelling of this alleged loanword, equipped with the Aramaic state suffix, is very peculiar.⁴⁶ More specifically, the problem lies in the choice of rendering Greek initial *ε*- with the pharyngeal fricative 𐤏. As pointed out by Müller-Kessler (1991, 34), contrary to Samaritan Aramaic, 𐤏 was not employed in CPA as a *mater lectionis* to represent *a/ā*. Nevertheless, the scholar gathered three instances, to which we now add this fourth one, of this phenomenon in the magical booklet: 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏 (page 7 of the booklet), 𐤏𐤏𐤏 𐤏𐤏𐤏 (page 5), and 𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏𐤏 (page 3, a loanword from Byzantine Greek *λαζούριον*, 'light blue').⁴⁷

The explanation provided by Baillet (1963, 395–96) for the identification of 𐤓𐤁𐤍𐤏𐤕 with the viper is based on the existence of similar words in other varieties of Aramaic, such as Jewish Babylonian and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic ܒܝܒܐ, which features the same initial fricative, or Syriac ܒܝܒܐ, clearly a loanword from Greek ἑχίδνα, ‘viper’. Sokoloff’s identification of 𐤓𐤁𐤍𐤏𐤕 as a loanword from Greek ἐχῖνος is not unproblematic either, given that the Greek word means ‘hedgehog, urchin’ and does not refer to snakes,⁴⁸ which is instead the case of the words ἑχίδνα and ἑχίς. Based on its aspect, the word likely entered CPA via varieties of Aramaic other than Syriac, such as Jewish Palestinian Aramaic.

4.1 From Latin into Greek, from Greek into CPA

It was already pointed out that some Latin words reached CPA via Greek. I gathered a total of 26 Latin words, mostly belonging to the military sphere or the field of measures and weights. Together with  discussed in the previous section, I would like to mention:

44 Butts 2016c, 17-18.

45 Baillet 1963, 395-6.

46 Sokoloff 2014a, 307.

⁴⁷ Syr. ܐܝܢ or ܐܝܢܐ. Again, the ‘ayn is very problematic: the reading is undeniable, but its very presence might be a scribal mistake. Sokoloff (2014a, 197) proposes to emend the word into ܐܝܢܐܢܐ. On the use of light blue in inks, see Pacha Miran 2020, 69-70.

⁴⁸ Liddell, Scott 1883, 628-9. In his dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, Sokoloff (2002, 861) proposed that the word was a Semiticized form of Greek ἔχις, but he later corrected himself in the dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. See Sokoloff 2003, 406.

- ܫܠܬܢܐ < Gr. σκουτον < Lat. *scutum*, ‘shield’;
- ܐܫܫܪܝܢ < Gr. ἀσσάριον < Lat. *assarium*, ‘*assarius*, small copper coin’;⁴⁹
- ܕܢܐܪܝܐ < Gr. δηνάριον < Lat. *denarius*, ‘gold *denar*’;
- ܐܘܢܥܝܐ < Gr. οὐγκία < Lat. *uncia*, ‘ounce’;⁵⁰
- ܠܝܓܝܐ/ܠܝܓܝܐ < Gr. λεγιών/λεγεών < Lat. *legio*, ‘legion’;
- ܡܕܝܐ < Gr. μόδιος < Lat. *modium*, ‘corn measure, peck; container, bushel’;
- ܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. μίλιον < Lat. *mille*, ‘Roman mile’, ‘mile-stone’;
- ܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. πραιτώριον < Lat. *praetorium*, ‘governor’s headquarters’;⁵¹
- ܕܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. καῖσαρ < Lat. *caesar*, ‘Caesar, emperor’;
- ܕܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. κάστρον < Lat. *castrum*, ‘cohort’;⁵²
- ܕܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. κασσίς < Lat. *cassida*, ‘helmet’.⁵³

The group of Latin loanwords includes a small sample of words belonging to other semantic fields, such as ܦܫܥܝܐ < Gr. φασκία < Lat. *fascia*,⁵⁴ ‘bandage used to wrap a corpse’; ܕܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. κελλίον < Lat. *cella*, *cellula*, ‘cell’; ܡܝܠܝܐ < Gr. κάλαμος < Lat. *calamus*, ‘reed pen, stylus’.

An interesting loanword from Latin extant in CPA is the word ܡܝܠܝܐ, which supposedly comes from a Greek form σίγνον < Latin *signum*, ‘sign’. What is peculiar is that the text in which it is found, the *Acta Pilati*, treats it like a plural,⁵⁵ since the word is used as a translation of the Greek plural τὰ σίγνα.⁵⁶ Reconstructing the input form poses a problem: the presence of a final ܐ- is usually explained as the result of a loanword from a Greek plural accusative form, but second declension neutral nouns feature only -α as their plural accusative ending, not -ας. The problem appears as well in the Syriac

49 The CPA outcome lost the Greek and Latin declension suffixes.

50 Syr. ܐܫܫܪܝܢ. The presence of the final ܐ- in CPA testifies to the fact the input form was probably a Greek accusative plural.

51 Cf. Jewish Palestinian Aramaic for ρ>ܠ.

52 The input form is the plural κάστρα instead of the singular κάστρον. Sokoloff (2014a, 378) registers two spellings, ܕܡܝܠܝܐ and ܕܡܝܠܝܐ. The presence of the emphatic ܣ is probably triggered by the influence of the following emphatic sound ܬ. A similar phenomenon is attested in another loanword from Latin, *custodia*, through Greek κουστωδία, which is attested in CPA both as ܕܡܝܠܝܐ and ܕܡܝܠܝܐ.

53 The input form is the genitive κασσίδου.

54 Even though such a word is not immediately connected to the military sphere, the military could have been its conduit.

55 Sokoloff 2014b, 17.

56 For the Greek text, see Tischendorf 1876, 222.

translation of *Acta Pilati*, which features ܡܠܬܬܐ,⁵⁷ even though Syriac could have hardly prompted the CPA outcome, as the CPA translation of this text was made directly from Greek.⁵⁸ Whether such hypothetical Syriac influence was vehiculated by a translator who worked both on Syriac and CPA translations of the Greek text, which resulted in the same “quirk”, is impossible to prove.

4.2 From Greek into CPA, via Arabic

It is not always easy to identify how or when a Greek word entered CPA vocabulary and texts. However, there are some instances in which this identification is possible, as in the case of a handful of Greek words that entered CPA through Arabic (spoken by Christians). Whether this mediation was made in writing or simply in the mind of scribes who were speakers of Arabic remains to be ascertained.⁵⁹ Be as it may, the influence of Arabic is shown in the CPA realization of Greek π: since Arabic lacks the bilabial voiceless stop *p* and replaces it with the voiced *b*, these loanwords feature ܒ instead of the usual ܢ:

- ܒܠܫܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. πρώτη, ‘at first’;
- ܒܠܬܬܐܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. προφητεία, ‘prophecy’;
- (ܒܠܬܬܐܬܐ) ܡܠܬܬܐܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. δεσπότης, ‘master’;
- ܬܡܬܐܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. τοπάzion, ‘topaz’;⁶⁰
- ܒܠܬܬܐܬܐܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. μητροπολίτης, ‘metropolitan’;
- ܬܡܬܐܬܐ < Ar. < Gr. ῥιπίδιον, ‘fan (used by the deacon)’.

There is one instance in which the passage π > ܒ > ܒ might have caused a hypercorrection. In the text of the *Service of Compline*, we find the curious word ܒܠܬܬܐܬܐ, ‘the Devil’.⁶¹ The text belongs to the CPA *Horologion* preserved in the Berlin manuscript Or. Oct. 1019, copied by the priest PHEME in Jerusalem in 1187/1188 CE.⁶²

⁵⁷ Rahmani 1908, vol. 2: 3.20. Sokoloff (2009, 999) indicates σιγύναι as the Greek counterpart of the word.

⁵⁸ Brock 1971.

⁵⁹ Although I personally find it highly likely, since the alleged intermediary Arabic words are absent from most dictionaries. Interesting examples are the words for ‘metropolitan’ and ‘topaz’, which are usually written مطران (created via root extraction) and توباز (featuring an initial ܬ which could have hardly prompted CPA ܬ) and cannot possibly be the input forms of CPA outcomes. The possible input forms of the loanwords gathered here could be searched in Christian Arabic vernacular, which lacks a reference dictionary.

⁶⁰ See note 51.

⁶¹ Black 1954, 88 and 280.

⁶² Black (1954, 4-5) explains that the text was likely copied from an earlier parchment manuscript. A leaf of this latter manuscript belongs to the Mingana collection in Birmingham, labelled Mingana Syriac 660.

Since the text belongs to the late phase (ca. eleventh to thirteenth century) when CPA was no longer spoken but still employed as a liturgical language, and had gotten heavily influenced by Arabic (and Syriac),⁶³ the scribe might have opted for ܐ instead of ܢ as the result of hypercorrection. The scribe must have been aware, therefore, that Greek π turned into ܦ in Arabic and decided to replace ܢ with ܐ to avoid a possible mistake. If this scribe was responsible for such a “misunderstanding”, it implies that he recognised the word ܠܐܒܕܐܢܐ as coming from Greek διάβολος; alternatively, this could be a mere scribal mistake caused by distraction or by the use of a copy with such mistake.

5 Conclusions

This paper offered a brief introduction to the study of Greek loanwords in CPA and provided an overview of the main borrowing strategies employed. Moreover, it discussed a sample of loanwords from Latin via Greek, and from Greek via Arabic, to provide the most accurate sketch of the possibilities that this line of research has to offer. This research opens the path to additional trajectories: first, to conduct an extensive comparison with Greek words attested in the other Late Aramaic varieties, aiming to assess the level of innovation or, conversely, alignment to other western varieties testified by CPA. Second, to compare the Greek loanwords attested in CPA with those extant in Western Neo-Aramaic varieties spoken in modern-day Syria, which show the presence of many words coming from their Late Aramaic ancestor. An example is the word used in CPA to refer to Bedouins/Arabs: ܠܐܒܕܐܢܐ . ܠܐܒܐܢܐ is a loanword from Byzantine Greek σαρκενός,⁶⁴ which is attested as well in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic as ܠܐܒܐܢܐ, and is extant in the Western Neo-Aramaic Muslim dialect of the Syrian village of Bax'ā (pl. *sarkōyin*), where it refers to Muslim people.⁶⁵ This line of study and its possible applications contribute to widening our understanding of modern vernaculars, and to tracing their connection to Late Aramaic varieties.⁶⁶

⁶³ For a chronology of CPA, see Morgenstern 2011, 629-31 and the discussion in Díez Merino 2003. For a discussion on the sources of the late phase, see Müller-Kessler 1991, 23-6.

⁶⁴ See Macdonald 2009 on the possible Semitic origin of the Greek word.

⁶⁵ See the discussion in Contini, Nicosia 2020, 99-100.

⁶⁶ The opposite approach, i.e., using modern vernaculars to explain obscure Syriac words, was recently used in Mutzafi 2024.

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Les inscriptions araméennes christo-palestiniennes : géographie, épigraphie, paléographie, histoire

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Abstract This paper offers an overview of Christian Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions found in the Byzantine and Arabian Provinces. After a discussion on the geographical distributions of Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions in the Middle East, alongside the known places of production of Christian Palestinian manuscripts, the paper studies Christian Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions within their archaeological context and according to their proximity to Greek inscriptions. The paper aims to sketch a paleogeographical outline of Christian Palestinian Aramaic inscriptions, and proposes some hypotheses about their linguistic and social history within the Byzantine Middle East. Christian Palestinian language is strictly connected to the process of evangelisation of these provinces operated by the Melkite Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Keywords Araméen. Égypte. Inscriptions. Israël. Jordanie. Mosaiques. Palestine. Patriarcat melkite. Période byzantine. Populations sémitiques. Première époque islamique. Phoenice maritima. Provincia Arabia. Provinciae Palestinae. Syrie. Syrie.

Sommaire 1 Un dialecte araméen attesté du V^e au XII^e siècle. – 2 La géographie de l'araméen christo-palestinien. – 3 Des inscriptions sur mosaïques dans des monuments ecclésiastiques. – 3.1 Province de *Phoenice maritima*. – 3.2 Province de *Palaestina prima*. – 3.3 Province de *Palaestina secunda*. – 3.4 *Provincia Arabia*. – 3.5 Province de *Palaestina tertia*. – 4 Des inscriptions funéraires. – 5 Inscriptions pariétales diverses dans des églises et des locaux religieux. – 5.1 Des inscriptions sur des enduits. – 5.2 Des graffiti dans des locaux troglodytes. – 5.3 Une inscription gravée sur un bloc d'appareil. – 6 Inscriptions sur des objets. – 6.1 Inscriptions sur des céramiques localisées. – 6.2 Inscriptions sur des objets de provenances inconnues. – 7 Inscriptions rupestres. – 8 Une paléographie cohérente. – 9 Une nouvelle configuration sociale.

Depuis plusieurs années déjà, nombre de travaux archéologiques et historiques intéressés à l'antiquité tardive, aux périodes protobyzantine et proto-islamique en Palestine, en Transjordanie et en Syrie ont été consacrés à l'étude des populations dans leurs villages, leurs situations géographiques, leur économie, leurs langues et leurs religions. À l'ouest du Jourdain, plusieurs articles synthétiques se préoccupaient surtout des processus de diffusions monastiques;¹ pour la Transjordanie et la Syrie, les travaux des archéologues et historiens se sont depuis longtemps intéressés à comprendre les tissus territoriaux, tant dans leurs structures agricoles que dans les habitats et les lieux de culte. Après les travaux pionniers de Tchalenko,² les études à la fois détaillées et synthétiques notamment de J.-M. Dentzer,³ F. Villeneuve,⁴ G. Tate,⁵ A. Sartre-Fauriat⁶ auxquelles s'ajoutent les corpus épigraphiques raisonnés des IGLS,⁷ sont significatives d'une méthode cohérente et d'un recueil de documentation fondamentaux. C'est dans cette perspective que nous devons considérer le recueil des inscriptions araméennes christo-palestiniennes qui, au-delà de leur apport linguistique au sens strict, sont significatives de populations dans leur histoire la plus humble, dans leur répartition régionale et leur évolution sociale et religieuse.⁸

1 Un dialecte araméen attesté du v^e au xii^e siècle

Rappelons tout d'abord que l'araméen christo-palestinien⁹ n'est pas le syriaque : il s'agit de deux dialectes araméens différents, même s'ils

1 Voir, par exemple Bar 2005 ; Ashkenazi, Aviam 2012.

2 Tchalenko 1953-1958.

3 Dentzer 1985-1986.

4 Villeneuve et al. 1997.

5 Tate 1992.

6 Sartre-Fauriat 2001 ; la préface de J.-M. Dentzer explique la tâche que s'est fixé la Mission archéologique française en Syrie du Sud. L'introduction (vol. I) présente « la dimension historique et sociale » de la recherche ; la conclusion (vol. II) offre une réflexion d'un grand intérêt sur les relations entre culture indigène et hellénisation.

7 « Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie », programme de recherche international du laboratoire Hisoma (« Histoire et sources des mondes antiques ») de la « Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux » à Lyon.

8 Je suis particulièrement reconnaissant à Jimmy Daccache pour l'aide qu'elle m'a apportée dans la relecture de cette contribution, pour les corrections et précisions qu'elle y a proposées et pour les idées que nous avons débattues à cette occasion.

9 Voir une présentation d'ensemble des documents écrits – manuscrits et inscriptions – par Desreumaux 1998. Depuis, il faut ajouter les importantes découvertes de nouveaux manuscrits au monastère Sainte-Catherine du Sinaï et plusieurs inscriptions en Palestine et en Jordanie. Une plus récente présentation d'ensemble du christo-palestinien est celle, particulièrement claire, de Morgenstern 2011.

sont des cousins très proches. Ils comportent de notables différences lexicales et grammaticales¹⁰ et leurs écritures sont différentes, même si l'écriture christo-palestinienne a été créée à partir de l'estrangela syriaque. La différence est sensible dans les manuscrits dès le V^e-VI^e siècle [fig. 1, en haut] ; elle le demeure jusqu'au XII^e siècle [fig. 1, en bas], date après laquelle le christo-palestinien ne semble plus s'écrire.

Il y a une grande quantité de manuscrits syriaques écrits et diffusés dans tout le Proche et Moyen-Orient, jusqu'en Asie, du V^e au XX^e siècle¹¹ alors que ne nous sont parvenus que peu de manuscrits christo-palestiniens écrits et diffusés.¹²

De même, en dehors de la Palestine, d'Israël et de la Jordanie où il n'y a que cinq sites où se trouvent des inscriptions syriaques, il y a beaucoup d'inscriptions syriaques dans tout le Proche-Orient – Liban, Syrie, Iraq, Turquie orientale –, l'Égypte, l'Asie centrale, l'Inde et la Chine, datables de la fin du I^{er} siècle jusqu'au XX^e siècle,¹³ mais il n'y a qu'un tout petit nombre d'inscriptions christo-palestiniennes (environ cent trente !) découvertes à ce jour, datables du V^e au IX^e siècle et dans une région limitée, en Palestine, en Israël, en Jordanie et dans le Sud de la Syrie,¹⁴ tandis que, dans les provinces byzantines de la Phénicie maritime, des Palestines et de l'Arabie où se trouvent toutes les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes, il n'y a que quelques inscriptions syriaques. Cette répartition correspond à la présence des différentes communautés ; les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes sont dues à des communautés chalcédoniennes d'expression araméenne, populations locales christianisées, tandis que les quelques inscriptions syriaques y sont l'expression d'Églises syro-occidentales et syro-orientales dont la présence était minoritaire dans le patriarcat de Jérusalem. L'inscription syriaque en estrangela du linteau fragmenté de Dayr Mâkir¹⁵ en Syrie du Sud,

10 Voir les exemples significatifs détaillés dans l'article de Christian Stadel.

11 Voir Borbone, Briquel Chatonnet 2015.

12 Voir Desreumaux 2015. Même remarque que dans la note 1 : les nouveaux manuscrits du Sinaï, parmi lesquels une quantité notable de manuscrits christo-palestiniens, sont en cours d'étude et de publication ; toutefois, la proportion par rapport aux manuscrits syriaques demeure très faible.

13 Voir Briquel Chatonnet, Debié, Desreumaux 2004 et récemment Desreumaux 2019. Les inscriptions syriaques chrétiennes dont la plus ancienne connue contenant une date est celle de Nabgha en Syrie (datée de 406 ap. J.-C.) succèdent par la graphie aux inscriptions araméennes édesséniennes dont la plus ancienne est datée de la fin du I^{er} siècle ; mais déjà vers le milieu du III^e siècle apparaissent dans la graphie édessénienne deux inscriptions chrétiennes.

14 Voir Desreumaux 2016.

15 Naveh 1976, 102-3, fig. 1 et pl. XXX.1-2 ; l'inscription est écrite de gauche à droite en lettres estrangela séparées, verticales, comme l'inscription du baptistère de Dehes (Littmann 1905, n° 8, 23-7) dans le massif Calcaire de Syrie du Nord. Sur ces particularités graphiques, voir Desreumaux 2009.

datable du VII^e siècle, provient peut-être d'une enceinte monastique ; l'inscription syriaque en estrangela de la mosaïque de Jéricho est celle du monastère syro-oriental venu de Mésopotamie du Nord – en l'occurrence Šaqlawa près d'Erbil ;¹⁶ les inscriptions syriaques en serto du couvent Saint-Marc (toujours vivant) de Jérusalem sont celles de l'Église syro-orthodoxe ayant implanté une présence dans la ville sainte¹⁷ et celles de Tel Masos dans le Negev¹⁸ sont des graffiti de moines du seul monastère syro-orthodoxe (aujourd'hui ruiné) présent dans la région ; la petite inscription sur mosaïque de la basilique de Bethlehem¹⁹ est la signature en écriture formelle d'un diacre syriaque-orthodoxe de l'époque des Croisades reproduisant l'écriture manuscrite calligraphiée d'un bel estrangela typique de la « renaissance syriaque ». Il n'y a en outre que quelques graffiti,²⁰ ceux de pèlerins syro-occidentaux et syro-orientaux médiévaux sur les colonnes du portail du Saint-Sépulcre²¹ et l'inscription du voyageur du désert noir dans le Nord de la Jordanie près du fort romain de Qaṣr Burqa'.²² Un hasard de l'histoire a voulu qu'à peu près à la même époque dans cette région safaitique de la Ḥarra jordanienne, un voyageur syriaque [fig. 2, à gauche] et un diacre christo-palestinien [fig. 2, à droite] ont laissé un témoignage de leur passage chacun sur un rocher à quelques kilomètres de distance : on y voit bien la différence paléographique, différence significative entre deux cultures écrites, expressions de deux appartenances religieuses différentes.

Les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes ne sont pas nombreuses. Présentons-les ici et situons-les dans l'histoire.

16 Voir Fiey 1983. Brock, Taylor 2001, II, 34, commente l'inscription comme parlant de moines venus du Khuzistan, du Fars, du Qatar et de Sahrzur au vii^e siècle.

17 Palmer, Van Gelder 1994 y ont recueilli et édité vingt inscriptions syriaques, garshuni et arabes d'époque moderne.

18 Maiberger 1983.

19 Kühnel 1993 ; la lecture de l'inventeur est à rectifier ; lire + ṣr b'syl mšmšn', « Le diacre Basile a dessiné ».

20 L'impressionnante liste des graffiti syriaques dressée par Daccache 2024 montre bien que ceux-ci sont rares dans les provinces qui nous occupent : dans le domaine de l'araméen palestinien, les inscriptions syriaques sont le fait de communautés venues d'ailleurs et de passagers.

21 Brock, Goldfus, Kofsky 2006-2007 publient vingt-sept graffiti syriaques contenant cinquante-deux noms propres de pèlerins venus de divers endroits du Moyen-Orient. Depuis, on ajoutera les neuf graffiti publiés par Locatelli 2022.

22 Gorea 2005. Le dessin de l'inscription (fig. 2, à gauche) est celui de Maria Gorea (2005, 26).

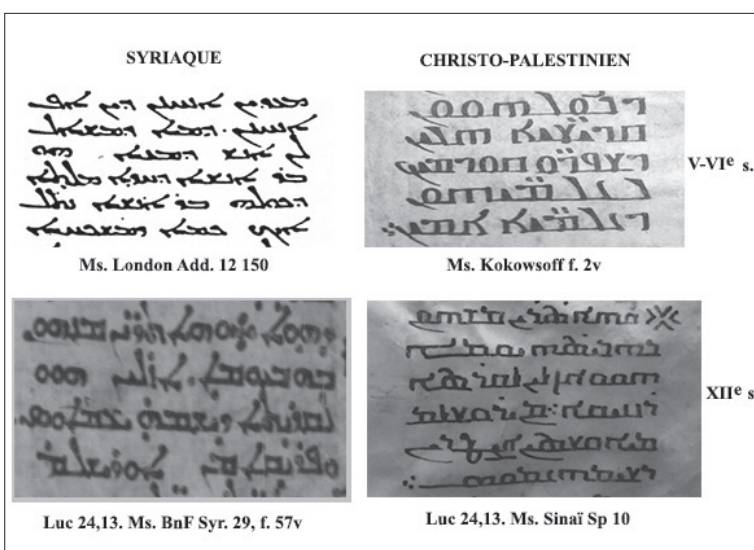


Figure 1 Comparaison entre l'écriture syriaque et l'écriture christo-palestinienne

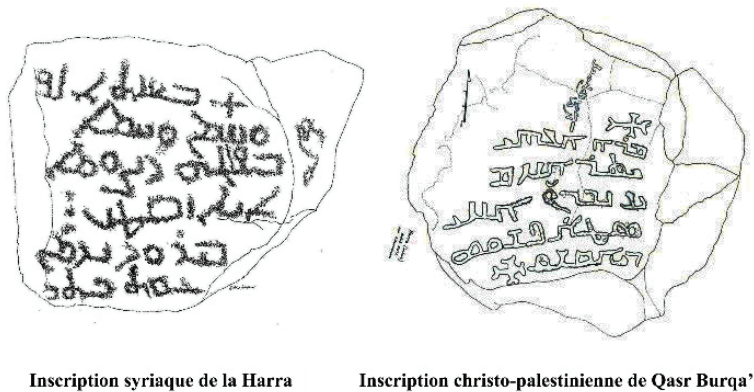


Figure 2 L'inscription syriaque (dessin Maria Gorea, Mission Samra) et l'inscription christo-palestinienne (dessin A. Desreumaux) dans la Harra jordanienne

2 La géographie de l'araméen christo-palestinien

La géographie de l'araméen christo-palestinien d'après ses manifestations écrites présente un paradoxe qui tient d'une part à la faible quantité de documents conservés, manuscrits et inscriptions, et d'autre part à son domaine social assez restreint dont le dialecte christo-palestinien était l'expression et à son destin qui l'a fait se fondre dans l'histoire plus vaste des communautés arabes melkites.²³

Le paradoxe en effet est le suivant : d'une part, les lieux de production et d'utilisation ainsi que de dépôts antiques des manuscrits christo-palestiniens (qui, rappelons-le, appartiennent à la tradition melkite) sont en très petit nombre : la laure du Castellion de saint Sabas, le monastère Sainte-Catherine du Sinaï, la Geniza du vieux-Caire, la Kubbah de Damas, la Samarie, la montagne Noire antiochienne. En regard, les sites où l'on a trouvé des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes sont plus nombreux [fig. 3]. Celles-ci se trouvent toutes dans trente-et-un sites des actuels pays de Syrie, Jordanie, Palestine, Israël et Égypte ; ces sites étaient répartis dans six provinces byzantines [fig. 4] :

- l'extrême sud-ouest de la *Phoenice maritima* (ou *Phoenice prima*). 4 sites : Šlomi, 'Evron, Kabri, Ḥorvat Qaṣrah / Kafr Samir ;
- la *Palaestina prima*. 8 sites : Tel Yunis, 'Ābūd, wādī Ṣuwaynīt, Ḥirbat Mird, 'Umm al-Ru'ūs, Ḥirbat Qaṣrah, 'Anab al-Kbīr ; Mevo Modī'im ;
- la *Palaestina secunda*. 5 sites : Ḥirbat al-Burz, Qam, Dayr al-Sa'ana, Mar-Liyas du wādī Rāḡib, 'Uyūn 'Umm al-'Azam ;
- la *Palaestina tertia*. 3 sites : Ḥorvat Ḥurah, Qaṣr al-Abiaḍ dans le Lisān, wadi Ḥaḡḡāḡ (plus bas, en dehors de la carte) ;
- l'*Arabia*.²⁴ 11 sites : Dayr al-'Adas, Qaṣr Burqa' (plus à l'est, en dehors de la carte), Riḥāb, Gerasa, Ḥayyān al-Muṣrif, Ḥirbat al-Samrā',²⁵ al-Quwaysima, Ḥirbat al-Kursī, 'Uyūn Mūsa, Madaba, 'Umm al-Raṣāṣ ;
- l'*Aegypta*. 1 site : Edfou.

²³ Les manuscrits liturgiques christo-palestiniens enracinés dans la tradition de Jérusalem, appartiennent tous à la tradition byzantine et montrent progressivement leur arabisation ; ils font partie de ce processus de constitution de l'identité chrétienne arabe orthodoxe que Griffith 2006 décrit pour déterminer ce que recouvre en réalité le terme « melkite ».

²⁴ Fergus Millar en 2009 (Millar 2009, 103, note 32) ne considère, pour la *Provincia arabia*, que Gerasa, Samra, la région de Philadelphia (je suppose al-Quwaysima) et, plus au sud (je suppose 'Umm al-Raṣāṣ).

²⁵ Ci-après, simplement désigné Samra.

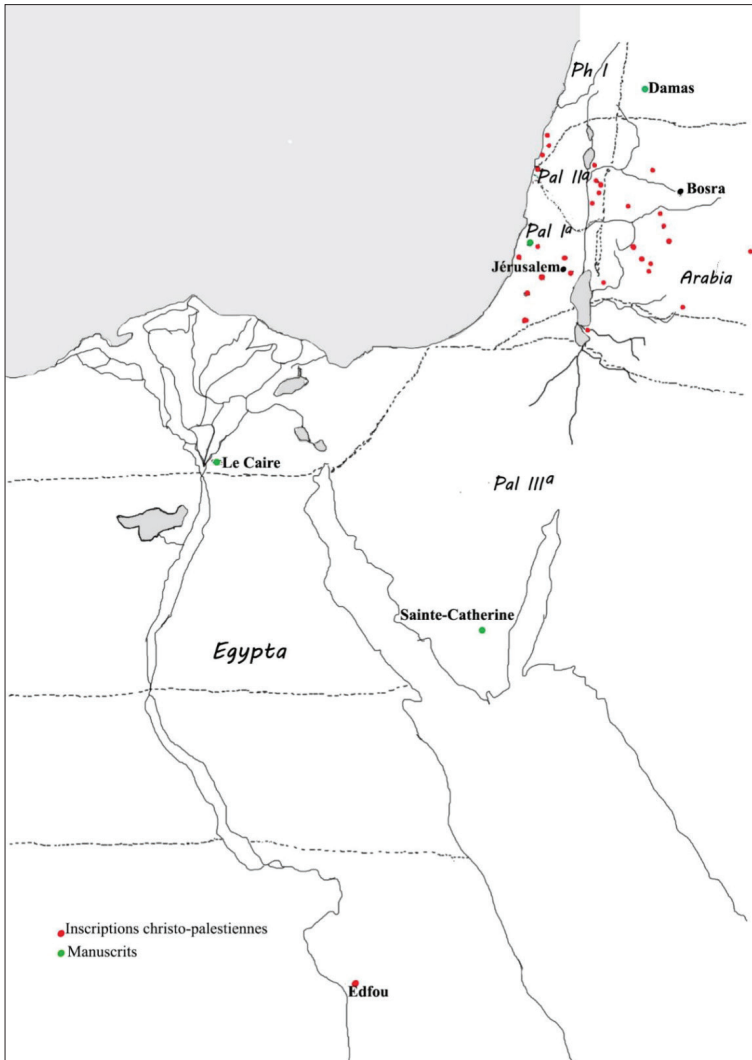


Figure 3 Carte des sites christo-palestiniens: les manuscrits et les inscriptions

Il faut ajouter sept objets de provenances inconnues.²⁶

Presque toutes ces inscriptions ont été découvertes *in situ* dans des établissements de dimensions et d'importances variées

²⁶ La liste présentée par Hoyland 2010, 37 est à la fois incomplète (il manque les lampes et les amulettes) et erronée : il faut évidemment exclure les inscriptions de Tell Masos – en écritures syriaque serto et syro-orientale – et celle de Dayr Mākir qui est en syriaque estrangela.

dont il convient d'apprécier la place qu'ils occupent dans l'espace géographique et historique somme toute limité entre la côte méditerranéenne à l'ouest, le *limes arabicus* à l'est, le Hauran au nord, Edom au sud. Il faut en outre reconnaître les endroits où sont placées les inscriptions et le rôle qu'elles jouent dans les monuments ; cela se révèle difficile, car on constate que tous les emplacements ne sont pas bien définis, que peu ont bénéficié d'études archéologiques correctes et que certaines inscriptions, dont on ne possède hélas que des relevés et des photos médiocres, ont été mal conservées.

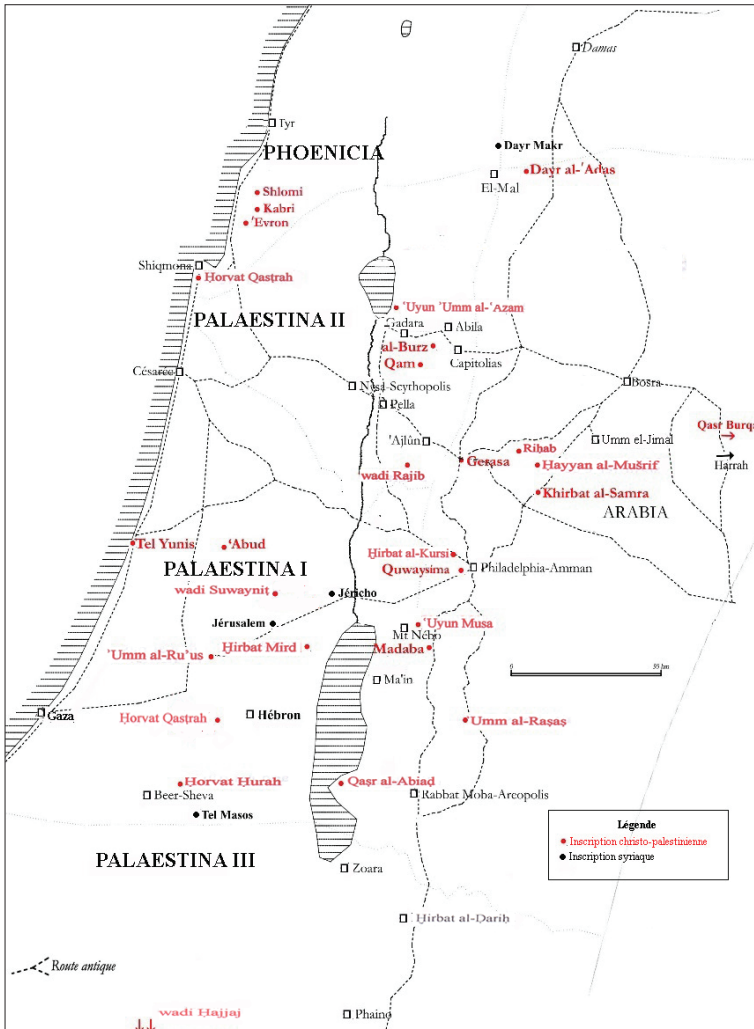


Figure 4 Carte des sites d'inscriptions christo-palestiniennes (points rouges) et des sites d'inscriptions syriaques de la région (carrés noirs)

Dans les six provinces, les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes se trouvent dans des établissements de l'époque byzantine préislamique et de la première époque islamique, surtout sur des pavements en mosaïque des édifices religieux, églises de bourgs ou de monastères, mais on en trouve aussi une dans une cour d'un ensemble rural (qui peut être monastique). Il faut d'ailleurs remarquer qu'il n'est pas facile de distinguer s'il s'agit ou non d'une église de bourg, d'une église monastique, d'un sanctuaire de pèlerinage ou d'un sanctuaire votif.²⁷

Quoi qu'il en soit, on compte vingt-et-une mosaïques inscrites, sur les trente-quatre sites reconnus. Cependant, le corpus épigraphique christo-palestinien, loin de se limiter aux inscriptions sur mosaïques, comprend aussi des stèles funéraires, des inscriptions rupestres et des graffiti, des amulettes, des inscriptions sur objets en céramique, en bois, en marbre.

3 Des inscriptions sur mosaïques dans des monuments ecclésiastiques

3.1 Province de Phoenice maritima

Dans la province de *Phoenice maritima*, le complexe ecclésial de 'Evron est un vaste ensemble du V^e siècle autour d'une église à trois nefs, complexe d'une communauté rurale dépendant du diocèse de *Ptolemaïs*. À en juger par le nombre d'ecclésiastiques nommés par les treize inscriptions grecques datées, dans l'ère de *Ptolemaïs*, de 415 à 490 ap. J.-C., la communauté était d'importance. À l'entrée de ce qui a pu être le baptistère, l'inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 5] se trouve sur le plus ancien pavement de l'ensemble.²⁸ Ce sont de simples noms – deux noms sémitiques, ŠWŠN et BSLW, deux noms grecs Marinos et Ammanos et un nom latin, Claudius, transcrits – disposés autour d'une croix polychrome contenant une invocation qui peut être une épitaphe. Cette inscription qui est la plus ancienne inscription christo-palestinienne datée, étant dans l'archidiocèse de Tyr dont *Ptolemaïs* était suffragant, peut amener à poser la question de l'origine de l'écriture christo-palestinienne qui reste difficile à résoudre dans l'état actuel de la documentation connue, d'autant plus que les inscriptions se trouvent surtout en Palestine première.

27 Michel 2001, 13 pose bien la problématique pour l'ensemble des sanctuaires du Proche-Orient : « S'il est parfois possible d'identifier une église épiscopale ou communautaire, une église monastique ou une église de pèlerinage, des chapelles privées ou consacrées à des dévotions secondaires, les vestiges archéologiques ne présentent bien souvent aucune spécificité qui permette de les distinguer, ni d'identifier l'éventuelle appartenance à des communautés différentes. »

28 Tzaferis 1987 et Jacques 1987.

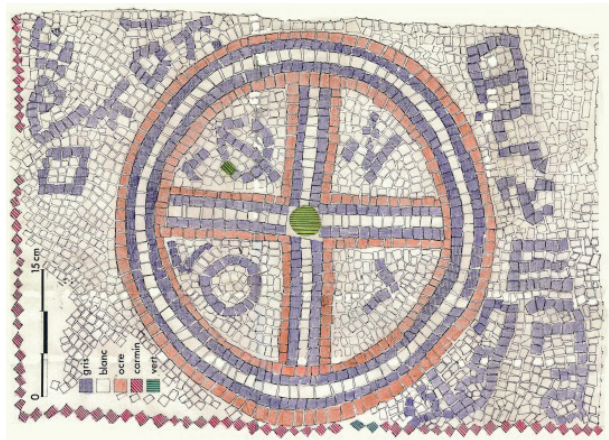


Figure 5 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de 'Evron en Phénicie maritime (relevé A. Desreumaux)



Figure 6 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Ḥorvat Qaṣṭrah en Phénicie maritime (Naveh 1996)

À **Ḥorvat Qaṣṭrah**, près de Haïfa, l'antique *Castra-Porphyreon*, l'inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 6] se trouve dans le baptistère de l'une des églises,²⁹ celle du nord-est d'un vaste ensemble urbain, datée de la fin du IV^e à la fin du VII^e siècle ; l'inscription serait datable autour de 600 ap. J.-C. et voisine avec une inscription grecque hélas acéphale qui ne donne pas d'information sur le village et la raison précise de l'inscription ; tandis que celle-ci (à moitié détruite) pouvait évoquer l'auteur du pavement, l'inscription christo-palestinienne disposée à la suite de la grecque, implore « Souviens-toi, Seigneur, de ton serviteur Lulianos » pour un personnage au nom grec dont la fonction reste inconnue. Ce peut être la signature du mosaïste.

29 Di Segni, Naveh 1996.



Figure 7 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Kabri en Phénicie maritime (photo C. Dauphin)



Figure 8 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Šlomi en Phénicie maritime (la partie bleutée est une hypothèse de restitution) (relevé A. Desreumaux)

Non loin, à **Kabri**, l'antique *Kabritha*, sur le site datable de 575 à 650 ap. J.-C., le monument n'est pas identifié ; il s'y trouvait une petite inscription [fig. 7] christo-palestinienne – un simple nom : Abraham – sur une mosaïque polychrome.³⁰

Tout près de 'Evron sur la côte galiléenne, à **Šlomi**, dans l'archidiocèse de Tyr, un site rural daté du V^e au VIII^e siècle, interprété comme une ferme monastique,³¹ une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 8] abîmée, datable de 654 à 663 ap. J.-C., commémore la réfection du pavement d'une cour intérieure.³²

³⁰ Bibliographie des fouilles par Scheftelowitz 2008, 1895. L'inscription est inédite : Desreumaux (à paraître).

³¹ Dauphin 1993 ; Dauphin, Kingsley 2003.

³² L'inscription est inédite ; elle a fait l'objet d'une étude par moi-même à paraître dans la publication finale de la fouille.

3.2 Province de *Palaestina prima*

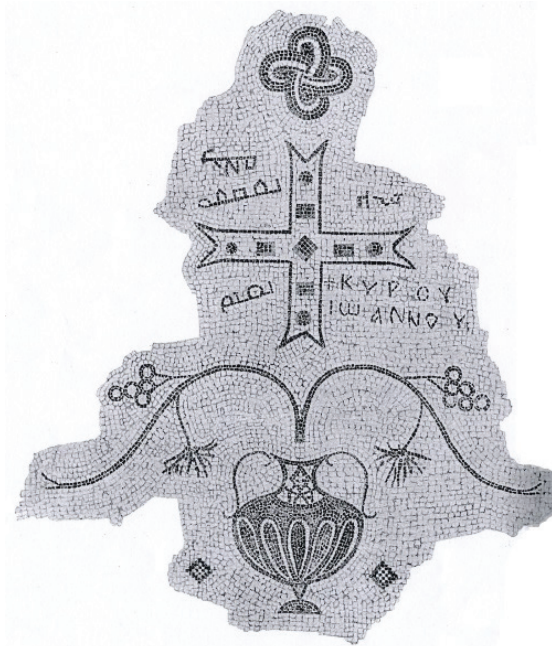


Figure 9 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de 'Umm al-Ru'ūs en *Palaestina prima* (dessin du P. Delau dans Vincent 1899)

Dans la province de *Palaestina prima*, dans la shefelah, la petite chapelle de 'Umm al-Ru'ūs qui n'est pas datée³³ avait été ornée d'une belle mosaïque aujourd'hui bien détruite. Le motif d'une croix polychrome subsistant sur l'estrade avancée du sanctuaire est entouré de petites inscriptions grecques et christo-palestiniennes [fig. 9] – de simples noms : un nom sémitique, ISHQ et un nom grec transcrit en christo-palestinien, Luc et deux noms écrits en grec, Cyr et Jean et en transcription QR' et YWNUN – restées inédites.³⁴ C'est un des rares endroits où des noms inscrits en christo-palestinien sont la transcription de noms grecs inscrits autour du même motif sur un pavement.

33 Vincent 1899. Une estimation du vi^e-vii^e siècle s'appuie sur les vestiges de la région, mais aucun critère précis ne ressort de l'examen des restes du site lui-même.

34 Desreumaux (à paraître).



Figure 10
L'inscription christo-palestinienne de 'Anab al-Kbir
en *Palaestina prima*
(photo dépliant de l'autorité palestinienne)

À 'Anab al-Kbīr, l'antique *Anab* d'Eusèbe dans le territoire d'*Éleuthéropolis*, au sud-ouest d'Hébron, l'église monastique est datée du VI^e-VIII^e siècle;³⁵ les inscriptions grecques font état d'un évêque, d'un chorévêque, d'un hygoumène, de diacres, de plusieurs prêtres et de trois mosaïstes. Sur la mosaïque de pavement du sanctuaire, une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 10] est accolée à une inscription grecque portant le nom de celui qui est sans doute l'abbé constructeur, Abbas Oulpianos dans le carré central de la mosaïque de l'estrade. L'inscription christo-palestinienne porte la prière de demande de deux prêtres HNYNH et GYRGWN, noms qui peuvent être des transcriptions de deux noms des inscriptions grecques, mais avec des écarts de transcription. Au nord-est de Jérusalem, près de Muḥmas – la *Miḥmas* biblique dont parle notamment le premier livre de Samuel – dans le **wādī Ṣuwayniṭ**, où se trouve la laure fondée au VI^e siècle par saint Firmin le disciple de Mar Sabas, un petit bâtiment non encore fouillé a été repéré par les restes d'un pavement de mosaïque inscrit en christo-palestinien qui nomme le bâtiment comme une cellule construite en offrande par un prêtre portant un nom araméen, ŠYL.³⁶ Un peu plus loin, dans le complexe des grottes monastiques creusées dans la falaise, une inscription à l'encre rouge proclame trois fois un verset psalmique sur le revêtement des parois d'une citerne [fig. 23].

³⁵ Magen, Peleg, Sharukh 2012.

³⁶ Halloun, Rubin 1981.



Figure 11 – L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Mevo Modi'im en *Palaestina prima*
(photo Abudraham 2020,48)

Non loin de Tel-Aviv, à **Mevo Modi'im**, dans la chapelle d'un petit ensemble peut-être monastique, deux lignes sur fond blanc [fig. 11] nomment simplement en transcription christo-palestinienne un prêtre au nom grec, QYRYQW[S] dans une graphie de belle qualité parfaitement calibrée.³⁷

3.3 Province de *Palaestina secunda*

Dans cinq petits sites appartenant à la province de *Palaestina secunda* ont été trouvées des inscriptions sur mosaïque.

Sur la pente du Ġawlan, surplombant le lac de Galilée, le site de **'Uyūn Umm al-'Azam ouest**, un petit complexe du VI^e-VII^e siècle dans l'orbite de la cité d'*Antiocheia Hippos*, comporte une salle mal identifiée, mais sur le pavement de mosaïque de laquelle une longue inscription christo-palestinienne est une dédicace faite par une diaconesse nommée Thècle.³⁸

Dans l'extrémité nord-ouest de l'actuelle Jordanie, quatre églises comportent des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes.

Dans la grande église à trois absides de **Ĥirbat al-Burz**, non loin d'Irbid, sur la mosaïque de pavement qui pourrait dater du VII^e siècle, tout près du sanctuaire, une inscription de fondation³⁹ entremêle le grec et le christo-palestinien ; elle est très endommagée, mais on y décèle un texte de fondation.

³⁷ Abudraham 2020. Je suis très reconnaissant à Christian Stadel de m'avoir communiqué l'article contenant les photos de cette inscription et des vestiges du monastère dont l'existence dans les archives de l'Israel Antiquity Authority m'avait échappé.

³⁸ Dvorjetski et al. 2022.

³⁹ Ḥaṣauneh 1994.



Figure 12 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Qam en *Palaestina secunda* (photo Fawzi Zayyadine)

Au sud-ouest d'Irbid, à **Hirbat Sa'ana**,⁴⁰ une structure ouest-est de deux églises mononefs jointes par le chevet de l'église ouest, est flanquée de pièces annexes ; dans celle du sud-est, il reste la moitié d'une inscription christo-palestinienne circulaire autour d'une croix inscrite dans un cercle. Les caractères qui subsistent, sont étrangement carrés, traités de manière orthogonale, et séparés, sans ligature ; le sens ne se laisse pas appréhender.

Au sud-est de Bayt Ras, l'antique *Capitolias*, a été dégagé à **Qamm** ce qui peut avoir été un petit ermitage ou un sanctuaire votif dont la chapelle est bellement ornée d'un pavement de mosaïque ; une inscription grecque au haut de la nef qui parle de la réalisation de la mosaïque, nomme un certain Jean ; la figure centrale du tapis de la nef, un personnage qui a subi un iconoclisme, était accostée d'une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 12] en deux lignes désignant un prêtre dont le nom semble se lire ADY, comme l'ancêtre du Christ dans la généalogie de Luc, à moins qu'il faille lire ADYN.⁴¹

Sur le ġabal 'Aġlun, à l'ouest de *Gerasa*, près du sanctuaire de Mar-Liyas dans la très belle vallée du **wādī Raġīb**, une petite chapelle mononef est joliment pavée d'une mosaïque. Une grande inscription [fig. 13] de neuf lignes dans un octogone⁴² rappelle la fondation de la chapelle par le prêtre Sabin en demande de miséricorde pour lui, pour les résidents du lieu et pour le monde entier.

⁴⁰ Puech 2003, 319-21.

⁴¹ Je remercie Fawzi Zayyadine qui m'a envoyé le cliché dès la découverte de l'inscription.

⁴² Mon dessin, fait sur le relevé réalisé en compagnie de Rafe' Harahshah, inspecteur des Antiquités de Jordanie, et ma lecture sont à paraître.



Figure 13 L'inscription christo-palestinnienne du wādī Raḡīb (cliché A. Desreumaux)

3.4 *Provincia Arabia*

Tout au nord de la *provincia Arabia*, à la limite avec la province de *Phoenixe secunda*, dans le Ḥauran, la grande église conventuelle Saint-Georges de **Dayr al-'Adas** est datable du VIII^e siècle. Une longue inscription de fondation – hélas très endommagée – datée de 722 ap. J.-C., se trouve sur le pavement de mosaïque du collatéral sud, devant le chancel.⁴³

Dans la Balqa', au sud de Mafraq, non loin de *Bostra*, la capitale de la province, dans la steppe du *limes arabicus* traversée par la *via nova* de Trajan, trois sites proches les uns des autres ont gardé des traces écrites de communautés où l'on parlait l'araméen christo-palestinien : Rihāb, Ḥayyān al-Mušrif et Ḥirbat al-Samra'. Dans les deux premiers ont été trouvées des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes sur mosaïque, dans le troisième, de nombreuses stèles funéraires.

À **Rihāb**, gros bourg byzantin en Jordanie du Nord, dans le diocèse de *Bostra*, au temps de l'évêque Théodore autour de 635 ap. J.-C., plusieurs églises ont été construites et pavées de mosaïques. Dans l'une d'elle, hélas non située par une fouille scientifique, à côté d'une inscription grecque, une inscription christo-palestinnienne sur deux lignes dans un cartouche [fig. 14], devant ce qui paraît avoir été un seuil, porte la citation du *Psaume* 17, 20.⁴⁴

⁴³ Farioli Campanati 1995, 267, n° 3 et 4.

⁴⁴ Desreumaux 2022, 312-16.



Figure 14 L'inscription christo-palestinienne sur mosaïque de Riḥab (photo Abd el-Kader al-Hasan)



Figure 15 L'inscription christo-palestinienne de Ḥayyān al-Mušrif (photo M. Piccirillo)

À quelques kilomètres au sud-est, a été fouillé l'ancien village byzantin de **Ḥayyān al-Mušrif**, qui comporte de nombreuses maisons et une petite église toutes bâties en beau calcaire jaune. Une inscription christo-palestinienne en deux lignes dans un cartouche [fig. 15] se trouve sur le pavement de mosaïque d'une cour, devant le seuil d'une porte de la chapelle d'un petit monastère ; elle invoque la miséricorde divine pour le prêtre Q'Y fils de 'YSWBWNW, formes araméennes des noms grecs Gaios, fils d'Eusebonas, qui a fait la cour.⁴⁵

Dans la banlieue de Amman, relevant de l'évêché de l'antique *Philadelphia*, au bourg de **al-Quwaysima**, situé sur la *via nova*, les deux églises fouillées sont pavées de mosaïques. Dans l'une, où les représentations figurées ont été détruites par des iconoclastes, se trouvent trois inscriptions grecques. Dans l'autre, se trouvent deux inscriptions grecques qui datent la restauration de l'édifice de 717/8 et une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 16] ; celle-ci, située au haut de la nef devant les marches d'accès au sanctuaire, est, sur sept lignes, une invocation de bénédiction pour le lieu, les sept lignes suivantes sont tronquées.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Desreumaux 2022, 307-12.

⁴⁶ Milik 1959-1960, 177-80.



Figure 16
L'inscription christo-palestinienne de al-Quwaysima
(Milik 1959-60, 179)

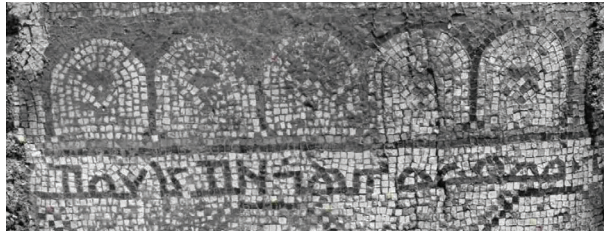


Figure 17 Hirbat al-Kursi: l'inscription christo-palestinienne du sanctuaire (cliché offert par M. Piccirillo)

Également dans la banlieue de Amman et relevant du même évêché, le petit ensemble monastique de **Hirbat al-Kursi** comprend une petite chapelle mononef pavée de mosaïques abîmées par des réparations iconoclastes. Les inscriptions grecques et christo-palestiniennes sont disposées de façons symétriques dans un plan concerté. Les inscriptions grecques désignent le martyrium et nomment le commanditaire, l'évêque et les prêtres responsables des travaux – tous de noms grecs. Dans le sanctuaire, au long du chevet plat, une double invocation en christo-palestinien [fig. 17] ; en outre au haut de la nef, devant le chancel le long duquel est une longue inscription grecque dans une *tabula ansata*, se voient les restes d'une inscription christo-palestinienne qui a subi une lourde réparation.⁴⁷ Les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes sont des invocations pour un prêtre au nom araméen, ŠUMAŠ.

⁴⁷ Puech 1988.



Figure 18 'Uyūn Mūsa : restitution numérique de l'inscription christo-palestinienne sur la photo de M. Piccirillo (reconstruction Dominique Couson, Desreumaux)

Dans l'évêché de **Madaba**, dans la riante vallée au pied du mont Nébo, le petit complexe agricole monastique de '**Uyūn Mūsa**, parmi les jardins de la vallée irrigués par « Les sources de Moïse », est daté du VI^e siècle. La petite église à trois nefs est pavée, lors de sa première phase, sous l'évêque Thomas, d'une mosaïque où plusieurs inscriptions grecques nomment des donateurs et ordonnateurs – des noms grecs et des noms araméens grécisés – et une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 18] qui fait mémoire, pour ses bonnes œuvres, d'un prêtre au nom grec aramaïsé, GAYAN.⁴⁸

À **Madaba** même, au centre de l'atrium de la grande église nommée « cathédrale », sur le pavement daté 575/576 ap. J.-C., à côté de l'ouverture de la citerne, une inscription en caractères grecs (ΓΟΥΒΒΑ ΒΑΓΟΥΒ[ΒΑ]) est un cas d'allographie transcrivant une expression araméenne qui traduit une expression grecque (ΛΑΚΚΟΣ ΕΝ ΛΑΚΚΩ) de l'inscription voisine.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Piccirillo 1989, 256, n° 12 ; je corrige la lecture.

⁴⁹ Gatier 1986, n° 137, 135.

3.5 Province de *Palaestina tertia*

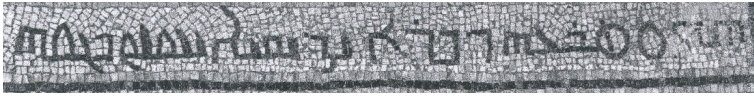


Figure 19 Hūra : l'inscription christo-palestinienne associée au grec (Muséon 2016, fig. 2)

Dans la province de *Palaestina tertia*, dans le désert du Négeb, près de Be'er Šava, l'antique *Birsaba*, le monastère du gros village de **Hūra** comprend une chapelle mononef pavée en mosaïque. Une inscription grecque se trouve juste devant le sanctuaire et une autre dans une grande salle annexe. En outre, dans un simple cartouche, une inscription grecque de deux lignes et demie donne la date de fondation en 597 et nomme l'hygoumène Ilariônos ; elle est suivie d'une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 19] qui complète la troisième ligne par la citation du *Psaume* 117, 20.⁵⁰

4 Des inscriptions funéraires

Dans le Nord de la *Provincia arabia*, le site de **Hirbat al-Samrā'** est exceptionnel. En effet, l'antique *Adeitha*, étape sur la *via trajana*, camp romain puis bourg byzantin aux treize églises, a vu se développer un cimetière avec des stèles funéraires gravées.⁵¹ Celles-ci, d'abord comme à Riḥāb, étaient des blocs équarris inscrits en grec lors de la période romaine (II^e-IV^e siècles) ; elles ont été ensuite, lorsque le bourg était devenu chrétien, des galets gravés de croix de divers modèles, certaines portant un nom inscrit en grec, d'autres, plus nombreuses, un nom inscrit en christo-palestinien. Près de neuf cents stèles ont été retrouvées. L'une des stèles chrétiennes inscrite en grec porte la date de 457 (ère de la province) soit 562/3 ap. J.-C. et l'homogénéité archéologique et épigraphique de l'ensemble du cimetière chrétien suggère de dater celui-ci du VI^e siècle, peut-être se prolongeant jusque dans la première moitié du VII^e. Parmi les noms inscrits en grec, une dizaine sont grecs et une quinzaine sont araméens. Parmi les noms inscrits en christo-palestinien, ce sont surtout des noms sémitiques (on en compte cinquante-cinq), par exemple 'UBAYDU [fig. 20a], mais les noms grecs araméisés ne manquent pas (on en compte quatorze), par exemple QMṬS' transcription de Καμῑτσα [fig. 20b].

⁵⁰ Vainstub, Sokoloff, Varga 2016.

⁵¹ Le site découvert en 1924 a été fouillé depuis 1981 : Humbert, Desreumaux 1998.



Figure 20ab Deux stèles de Hirbat Samrā* (clichés mission Samra de l'École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem)



Figure 21 Inscription christo-palestinienne du bouchon de colombarium de Ġaraš (photo A. Desreumaux)

Si donc les inscriptions sur les pavements en mosaïques des églises de Samra sont seulement en grec, langue de l'empire, de l'administration et de la liturgie, les inscriptions du cimetière, tant celles qui sont écrites en grec que celles qui le sont en araméen, indiquent que le paysage culturel de la population qui s'est installée puis développée à *Adeitha* est enraciné dans une belle harmonie sémitique – nabatéenne, safaïtique, arabe – christianisée dans le cadre de l'empire byzantin. Le grec n'ayant pas été substitué aux parlers locaux, l'expression de ceux-ci a pu se poursuivre dans le dialecte araméen de Palestine qui se trouva devenu l'instrument de la christianisation certainement originaire du patriarcat de Jérusalem.

On n'a pas trouvé d'autre cimetière où des stèles portassent les noms des défunts en christo-palestinien. Toutefois, à **Ġaraš**, la *Gerasa* de la décapole, un bouchon de colombarium porte une inscription christo-palestinienne [fig. 21] soigneusement gravée,⁵² qui invoque Dieu pour le repos de l'âme d'un inconnu.

5 Inscriptions pariétales diverses dans des églises et des locaux religieux

5.1 Des inscriptions sur des enduits

Deux inscriptions sur des enduits ont été retrouvées dans des laures byzantines.

L'une est une invocation au Christ écrite à l'encre noire [fig. 22] sur un fragment de plâtre de l'*hyrkania*, au **Ĥirbat Mird**.⁵³

L'autre, peinte en rouge trois fois sur l'enduit à la chaux [fig. 23] d'une citerne de la laure de **saint Firmin dans le wādī Ṣuwayniṭ**, est une citation du *Psaume* 28, 3 : « Voix du Seigneur sur les eaux ». ⁵⁴ Il n'est nul besoin de considérer la piscine comme un baptistère : le vers du psaume a été trouvé plusieurs fois utilisé en grec dans des citernes byzantines.

Les deux inscriptions sont à dater du VI^e ou du VII^e siècle d'après le contexte archéologique et historique.



Figure 22
L'invocation sur le plâtre de Ĥirbat Mird
(photo A. Desreumaux)

52 Ronzevalle 1909.

53 Milik 1953, 526-7 ; Wright 1961 ; Milik 1961a ; Perrot 1963, 507-10.

54 Desreumaux, Humbert, Nodet 1978.

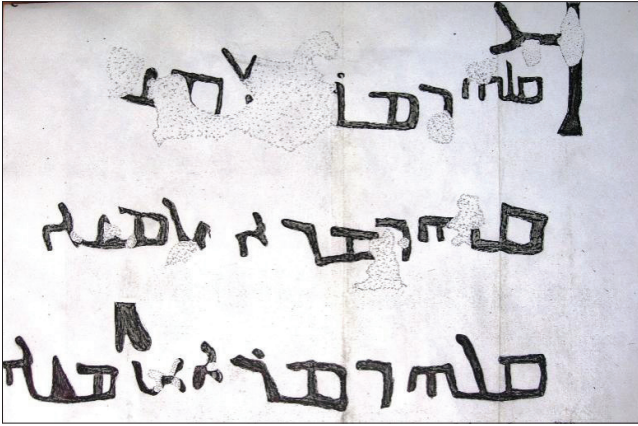


Figure 23 La triple citation du Psaume dans la citerne de la laurē du wādī Šuwaynīt (relevé et dessin A. Desreumaux)

5.2 Des graffiti dans des locaux troglodytes

À l'ouest de Hébron, à **Ḥorvat Qaṣrah**, six chambres de tombes à *kokhimī* des I^{er}-II^e siècles ont été réaménagées comme complexe ecclésial comprenant deux chapelles. Sur les parois, sont de nombreux graffiti et inscriptions grecques, christo-palestinienne et arabe, ainsi que des croix ; sur le mur d'un passage entre deux salles, une inscription christo-palestinienne est gravée dans une *tabula ansata*.⁵⁵ Le graffiti et l'inscription sont des invocations.

Dans le Lisān, au sud-est de la mer Morte, dans la région de l'antique Zoara, la laurē de **'Umm al-Abiaḍ** est l'un des ermitages creusés dans les couches marneuses du désert où sont venus vivre des moines au VI^e-VII^e siècle. Des graffiti en araméen christo-palestinien sur la paroi de la grande pièce voisinent avec des graffiti grecs, simples invocations au Christ et à la Vierge Marie.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Naveh dans Kloner 1990, 139, no. 1, fig. 22.

⁵⁶ Holmgren, Kaliff, Svensson 2005 ; Holmgren, Kaliff 2012.

5.3 Une inscription gravée sur un bloc d'appareil

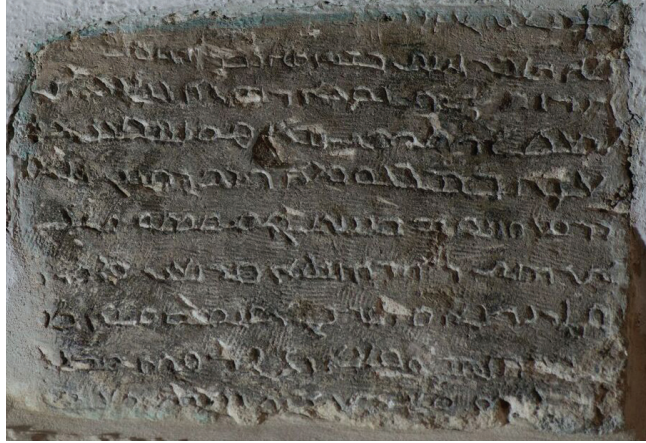


Figure 24 L'inscription murale de 'Abūd (cliché Jean-Baptiste Humbert, EBAF)

Au nord-ouest de Jérusalem, dans le bourg palestinien de 'Abūd, sur un bloc du mur de la nef sud de l'église grecque orthodoxe consacrée à la Vierge, une inscription commémorative [fig. 24] est datée de 450 du règne des Bédouins (c'est-à-dire selon l'Hégire), soit 1018 ap. J.-C.

Elle pose de délicats problèmes de déchiffrement, car elle avait été recouverte d'un enduit très dur qui subsiste encore incrusté dans certains traits.⁵⁷ Par sa date, cette inscription est singulière dans le corpus ; elle appartient aux documents christo-palestiniens d'époque médiévale, époque pour laquelle on dispose de manuscrits, presque tous des codices liturgiques, mais d'aucune autre inscription. Cependant son écriture reste celle que l'on trouve dans les inscriptions des siècles précédents.

⁵⁷ Milik 1961b offre une synthèse historique sur 'Abud ; il y cite le texte de l'inscription qu'il avait nettoyée et publiée l'année auparavant (Milik 1959-1960, 197-204).

6 Inscriptions sur des objets

6.1 Inscriptions sur des céramiques localisées

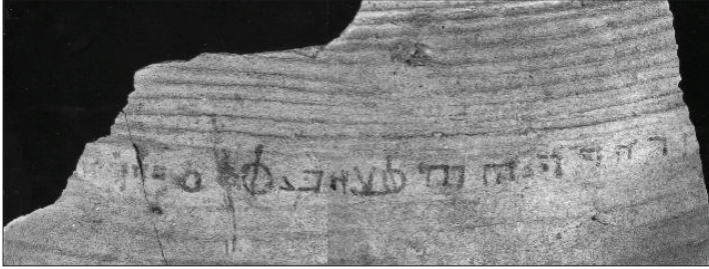


Figure 25 Le tesson de jarre de Tel Yunis (cliché M. Bar-Asher)



Figure 26 Riḥāb : tesson de marmite byzantine (photo mission Samra de l'EBAF)

On connaît des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes sur des poteries. Le fragment de jarre [fig. 25] du VII^e siècle, trouvé à **Tel Yunis** sur la côte palestinienne près de Jaffa porte une ligne inscrite à l'encre noire.⁵⁸ L'inscription, difficile à bien lire, concerne le vin.

En Jordanie, à **Riḥāb** dont nous avons parlé ci-dessus pour sa mosaïque, un fragment de couvercle [fig. 26] de marmite byzantine qui est datable du VI^e-VII^e siècle, a été incisé avant cuisson. Il semble avoir porté un nom propre.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Bar-Asher 1975.

⁵⁹ Desreumaux 2022, 317-18.

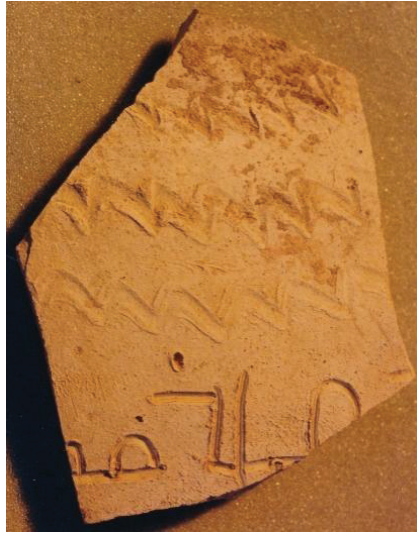


Figure 27 Le tesson de jarre R.1412 de 'Umm al-Raṣāṣ (photo M. Piccirillo)



Figure 28 Le tesson de jarre byzantino-omayyade de Ġaraṣ (Stinespring 1935, fig. 5)

Dans le Sud de la Jordanie, trois tessons de vases gravés avant cuisson ont été trouvés à 'Umm al-Raṣāṣ, l'antique *Castron Mefaa*, et portent chacun un nom propre.⁶⁰ Le fragment de jarre R.1412 [fig. 27] porte une incision avant cuisson sous un décor caractéristique du VII^e-VIII^e siècle. Le petit tesson R.4985⁶¹ porte une inscription quasi identique à une gravure sur deux tessons de vases [fig. 28] trouvés dans une des boutiques du carrefour central de *Gerasa* (Ġaraṣ).⁶² Il est vraisemblable que ce sont les traces d'un commerce entre le Sud et le Nord de la province.

60 Le tesson R 1412 : Puech 1989 et le tesson A 4105-4106 : Puech 1991, 526.

61 Le tesson R 4985 : Puech 1991, 528.

62 Stinespring 1935, 9 et photo fig. 5.



Figure 29
La tablette copte d'Edfou
(photo Musée du Louvre)

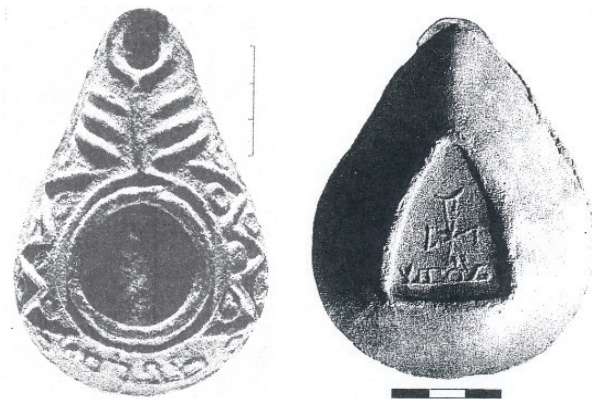
Le dernier objet de provenance connue vient d'**Edfou**, le célèbre ancien temple égyptien sur le Nil, l'antique *Apollonopolis magna* où l'on a découvert en 1921 des documents écrits grecs, démotiques, arabes et coptes. L'objet, une tablette en bois [fig. 29], se trouve aujourd'hui au musée du Louvre;⁶³ c'est une peinture melkite égyptienne, un portrait représentant la *Tychè* de Constantinople « la belle Florissante », peint par-dessus des textes en quatre colonnes, des péricopes du Nouveau Testament en christo-palestinien. Il s'agissait sans doute d'une tablette liturgique.

63 Étude conjointe par Rutschowskaya, Desreumaux 1992.

6.2 Inscriptions sur des objets de provenances inconnues



Figure 30
La pierre du musée Rockefeller
(cliché Jean-Baptiste Humbert
de l'EBAF)



Figures 31 À droite, lampe moulée inscrite (Naveh 1988, pl. 9.E)
Figures 32 À gauche, lampe moulée inscrite à l'envers (Naveh 1988, pl. 9.F)

Le premier est un **bloc de pierre** en calcaire [fig. 30] de la région de Jérusalem sur lequel est gravée une inscription de fondation d'un hôpital.⁶⁴ Trouvé dans les environs de Jérusalem, il peut s'agir de l'un des établissements de soin fondés à l'époque byzantine autour de la ville sainte ; ce pourrait être, par exemple, celui de l'hospice du lieu de pèlerinage à l'auberge du Bon Samaritain.

64 Aujourd'hui dans le musée Rockefeller. Milik 1953, 530-3 ; ma lecture est proche de celle de Milik, avec quelques différences. Je lis : « + Gloire à [Dieu]. Cet hôpital a été fait aux jours de mar Mayuma + Quiconque y entre, qu'il y ait un destin favorable pour [lui]. »

On connaissait de nombreuses lampes à huile portant une inscription grecque conçue avec leur moule. On connaît désormais **trois lampes** des VII^e-VIII^e siècles portant une inscription christo-palestinienne.⁶⁵ Deux sont identiques [fig. 31], issues du même moule ; la troisième [fig. 32] porte une inscription écrite à l'envers sur son fond,⁶⁶ soit parce que le moule a été écrit à l'endroit, soit volontairement pour une raison magique, l'écriture inversée étant utilisée dans un sens apotropaïque.⁶⁷ L'état de conservation et le manque d'usure de ces objets amènent à penser qu'ils étaient des lampes déposées dans des sépultures.



Figure 33 Amulette de la coll. Cope (Naveh & Shaked 1993, pl. 18)

La magie s'est écrite aussi en christo-palestinien. On connaît cinq amulettes. Par exemple, l'une [fig. 33], en bronze,⁶⁸ est écrite pour faire sortir la douleur d'une dame au nom grec, Makrina et pour un certain ܛܡܩܦ ; elle est composée de trois lignes d'incantation et de quatre lignes de lettres et de signes magiques semblables à ceux qu'on trouve sur les bols et les amulettes syriaques, araméennes ou mandéennes.

65 Naveh 1988, 39, no. 7 et pl. 9.E ;

66 Naveh 1988, 39-40 & pl. 9.F-G.

67 C'est du moins l'hypothèse de l'éditeur Joseph Naveh.

68 Naveh, Shaked 1993, 17-19 et pl. 18.

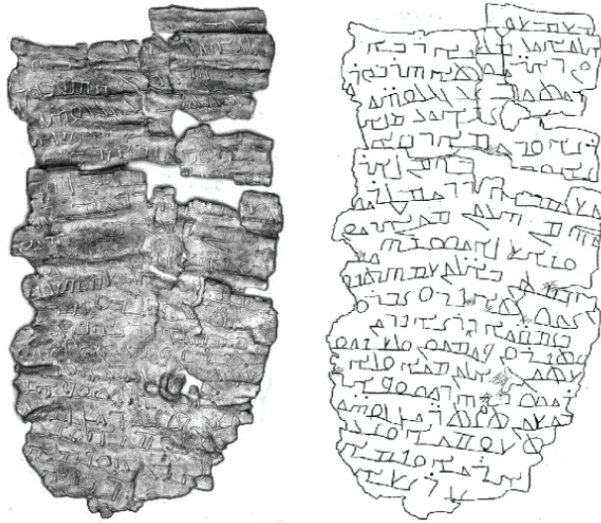


Figure 34 Amulette en plomb (Abudraham 2017)

Une autre en plomb [fig. 34] porte un texte de vingt lignes pour éloigner plusieurs anges maléfiques connus dans le monde juif, d'un homme au nom grec, DYMṬR[YS].⁶⁹

Pour être plus complet, notons l'existence d'un objet de provenance inconnue. Un petit fragment de marbre a été repéré chez un antiquaire de Jérusalem par Jean-Baptiste Humbert, archéologue émérite (Laboratoire de l'archéologie, École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem) ; il reste quelques lettres gravées dont on lit le mot « sept ».

7 Inscriptions rupestres

Loin des centres habités, on a trouvé des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes de voyageurs.

Au nord-est de la Jordanie, non loin de la frontière de la Syrie et de l'Iraq, dans le désert Noir de la Ḥarra, à quelques kilomètres du monastère isolé de **Qaṣr Burqa'**, un diacre a pris le temps de graver soigneusement une invocation sur un rocher en basalte [fig. 2 à droite] [fig. 35] d'un cairn au bord d'un mini wadi.⁷⁰ On notera qu'une inscription arabe est venue s'y adjoindre. C'est aussi une invocation : « Que Dieu pardonne à GAMĪL, fils de Hānī ».

⁶⁹ Abudraham 2017.

⁷⁰ Harahshah, Desreumaux 2016.



Figure 35 Inscription du diacre Étienne près de Qaṣr Burqa' dans la Ḥarra jordanienne (photo A. Desreumaux)



Figure 36 Graffiti d'un pèlerin dans le wādī Ḥaḡḡaḡ (photo A. Desreumaux)

Bien loin de là, dans le désert du Sinaï, près de 'Ayn Ḥodra, dans le **wādī Ḥaḡḡāḡ**, « le wadi du pèlerinage » sur la route d'Aqaba – l'antique Aila – au monastère Sainte-Catherine, des pèlerins ont laissé, inscrits en christo-palestinien, des graffiti de leur passage [fig. 36], sur les ressauts de mesa émergeant du sable.⁷¹

71 Desreumaux inédit [fig. 36]. Voir aussi d'autres inscriptions Puech 2014.

8 Une paléographie cohérente

Quand on rassemble les formes des caractères de toutes les inscriptions quelles que soient leurs situations géographiques, et qu'elles soient datées ou non, on ne peut que constater leur cohérence : la structure de chaque lettre est la même, avec des variantes stylistiques et la structure générale de l'écriture est la même. Elle est notamment conçue comme inscrite dans un module, même si les tailles des lettres sont parfois fluctuantes. Ce n'est pas le lieu ici de commenter chaque lettre et ses variantes.

Prenons simplement deux exemples dans le tableau comparatif des inscriptions datées [fig. 37] : le 'alaf « en queue de scorpion » est identique dans l'inscription sur mosaïque datée de 415 de l'église de 'Evron en *Phoenice maritima*, dans l'inscription peinte sur plâtre au VI^e siècle à Ḥirbat Mird en *Palaestina Prima*, sur la mosaïque du baptistère de l'église de Ḥorvat Qaṣṭrah datable vers 600 en *Phoenice maritima*, sur la jarre à vin de Tell Yunis datable du VII^e siècle sur la côte palestinienne en *Palaestina Prima*, sur la mosaïque datée de 722 de la grande église de Dayr al-'Adas dans la *Provincia Arabia*.

Le 'ayn « à apex inversé » est identique sur la mosaïque du baptistère de l'église de Ḥorvat Qaṣṭrah datable vers 600 en *Phoenice maritima*, sur la mosaïque datée de 717 de l'église de al-Quwaysima près de Amman et sur la mosaïque datée de 722 de la grande église de Dayr al-'Adas dans la *Provincia Arabia*.

En somme, les vestiges inscrits en christo-palestinien sont des témoignages d'une population dont l'expression linguistique et l'écriture sont cohérents sur l'ensemble des six provinces byzantines sans différence notable entre les provinces.

Qui plus est, l'examen des inscriptions datées de l'ensemble du corpus montre que de 415, date de la plus ancienne inscription, à 722, date de la plus récente datée, il n'y a pas d'évolution paléographique notable et les différences stylistiques visibles restent à étudier en comparaison avec les manuscrits de la période ancienne (i.e. avant le X^e siècle) dont la graphie reste remarquablement constante, à part, justement, des différences stylistiques (régionales ? d'écoles scribales ?) à étudier.

Trois observations sur ce tableau :

1. On aperçoit bien sûr des variantes de formes ; à vrai dire, il y en a peu.
Beaucoup de lettres ne changent quasiment pas de formes : *bet, dalath, he, ʔet, lamad, mim, semkat, qaf, reš, šin, taw* ;
Plusieurs lettres présentent des formes multiples : il y a deux formes de *ʾalph* : le *ʾalph* estrangela ; le *ʾalph* « à queue de scorpion » ;
trois formes de *waw* : le cercle, l'arc de cercle, le triangle ;
deux formes de *het* : le *het* « en N » et le *het* « en H » ;
deux formes de *yud* : le petit trait vertical et le petit triangle ;
deux formes de *nun* ;
le trait vertical et le trait vertical potencé ;
deux formes de *ʾayn* : le trait oblique court et le trait oblique à apex arrière ;
deux formes de *taw* : le corps arrondi et le corps en demi-cercle plus ou moins anguleux.
Toutefois, la structure reste fondamentalement la même.
2. Certaines formes semblent dues à des modèles cursifs. Ce point est d'une grande importance : alors qu'aucun manuscrit ancien n'est daté ni datable de façon sûre, les inscriptions datées nous offrent des points de repères chronologiques précieux.
3. La cohérence et la régularité paléographique des inscriptions est d'autant plus importante que cette écriture est tout-à-fait congruente avec celle des manuscrits antérieurs au X^e siècle et il est remarquable que l'écriture de presque toutes ces inscriptions est une écriture régulière et contrôlée qui se conforme à la structure de la calligraphie formelle régulière des manuscrits. On y trouve cependant des traits cursifs sans doute provenant d'une écriture plus courante, ce qui confirme l'existence, outre l'écriture monumentale, d'une pratique écrite familière, sans doute domestique, comme on le voit sur la poterie de Tel Yunis, le plâtre de Mird, les amulettes et les graffiti.

Les différents genres de ces inscriptions le confirment. Le plus grand nombre d'entre elles se trouvent dans des églises de villages. En effet, en dehors de mention explicite d'un lieu monastique, on doit résister à la tentation d'en faire des ermitages ou des monastères et celles qui se trouvent un peu isolées dans la campagne sont souvent des sanctuaires votifs.

En grande majorité, certes, ce sont des inscriptions monumentales et ce fait doit être souligné, car on a trop souvent lu çà et là des jugements qui dépréciaient le christo-palestinien comme négligé. Si cela est le fait de quelques-unes des inscriptions, on voit que

dans l'ensemble, elles sont de bonne tenue. En même temps, la préoccupation qui transparaît dans les expressions des ordonnateurs et des donateurs est essentiellement une demande de propitiation et une aspiration au salut de leur âme ; leur expression officielle et publique fait partie de leur vie personnelle. Et la langue qui est écrite dans les lieux religieux est celle aussi du commerce du vin, des épigraphes sur les lampes, sur les marmites et sur les lamelles incantatoires. La considération de l'ensemble des inscriptions christo-palestiniennes et leur examen paléographique comparé avec les manuscrits devra s'interroger sur les pratiques graphiques et les variantes de l'écriture christo-palestinienne. Une première hypothèse pourrait être avancée : cette écriture, d'abord mise au point pour la production de manuscrits bibliques et liturgiques, s'est déclinée en formes monumentales et en formes cursives.

9 Une nouvelle configuration sociale

L'existence même de ces inscriptions nous interroge sur les populations qui les expriment dans leurs lieux de culte où elles se trouvent toujours à côté d'inscriptions grecques. Ces dernières occupent les emplacements selon les habitudes dans toutes les églises byzantines du Proche-Orient. Les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes ne sont pas placées dans des endroits et des lieux particuliers différents de ceux des inscriptions grecques : elles font partie du monde protobyzantin et leur existence signifie que dans ce monde d'expression grecque, le besoin d'une expression écrite araméenne s'était fait sentir.

Dans l'ensemble des provinces, manifestement, elles sont en minorité et l'on serait tenté de dire, apparemment secondaires. Elles ne sont pas des traductions des inscriptions grecques auprès desquelles elles se trouvent : il n'y a pas de vraies bilingues à part celle de 'Umm al-Ru'ūs. Les groupes qui les ont exprimées avaient, semble-t-il, leurs propres préoccupations. Ils n'étaient évidemment pas étrangers au monde grec majoritaire, celui dans lequel s'exprimait la culture chrétienne du Proche-Orient : des noms propres et des concepts grecs se transcrivent dans l'écriture christo-palestinienne.

On le voit, par exemple, dans l'usage en transcription, de noms grecs comme Thomas, Petros, Stephanos, Eusebônas ou même de noms sémitiques grécisés comme Marinos, Ammanos, Yuḥanon, à côté des noms sémitiques qui sont manifestement ceux de la population : Šušan, 'Ubaidu, Abraham, Iṣḥaq, Qaya... Le vocabulaire, de son côté, emprunte et transcrit des mots grecs : *phulakton*, *diakonos*.

Il n'est pas aisé de connaître de quelles populations sémitiques le christo-palestinien était devenu, dans le monde grec byzantin, l'expression écrite et, nous l'avons perçu à travers les petits restes

d'inscriptions sur des objets courants, l'expression orale. L'analyse onomastique détaillée de l'important lot des stèles funéraires de Samra en Arabie, suggère la convergence de plusieurs groupes linguistiques : l'ancien fonds araméen, le nabatéen, le safaitique, l'arabe. D'autre part, les inscriptions et les restes manuscrits trouvés en Judée, replacés dans le contexte de l'histoire assez bien documentée des moines de Palestine suggèrent que l'œuvre christianisatrice de ceux-ci, au premier rang desquels se trouve le couvent de Mar-Sabas, a dû jouer un rôle éducatif essentiel dans les tribus de cette région et que les inscriptions christo-palestiniennes dans les édifices religieux tant des Palestines que de l'Arabie reflètent l'expression religieuse de ces populations. On y perçoit leurs prières, l'organisation de leurs lieux liturgiques, somme toute leur participation, dans une langue sémitique christianisée, à un monde byzantin de culture grecque traduite pour eux.

Cette expression linguistique sémitique propre à la Palestine et à l'Arabie, qui apparaît au début du V^e siècle et s'étend petit à petit dans la région, semble participer du large processus que Jan Willem Drijvers percevait du V^e siècle comme un « âge de transformation » : « Tandis que le quatrième siècle est encore largement un âge de continuité avec l'empire antérieur, le cinquième peut à juste titre être considéré comme un moment où l'Eurasie méditerranéenne et l'Afrique du Nord témoignent de profondes transformations politiques, sociales, religieuses, économique et culturelles qui ont créé les racines d'où grandit le Moyen Âge. »⁷² En ce qui concerne les populations sémitiques de la région, leur expression écrite en christo-palestinien qui naît au V^e siècle avec leur christianisation, se développe au cours des VI^e et VII^e siècle, dans des inscriptions et des manuscrits pour devenir une langue biblique et liturgique des communautés melkites ; celles-ci ensuite abandonnent progressivement le grec qui demeure la langue liturgique tandis que l'arabe devient progressivement la langue de toute la région.

72 « Whereas the fourth century is still very much an age of continuity with the earlier empire, the fifth can rightly be viewed as the moment when Mediterranean Eurasia and North Africa witnessed the profound political, social, religious, economic, and cultural transformations that created the roots out of which grew the Middle Ages. », Drijvers, Lenski 2019, 7.

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The New Psalm Texts in Sinai New Finds CPA Fragments 12 with the Eusebian *hypotheses*

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Abstract The much damaged Sinai CPA Fragment 12 from the New Finds contains passages from the Psalms. The present contribution publishes the texts of those Psalms which are not yet known from elsewhere.

Keywords Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Palimpsests. Psalms. Sinai.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Upper text. – 3 Relationship of the upper text to other CPA Psalm texts. – 4 Relationship to the Septuagint. – 5 Orthography and lexicon. – 6 The New Psalm Texts.

1 Introduction

The Psalter is rather poorly preserved in CPA, and often only as excerpts in liturgical manuscripts, though a few complete Psalms are to be found in the *Horologion*.¹ All the Psalm texts in liturgical manuscripts were helpfully assembled and edited by M.H. Goshen-Gottstein and H. Shirun in 2008;² since that date some fragments from a manuscript of a complete Psalter came to light among the CPA fragments from the ‘New Finds’ at St Catherine’s Monastery, Mount

1 I am greatly indebted to Christa Müller-Kessler for her valuable comments and for providing me with her readings of the undertext (these will be published separately). I also thank the anonymous readers for their suggestions and comments.

2 Goshen-Gottstein, Shirun 2008.

Sinai. Sinai CPA Sparagma/Fragment 12³ consists of two damaged bifolios and a folio belonging to quire 8 of the original Psalms manuscript, together with fragments (some very small) from other earlier and later parts of the manuscript. Parts of (LXX) Psalms (17), 21, 73, 80-84, 86-88, 101, 135-6, 145-6 are preserved.⁴ Subsequently it turned out that the CPA folio attached to Syriac New Finds X17N comes from the same manuscript.⁵ The original manuscript must have measured 12.5 by 19.5 cm, with a single column of 26 lines to the page, with an area of writing which was approximately 9.5 by 15.7 cm (the left hand justification is very uneven). Word breaks between two lines are not infrequent, and in several cases these involve an isolated *d*- at the end of a line (e.g. Ps. 73:8, 88:29, 48, 101:12 etc.). The script should probably be dated to the 9th or 10th century.⁶

The folios were evidently palimpsested, and in some cases, double palimpsested. CPA letters, at 90 degrees to the upper text, are clearly visible in Figures 424 and 425 (fragment with Ps 80:14- 81:7, and elsewhere); the undertext of three folios has been identified as containing CPA Psalms 21:16b-23:2 and 121:5-123:8, and the readings have been provided to me by Christa Müller Kessler. Remarkably, Psalms 22 and 23 are provided with the *hupotheseis* attributed to Eusebius (see further, below).⁷ The other undertext is written on the same plane as the Psalms text, but only a few faint traces of letters in Syriac (?) script are visible in the images available.

In the upper text each psalm is simply introduced by its number, written out, preceded by 'Psalm (attributed) to David'. The LXX Psalm titles are omitted, and this is also the case with the recurrent term *diapsalma*. The attribution to David is found even when LXX has a different attribution (thus Pss. 81, 82, 84, 86, 87). A distinctive feature is the presence in a sloping Greek uncial script of the opening words of each psalm, a practice also attested in a Sogdian fragment of Psalm

³ Briefly described in Brock 1995. The CPA fragments are described on 79-91, with 122-18, and Figures 375-454. Colour images of the bifolia (only) are available from the site of the Sinai Palimpsests Project (<https://sinai.library.ucla.edu>).

⁴ The Septuagint numbering is used throughout this contribution. I am most grateful to the Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai, for permission to publish the new CPA Psalms.

⁵ Philothée du Sinaï 2008, 165-66 (with an image of the verso on p. 163); the verso, containing Ps. 74:7-11, 75:1-3, was transcribed by Alain Desreumaux, on pp. 165-66 (in line *šrb'* should read *hrb'*). The recto remains unread.

⁶ *Dalat* is still without a point.

⁷ PG 23, 68; now ed. Bandt 2019. The *periochai* or *hupotheseis* are listed on f. 10r of the LXX Codex Alexandrinus, but they do not appear before the individual psalms, as is the case in some Latin Psalters, cf Salmon 1959, 117. In Syriac the *hupotheseis* are listed at the beginning of the Syrohexapla Psalms (ed. Ceriani, ff. 1v-2v), but they only feature as a heading to each individual psalm in the Peshitta Psalter 12t4; cf. van Rooy 1999, 11-25, and van Rooy 2013, 2-3.

33, edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams.⁸ The ends of *stichoi* are indicated by -: encircled in red by a secondary hand which has also ringed (or overwritten in the case of Ps 81) the opening words in red. For Psalms 85 and 89 the rubric ‘*Antiphon*’ appears; this term refers to the divisions between two *kathismata*, for which the later term was *šubbaha* (*doxa* in Greek Psalters).⁹ The term is also found for Psalms 46, 49, 81 and 89 in the fragments in British Library Add. 14,664, published by Land.¹⁰ Both manuscripts were evidently written for monastic use.

In the undertext, the Psalm 22 opens with the heading ‘Psalm for David, the twenty-second’, followed immediately by the Eusebian *hypotheses* (in this case Διδασκαλία νεοῦ λαοῦ εἰσαγωγή); verse 1 then commences. In the case of Psalm 23, however, the format is somewhat different, with ‘For David a Psalm on the first (day) in the week, the twenty-third’, following which is the Eusebian *hypothesis* (Προφητεία κλήσεως ἐθνῶν, καὶ τελείωσις τῶν σωζομένων), and then Psalm 23 commences. On the first (day) in the week is to be understood as ‘on Sunday’ corresponding to the Septuagint’s τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων. For Psalms 122 the Eusebian *hypothesis* (Εὐχῆς) and for 123 there is space for the short *hypotheses* (Εὐχαριστίας), but the palimpsest is at both these points illegible. Whether or not Psalm 122 had an attribution to David is unclear, and all that survives of the number is ‘one hundred and twenty-two’. The same applies to Psalm 123: following the number are two illegible lines which could have contained both the name and the single word of the *hypothesis*.

The presence of ‘On Sunday’ for Psalm 23 suggests that the undertext contained both the Eusebian *hypotheses* and the Septuagint headings: there is no Septuagint heading for Psalm 22, while for Psalms 122 and 123 there would be space in the illegible lines for the LXX τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν in both cases. The presence of the *hypotheses* before individual psalms is remarkable, since this would seem to be rare in the case in Septuagint Psalter manuscripts.¹¹

In the following list of the contents of the fragments the Septuagint numbering of the Psalms and of the verses are those of the Göttingen *Septuaginta*, X, *Psalmi cum Odis* (1931, repr. 1967), ed. A. Rahlfs. The availability of the text in question in CPA in other sources is also noted.

⁸ Sims-Williams 2004, 623-31; cf. also D’Aiuto 2008, 13-19.

⁹ Cf. Parpulov 2014, 80.

¹⁰ Land 1875, 103-10. Ps. 46 is prefaced by *qatisma*.

¹¹ This is implied by Parpulov 2014, 56. A consultation of facsimiles of several early manuscripts and of microfilms of some early Psalters in the Library of St Catherine’s Monastery, Sinai, did not produce any examples, but sporadic examples (including Ps. 22 – but not for Ps. 23!) can be found in the apparatus of Holmes, Parsons 1823. According to Stichel (2007, 143, with note 339), the Eusebian *tituli* often feature in the margins of the famous Chludov Psalter. For their appearance in Latin and Syriac Psalters, see note 7, above.

(b) Two fragments constituting the upper and lower part of a single folio (Brock 1995, Figs. 420-423). The inner margin of the recto contains the quire signature (*zayn* = 7). The presence of this quire number *zayn* (=7) on the recto of (b), along with that of *ḥeth* (= 8) on the verso of (e), raises the question: does the scribe follow the ‘mirror-system’ of numbering quires, normal in CPA manuscripts,¹³ according to which the number on the first folio of a quire ‘mirrors’ the number on the last folio of the *previous* quire? Or does he follow the system standard in Syriac, but also occasionally found in CPA manuscripts,¹⁴ whereby the number on the first folio of a quire matches that on the last folio of the *same* quire? According to ‘mirror-system’ Psalm 73 would feature on the first folio of the *eighth* quire, whereas for the Syriac system it would be on the first folio of the *seventh* quire. According to both systems, however, *ḥeth* on the verso (with the end of Psalm 88) will be the last folio of the *eighth* quire. It is clear that only the Syriac system will provide sufficient space for the span of text from Psalm 73 to the end of Ps 88 (cf. also the reconstruction of the contents of quire eight, below).

Quire	CPA 'mirror-system'	Syriac system
VII	1r <6>	1r = <i>zayn</i> /7 ~ Ps 73
	8v <7>	8v <7>
VIII	1r = <i>zayn</i> /7 ~	Ps 73 1r <8>
	8v = <i>heth</i> /8 ~ Ps 88	8v = <i>heth</i> /8 ~ Ps 88

14 An example can be seen in Brock 1995, Fig. 412 (CPA *Sparagma* 10). Desreumaux (2015, 134) cites Sinai New Finds X17N as another case: this must refer to the Psalms fragment since the rest of X17N is in Syriac; since Desreumaux had already noted that the CPA text in X17N belongs to *Sparagma* 12, his statement about the quire numbering must in fact have been based on the evidence of Fragment 12.

Recto of (b): Psalm 73:3-6 and 73:6-11 (Brock 1995, Figs 420 and 422).

Verso: Psalm 73: 11-14 and 73: 15-20a (Brock 1995, Figs 421 and 423).

Psalm 73 is not preserved elsewhere in CPA.

A folio, containing Psalm 74:7-11 and Psalm 75:1-5 on the verso, from the same manuscript as Fragment 12, is preserved as Sinai X17N, where it has become attached (evidently as a protective guard) to a folio of a paper manuscript containing *stikhera*.¹⁵ An image of the verso, together with a full transcription in both CPA and *estrangelo* scripts,¹⁶ is provided by A. Desreumaux (in Philothée du Sinai 2008, 165-66) who recognizes the folio as belonging to the same manuscript as Fragment 12; he suggests a 10th-century date for the upper text and *circa* 7th for the undertext (traces of several letters are visible in the image). Since no image of the recto is provided, its Psalm text still remains to be published.

(c-e) The texts of (c-e) will all belong to the eighth quire of the original manuscript, with (c) and (d) constituting folios 2, 4-5, and 7 of this quire. The quire, which must have originally consisted of four bifolios, can be reconstructed as follows:

folio 1: lost

folio 2r: Psalm 80:14-81:7 (Brock 1995, Fig. 424, left).

2v: Psalm 81:8-82:12 (Brock 1995, Fig. 425, right).

folio 3: lost.

folio 4r: Psalm 83:2-84:12 (Brock 1995, Fig. 426, left).

4v: Psalm 84:12-85:9 (Brock 1995, Fig. 427, right).

folio 5r: Psalm 85:9-86:2 (Brock 1995, Fig. 427, left).

5v: Ps. 86:3- 87:9 (Brock 1995, Fig. 426, right).

folio 6: lost.

folio 7r: Psalm 88:9-19 (Brock 1995, Fig. 425, left).

7v: Psalm 88:20-30 (Brock 1995, Fig. 424, right).

folio 8r: Psalm 88:35-42 (Brock 1995, Fig. 428).

8v: Psalm 88:47-89:1 (Brock 1995, Fig. 429).

Parallels are available for Psalm 81 and 82:1-10a in BL Add. 14,664, f.27r, edited in Land 1875,108-109; Psalm 83-85 feature in the *Horologion* (Ps. 84:1, 7 also in Lewis 1897, 65); for Psalm 85, Lewis 1897, 70, has verses 1, 15 and 16a. Psalm 87 is in the *Horologion* (and verses 6, 17 in Lewis 1897, 122, but just after a lacuna starts in Fragment 12); Psalm 89 is also in the *Horologion* and BL Add. 14,664, f.28rv and 29r (ed. Land 1875, 109-110. Thus the text of Psalm 88

¹⁵ Philothée du Sinai 2008, 161-66.

¹⁶ In line 22 ܠܠܝܠܝܐ should be read as ܠܠܝܠܝܐ .

in CPA *Sparagma* 12 is completely new, while that of Psalm 86 is provided for the first time in full.

(f) Part of the inner side of a page, torn diagonally. The recto has parts of Psalm 101:8-16 (Brock 1995, Fig. 430), and the verso parts of Psalm 101:17-27 (Brock 1995, Fig. 431). Psalm 101 features in the *Horologion* (and verses 1-2 in Lewis 1897, 122).

(g) A very damaged bifolium: 1r contains parts of Psalm 135:9-18 (Brock 1995, Fig. 432, left); 1v has parts of Psalm 135:24-136:4a (Brock 1995, Fig. 433, right); 2r has parts of Psalm 145:1-9 (Brock 1995, Fig. 433, left); and 2v has parts of Psalm 146:3-8 (Brock 1995, Fig. 432, right). Psalms 135-6 and 146 are not otherwise attested, but Psalm 145 is found in the *Horologion*.

2.1 Undertext

It has been possible to identify the undertext of three of the palimpsest folios of CPA *Sparagma* 12; the following passages have been identified:

Psalm 21:16b - 21 = 1r, under (g)
 21:21b - 24 = 1v, under (g)
 21:27 - 22:3a = 1r/4v, under (cd)
 22:3b - 23:2 = 1v/4r, under (cd)
 121:6b - 122:2 = 2v/3r, under (cd)
 122:4 - 123:8 = 2r/3v, under (cd).

There is an overlap between the upper and lower texts for Psalm 21: 17-19. Although the translation would appear to be basically the same, there are five differences, the most important being:

Psalm 21:17b περιεσχον με. ωρυξαν (χειρας μου): the undertext has []
 ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܐ ܕܥܝܢܝܐ (ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ), but the upper text [] [ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ] ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܐ.
 The same Greek word is translated by ܡܥܬܝܢ in Psalm 56:6 (Black 1954, 230).
 Since ܡܥܬܝܢ in Psalm 21:17 represents the more literal translation, it should perhaps best be seen as a correction towards the Greek.

Two others concern an added conjunction *waw* in the upper text (Ps. 21:18 ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ, and 21:19 ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ), and one a transposition (Ps. 21:18, where the upper text has [ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ] ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ in contrast to the undertext's ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ; all these are likely to be secondary developments in the upper text, and this very probably also applies to the fourth case, 21:19 ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ; under text ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ [ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ] upper text ܡܥܬܝܬܝܢ).

For Psalm 123 there is an overlap of five verses (123:1, 3-8) with a fragment in St Petersburg, published by N. Pigulewsky¹⁷ (= Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1997, 126). Here too there are three main differences to be found:

Ps. 123:5 *εδωκεν*; undertext ܐܬܢܐ = Greek, but St P. ܐܬܝܐ.

Ps. 123:7 *η παγίς συνετριβη και ημεις ερρυσθημεν*; undertext ܐܡܢܢܐ ܬܪܝܒܬܐ ܐܡܢܢܐ ܥܡܢܢܐ = Greek; St P. ܐܡܢܢܐ [ܐܡܢܢܐ ܐܡܢܢܐ. (The reading ܐܡܢܢܐ is very unclear in the photograph).

Ps. 123:8 *η βοθηα ημων εν ονοματι κυριου*; undertext ܐܠܝܐܬܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܐܡܢܢܐ = Greek; St P. ܐܠܝܐܬܐ ܐܡܢܢܐ [ܐܡܢܢܐ. The readings of the St Petersburg fragment remain puzzling.

3 Relationship of the upper text to other CPA Psalm texts

(a) *Horologion*.

The *Horologion* provides the text for Psalms 84, 85, 87, 101 and 145; their text proves to be exactly the same as that of *Sparagma* 12, apart from several orthographical differences and a small number of mostly minor variants. One variant, however, might suggest an approximation to the LXX subsequent to the text in *Sparagma* 12:¹⁸

Psalm 101:12(11): ܐܠܝܐܬܐ [ܐܠܝܐܬܐ *Horologion* = LXX

(b) Psalm fragments in BL, Add. 14,664, ff. 22-29 (ed. Land 1875, 109 Syr.).

The text in Add. 14,664 is essentially the same as that of CPA *Sparagma* 12; at the beginning of Psalm 89 they both have the rubric *rish antiphon*. The only substantial variants are:

Ps. 82:2 ܐܠܝܐܬܐ [ܐܠܝܐܬܐ Add. 14,664 (Land notes, however, that ܐܠܝܐܬܐ and ܐܠܝܐܬܐ are uncertain).

Ps. 82:4 ܐܠܝܐܬܐ [ܐܠܝܐܬܐ Add. 14,664; LXX καταπανουργευσαντο.

(c) Isolated verses in Lewis 1897.¹⁹

¹⁷ Pigulewsky 1934, 519-27; some improved readings in Müller-Kessler, Sokoloff 1997, 126-7.

¹⁸ When the verse numbers are sometimes different from those of the Göttingen edition, they are given in brackets.

¹⁹ Psalm quotations occurring in other works are excluded, although it would be interesting to know if their CPA translators ever made use of the present version.

The Psalm verses in Lewis (1897, 65 and 70), Psalm 84:1, 7, and 85:1, 15b, 16a,²⁰ are clearly from the same translation as that in CPA *Sparagma* 12.

Psalms in the upper text of *Sparagma* 12 which are not preserved elsewhere in CPA are 21, 73, (86), 88, 135-6, 146.

4 Relationship to the Septuagint

As might be expected, and as noted by Matthew Black (1954, 14), CPA normally agrees with variant readings to be found in the LXX witnesses to the Lucianic recension (L), which became the standard Byzantine text tradition. For the Psalm texts in the *Horologion*, Black provided a detailed collation (1954, 25-41). The following collation against the text printed in vol. X of the Göttingen Septuaginta offers a supplement, primarily covering those Psalms in *Sparagma* 12 which are not attested elsewhere.²¹

21:4 αγιοις] αγιω Bo La Ga L 55 CPA = MT
 73:8 η συγγενεια] αι συγγενειαι L Tht Syh La^R CPA
 73:17 εποιησας] επλασας L Tht Syh 1219 CPA (vid.)²²
 74:11 (X17N) τα κερατα] το κερας Bo R L Tht 1219 CPA
 82:10 ο ιαβιν] τω ιαβιν L Tht 55 CPA
 88:24 τους εχθρους αυτου / απο προσωπου αυτου] tp S Ga L Tht Syh CPA (=MT)
 101:23 βασιλειας] βασιλεις Sa Ga L Tht Syh A 1219 55 CPA
 135:16 τω εξαγαγοντι - αυτου] om. S Ga L Tht Syh A 1219 55 CPA (=MT)
 145:3 και] om. Ga L Thdt 1219 CPA (=MT)
 145:8 κυριος ανορθοι κατερραγμενους / κυριος σοφοι τυφλους] tp Ga L Tht Syh 1219 CPA (=MT).

In one case CPA agrees with just Syh:

Ps. 81:4b εκ] και εκ Syh CPA

Perhaps more significant are cases where CPA goes against L:

Ps. 73:9 ημων = CPA] αυτων Sa L Tht Syh
 Ps. 88:20 οσοις L pauc. = MT] υιοις rell. CPA

²⁰ Lewis (1897) inadvertently gives the higher Hebrew numbers (85, 86) here (but not at p. 122).

²¹ The sigla and verse numbering are those of the Göttingen LXX, *Psalmi cum Odis*; see the list of abbreviation at the end of the paper.

²² Although most of the verb is lost, there seem to be traces of *lamadh*, indicating [למד] rather than [למד]ב.

Ps. 145:6 αυτοις L etc.] αυτη Bo Sa La^R Syh 1219 CPA

Ps. 146:5 ημων] om Bo La^E CPA.

A number of apparent variants where CPA has no other support are to be found; whether or not these also reflect genuine underlying Greek variants is difficult to tell, and judgement must often await a new edition of the Göttingen Septuaginta. The following cases might be noted:

Ps. 21:22 (undertext): there are two illegible lines between ‘out of the mouth’ and ‘the lion’. It is hard to imagine what could have intervened, and perhaps it is best to suggest that at the beginning of the verso the scribe copied some wrong words and then erased them.

Ps. 22:4 (undertext): μετ εμου] + *mr*’ (representing κυριε or κε) CPA

Ps. 85 title προσευχη] ψαλμος CPA

Ps. 86:5 and 6 εγεννηθη... γεγεννημενων] εγεννηθη... γεγεννημενων CPA

Ps. 86:6 εν αυτη] εκει CPA

Ps. 88:21 αγιω] αγιου CPA

Ps. 88:28 υψηλον] υψηλων CPA

Ps. 101:12 εκλιθησαν] ‘passed by’ CPA (perhaps due to the influence of Ps. 143:4)

Ps. 121:7 (undertext) εν ταις πυργοβαρεσιν σου ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ. The CPA translator had problems to convert the Greek compound into this Western Aramaic idiom.

Ps. 122:4 (undertext) After the final words of the Psalm ܕܥܝܢܝܢ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ, and after the Psalm number ‘the one hundred and twenty-third Psalm’, there are two extra lines for the today illegible Eusebian *hypothesis*.

Ps. 135:26 last two lines] om. CPA

Ps. 146:7 ημων] om, CPA.

5 Orthography and lexicon

The following orthographical/morphological features are worth noting: at Psalm 80:7 the af’el of ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ is ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ rather than ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ. Both 86:1 ܕܥܝܢܝܢ and 86:5 ܕܥܝܢܝܢ are found; likewise both ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ and ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ.

There are a few lexemes that do not feature in Sokoloff’s dictionary:²³ ܕܥܝܢܝܢ Ps. 82:4, rendering καταπανουργεύω (cf. ܕܥܝܢܝܢ in Sokoloff 2014, 2018; for the variant reading in the *Horologion*, see above); ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ Ps. 136:2 LXX ἰτέα;²⁴ ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ Ps. 88:39, LXX ἀναβάλλομαι

²³ Sokoloff 2014.

²⁴ There is no clear explanation for this; it is hardly a corruption of a transcription ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ, as Schulthess (1903, 38) suggested; ἰτέα is also found in Isaiah 44:4 where Lewis 1897, 38 has ܐܬܬܝܬܝܢ. A possible explanation could be that the word is related

15 [All my bones were s]cattered; [my heart was m]ade [like] which [] 16 It
dried up like [] and my tongue stu[ck to] to the dust of death [] me. 17 [Do]gs
encircled me [] The assembly of those doing evil [] me. They dug into [my]
hands [] 18 They numbered all [my] bones. Now they saw and wat[ched] 19
And they divided my garments [] and over my clothing []

[illegible]

29 Initial *alaph* is written above the line.

(c) **Psalm 86** (Figs. 427 left, 426 right)

(the Psalm is attested in full in the *Horologion*)

Eighty seventh Psalm of David.

30 It is not clear whether or not the lacuna witnessed to the variant + τῆς κτισσεως.
31 Error for the expected $\Lambda\Lambda\Gamma\eta\Delta\kappa$ 3 f.pl. ending κ - is not attested elsewhere: cf. Müller-Kessler 1991, 153, 163-64.
32 *Waw* is a later addition.

(d) **Psalm 88:9-30, 35-42, 47-53** (Figs. 425 left, 424 right, 428, 429)

[illegible]

Ps. 88:9 [O Lord God] of powers, who resembles you? You are mighty, Lord, and [your] truth [] you. 10 You are Lord over [the rule] of the sea, and you still the tossing of [its wa]ves. 11 You have humbled the [arr]ogant like one who is struck, and with the arm of your might you have scattered your enemies. 12 Yours is the heaven and yours is the earth; the inhabited (world) and its fulness you founded. 13 The north and the ocean you founded. Let Tabor and (H)ermon rejoice in your name. 14 Let your arm with mighty actions, your hand, be firm: let your right hand be exalted. 15 Righteousness and judgement [] of your throne; mercy and truth go before your face. 16 Blessed is the people [] recognises the jubilation. O Lord, in the light of your countenance let them proceed. 17 And in your name let them rejoice all day, and in your righteousness they will be raised up. 18 For you are the glory of their might, and in your will our horn is exalted. 19 For of the Lord there is succour, and of the Holy One, our king. 20 Then you spoke in a vision to your children, and [you sai]d, I have placed assistance for [], I have raised up a chosen one [from my peo]ple. 21 I have found David, [my servant]; with oil of my holiness [I have anoint]ed him. 22 For see how my hand is accepted with him,³³ and my arm strengthens him. 23 The enemy will not profit within him, and the son of the law-transgressor will not continue to do him wrong. 24 []³⁴ before his face his enemies and those who hate him []. 25 My truth and my mercy [are with him] and in my name [his horn] is exalted. 26 I will place in the sea [his hand] and in the rivers his right hand. 27 [He will cal]l me, You are my father, my God and the supporter of my life. 28 I will establish him as firstborn, raising up to himself the kings of the earth. 29 For ever will I preserve for him my mercy, and my covenant will be faithful to him. 30 I will establish to the eternal age his seed and [his] throne [7 lines lost] 35 [I will not] profane [my] covenant, and what proceeds from my lips I will not []. 36 A single time have I sworn in my holy (place) to David, if I should act falsely, 37 that his seed will endure for ever, and his throne will be like the sun before me, 38 [and lik]e the moon that is established for ever, and the faithful witness is in heaven. 39 But you rebuffed and scorned, and you made as nothing³⁵ your anointed one, 40 You overturned the covenant of your servant, you profaned the ground of his sanctuary. 41 You broke down all his fences, you made his strong places (an object of) fear. 42 There despoiled him all those who pass by on the road. He is made [(an object of) shame] to his neighbours. [10 lines lost] 47 [like] fire your anger. 48 [Re]member what is my state, [for] was it for nothing you created all the children of mankind? 49 What human being is there who does not see death and rescues [him]self from the hand of Sheol? 50 Where are your ancient [mer]cies, O Lord, which you swore to David in your truth? 51 Remember the reproaches of your

33 LXX συναντήθηται.

34 Whereas the 'ayn of ܐܢ is clear, the previous letter is uncertain, but if it is correct the verb is likely to be ܐܢܐ 'to sleep', here presumably *afel*. ܐܢܐ (cf. Syriac) would correspond much better to the Greek συγκοψω here, but is hitherto unattested in CPA.

35 Reading ܕܠܐ ܒܝܐ 'did not bring' as one word ܕܠܐ ܒܝܐܐ (cf. Syriac ܕܠܐ; the negative here would imply that the translator took the initial *alpha* of ἀνεβαλον as an *alpha* privative, which does not seem likely.

servants, what I have held in my bosom, (coming from) many peoples. 52 How your enemies have reproached, O Lord, how have they reproached the successor of your anointed. 53 Blessed is the Lord for ever; let it be [] thus.

Eighty-ninth Psalm of David. Head of Antiphon.

(e) **Psalm 135:9-136:4a** (Figs 432 left, 433 right)

9 10 | [] 9
 11 | [] 11
 12 | [] 12
 13 | [] 13
 14 | [] 14
 15 | [] 15
 16 | [] 16
 17 | [] 17
 18 | [] 18
 19 | [] 19
 20 | [] 20
 21 | [] 21
 22 | [] 22
 23 | [] 23
 24 | [] 24
 25 | [] 25
 26 | [] 26
 27 | [] 27
 28 | [] 28
 29 | [] 29
 30 | [] 30
 31 | [] 31
 32 | [] 32
 33 | [] 33
 34 | [] 34
 35 | [] 35
 36 | [] 36
 37 | [] 37
 38 | [] 38
 39 | [] 39
 40 | [] 40
 41 | [] 41
 42 | [] 42
 43 | [] 43
 44 | [] 44
 45 | [] 45
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 47 | [] 47
 48 | [] 48
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 87 | [] 87
 88 | [] 88
 89 | [] 89
 90 | [] 90
 91 | [] 91
 92 | [] 92
 93 | [] 93
 94 | [] 94
 95 | [] 95
 96 | [] 96
 97 | [] 97
 98 | [] 98
 99 | [] 99
 100 | [] 100

Ps. 135:9] of] the night. Since [for ever are his mercies]. 10 To him who struck [Egypt and her first]born, since for ever are his [mercies]. 11 He brought Is[rael out] of its midst, since for ever are his me[r]cies. 12 With a firm hand and with an arm upraised, since for ever are his mercies. 13 To him who split the Red Sea into parts, since for ever are his mercies. 14 And he caused Israel to cross over in its midst, since for ever are his mercies. 15 And he shook [Pharaoh] and all his army in the [Red] Sea, since for ever are his mercies. 16 [] his people in the desert, since for ever are his mercies. 17 The One who struck great kings, since for ever are his mercies. 18 And he slew strong kings, since for ever [8 lines lost] 24 [] who del[ivered us from] our ene[mies] since for eve[r] are his m[ercies]. 25 He who gave [] to all f]lesh, since for ever are his [mercies] 26 Confess the God of heaven, since for ever are his mercies.

By the river (Greek)

One hundred and thirty sixth Psalm of David. 1 By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept when we remembered Sion. 2 On the palms(?) in her midst we hung our lyres. [3] there, they requested us, those who had [taken] us [captive,] for words of the psalms, [and those] who had brought us, for a song: Sing to us from the psalms of Zion. 4 How shall we sing to you []

List of abbreviations

Bo = Bohairic
 CPA = Christian Palestinian Aramaic
 Sa = Sahidic
 Ga = Psalterium Gallicanum
 L = Lucianic recension
 La = Old Latin
 MT = Masoretic Text
 Ps. = Psalm
 St P. = Saint Petersburg
 Syh = Syrohexapla
 Tht = Theodoret

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Une collection d'apophtegmes au Monastère Sainte-Catherine du Sinaï dans le codex M58N + M59N + CPA Sp 5 + CPASp14 Apports et intérêt du manuscrit

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Abstract The manuscripts M58N, M59N, Sp 5 and Sp 14 from the Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai form the dismantled remains of a palimpsest manuscript in Christian Palestinian Aramaic. This manuscript requires a complete restoration so that all the pages can be read, both in the upper and the lower texts. After a codicological description, the paper presents the collection of *Apophtegms of the Fathers* contained in the upper text. This collection not only extends the Christian Palestinian Aramaic vocabulary by providing new words or forms not yet attested, but also allows us to correct erroneous readings of certain words in other manuscripts. A study of the structure of this collection of apophtegms and a detailed comparison with the known Greek versions allows us to improve the edited Greek text of certain apophtegms, but also to link our collection to a part of the textual tradition known as the 'Sabaïte-type collection'.

Keywords Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Ancient Greek. Manuscripts. Lexicology. Apophtegms of the Fathers. Textual tradition. Palimpsest. Codicology. Translation.

Sommaire 1 Introduction. – 2 Le manuscrit. – 2.1 Description. – 2.2 Contenu. – 3 Apport pour la connaissance de l'araméen christopalestinien. – 3.1 Nouveaux mots araméens. – 3.2 Du grec à l'araméen : quelle fidélité ? – 4 Apports de l'araméen à la connaissance de la tradition grecque des Apophtegmes. – 4.1 Quand l'araméen améliore le grec. – 4.2 Nouveaux éléments pour la transmission des Collections. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

En 2010, Alain Desreumaux m'a confié un ensemble de photographies qu'il avait lui-même effectuées au monastère Sainte-Catherine du Sinaï, avec l'accord du bibliothécaire, le père Justin. Dans ce lot se trouvaient les photographies d'un manuscrit démembré dont les parties conservées étaient : CPA Sp 5, 1r à 2v (Brock 1995, 82) ; CPA Sp 14, 1r et 4v (Brock 1995, 89) ; M58N, 1r à 6v, et 7r-8v (Philothée 2008, 541-2) qui forme un bifolio séparé ; 22 photos de M59N (Philothée 2008, 543-8) qui correspondent aux pages accessibles de ce codex très endommagé, partiellement brûlé et dont de nombreux folios sont encore collés entre eux.

A. Desreumaux, à qui Mère Philothée avait confié la rédaction des notices des manuscrits en araméen christopalestinien de son catalogue, avait déjà fait le rapprochement entre les codex M58N et M59N, et avec le Sp 14 du catalogue de S. Brock. Le Sp 5 avait échappé à tout rapprochement du fait de son contenu non identifié. Mais un examen attentif de ce bifolio ne laisse place à aucun doute, et l'identification de son contenu est venue confirmer cette hypothèse.

À l'heure actuelle, on ne connaît pas d'autre fragment de ce codex.

Nous nous proposons ici de décrire ce manuscrit et son contenu, puis, à l'aide de quelques exemples, d'en montrer les apports pour la connaissance de l'araméen christopalestinien, et l'intérêt pour la tradition des textes qu'il contient.

2 Le manuscrit

2.1 Description

Les folios, d'une taille de 200 mm de haut et de 165 mm de large en moyenne, sont écrits à pleine page à raison de 18 ou 19 lignes par page, parfois 16 ou 17. Leur état de conservation est très variable : le M58N (1r-6v) est bien conservé dans sa partie centrale, mais le bifolio extérieur (7r-8v) est très endommagé ; Sp 14 n'est plus qu'un coin de cahier aux pages collées ; Sp 5 est un bifolio très abîmé ; M59N présente de belles pages bien lisibles, mais la plupart des feuillets ne sont pas visibles car collés entre eux, et la dernière page (n° 22) est très endommagée.

Tous ces folios sont des remplois de folios palimpsestes eux-mêmes en araméen christopalestinien. J'ai identifié au moins trois manuscrits différents remployés, mais il y en a peut-être quatre. De ces manuscrits, seuls deux ont pu être déchiffrés : le premier conserve des passages de l'*Asceticon* d'Abba Isaïe, et de quelques textes non identifiés mais appartenant au même codex d'origine, et

le second donne les restes de la *Première Épître aux Corinthiens*. Le tableau 1 récapitule la répartition des feuillets de palimpsestes par codex [tab. 1].

Palimpseste I : *Asceticon* d'Abba Isaïe (18 lignes / colonne)
Palimpseste II : *Première Épître aux Corinthiens* (22 lignes / colonne)
Palimpseste III : non identifié (= IV ?) (21/22 lignes / colonne)
Palimpseste IV : non identifié (= III ?) (21/22 lignes / colonne)

Tableau 1

folio	palimpseste
M58N, 1r-8v	I
Sp14, 1r-4v	I
M59N, 1-12	I
M59N, 13-16	II
M59N, 17	I
M59N, 18-21	II
M59N, 22	III (= IV ?)
Sp5, 1r-2v	IV (= III ?)

Il apparaît que la première partie du codex a été formée à partir du palimpseste de l'*Asceticon*, puis qu'une autre partie a été formée de celle contenant la *Lettre aux Corinthiens*, et enfin les derniers feuillets sur ce qui peut être un ou deux palimpsestes différents. Toutefois, faute d'une connaissance plus précise du M59N, il est difficile de savoir si d'autres palimpsestes ont servi à former le nouveau codex, ou quels textes ils contenaient.

2.2 Contenu

Revenons-en à l'écriture supérieure. Il a été observé par S. Brock (1995, 89) puis par A. Desreumaux (Philothée 2008, 541) que ce codex contenait une collection d'apophtegmes des Pères de type alphabétique, sans que l'ordre soit précisément celui de la collection grecque. Les folios ne sont pas numérotés, mais les cahiers le sont, selon l'usage courant des numéros identiques en vis-à-vis, l'un finissant le cahier, l'autre l'entamant. En outre, les feuillets extérieurs sont pourvus, en marge supérieure, du titre courant ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (Vies des Pères) réparti sur les deux feuillets, qui ne laisse aucune place au doute sur le contenu du manuscrit.

Les Apophtegmes étaient encore mal connus dans la tradition araméenne : si l'on se réfère au volume de *Texts of Various Contents* édité par M. Sokoloff (2014b), on relève que les textes répertoriés

sous la rubrique « Apophtegmata » sont issus soit du catalogue de S. Brock, soit de celui de Mère Philothée. Mais on trouve aussi, sous la rubrique *Geronticon* une longue série d'apophtegmes anonymes qui avait été publiée et partiellement identifiée par H. Duensing. Nous avons complété l'identification de cette petite collection en comparant les versions grecque, araméenne et arménienne de ces apophtegmes (Capron 2016a). Enfin, il faut mentionner trois autres textes que M. Sokoloff intitule respectivement *Life of Sarmatos* (sic), *Life of Silvanus* et *Homily 7*. En réalité, les deux premiers textes donnent les restes de la succession d'apophtegmes N202¹ (Sarmatas) – Sarmatas 3 – Sarmatas 4 – Silvain 1 – [Silvain 2 (sur un feuillet inédit)] – Silvain 3 – Silvain 4 – Silvain 5 – Silvain 6 – N217 (Silvain), et le dernier donne ceux de l'apophtegme Théophile d'Alexandrie 4 (cf. Capron 2016b).

Grâce au codex du Sinaï, notre connaissance de ces collections d'apophtegmes en araméen christopalestinien s'accroît donc considérablement : il faut désormais ajouter une quarantaine d'apophtegmes, selon la liste du tableau 2 [tab. 2].

Certains récits de notre codex sinaïtique sont tirés d'autres recueils que les collections alphabétique ou systématique, comme l'*Histoire des moines d'Égypte* (HM)² dont les récits sont autant d'épisodes bio-hagiographiques. Leur insertion progressive dans les collections d'apophtegmes est bien connue, mais est surtout caractéristique des collections dérivées, que l'on pourrait appeler « de seconde génération ».

Il faut encore compter quelques extraits d'homélies traitant d'ascèse ou de vie monastique. Outre le texte attribué à un certain Grégoire, *Au sujet de l'âme au moment de la mort*, dont il ne nous reste que le titre et que nous ne sommes pas parvenu à identifier, on a surtout, dans la partie M58N, deux longs extraits d'une homélie d'Éphrem connue sous le titre *Adhortatio ad fratres* (= *Exhortation aux frères*).³

1 Pour la numérotation des apophtegmes, nous utilisons la table constituée par Regnault (1976, 201-289).

2 Édition par Festugière 1971.

3 = CPG 4018. Édition par Assemani (1746, 205D-215A). Les deux extraits se suivent sans interruption dans le texte grec, mais le scribe de notre codex a indiqué un changement de texte par le symbole de quatre points en marge, symbole utilisé dans ce manuscrit pour indiquer le passage à un autre chapitre. Par ailleurs, il faut signaler que, en M58N, fol. 3r, l. 11, l'araméen christopalestinien saute un long passage du texte grec qui, s'il avait été transcrit en araméen christopalestinien, aurait occupé environ un folio entier. Il est donc possible que ce soit le manuscrit antigraphé de notre codex qui ait été défectueux.

Tableau 2

apophtegme	localisation
Dioscore 3 + S1	M58N, f. 7r + f. 7v
Éphrem 1	M58N, f. 1r, l. 3-13
Éphrem 2	M58N, f. 1r, l. 14-18 + f. 1v + f. 2r, l. 1-6
Éphrem 3	M58N, f. 2r, l. 7-19 + f. 2v, l. 1-15
Éphrem, <i>Adhortatio ad fratres</i> , extrait 1	M58N, f. 2v, l. 16-18 + f. 3r + f. 3v, l. 1-4
Éphrem, <i>Adhortatio ad fratres</i> , extrait 2	M58N, f. 3v, l. 5-17 + f. 4r + f. 4v + f. 5r + f. 5v + f. 6r + f. 6v + f. 8r + f. 8v
apophtegme non identifié 1	Sp 14, f. 1r, l. 5-9
apophtegme non identifié 2	Sp 14, f. 1r, l. 10-12
Eucharistos	Sp 14, f. 2r, 2-15
Zacharie 3	Sp 14, f. 4v, l. 5-7
Zacharie 5	Sp 14, f. 4v, l. 8-15
Jean Colobos 15	M59N, 1, l. 1-8
Jean Colobos 20	M59N, 1, l. 9-17
Jean Colobos 16	M59N, 1, l. 18-19 + 1b, l. 6-9
apophtegme non identifié 3	M59N, 1b, l. 10-12
Jean le cénobite	M59N, 2, l. 1-10
Jean des Cellules 1	M59N, 2, l. 11-19 + 3, l. 1-16
Jean le Perse 4	M59N, 3, l. 17-19
Joseph de Panepho 9	M59N, 4, l. 1-3
Joseph de Panepho 3	M59N, 4, l. 4-19 + 5, l. 1-17
Joseph de Panepho 10	M59N, 5, l. 18-19 + 6, l. 1-4
Joseph de Panepho 11	M59N, 6, l. 5-16
Joseph le Thébain	M59N, 6, l. 17-19 + 7, l. 1-13
Isidore (prêtre de Scété) 1	M59N, 7, l. 14-18
Lucius	M59N, 8, l. 1-5
Longin 1	M59N, 8, l. 6-19 + 9, l. 1-6
Lot 2	M59N, 9, l. 7-19
Macaire 33	M59N, 10 + 11, l. 1-12
Macaire 4	M59N, 11, l. 13-17
Macaire le Citadin N488	M59N, 12 + 13
Macaire 39	M59N, 14 + 15, l. 1-16
Macaire N494 = <i>HM</i> 21, 13-14	M59N, 15, l. 17-19 + 16 + 17, l. 1-2
Macaire, <i>HM</i> 21, 15-16	M59N, 17, l. 3-18
Marc disciple de Silvain 2	M59N, 18, l. 1-2
Marc disciple de Silvain 3	M59N, 18, l. 3-19 + 19, l. 1-14
Marc disciple de Silvain 4	M59N, 19, l. 15-19 + 20, l. 1-6
Marc disciple de Silvain 5	M59N, 20, l. 6-13
Silvain S1	M59N, 20, l. 13-18
Nisterôs cénobite 2	M59N, 21
Sarmatas N202	M59N, 22, l. 1-11
Sarmatas 3	M59N, 22, l. 12-21
Théophile évêque d'Alexandrie 4	Sp 5, f. 1r + f. 1v
texte ascétique non identifié 2	Sp 5, f. 2r + f. 2v, l. 1-5
Grégoire, <i>Sur l'heure de la mort et la séparation de l'âme et du corps</i>	Sp 5, f. 2v, l. 7-16

3 Apport pour la connaissance de l'araméen christopalestinien

La découverte de ces textes permet d'enrichir considérablement notre connaissance du vocabulaire araméen christopalestinien. En effet, malgré le thème religieux qui domine évidemment toute cette littérature, on rencontre un vocabulaire très varié. Le lexique que nous en avons élaboré compte ainsi 680 entrées de vocabulaire, noms propres y compris. Le vocabulaire va des mots les plus courants aux mots les plus rares : certains mots étaient jusqu'alors inconnus en araméen christopalestinien ; d'autres apparaissent pour la première fois sous une forme non encore attestée. Nous exposerons ici quelques exemples représentatifs de ces apports linguistiques.

3.1 Nouveaux mots araméens

Dans l'*Exhortation aux moines* d'Éphrem, on rencontre le verbe au participe actif féminin ܡܢܬܝܬܐ⁴ sous la forme ܡܢܬܝܬܐ. Il s'agit d'une citation de la *Première Épître à Timothée*, ch. 5, v. 6 : ἡ δὲ σπαταλῶσα ζῶσα τέθνηκεν (« quant à celle qui ne pense qu'au plaisir, quoique vivante, elle est morte »). Ici, ܡܢܬܝܬܐ traduit le grec σπαταλῶσα, participe de σπαταλάω-ῶ, « rechercher le plaisir, vivre dans le plaisir ». Ce verbe n'est attesté que quatre fois dans les Écritures, mais aucun de ces passages n'était connu en araméen avant cette citation de la *Première Épître à Timothée*.

Le verbe ܡܢܬܝܬܐ apparaît déjà dans un papyrus.⁵ Dans sa première édition, J. T. Milik lisait ܡܢܬܝܬܐ mais émettait un doute sur cette lecture et admettait qu'il valait mieux lire ܡܢܬܝܬܐ, sans pour autant être assuré de la signification du terme.⁶ Dans sa réédition du texte, Milik choisit la lecture ܡܢܬܝܬܐ et traduit la phrase par « my heart is attained ».

Bien qu'il ait intégré ce petit texte dans son corpus de *Texts of Various Contents*,⁷ Sokoloff n'a pas créé d'entrée pour le verbe ܡܢܬܝܬܐ

⁴ L'article de C. Müller-Kessler (2021) n'était pas encore paru au moment de notre communication. Nous remercions l'auteure de nous en avoir communiqué une copie dès parution. Nos conclusions sur ce point sont tout à fait concordantes.

⁵ Édition *princeps* par Milik (1953, 533-7) ; réédition avec corrections par Wright - Milik 1961, 25.

⁶ Milik (1953, 536), commentaire à l. 9 : « Le second mot se lirait plus facilement ܡܢܬܝܬܐ, mais cette racine semble inconnue à l'araméen, sauf au judéo-palestinien (au sens 'être fâché, mécontent'). Même là, elle n'est attestée que d'une manière insuffisante par la tradition manuscrite. Au contraire, le verbe sémitique *r's* se présente en syriaque avec un sens figuré en sus du sens physique. ». Voir aussi Müller-Kessler 1991, 15, n. 70.

⁷ Sokoloff (2014b, 216), *EpiG8*.

dans son *Dictionary of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*. À la lumière de notre texte, il semble bien non seulement que la lecture 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌 de Milik soit tout à fait acceptable, mais encore que le sens soit aussi celui de « rechercher la jouissance, les plaisirs » : ce serait précisément parce que « son cœur recherche les plaisirs » que l'auteur du papyrus demanderait l'intercession de saint Sabas pour le pardon de ce péché.

On rencontre, toujours dans l'*Exhortation aux frères* d'Éphrem, le terme 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓, qui dérive évidemment de notre verbe 𐤒𐤓𐤕, ⁸ et qui traduit tout simplement σπατάλη dans la phrase διὰ τὴν σπατάλην ἡ πορνεία, ⁹ « à cause de la recherche de plaisir vient la débauche ». Ce terme apparaît déjà en araméen dans un texte qui n'avait pas été identifié jusqu'alors et qui est repris par Sokoloff (2014b, 132-5) sous la dénomination *Homily* 7¹⁰ et que nous avons identifié (Capron 2016b) comme étant l'apophtegme Théophile d'Alexandrie 4. ¹¹ Dans ce passage, le terme 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓 traduit le grec ἀπόλαυσις, « jouissance, plaisir ». Il y a donc bien accord entre les deux textes.

Mais dans son dictionnaire, M. Sokoloff (2014a, 58) ne savait pas comment traduire le terme et se contente d'indiquer, pour le sens, la mention « incertain ». ¹² Toutefois, il rappelle en note que Duensing, le premier éditeur du texte, affirmait être certain de sa lecture, ainsi qu'on le lit dans cette note:

Graphisch absolut sicher. Schultheß s. v. korrigiert das Wort bei Land 200, 13 in 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌 und giebt ihm die Bedeutung *cupiditas*, die es allerdings an allen andern Stellen nicht hat, dort aber haben muß. (Duensing 1906, 69, n. 1)

À la lumière de ce témoignage supplémentaire, non seulement la lecture de Duensing ne fait plus aucun doute, mais le mot prend son sens. Duensing relève ainsi que ce mot a déjà posé problème : en effet, dans son édition *princeps* de fragments d'homélie non identifiée, Land (1875, 200, fragment 41) lit bien l'expression 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓. F. Schultheß (1898) a publié une liste de corrections à cette édition. Pour le mot 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓, il suggère de lire 𐤓𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓, « la recherche,

⁸ Sur les dérivés nominaux en -ōn/-ōna, cf. Müller-Kessler 1991, 100-1.

⁹ Assemani 1746, 210A.

¹⁰ Édition *princeps* dans Duensing 1906, 69-71.

¹¹ Notre identification du texte nous a notamment permis de replacer les fragments dans leur ordre d'origine : *Hom*7, 4 - *Hom*7, 3 - *Hom*7, 1 - *Hom*7, 2.

¹² Puisque le mot figure bien sous l'entrée 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓, il faut très certainement considérer que la graphie 𐤒𐤓𐤕𐤌𐤓 que l'on rencontre en Sokoloff 2014b, *Hom*7, 1b, 20 n'est qu'une malencontreuse coquille.

le désir du ventre ».¹³ Il appuie sa remarque par le fait que le substantif ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ se rencontre déjà ailleurs. Mais ce qu'il ne dit pas, c'est que ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ traduit le mot grec ζήτησις, la « recherche » au sens intellectuel, non le « désir ».

En 1906, Duensing identifie le texte de cette homélie comme étant celui des *Catéchèses prébaptismales* de Cyrille de Jérusalem.¹⁴ Il ne reprend pas l'édition de Land, mais ajoute de nouveaux fragments (Duensing 1906, 41-62). Grâce à cette identification, il nous est aisé de relever que l'expression ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ, « ne poursuis pas le plaisir du ventre », traduit l'expression grecque μήτε γαστριμαργῶν.

Dans leur réédition des fragments des *Catéchèses* de Cyrille de Jérusalem,¹⁵ M. Sokoloff et C. Müller-Kessler confirment la lecture du manuscrit ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ, qu'ils corrigent toutefois en ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ, sans donner d'autre sens à ce mot que la mention « unclear ».¹⁶ Pour une raison obscure, M. Sokoloff (2014a, 57) ajoute qu'il faut corriger ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ en ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ, tout en conservant le sens de « gloutonnerie » dans l'expression ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ.

À notre tour, nous proposons une solution, mais plus simple : puisque partout où nous rencontrons ce mot, celui-ci a le sens de « désir, plaisir, recherche de plaisirs », acceptons que nous ayons ici un mot nouveau, sans qu'il soit besoin de corriger systématiquement toutes les occurrences que nous découvrons.

3.2 Du grec à l'araméen : quelle fidélité ?

On sait que l'araméen christopalestinien est friand de translittération de mots grecs, et le tableau 3 [tab. 3] montre bien encore le nombre de mots grecs translittérés que nous rencontrons dans ce manuscrit. Certains sont déjà connus, d'autres sont attestés pour la première fois.

13 Schultheß 1898, 707 : « l. ܠܝܬܐܢܝܬܐ „ seine (des Bauches) Sucht, Begehrt“. Dieses Subst. findet sich z. B. Joh. 3, 25, 1 Cor. 1, 20. »

14 = CPG 3585. On trouve, chez Duensing (1906, 49-50), une concordance des fragments publiés par Land et des références aux passages des *Catéchèses*. Le fragment 41 correspond à *Catéchèse* 4, ch. 36-37.

15 Müller-Kessler – Sokoloff 1999.

16 Müller-Kessler – Sokoloff 1999, 228. Müller-Kessler (2021, 221, n. 26) précise toutefois que, malgré elle, sa confirmation de la lecture du *shin* n'a pas été intégrée à la version envoyée pour impression.

Tableau 3

araméen	grec	araméen	grec
ܪܚ	ῆ	ܡܐܕܐ	χωρίς
ܡܪܚ	ἄββας	ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐ	χριστιανός
ܥܡܐ	οὖν	*ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐ	λεβιτών
ܪܡܪܝܢܐܬܐ	οἰκόνομος	ܪܡܪܝܢܐ	λαμπάς, -άδος
ܪܡܪܝܢܐ	ὄχλος	ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐ	μαγειρεῖον
ܠܡܪܝܢܐ	ξένος	ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐ	μέτρον
ܠܡܪܝܢܐܬܐ	Ἀλεξανδρεύς	ܠܡܪܝܢܐܬܐ	μηλωτάριον
ܪܡܠܝܡܐ	σχῆμα	ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐ	μᾶλλον
ܪܡܠܝܢܐܬܐ	ἀκρίβεια	ܠܡܪܝܢܐܬܐ	μαρτύριον
ܪܡܠܐ	ἄρα	ܡܐܕܐܡܐ	σωθείης
ܪܡܠܝܢܐ	ἄρχων	ܪܡܠܝܢܐܬܐ	πολιτεία
ܡܡܐܬܐ	βίος	ܡܡܐܬܐ	φύσις
ܪܡܠܐ	γένος	ܡܡܠܝܢܐ	πάντως
ܪܡܠܐ	γάρ	ܪܡܡܝܢܐܬܐ	κίρκος
ܠܡܐ	δή	ܠܡܠܝܢܐ	κατηγορῶ
ܡܡܠܝܢܐ	ὅλως	ܚܪܝܬܡܐܕܐܬܐ	κοινόβιον
ܪܡܠܝܢܐܬܐܡܐ	ὑποδιάκονος	ܚܡܐ	κᾶν
ܪܡܡܝܢܐܬܐ	τόμος	ܠܡܐܬܐ	Θηβαῖος
ܪܡܠܐ	τάξις		

Il me semble qu'il convient d'ajouter à cette liste un mot encore inconnu en araméen christopalestinien, et pourtant aussi inconnu en grec : ܪܡܠܝܢܐܬܐ, que l'on rencontre deux fois dans le même texte,¹⁷ et une fois dans un autre texte, où il n'est que partiellement lisible.¹⁸ Dans les deux premiers cas, la lecture est assurée et il n'est pas pensable d'y voir une double faute du scribe. On attend ici que ce mot inconnu traduise le grec μοναχός. Il est donc très tentant de supposer une translittération d'un mot grec *μονήτηρ, non attesté.

Si ce nom, qui possède la forme d'un nom d'agent en -τηρ, n'est pas connu dans les textes littéraires, on rencontre en revanche, chez Macarius de Magnésie, un auteur du IV^e siècle, le terme μονητήριον pour désigner un lieu fixe de résidence.¹⁹

Mais le mot grec usuel pour désigner le monastère est évidemment μοναστήριον, lieu habité par un μοναχός, ou un μοναστής, mot plus rare, ou, si c'est une femme, une μονάστρια. On retrouve donc bien ici

¹⁷ Apophtegme Macaire l'Égyptien 39 (M59N 14, l. 17 et 15, l. 11).

¹⁸ Sp 14, 4v, l. 7.

¹⁹ Le mot apparaît à trois reprises dans *Monogénès* (= CPG 6115) : lib. III, 11, 16 ; lib. III, 12, 11 ; lib. IV, 12, 14 (édition Goulet 2003).

la construction sur le radical μονάσ- auquel est ajoutée la désinence d'agent -της/-τρια.

D'où vient cette profusion de termes qui ne dérivent pas simplement les uns des autres ? Il faut se souvenir que, en grec, deux racines presque identiques s'affrontent pour former les termes servant à désigner le mode de vie monastique : la racine *men- (qui donne le verbe μένω, « demeurer »), et la racine *mon- (qui a donné μόνος, « seul »). Or le moine est tout à la fois celui qui vit seul (μοναχός) et celui qui demeure dans un lieu fixe (μονή). On comprend alors comment ces deux racines homophones sont utilisées l'une pour l'autre sans qu'il y ait pour autant de distinction fondamentale entre les deux, mais en insistant au contraire sur ce double aspect caractéristique de la vie du moine : l'isolement et la fixation dans un lieu.

En araméen christopalestinien, on connaît déjà le terme ܠܡܢܬܐ, qui est attesté dans deux textes d'apophtegmes, où il désigne spécifiquement l'habitat monastique.²⁰ Dans le premier cas, il traduit le grec κελλίον, « cellule », dans l'autre, le mot μοναστήριον, « monastère ». Mais il est évident qu'il est, à l'origine, une translittération du grec μονή, « lieu de résidence », d'où « monastère ».

On connaît désormais le terme ܠܡܢܬܐ, qui désigne le moine. Il est difficile de savoir avec certitude de quel mot grec ce terme est la transcription : à cette époque, on ne connaît pas de création de nom d'agent en -τηρ²¹ et l'on attendrait alors le grec *μονητής. Mais on se heurte ici à un évident problème de translittération : dans tous les exemples connus à ce jour, les noms en -της, caractéristiques des noms d'agents en grec, sont translittérés en araméen christopalestinien par une finale en ܐܢܬܐ.²² Il ne reste donc, semble-t-il, que l'hypothèse de la création d'un nom d'agent dérivé du grec μονητήριον, lequel mot n'est pas attesté en araméen christopalestinien.

Enfin existe un terme qui a posé problème à ses lecteurs : Duensing (1906, 15-41), dans son édition d'Apophtegmes anonymes, a rencontré l'expression ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ, expression supposée traduire le grec τὸ ἐπάγγελμα τοῦ μοναχοῦ, « la profession, l'engagement de moine ».²³ Or, cette expression apparaît en grec un peu plus haut dans le même texte où elle est traduite en araméen

20 Apophtegmes Agathon 6 (Sokoloff 2014b, *Apoph1*, 1b:3) et Silvain 1 (Sokoloff 2014b, *VSil*, 1b:8).

21 Sur la formation des noms d'agents en -τηρ/-της, on trouvera une synthèse claire chez Rousseau 2021.

22 Nous avons relevé, dans Sokoloff 2014a, les termes suivants : ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (ἀναχωρητής) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (βουλευτής) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (δεσπότης) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (ιδιώτης) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (ὕπηρετης) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (τραπεζίτης) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (λειτουργός) ; ܠܡܢܬܐ ܠܡܢܬܐ (κυβερνήτης).

23 Duensing 1906, 32-33, fol. 7v, col. a, l. 18-19.

par ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ.²⁴ Ces deux termes sont donc bien perçus comme synonymes, et ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ paraît bien dériver de ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ, comme ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ dérive de ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ, « solitaire, moine ». Toutefois, Duensing a été gêné par ce mot et précise en note qu'il y voit une corruption pour une forme probable ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ, plus proche du grec μοναστήριον, et explique cette confusion par une mauvaise lecture du tsadé.²⁵

Dans son corpus de *Texts of Various Contents*, M. Sokoloff (2014b, 71-90) reprend ce texte sous le titre *Geronticon* et, à l'instar de Duensing, conserve la lecture du manuscrit. En revanche, dans son dictionnaire (2014a, 212), il crée l'entrée ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ, en proposant d'y voir un dérivé abstrait de μοναστήριον, et corrige en conséquence le texte de Duensing.

Mais nous savons maintenant que, quel que soit le mot grec qu'il interprète, le terme ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ est bien attesté en araméen : il n'y a donc pas lieu de supposer une dérivation abstraite sur un autre mot que celui-ci. Du point de vue sémantique, il est en outre plus cohérent de faire dériver ܠܕܘܠܬܐܢܐܢܐ, « vie de moine », d'un nom d'agent ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ, « moine », que d'un nom de bâtiment.

La troisième occurrence du mot ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ se rencontre dans le fragment Sp 14, en partie publié par S. Brock (1995, 89). De ce fragment, S. Brock déchiffre les restes de quatre lignes, dans lesquelles il reconnaît la fin de l'apophtegme Zacharias 3, puis le début de Zacharias 5. À la fin de la première ligne, il ne donne pas toutes les lettres visibles sur le fragment, mais seulement ܠܬܡܢܐ, comme si le mot était coupé. L'examen de la photographie²⁶ nous permet de lire aisément la séquence ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ ; quant au *resh* final, il est très effacé et il n'en reste que le point supérieur et le pied, avant la double ponctuation. Devant ce mot inconnu et, qui plus est, difficile à lire, on comprend la prudence de S. Brock quant à son interprétation. Or, S. Brock avait très bien identifié ce texte, et le grec donne, pour cette dernière phrase de l'apophtegme Zacharie 3 οὐ δύναται εἶναι μοναχός, « il ne peut être moine », ce qui correspond très bien aux restes lisibles de cette ligne ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ. Il semble ainsi qu'il n'y ait plus de doute à avoir sur la lecture de ce passage difficile.

Pour en finir avec l'étude de ce mot nouveau, on constate que l'araméen a, en quelque sorte, opéré un choix entre les mots grecs qu'il translittère et remploie : que ce soit ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ, ܠܬܡܢܐ ou

²⁴ Duensing 1906, 32-33, fol. 7v, col. a, l. 8-9.

²⁵ Duensing 1906, 32, n. 3 : « Dem Sinne nach = ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ. Es liegt eine gleiche Korruption vor wie nach Payne Smith bei Jesu Bar-Ali, wo ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ für ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ μοναστικοί vorkommt. Vielleicht ist die Korruption über ܠܬܡܢܐܢܐ zustande gekommen. »

²⁶ On trouvera une photographie de ce fragment en très haute qualité sur le site Internet <https://sinai.library.ucla.edu>.

ΚΔΟΪΛΛΙΟΤ,

4

4.1

En grec, les collections d'apophtegmes sont connues selon deux grandes traditions : la collection alphabético-anonyme, qui classe les apophtegmes par ordre alphabétique de moine, puis donne un ensemble d'apophtegmes anonymes, dont le classement fait débat ; d'autre part, la collection systématique, qui classe les apophtegmes selon vingt thèmes, et dispose à l'intérieur de ces thèmes les apophtegmes nominatifs en premier lieu, et anonymes ensuite.²⁷ Ces deux collections connaissent chacune son évolution propre, même si de nombreux points de contact existent entre elles.

Notre collection est de type alphabétique et respecte, à ce qu'il semble, l'ordre alphabétique grec : on observe en effet, dans le codex M58N, la succession Dioscore – Éphrem, puis (Sp 14) Eucharistos – Zacharias. Transcrits en araméen, les noms d'Éphrem et d'Eucharistos commencent tous deux par un *olaph* : c'est donc bien que l'ordre grec a primé sur l'ordre araméen.

Pourtant, la liste des apophtegmes se conclut par l'apophtegme Théophile d'Alexandrie 4, que l'on trouve au début du feuillet Sp 5, avant un extrait non identifié puis l'annonce d'un texte de Grégoire sur la séparation de l'âme et du corps. On s'attend bien à ce que le nom grec de Théophile soit transcrit en commençant par un *taw*, ce qui pourrait expliquer la place finale de cet apophtegme, mais ceci contrevient alors à ce que nous exposons à l'instant, à savoir que l'ordre des apophtegmes était l'ordre du grec.

Une explication peut être avancée : nous avons déjà dit que cet apophtegme était connu ailleurs en araméen (Duensing 1906, 69-71). Or, nous n'avons ni le début, ni la fin du texte, et l'on ne sait pas ce qui le précède ou le suit directement. La seule assurance que nous ayons est que, dans les deux cas, il appartient au même codex

27 Sur la constitution des collections d'apophtegmes, l'ouvrage de référence reste la synthèse de Guy 1984.

Notons enfin que cet apophtegme de la collection alphabétique, contrairement à de nombreux autres, a été peu remployé dans d'autres collections, peut-être justement du fait de sa longueur et de sa nature homilétique. On ne le retrouve que dans le corpus tardif de Paul Evergétinos, et dans une traduction arménienne qui n'hésite pas à étoffer le texte. Pour établir correctement le texte de cet apophtegme, on ne dispose donc que des manuscrits de la collection alphabétique. Or on lit en araméen cette phrase : ܠܗܝܬ ܘܢܝܥܐ ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܟܪܝܣܬܐܠܝܢܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܒܝܠܝܐ ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܟܪܝܣܬܐܠܝܢܐ, qui traduit le grec ὅποιαν ἀκρίβειαν; ὁποιαν προσευχήν; ὁποιαν ἀσφάλειαν; (« quelle exactitude ? quelle prière ? quelle vigilance ? »).²⁹ S'il est aisé de reconnaître le grec ἀκρίβεια, « exactitude », derrière l'araméen ܠܗܝܬ ܘܢܝܥܐ ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ ܕܟܪܝܣܬܐܠܝܢܐ ; si l'on identifie bien ܠܗܝܬ ܘܢܝܥܐ, « vigilance, observance », déjà attesté, en revanche, ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ pose quelques problèmes. Le mot n'est pas connu en araméen christopalestinien, mais il l'est en araméen targumique, où il signifie « intelligence, attention »,³⁰ ce qui n'a pas lieu d'étonner puisque le verbe ܡܫܚܝܬܐ, bien attesté en araméen christopalestinien, a pour sens « faire attention, être prudent ». Toutefois, le passage du grec προσευχήν, « prière » à l'araméen ܕܡܫܚܝܬܐ, « attention, prudence » n'est pas sans poser question. La solution à ce problème est en fait à chercher dans le texte grec. Cet apophtegme a été publié par J.-B. Cotelier (1677, 463-5) d'après le manuscrit Paris, BnF, grec 1599.³¹ Pourtant, notre connaissance des collections d'apophtegmes et des manuscrits qui les conservent a considérablement évolué depuis cette époque. J.-Cl. Guy (1984, 16) a relevé huit manuscrits contenant tout ou partie de la

29 Sp 5, 1r, l. 15-17. Trad. Regnault 1981, 119.

31 N° Diktyon 51219.

collection alphabétique complète des Apophtegmes. Les manuscrits Athènes, EBE, 504³² et Paris, BnF, grec 916³³ sont lacunaires pour le texte qui nous intéresse ici. Nous n'avons pas eu accès à Berlin, SBB, Phillips 1624.³⁴ Les manuscrits Paris, BnF, Coislin 126³⁵ et Londres, British Library, Add. 22508³⁶ rejoignent le manuscrit Paris, BnF, grec 1599 dans la lecture de ce passage. En revanche, les manuscrits Sinaï, Sainte-Catherine, grec 448³⁷ et Paris, BnF, Coislin 232³⁸ donnent tous deux la leçon *ὁποῖαν προσοχήν*; « quelle prudence ? ». Étant donné le contexte littéraire de cette expression, il nous paraît raisonnable de préférer cette lecture à celle éditée par Cotelier : la triade *ὁποῖαν ἀκρίβειαν*; *ὁποῖαν προσοχήν*; *ὁποῖαν ἀσφάλειαν*; semble bien faire écho à celle qui précède *ποταπὴν ἀγωγὴν*; *ποταπὴν πολιτείαν*; *ποταπὸν δρόμον*; (« quelle conduite ? quelle vie ? quelle course ? »³⁹).

Notre codex fait donc ici d'une pierre deux coups : non seulement il enrichit notre vocabulaire araméen d'un mot nouveau, mais il permet aussi de corriger ce qui était manifestement une leçon fautive du texte grec édité.

4.2 Nouveaux éléments pour la transmission des Collections

Il est difficile de rattacher avec assurance notre collection à l'un des multiples rameaux de la tradition des apophtegmes. Tout au plus, pouvons-nous opérer des rapprochements entre nos textes et d'autres traditions. Ainsi, il n'est pas rare que les variantes relevées dans le texte araméen se rapprochent de variantes trouvées dans la collection systématique, en particulier du groupe de manuscrits édités sous les sigles Q, R et T.⁴⁰ Or, pour ne prendre que cet exemple, ces manuscrits ont la particularité d'ajouter, parmi d'autres œuvres patristiques, l'extrait de l'*Exhortation aux frères* d'Éphrem à la suite de leur collection d'apophtegmes.

Pourtant, cette observation ne suffit pas à expliquer la constitution de notre collection, puisque la moitié des apophtegmes identifiés dans notre codex ne figure pas dans la collection systématique.

32 N° Diktyon 2800.

33 N° Diktyon 50504.

34 N° Diktyon 9526.

35 N° Diktyon 49270.

36 N° Diktyon 39001.

37 N° Diktyon 58823.

38 N° Diktyon 49373.

39 Trad. Regnault 1981, 119.

40 Q = Paris, BnF, grec 917 (n° Diktyon 50505) ; R = Paris, BnF, grec 914 (n° Diktyon 50502) ; T = Athènes, EBE, 500 (n° Diktyon 2796).

Mais une autre collection doit retenir notre attention :⁴¹ il s'agit de celle que J.-Cl. Guy (1984, 221-30) a appelé la « collection de type sabaïte », et qui n'est représentée pour l'instant que par trois manuscrits grecs : Paris, BnF, grec 1598 ;⁴² Mont Athos, Monê Karakallou, 38⁴³ et Londres, British Library, Burney 50.⁴⁴ Or, notre collection araméenne partage au moins deux particularités avec cette collection :

1. l'apophtegme de Sarmatas numéroté N202⁴⁵ est anonyme dans la tradition grecque, sauf dans la collection sabaïte, qui l'attribue aussi à Sarmatas ;⁴⁶
2. les apophtegmes relatifs à Marc disciple de Silvain présentent exactement les mêmes caractéristiques en araméen que dans cette collection, à savoir :⁴⁷
 - les apophtegmes 4 et 5 ne sont pas séparés, mais donnés comme un seul récit ;
 - la série est suivie, sans interruption, de l'apophtegme de Silvain Supplément 1.⁴⁸

De plus, dans les deux cas, les variantes textuelles observées dans la version araméenne correspondent exactement à celles de la collection sabaïte.

Dans le tableau 4, nous mettons en parallèle les trois versions du passage conservé de l'apophtegme Sarmatas N202, dans le manuscrit Paris, BnF, Coislin 126, qui a servi de base à l'édition de la collection des apophtegmes anonymes par F. Nau (1908, 278-9), puis dans le manuscrit Paris, BnF, grec 1598, qui témoigne de la collection sabaïte et où l'apophtegme est explicitement attribué à Sarmatas, et enfin dans notre manuscrit (M59N, photo 22, l. 1-11). Pour faciliter la visualisation des différences entre les deux versions grecques, nous avons indiqué en italique, dans le premier témoin, ce qui ne figure pas dans l'autre version, et, dans le second témoin, nous avons indiqué en

41 Notre analyse de cette collection n'en est encore qu'à ses prémices. Les phénomènes relevés ici ne sont en aucun cas exhaustifs.

42 N° Diktyon 51218.

43 N° Diktyon 25607.

44 N° Diktyon 39320.

45 M59N, fol. 22. Édition Nau 1908, 278-9.

46 Ce texte est anonyme dans l'ensemble de la tradition, à l'exception du syriaque, qui l'attribue aussi à Sarmatas (cf. Bedjan 1897, 448 pour le texte syriaque, et Budge 1907, 5, n° 9 pour la traduction anglaise). Le texte grec est conservé dans les manuscrits de Paris (fol. 126v) et de Londres (fol. 121v).

47 Ces apophtegmes sont classés à la suite des apophtegmes de Silvain dans la collection sabaïte. Ils ne sont conservés que dans les manuscrits de Paris (fol. 121r-v) et de Londres (fol. 118v-119r).

48 Édition Guy 1984, 47.

Tableau 5

Paris, BnF, grec 1599 + Paris, BnF, Coislin 257	Paris, BnF, grec 1598	Sinaï, Sainte-Catherine, M59N
Ἄλλοτε συνέβη αὐτὸν ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπὸ Σκήτewς, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σινᾶ, καὶ μεῖναι ἐκεῖ. Καὶ ἔπεμψεν ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Μάρκου ὀρκίζουσα αὐτὸν μετὰ δακρύων, ἵνα ἐξέλθῃ υἱὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἴδῃ αὐτόν. Ὁ δὲ γέρων ἀπέλυσεν αὐτόν. Καὶ ὡς ἐποίει τὴν μελωτήν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν, καὶ ἤρχετο ἀσπάσασθαι τὸν γέροντα, εὐθέως ἔβαλλε κλαῖιν, καὶ οὐκ ἐξήρχετο. Ἔλεγον περὶ τοῦ Ἀββᾶ Σιλουανοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἤθελεν ἐξελεθεῖν εἰς Συρίαν, εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ μάθητῃς αὐτοῦ Μάρκος· Πάτερ, οὐ θέλω ἐξελεθεῖν ἔνθεν· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ σὲ ἀφῶ ἐξελεθεῖν, Ἀββᾶ. Ἀλλὰ παράμεινον ὧδε τρεῖς ἡμέρας. Καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκοιμήθη. Ἔλεγον δὲ περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἐξηλθεν ὕστερον εἰς Παλαιστίνην καὶ ποιήσας κελλίον πρὸς τῷ ποταμῷ διήγεν ἐκεῖ ὥσπερ ἐν Σκίτῃ τὸν ὑπόλοιπον αὐτοῦ χρόνον.	Ἄλλοτε πάλιν συνέβη αὐτοῦς ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπὸ Σκήτewς, καὶ ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σινᾶ, καὶ ἔμειναν ἐκεῖ. Καὶ ἔπεμπεν ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Μάρκου, ὀρκίζουσα μετὰ δακρύων, ἵνα ἀπέλθῃ, τοῦ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν. Καὶ ὡς ἐποίει τὴν μελωτήν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν, καὶ ἤρχετο τοῦ ἀσπάσασθαι τὸν γέροντα, ἔβαλλεν κλαίειν, καὶ οὐκ ἐξήρχετο. Ὅτε δὲ ἠθέλεσεν ὁ γέρων ἐξελεθεῖν εἰς Συρίαν, λέγει ὁ Μάρκος· Πάτερ, οὐ θέλω ἐξελεθεῖν ἐνθεν· καὶ πάλιν οὐ θέλω ἀφῆναί σε Ἀββᾶ. Ἀλλὰ παράμεινον ὧδε τρεῖς ἡμέρας. Καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκοιμήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ. Καὶ ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἀββᾶς Σιλουανὸς εἰς Παλαιστίνην, ἐποίησεν ἑαυτῷ κελλίον παρὰ τὸν ποταμὸν, καὶ διείξεν ἐκεῖ ὥσπερ εἰς Σκήτην τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον τῆς ζωῆς αὐτοῦ.	ⲕⲗⲧⲛ ⲡⲁⲗⲓⲛ ⲉⲛⲉⲃⲏ ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲩ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ ⲁⲩⲡⲟ ⲥⲕⲏⲧⲉⲱⲥ, ⲕⲁⲓ ⲁⲩⲡⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲧⲟ ⲟⲣⲟⲥ ⲧⲟ ⲥⲓⲛᾶ, ⲕⲁⲓ ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲁⲓ ⲉⲕⲉⲓ. ⲕⲁⲓ ⲉⲩⲡⲉⲙⲡⲉⲛ ⲏ ⲙⲏⲧⲏⲣ ⲧⲟῦ ⲙᾶⲣⲕⲟⲩ ⲟⲣⲕⲓⲛⲟⲩⲥⲁ ⲙⲉⲧᾶ ⲉⲃⲁⲕⲣῶⲛ, ⲏⲛᾶ ⲁⲩⲡⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ ⲧⲟῦ ⲏⲃⲉⲓⲛ ⲁⲩⲧⲟⲩ. ⲕⲁⲓ ⲟⲥ ⲉⲩⲡⲟⲓⲉⲓ ⲧⲏⲛ ⲙⲉⲗⲟⲧⲏⲛ ⲁⲩⲧⲟῦ ⲧⲟῦ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ, ⲕⲁⲓ ⲏⲣⲕⲉⲧⲟ ⲧⲟῦ ⲁⲥⲡᾶⲥⲁⲥⲱⲥⲁⲓ ⲧὸⲛ γⲉⲣⲟⲛⲧⲁ, ⲉⲩⲧⲉⲱⲥ ⲉⲃⲁⲗⲗⲉ ⲕⲗⲁⲓⲛ, ⲕⲁⲓ ⲟⲩⲕ ⲉⲃⲏⲣⲕⲉⲧⲟ. Ἐⲗⲉⲓⲛ ⲡⲉⲣⲓ ⲧⲟῦ ⲁⲃⲃᾶ ⲥⲓⲗⲟⲩⲁⲛⲟῦ, ⲟⲧⲓ ⲟⲥ ⲏⲧⲉⲗⲉⲛ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲥⲓⲣⲓᲁⲛ, ⲉⲓⲡⲉⲛ ⲁⲩⲧῶ ⲟ ⲙᾶⲧⲏⲧⲏⲥ ⲁⲩⲧⲟῦ ⲙᾶⲣⲕⲟⲥ· ⲡᾶⲧⲉⲣ, ⲟῦ ⲧⲉⲗⲱ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲛⲧⲉⲛ· ᲁⲗⲗ' ⲟῦⲃⲉ ⲥⲉ ⲁⲩῶ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧⲉⲓⲛ, ⲁⲃⲃᾶ. ᲁⲗⲗᾶ ⲡᾶⲣᾶⲙⲉⲓⲛⲟⲛ ὧⲃⲉ ⲧⲣⲉⲓⲥ ᲏ⲙⲉⲣᾶⲥ. ⲕⲁⲓ ⲧ᲏ⲓ ⲧⲣᲓⲧⲏ ᲏ⲙⲉⲣᾶ ⲉⲕⲟⲓⲙ᲏ⲧⲏ ⲉⲛ ⲉⲓⲣ᲏ⲛⲏ. ⲕⲁⲓ ⲉⲃⲉⲗⲉⲧῶⲛ ⲟ ⲁⲃⲃᾶⲥ ⲥⲓⲗⲟⲩⲁⲛⲟⲥ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲡᾶⲗⲁⲓⲥⲧᲓⲛⲏ, ⲉⲩⲡⲟⲓ᲏ⲥⲉⲛ ⲉⲁⲩⲧῶ ⲕⲉⲗⲗᲓⲟⲛ ⲡᾶⲣᾶ ⲧὸⲛ ⲡⲟⲧᾶⲙὸⲛ, ⲕⲁⲓ ⲉⲓⲉⲓⲛ ⲉⲕⲉⲓ ὧⲥⲡⲉⲣ ⲉⲓⲥ ⲥⲕ᲏ⲧ᲏ⲛ ⲧὸⲛ ⲗⲟⲓⲡὸⲛ ⲕⲣὲⲛⲟⲛ ⲧ᲏ⲥ ⲙⲟⲓⲥ ⲁⲩⲧⲟῦ.

Enfin, bien que notre étude sur ce point soit encore à l'état d'ébauche, nous remarquons que la collection sabaïte présente souvent, dans ses textes, des variantes textuelles de la collection systématique dont seule la famille de manuscrits QRT témoigne. Cet aspect mériterait à soi seul une analyse qui n'a pas sa place ici, mais vient souligner la proximité de cette famille avec la collection sabaïte et, par voie de conséquence, avec notre collection araméenne.

5 Conclusion

Notre codex présente donc un triple intérêt. En premier lieu, la reconstitution de l'ordre originel des parties aujourd'hui conservées nous permet d'identifier une collection de textes ascétiques dont le noyau central est une collection alphabétique d'apophtegmes, déjà augmentée de récits biographiques édifiants. Ce faisant, le codex fournit de nouveaux textes au corpus encore réduit de textes littéraires attestés en araméen christopalestinien. La collection d'apophtegmes déchiffrée en écriture supérieure augmente considérablement la connaissance que nous avons de ce genre littéraire en araméen. Le parallèle possible avec un autre codex montre en particulier la popularité de cette composition. Par ailleurs et même si elle ne constitue pas l'objet principal de cette communication, l'exploration des palimpsestes qui composent le livre prouve à quel point il sera précieux de poursuivre les investigations sur ce manuscrit. Bien que déjà attestée en araméen christopalestinien, la *Première Épître aux Corinthiens* n'est pas encore connue en son entier, et notre codex verse de nouveaux passages à sa connaissance. L'identification d'un ensemble de textes ayant appartenu à l'*Asceticon* d'Abba Isaïe est elle aussi de première importance : non seulement le texte est mal connu en grec, mais la version contenue dans notre codex montre de nombreuses particularités qui apporteront beaucoup à la connaissance de la tradition de ce texte.

Le second intérêt est d'ordre linguistique : au moyen de quelques exemples, nous pensons avoir montré toute la richesse à tirer de ces nouveaux textes pour la connaissance du vocabulaire araméen christopalestinien. Surtout, il apparaît que nous devons veiller à ne pas corriger abusivement les manuscrits et leurs leçons lorsque nous sommes confrontés à des mots ou des formes non encore identifiées.

Enfin, les premiers sondages permis par la lecture de ce manuscrit, aux pages aisément accessibles, montrent qu'il est possible de replacer notre collection d'apophtegmes dans un ensemble plus large, non seulement en regard de la tradition grecque, mais encore des traditions syriaque ou arménienne.

Nous ne pouvons donc que souhaiter ardemment que ce codex fasse l'objet d'une restauration complète et d'une couverture photographique donnant accès tant au texte supérieur qu'aux textes palimpsestes, qui ne manqueront pas de nous réserver d'heureuses découvertes.

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.At the time of its discovery, Christian Palestinian Aramaic suffered from its proximity to Syriac and from the fact that its literary production encompassed mostly translations from Greek. Spanning inscriptions, magical texts, and many literary genres, the Christian Palestinian Aramaic corpus has recently gained scholarly attention and is now recognised for its historical value. This shift has fostered a deeper understanding of the linguistic, textual, and cultural history of Melkite Christians in Syria and Sinai. This volume presents a selection of studies in Christian Palestinian Aramaic linguistics, epigraphy, and literature, complemented by a comprehensive bibliography of the field.



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