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Editorial

The present issue of *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin* includes an *In Memoriam* section dedicated to Malachi Beit-Arié. As our readers will remember, he passed away on 17 October 2023, and our colleague from the editorial board, Alessandro Bausi, wrote shortly thereafter an editorial in his honour.[1] The present *In Memoriam* section is a tribute overdue since Malachi's passing and is intended as a small homage to someone who can rightly be considered—without exaggeration—the father of Hebrew codicology.

In 1965, Beit-Arié and Colette Sirat founded the 'Hebrew Palaeography Project' (מפעל הפאליאוגראפיה העברית) within the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, following in the footsteps of the Comité international de paléographie latine, established in 1953. Both Beit-Arié and Sirat joined forces to embark on one of the most foundational endeavours in the emerging field of Hebrew codicology: the cataloguing of dated Hebrew manuscripts from 1207 to 1540, initially limited to those extant in libraries of France and Israel.[2]

This catalogue, published between 1972 and 1986, remained to some extent incomplete, as it could not include the oldest known codices and manuscript fragments—dating from the 10th to 12th centuries—many of which were preserved in the libraries and archives of the former Soviet Union, largely inaccessible to Western researchers until the fall of the Berlin Wall. The opening of Russian collections after the collapse of the Soviet Union enabled Beit-Arié, Sirat, and Mordechai Glatzer to complete this undertaking, resulting in the publication of four additional volumes between 1997 and 2006,

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1 A. Bausi, 'Editorial. In memoriam Malachi Beit-Arié (20 March 1937–17 October 2023)', *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin*, 9 (2023), 5-6. DOI: 10.25592/uhhfdm.14135.

2 Published in three double volumes, one containing the descriptions of the manuscripts, and the other with a selection of images from the described manuscripts: *Manuscrits médiévaux en caractères hébraïques: portant des indications de date jusqu'à 1540 – ש"ה*, אוצר כתבי-יד עבריים מימי הביניים בציוני תאריך עד שנת ה"ש, I: C. Sirat and M. Beit-Arié, *Bibliothèques de France et d'Israël: manuscrits de grand format* (Paris–Jerusalem: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Israel Academy of Sciences, 1972); II: M. Beit-Arié and C. Sirat, *Bibliothèques de France et d'Israël: manuscrits de petit format jusqu'à 1470* (Paris–Jerusalem: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Israel Academy of Sciences, 1979); III: C. Sirat, M. Beit-Arié and M. Glatzer, *Bibliothèques de France et d'Israël: manuscrits de petit format de 1471 à 1540* (Paris–Jerusalem: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Israel Academy of Sciences, 1986).

describing dated Hebrew manuscripts up to the year 1200.[3] Thus, the monumental task of cataloguing dated Hebrew codices, initiated in the 1960s, was finally completed, with Beit-Arié and Sirat playing a leading role.

The catalogue of dated Hebrew manuscripts set the methodological foundations and objectives of Hebrew codicology for decades. It also profoundly shaped Beit-Arié's career and scholarly output. It is no exaggeration to say that the study of dated Hebrew manuscripts laid the groundwork for two fundamental and complementary efforts that defined his entire career: the creation of a Hebrew codicology manual and the development of a database of dated Hebrew manuscripts.

The study of dated Hebrew manuscripts preserved in French and Israeli libraries up to 1540 provided Beit-Arié with an ideal corpus for writing the first Hebrew codicology manual based on the quantitative analysis of codicological data—*Hebrew Codicology*, published first in 1977 by the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes of the CNRS, and four years later by the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.[4] Like the catalogue of dated Hebrew manuscripts, this manual was guided by the methodological principle that shaped the early decades of modern codicological studies: a focus on dated manuscripts to chronologically anchor all relevant material data of medieval manuscript production. *Hebrew Codicology* was the first work to reveal the material characteristics of Hebrew manuscripts according to their chronology and place of production, offering fundamental interpretative tools that have since been indispensable to all scholars of Hebrew manuscripts.

However, throughout his career, Beit-Arié remained fully aware that *Hebrew Codicology* was only a starting point—the first result of studying a representative corpus of dated Hebrew manuscripts up to 1540, but not the final word. After decades of research in Hebrew manuscript studies and crucial contributions to the advancement of this field, he embarked on writing a new, significantly expanded and revised *Hebrew Codicology* (growing from 114 pages in the 1977 edition to 702 in the 2021 edition!).[5] This new version in-

3 M. Beit-Arié, C. Sirat, and M. Glatzer, *Codices hebraicis litteris exarati quo tempore scripti fuerint exhibentes –* אוצר המצחפים העבריים כתבי-יד בכתב עברי מימי הביניים בציוני תאריך, I: until 1020 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997); II: from 1021 to 1079 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000); III: from 1085 to 1140 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002); IV: from 1144 to 1200 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

4 M. Beit-Arie, *Hebrew Codicology: Tentative Typology of Technical Practices Employed in Hebrew Dated Medieval Manuscripts* (Paris: Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, 1977; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1981).

5 M. Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Codicology: Historical and Comparative Typology of Medieval Hebrew Codices Based on the Documentation of the Extant Dated Manuscripts until 1540 Using a Quantitative Approach*, ed. N. Pasternak, tr. I. Goldberg, Publi-

cluded additional chapters reflecting his extensive experience in quantitative and comparative codicological research on medieval Hebrew manuscripts. Not surprisingly, he often referred to his new *Hebrew Codicology* as his *opus magnum*. In the field of palaeography, and as a complement to his research in codicological studies, his three-volume *Specimens of Medieval Hebrew Scripts* must also be mentioned—a true catalogue of medieval Hebrew scripts, compiling samples of the writing styles used in medieval Hebrew manuscripts across all geocultural areas where they were produced.[6]

The second major endeavour that defined Beit-Arié's career—no less important than *Hebrew Codicology*—was the creation and development of a database of dated Hebrew manuscripts: Sfardata.[7] From the early days of using computers for statistical and quantitative research, Beit-Arié recognized the immense potential of a codicological database of dated Hebrew manuscripts and devoted much of his long career to its development and implementation. From the era of punched cards to communicate with computers to the online publication of Sfardata, Beit-Arié tirelessly worked to provide a comprehensive, reliable, and methodologically rigorous research tool. Today, no study of medieval Hebrew manuscripts can be conducted without knowledge and use of Sfardata.

Beit-Arié always understood that Hebrew codicology and palaeography had to be studied within their diverse cultural contexts. He dedicated great efforts to promoting comparative codicology, which explains his participation in the European Science Foundation's 'Comparative Oriental Manuscripts Study' research networking programme, and one of the reasons why, in this editorial of *COMSt Bulletin*, we pay tribute to him with a section inevitably filled with continuous references to his work—work that, fortunately, will always be available to us. For this and many other things, thank you, Malachi.

Javier del Barco

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cations of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, The Hebrew Palaeography Project (Jerusalem–Hamburg: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2021) DOI: 10.25592/uhhfdm.9349.

6 *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts* – אסופות כתבים עבריים מימי הביניים, I: M. Beit-Arié in collaboration with E. Engel and A. Yardeni, *Oriental and Yemenite Scripts* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1987); II: M. Beit-Arié and E. Engel, *Sefardic Script* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2002); III: E. Engel and M. Beit-Arié, *Ashkenazic Script* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2017).

7 <https://sfardata.nli.org.il/>.

Hebrew Manuscript Studies
in memoriam Malachi Beit-Arié

Coloured Ruling Lines in a Fourteenth-Century Ashkenazi Torah Scroll
(Erfurt 9; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Or. fol. 1218)

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Rabbinic halakhah required that Torah scrolls be written with *relief* ruling, horizontal and vertical lines scored into the writing surface. *Coloured* ruling with plummet or ink would make a Torah scroll invalid for liturgical use. Ruling lines on some leather fragments of early Oriental Torah scrolls give the impression of being produced with plummet or ink but may be the result of dust in the furrows of relief ruling. Erfurt 9, a fourteenth-century Ashkenazi Torah scroll, has coloured ruling, which is partial secondary re-ruling, on 13 of the 34 surviving sheets, perhaps added when the original relief ruling was difficult to see. The coloured ruling in Erfurt 9 is brown, giving it the visual appearance of iron-gall ink. However, XRF tests showed that the only meaningful metallic component in the coloured ruling was lead (Pb). Lead plummet ruling tends to have a greyish appearance. Black specks under near infrared light are consistent with minium, a lead-based red ink that can turn brown when it degrades. Partial secondary re-ruling added with minium to the original relief ruling comes as a surprise as it would have rendered Erfurt 9 unfit for liturgical use.

In his *magnum opus* on Hebrew codicology, Malachi Beit-Arié dedicated an entire chapter to the 'scaffolding of copying' expressed through ruling.[1] Vertical and horizontal ruling lines provided the medieval scribe with a framework for writing in a straight and orderly manner. Beit-Arié identified two main types of ruling lines: 'relief ruling'—also known as 'blind ruling'—and 'coloured ruling'. Relief ruling was produced by pressing grooves into the writing surface either with a sharp or pointed instrument or with a framework of cords or ropes. Coloured ruling involved drawing lines, with ink or with

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1   Beit-Arié 2021a, 285–347, 2021b, 361–447.

plummet, a sort of medieval pencil. The 'lead' of modern pencils was invented in 1795 by Jacques Louis Conte and is primarily graphite mixed with clay without metallic lead (Pb).[2] Medieval plummet was made of lead (Pb), tin (Sn), or an alloy of the two, with or without an admixture of copper (Cu).[3]

Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls contained relief ruling, possibly made with a bone. Some scrolls were ruled using diluted ink, including one biblical text (4QDaniel[d]). Some biblical and non-biblical scrolls were altogether without ruling lines.[4]

Beit-Arié found that in the Middle Ages, relief ruling dominated the earliest Hebrew codices and continued to be dominant in Byzantium and the Middle East even after coloured ruling was introduced in Europe.[5] Coloured ruling began to gradually spread in the Jewish world in France at the end of the twelfth century and in Germany at the beginning of the thirteenth century.[6] At first, plummet ruling was 'implemented partially and in a secondary manner … on a few pages in which the relief rulings were assumedly not clearly visible'.[7] In some instances, plummet was used to 're-rule' relief ruling when the latter was difficult to see.[8] In France and Germany, plummet ruling became dominant in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although relief ruling never entirely disappeared. In contrast, plummet was used in Sefardi manuscripts and 'other zones outside Ashkenaz' as *re-ruling* of relief ruled codices but never fully replaced relief ruling.[9] A hybrid 'engraving plummet' technique common in Italian codices, but also found in some Ashkenazi and Sefardi codices, involved pressing the plummet stylus hard into the writing surface to create ruling lines that were both coloured and relief.[10] Ruling with ink, sometimes alongside plummet and relief, was unique to Italian codices beginning in 1421.[11]

One notable exception to the employment of coloured ruling was Torah scrolls. Early rabbinic halakhah *required* relief ruling in order for a Torah scroll to be valid for use in liturgy. This requirement is already assumed in the Babylonian Talmud in a discussion about writing the book of Esther with ruling lines:

2   See Koschatzky 1981, 50–53.
3   Beit-Arié 2021b, 368–370, 409. On the composition of plummet, see below.
4   Tov 2004, 58–59. On the earliest use of ruling lines, see Ashton 2008, 110–126.
5   Beit-Arié 2021b, 386–408.
6   Ibid. 415–416.
7   Ibid. 415.
8   Ibid. 416–417.
9   Ibid. 418.
10 Ibid. 419–422.
11 Ibid. 422–425.

That which was written in the book 'words of peace and truth' (Esther 9:30) … teaches that (Esther) needs ruling lines (שרטוט) like the truth of Torah.[12]

Esther 9:30 says that Mordechai sent 'words of peace and truth' as an epistle to Jews throughout the Persian Empire. The rabbis understood this epistle to be the book of Esther itself. In the Talmudic world, epistles were generally written without ruling lines. However, the Talmud understood 'truth' as a cipher for a Torah scroll and concluded that Mordechai's original epistle, the book of Esther, had ruling lines just like a Torah scroll. In this context, the Talmud inadvertently reveals that there is a requirement for Torah scrolls to have ruling lines.

The Babylonian Talmud refers to ruling lines as *sirṭuṭ* שִׂרְטוּט and the act of producing them as *mesarṭeṭ* מְשַׂרְטֵט.[13] This word is derived from the biblical Hebrew root שרט as in 'they shall not … *scratch scratches* (יִשְׂרְטוּ שָׂרָטֶת) in their flesh' (Lev 21:5), referring to the ancient practice of scratching (or cutting) one's skin until it bleeds as an act of mourning.[14] Hence, *sirṭut* in the Babylonian Talmud refers to relief ruling lines scratched or *scored* into animal skin. The Jerusalem Talmud prefers the verb *mesargelin* (מְסַרְגְּלִין) to describe the act of 'scoring' ruling lines and even uses it as a gloss to explain *mesarṭe-tin* (מְשַׂרְטְטִין).[15]

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12 מה שכתוב בספר דברי שלום ואמת … מלמד שצריכה שרטוט כאמיתה של תורה. Babylonian Tal-mud, *Megillah* 16b. For textual variants of this passage and other interpretations of the phrase 'like the truth of Torah' כאמיתה של תורה, see Danzig 2000, 293–300.

13 Jastrow 1903, 1629, 'שִׂרְטֵט'; Sokoloff 2002, 1190, 'שרטט'. On the orthography, Dan-zig remarks, 'in the Yemenite manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud that I checked, the word [שרטט] is written with a right-dotted *shin*, even though it's definite source is the biblical word שרט (in Aramaic: 'סרט', with a *samekh*) [and this is also how I heard the word pronounced by some of the Lithuanian rabbis that I was acquaint-ed with (perhaps because of their practice of interchanging right-dotted *shin* and left-dotted *sin*])'. Danzig 2000, 354. Jerusalem Talmud, *Megillah* 1:1, 70a (ms Leiden, University Libraries, Ms. Or. 4720 [Ms. Hebr. Scal. 3], II, f. 324r) has סיר-טוט with a *samekh*. Jastrow has a different entry for the *samekh* variant of the word where he remarks: 'Mostly שִׁירְטוּט'. Jastrow 1903, 988, 'סִירְטוּט'.

14 Also, Lev 19:28; cf. Deut 14:1; 1 Kgs 18:28 where the verb גדד is used. On parallels outside of ancient Israel, see Coogan and Smith 2012, 144; Driver 1902, 156; Ring-gren 1966, 241–242.

15 In a discussion about the forms of labor carried out in the construction of the Tab-ernacle, which were taken to be paradigms for forbidden labor on the Sabbath, the Jerusalem Talmud, *Sabbath* 7:3, 10c explains: '(The Mishnah lists) 'he who pro-cesses (skin)' (המעבדו). What sort of processing went on in the Tabernacle? They used to score (*mesarṭeṭin*) the skins. What (does it mean) they *score* (*mesarṭeṭin*) them? They *score* (*mesargelin*) them' (מה עיבוד היה במשכן. שהיו משרטטין בעו- המעבדו. מה משרטטין לון. מסרגלין לון רות.). Maimonides apparently understood this 'scoring' as making ruling lines in the preparation of writing materials, although Danzig argues

The Babylonian Talmud did not limit the requirement for ruling lines to Torah scrolls or to the book of Esther. Indeed, *any* biblical passage of three or more words quoted in an epistle or contract had to be written on ruled lines.[16] Hence, Rabbi Evyatar of Eretz-Israel was criticized for sending an epistle to the Babylonian Rabbi Judah bar Ezekiel (d. 299) in which he cited seven or eight words from Joel 4:3, 'writing to him without ruling (שירטוט)'.[17]

The *geṭ ḥaliṣah*, a sort of divorce certificate given by a man who declines to fulfill the duty of Levirate marriage with his kinsman's widow, was a special case of a non-biblical scroll that required ruling because it included a lengthy quotation from Deut 25:5–10.[18] Hence, *Halakhot Gedolot*, compiled by the early ninth century Babylonian Rabbi Simeon Kayyara, states:

> The (*geṭ ḥaliṣah*) scroll must be scored (לסרגולי) and if it was ruled (משרטיט) with ink (בדיותא)[19] it has no (legal) force until it is scored with scoring (דמסרגיל סרגולי).[20]

Kayyara uses the verb *mesarṭeṭ* to refer to something that can be done with ink. This means he is using it in the general sense of making ruling lines rather than in its original sense of *scoring* animal skin. Maimonides, similarly, refers to making coloured ruling using the verb *mesarṭeṭ*:

> One who makes ruling lines (המשרטט) with colour (בצבע) or without colour (on the Sabbath) is liable (for violating the Sabbath).[21]

Although *sirṭuṭ* could include coloured ruling in medieval Hebrew, the rabbis specifically required *relief* ruling in Torah scrolls. This was due to a tradition cited in the Jerusalem Talmud, with some minor variations in the tractate of Soferim:

> it is a *halakhah* of Moses from Sinai that … they must score (מסרגלין) with a reed (בקנה).[22]

that the scoring was in preparation for cutting skins to be used in the construction of the Tabernacle, see Danzig 2000, 305. Eventually, סרגל took on the meaning of a 'ruler', the tool used to draw a straight line, but this is not the sense of the word in the Jerusalem Talmud, see Danzig 2000, 317.

16 Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 6b.

17 וכתב ליה בלא שירטוט. Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 6b.

18 Babylonian Talmud, *Yevamot* 106b; Danzig 2000, 314–318.

19 For the textual variants including the scribal error בריותא, see Danzig 2000, 316 n.97.

20 וצריך לסרגולי מגילתא ואי משרטיט בריותא[!] ולא כלום עד דמסרגיל סרגולי. Kayyara 1875, 66a.

21 ואחד המשרטט בצבע או בלא צבע הרי זה חייב. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilkhot Shabbat 11:17.

22 הלכה למשה מסיני שיהו כותבין בעורות וכותבין בדיו ומסרגלין בקנה. Jerusalem Talmud, *Megillah* 1:11 71d; cf. Higger 1937, 96 (1:1). On the variations between the sources and

Similarly, the Jerusalem Talmud interprets the verse 'acquire truth, do not sell it' (Prov 23:23) as a requirement to score ruling lines in a Torah scroll using a reed.[23] It arrives at this through a midrashic interpretation of the verb *qene* (קְנֵה 'acquire') as if it derived from the noun *qaneh* (קָנֶה 'reed'). 'Truth' was understood as a cipher for the Torah. Hence, Prov 23:23 was understood as 'reed the Torah', that is, make ruling lines by pressing a reed into the writing surface of a Torah scroll to produce grooves.

The requirement to specifically use a *reed* to produce relief ruling in a Torah scroll was qualified by German Rabbi Barukh ben Isaac (*c*.1150–1211):

> I heard in the name of (our) Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel (of Dampierre) that (the requirement to rule a Torah scroll) is not necessarily with a reed, it also applies to a knife. Rather (the statement in the Jerusalem Talmud and Soferim) is meant to exclude lead (עופרת) and a coin, since their metal colours (the writing surface).[24]

The metallic lead (´*oferet* עוֹפֶרֶת) mentioned by the great tosafist Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Dampierre (*c*.1115–*c*.1183) was a type of plummet stylus. The *coin* was presumably silver, which the Roman author Pliny the Elder (d. 79) already mentioned as a metal used to draw black lines.[25] According to Rabbi Isaac of Dampierre, making ruling lines by colouring the writing surface with a metallic substance renders a Torah scroll invalid for liturgical use.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, Rabbi Isaac ben Moses of Vienna quotes the musings of one of his teachers about which of the different contemporary ruling techniques was appropriate for a Torah scroll:

> Concerning ruling (שירטוט) itself, my teacher Rabbi Simḥah (of Speyer)[26] was in doubt about what needs to be used for ruling. If we are particular about making ruling lines that last, which are visible forever, one should make ruling lines using (an) iron (implement). Or is it enough to make ruling lines that are visible to the scribe at the time of writing in order that the writing is straight such as with lead (עופרת), even though the ruling is erased after some time? Or (is it valid) if one wants to rule with

how this passage was interpreted, see Danzig 2000, 286–293. According to some rabbis, Torah scrolls have ruling line for aesthetic dignity rather than due to a *halakhah* of Moses at Sinai. For example, 'A Torah scroll is ruled between each line for beauty' (וספר תורה משום נוי משרטטין אותה בין שיטה לשיטה) Tam 2021, 146 (§ 104).

23 Jerusalem Talmud, *Megillah* 1:1, 70a.
24 שנינו במסכת סופרים ובירושלמי פרק קמא דמגילה מסרגלין בקנה. שמעתי משמו של רבי׳ יצחק בר׳ שמואל לאו דווקא בקנה הוא הדין בסכין אלא לאפוקי עופרת ומטבע שהשרטוט צובע ממתכ׳ Barukh ben Isaac 2010, 2:165 (§ 196).
25 In his *Natural History* (33,31), Pliny the Elder remarks: 'It surprises most people that silver traces black lines' (translation from Rackham 1961, 75). On drawing with silver, see Koschatzky 1981, 64–74; Meder 1919, 93–100.
26 On the early thirteenth century German Rabbi Simḥah of Speyer, see Emanuel 2014, 550–553.

minium (סיקרא)[27] or with another colour that lasts as long as the writing lasts? But *sirṭuṭ* means an indentation (גומא)[28] or groove.[29]

Coloured ruling could be functionally superior to relief ruling as in the case of a permanent ink such as minium (*siqra* סִיקְרָא), or inferior as with plummet which can get rubbed off. Regardless of the functionality, Rabbi Simḥah of Speyer concluded that the requirement was for a Torah scroll to be ruled with relief ruling based on the original and literal meaning of *sirṭuṭ* as scratching the surface of skin.

In his scribal manual, Provençal Rabbi Menaḥem Hameʾiri (1249–1316) similarly concludes that any tool that could produce an indentation without colouring the writing surface was acceptable for ruling a Torah scroll:

> Ruling is done with a reed or anything like it that is not made of a material that colours the parchment such as lead (כעופרת) or the like.[30]

The medieval requirement was for a Torah scroll to have relief ruling made with *any* implement as long it did not colour the writing surface with a foreign material. This raises the question of how to explain some early Oriental Torah scrolls that give the impression of having been ruled with ink. For example, Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Taylor-Schechter (hereafter T-S) AS 36.13, a leather fragment of an Oriental Torah scroll, probably written in the ninth century, gives the visual impression that it was ruled with ink or plummet (see fig. 1).[31]

Beit-Arié noted in his study of codices:

> Sometimes the lines ruled by hard point collected dust over the years, creating the impression that these were not blind rulings, but rather coloured rulings made by a plummet, and care must be taken not to be misled by this false impression.[32]

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27 On the meaning of סיקרא and minium, see below.

28 Jastrow 1903, 223, s.v. ʻגּוֹמָאʼ.

29 ובשירטוט עצמו נסתפק מורי הר״ר שמחה במה צריך לשרטוט אם אנו מקפידים בשרטוט המתקיים וניכר לעולם שישרוט בברזל. או סגי בשרטוט הנראה לסופר בשעת כתיבה כדי שיהא הכתב שוה כגון בעופרת אע״פ שנמחקת השריטה לאחר זמן. או אם רוצה לשרטט בסיקרא או בצבע אחר המתקיים כל ימי שהכתב מתקיים. מיהו שרטוט משמע לשון גומא וחריץ. Isaac ben Moses of Vienna 1862, 1:151 (§ 543).

30 ושהשרטוט נעשה בקנה. ובכיוצא בו כל שאינו נעשה בדבר הצובע את הקלף כעופרת וכיוצא בו. Menaḥem Hameʾiri 1956, 31.

31 Our thanks to Mordechai Weintraub who brought this scroll to our attention and proposed the tentative dating.

32 Beit-Arié 2021b, 388. This observation was anticipated by Wattenbach 1896, 216 who noted: ʻIn Urkunden sieht man oft leicht eingeritzte Linien, deren schwärzliche Färbung es zweifelhaft läfst, ob sich Staub hineingesetzt hat, oder ob Blei oder Braunstift angewandt istʼ.

Fig. 1. Horizontal and vertical ruling on an early oriental Torah scroll, which give the impression of being made with ink or plummet. The letters are iron-gall ink on leather. Cambridge, University Library, T-S AS 36.13 (Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library).

visible   ultraviolet   near infrared
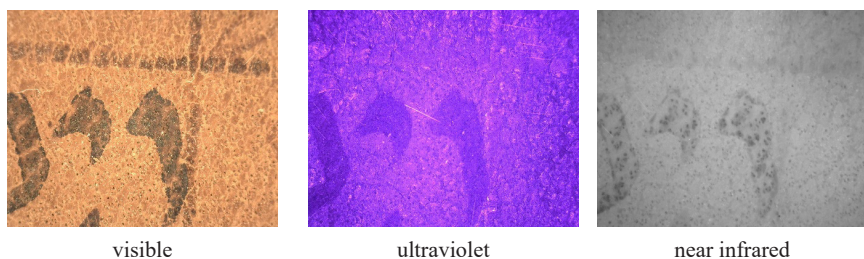
Fig. 2: Horizontal and vertical ruling, on an early oriental Torah scroll, which give the impression of being made with ink or plummet. The ink of the letters loses its opacity in near infrared light indicating it is iron-gall ink. T-S AS 36.13 (© Nehemia Gordon; CC BY 4.0).

Elsewhere Beit-Arié similarly noted:

> sometimes relief ruling […] achieves the appearance over time of plummet ruling, because of the accumulation of dust in the furrows. These appearances may mislead the codicologist into thinking that they are remains of plummet ruling.[33]

Beit-Arié's explanation of dust in the grooves might explain the impression of coloured ruling lines in T-S AS 36.13 and similar scrolls. The main ink of T-S AS 36.13 was iron-gall ink, which loses its opacity under near infrared light (see fig. 2). Scientific tests are required to confirm whether or not the dark ruling lines on this scroll were made with ink. If they were, the near infrared images show that it was not carbon-based ink.

33 Beit-Arié 2021b, 400 n.85. Cf. also ibid. 411 n.98.
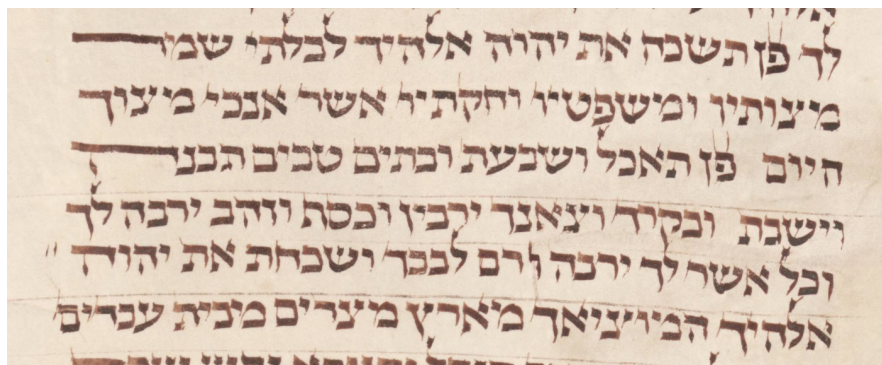
Fig. 3. The transition between relief ruling lines and coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9, sheet 24, col. 3. The coloured ruling lines begin on col. 3 l. 8 and continue to the end of the column. The coloured ruling lines are partial secondary re-ruling of original relief ruling lines. © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Recently, we discovered a Torah scroll containing coloured ruling that cannot be explained away as dust filling up the grooves. The Staatsbibliothek in Berlin houses the famous Erfurt collection consisting of Hebrew manuscripts said to have been seized from the Jewish community of Erfurt during a pogrom in 1349 (MSS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. fol. 1210–1222, 1224; Or. quart. 685).[34] Among this cache of Hebrew manuscripts are four Torah scrolls, one of which has been dated to the thirteenth century (Erfurt 7 = MS Or. fol. 1216) and three to the fourteenth century (Erfurt 6, 8, 9 = MSS Or. fol. 1215, 1217, 1218).[35]

Erfurt 9 (MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Or. fol. 1218) is an incomplete Torah scroll preserving Lev 11:26–Num 26:10 and Deut 2:15–34:12 on 34 sheets. There are three columns of text per sheet, except the last sheet which has two columns, for a total of 101 surviving columns. Each column has between 45 and 51 lines of text.[36] The sheets are about 57 cm wide and 67 cm high. The Pentateuch text of Erfurt 9 was written on parchment in iron-gall ink, as evidenced by the ink losing its opacity in near infrared light (see figs 5–6). This iron-gall ink was made from vitriol containing zinc and copper, which we will discuss in a future study.

The main ruling throughout the scroll is, as required for a Torah scroll, relief ruling. The text is horizontally arranged to 'hang' from the ruling line above it. Each column ends with a ruling line below the last line of text. In

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34 Caspi 2014; Gordon et al. 2020; Hahn et al. 2007; Nehring et al. 2021, 2022; Penkower 2014.
35 Penkower 2014, 118–119.
36 Caspi 2014, 239 n. 37.

Fig. 4. Vertical and horizonal coloured ruling in Erfurt 9 (sheet 28, cols 1–2). The relief ruling lines stand out against the darker background of surrounding surface discolouration. The horizontal coloured re-ruling is partial and only occasionally extends into the blank space between the two columns. © Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

addition to the relief ruling lines, coloured ruling is visible on at least 13 of the 34 sheets (see fig. 5).[37] The coloured ruling is *partial secondary re-ruling*, perhaps in places where the relief ruling was difficult to see (see fig. 3). In many places, the relief ruling lines stand out against the darker background of surrounding surface discolouration, possibly making them more visible now than they were in the Middle Ages (see fig. 4). There are sometimes two coloured ruling lines, one of which overlays the groove of the relief ruling and the other adjacent and parallel to it. Sometimes two coloured ruling lines are parallel to the relief ruling line resulting in three parallel lines (see fig. 6).

   Beit-Arié found that the earliest coloured ruling in Ashkenazi codices was *re-ruling* that was *partial* and *secondary* alongside relief ruling.[38] This perfectly describes the coloured ruling in Erfurt 9, but it is totally unexpected in a Torah scroll and it presumably invalidated the scroll's suitability for use in Jewish liturgy.

   We carried out micro photography and elemental analysis tests on the coloured ruling lines of Erfurt 9. Microscopy was carried out using a Dino-Lite (model AD4113T-I2V) with visible, ultraviolet (~395 nm), and near

37 We identified coloured ruling lines on *sheet 4* (col. 1 l. 23; col. 2 ll. 7, 12), *sheet 5* (col. 1 l. 5; col. 3 ll. 11–12 [parallel colour and relief lines on l. 11]), *sheet 7* (col. 1 multiple lines; col. 3 l. 48), *sheet 8* (col. 3 multiple lines), *sheet 18* (col. 1 l. 17), *sheet 20* (col. 2 l. 15; col. 3 l. 8), *sheet 22* (col. 3 multiple lines [parallel colour lines on l. 51]), *sheet 23* (col. 1–3 multiple lines), *sheet 24* (col. 1 l. 7; col. 3 multiple lines), *sheet 28* (cols 1–3 multiple lines [parallel colour and relief lines on l. 14 of col. 1; vertical coloured ruling lines on the sides of cols 2–3 at the top]), *sheet 29* (col. 3 multiple lines), *sheet 30* (col. 3 l. 50), and *sheet 34* (col. 2 multiple lines [vertical coloured ruling line on both sides of the column at the bottom]).

38 Beit-Arié 2021b, 415–416.

| visible | ultraviolet | near infrared |

Fig. 5: Horizontal and vertical coloured ruling line in Erfurt 9 (sheet 24, col. 3 l. 10) at about 50x magnification. Note the black specks in near infrared. The main text was written in iron-gall ink (© Nehemia Gordon; CC BY 4.0).

infrared (~940 nm) light at a magnification of *c*.50. Elemental analysis was carried out using Artax (Bruker Nano GmbH), a micro-X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) spectrometer with a Mo target, a CCD flash detector, and capillary optics resulting in an interaction spot of *c*.100 μm. Use of XRF analysis in the studies of writing inks is well attested in the literature.[39] In short, irradiation of an object with X-Rays causes emission of characteristic X-Rays from the elements present in the irradiated area, therefore, leading to determination of the elements in the tested area of the object under study.

The three XRF tests that we carried out on the coloured ruling lines of Erfurt 9 showed that lead (Pb) was the only meaningful metallic component (see fig. 7).[40] Although these lines have the visual appearance of iron-gall ink, the lack of iron excludes the possibility that they were made with iron-gall ink.

Beit-Arié pointed out that surprisingly little is known about the elemental composition of medieval coloured ruling lines.[41] Koschatzky claimed that many medieval manuscripts were ruled with natural graphite, a carbon mineral that was used for centuries before the invention of the modern pencil.[42] However, Koschatzky based this on visual observations and admitted it was sometimes difficult to visually distinguish between lead and graphite. Gullick noted, 'plummet, the pencil of the middle ages, was made of lead, perhaps with the addition of tin to harden it'.[43] According to Stiennon, some medieval sources describe plummet as made of 'three parts lead to one part bronze',

39   E.g. Rabin 2015.
40   Traces of iron (Fe) and other metals in the ruling lines did not exceed that found in the parchment.
41   Beit-Arié 2021b, 411 n. 100.
42   Koschatzky 1981, 48: 'So manche mittelalterliche Handschrift zeigt die mit Graphit liniierten Zeilen'.
43   Gullick 1991, 255 n.16 Cf. Wattenbach 1896, 215–219.

| visible | ultraviolet | near infrared |
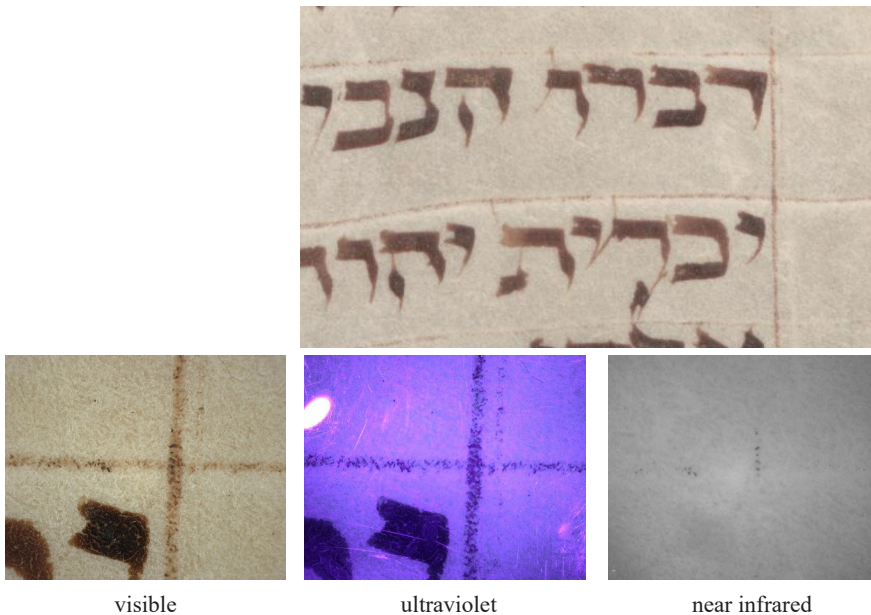
Fig. 6. Horizontal and vertical coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9 (sheet 28, col. 2) in macro (top), visible 50x magnification (bottom left), ultraviolet (bottom middle), and near infrared (bottom right). Traces of a second vertical coloured ruling line can be seen in visible and ultraviolet light. The original vertical relief ruling line can be seen in the macro photo to the right of both vertical coloured ruling lines. The white spots in ultraviolet are the reflection of the ultraviolet LEDs on a piece of Melinex placed over the parchment to protect it. The main text was written in iron-gall ink (© Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (top); Nehemia Gordon, CC BY 4.0 (bottom)).

the latter being an alloy of copper and tin.[44] The twelfth-century Christian author Theophilus mentions marking wood panels with 'lead or tin' (*plumbo uel stagno*).[45] The early fifteenth-century Italian painter Cennino Cennini describes plummet as 'made of two parts lead and one part tin, well beaten with a hammer'.[46]

An early scientific study, using Particle-Induced X-Ray Emission (PIXE), found lead (Pb) as the only metallic component of plummet ruling lines in nineteen medieval Greek and Latin manuscripts.[47] A study carried out using XRF on the two-volume Erfurt Giant Hebrew Bible, completed in

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44 Stiennon 1973, 159.
45 Theophilus 1961, 47.
46 Translation from Thompson 1956, 7.
47 Canart et al. 1991, 218.
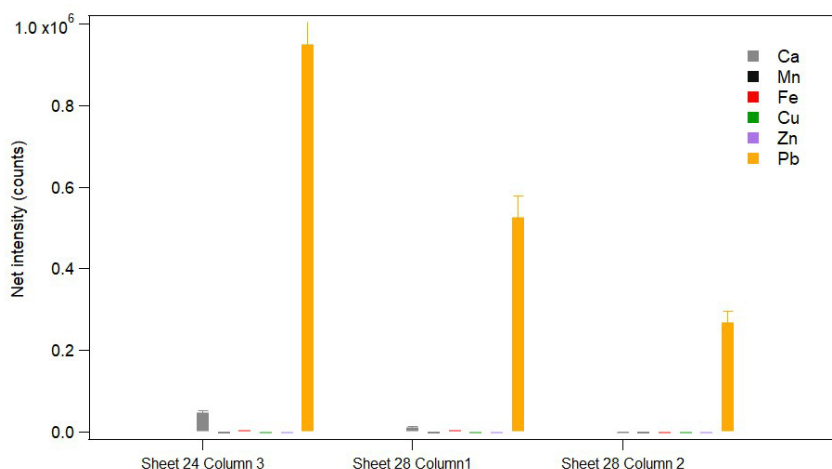
Fig. 7. XRF tests of three coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9 show lead (Pb) as the only mean-ingful metallic component. Traces of other metals do not exceed that found in the parchment.

1343[48] and part of the same cache that included Erfurt 9, found the ruling lines to contain a lead-tin alloy without iron.[49] A study of MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Codex Germanicus 1, a fifteenth-century German-lan-guage codex, found that two ruling lines (of the nine tested) were 'drawn with a lead stylus' without any admixture of iron, copper, or tin.[50] Similarly, a study of MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Codex Germanicus 6, a fifteenth century German-language codex, found that all the ruling lines contained lead as the only metallic component.[51]

    Some of the medieval rabbis cited above mention writing with 'lead' (ʿoferet עופרת), that is, plummet. In the first century BCE, the Roman poet Catullus mentions writing on papyrus that was 'ruled with lead' (derecta

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48 Erfurt 1; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Or. fol. 1210–1211; Sfardata Record Key: 0G127. The final Hebrew and English versions of Beit-Arié's book give the date as 1334, Beit-Arié 2021a, 321 n.100, Beit-Arié 2021b, 412 n.100. However, *Sfardata* gives the date as 1343. The colophon has the date Thursday 24 Adar Bet 5103 (יום ה׳ […]) בכ״ד ימים לחדש ואדר[!] [...] בק״ג לפרט, i.e. 21 March 1343 (or maybe after sunset on 20 March, since 21 March was a Friday).

49 'drawing materials of rulings and preparatory drawings … were performed with lead-tin-alloys, i.e. lead plummet. The admixture of tin to the flexible lead provides a necessary consistency'. Hahn et al. 2007, 25.

50 Heiles et al. 2018, 121.

51 Geissbühler et al. 2018, 134.

plumbo).[52] In the following century, Pliny the Elder referred to drawing lines with lead.[53] The *Palatine Anthology*, a collection of epigrams compiled in the tenth century by Constantine Cephalas from earlier sources, has multiple references to a lead disc used to make ruling lines.[54] Seven epigrams refer to retiring scribes who dedicate the tools of their trade to deities. One from the mid-first-century CE Philip of Thessalonica mentions the scribe's 'circular lead which marks off the margin of the pages'.[55] Another from the sixth century Byzantine courtier Paul the Silentiary refers to 'the never-moistened lead which draws that un-deviating line on which is based the regularity of the script (and) the ruler which guides the course of this revolving lead'.[56] Waltz explains 'never-moistened lead' (ἄβροχον […] μόλιβον) as 'lead that does not need ink'.[57] A recent study on carbonized papyri from Herculaneum used imaging XRF to reveal lead (Pb) ruling lines, which were 'probably drawn by means of a ruler and a leaden disk'.[58] Beit-Arié mentions plummet was used in Syriac manuscripts as early as the sixth century.[59] The Babylonian Talmud also mentions writing with 'lead' (Aramaic: *ʾavar* אֲבָר).[60] Rashi explains that the Talmud means 'rubbing a piece of lead (אבר) on parchment so that it

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52 Translation from Cornish 1921, 26–27 (§ 22); Romano et al. 2023. Merrill 1893, 42 explains: '*derecta plumbo*: for securing greater regularity, a thin, circular plate of lead guided by a ruler was used to draw lines for the writing, and to mark off the space reserved for margins. *derecta*, like *aequata*, modifies *omnia*, and is written rather than *directa* because motion in a single, fixed direction is indicated'.

53 In his *Natural History* (33,19), Pliny the Elder remarks: 'Another more important reason for (gold's) value is that it gets extremely little worn by use; whereas, with silver, copper and lead, lines may be drawn, and stuff that comes off them dirties the hand' (translation from Rackham 1961, 49).

54 *Palatine Anthology* 6,62–68; Paton 1927, 330–335; Waltz 1960, 51–55; Romano et al. 2023. Cf. *Palatine Anthology* 6,295 (Paton 1927, 456–459; Waltz 1960, 147).

55 Translation from Paton 1927, 331 (6,62).

56 Ibid. 334 (6,66).

57 'Un plomb qui n'a pas besoin d'encre' (translation from Waltz 1960, 53).

58 Romano et al. 2023.

59 Beit-Arié 2021b, 411 n. 98.

60 Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a. Biblical Hebrew עופרת 'lead' was translated by Targum Onkelos into Aramaic as אברא (Ex 15:10; Num 31:22) and by Targum Jonathan as אבר (Ezek 22:18; 27:12). The Aramaic word was adopted in post-biblical Hebrew. For example, Mishnah, *Miqwaʾot* 6:8, which speaks about water flowing through 'a pipe of clay or lead' (סילון של חרש או של אבר). Rashi explains the word כעופרת 'like lead' in Ex 15:10 as 'אבר *plomb* in the foreign tongue' (כעופרת אבר פלו״ם בלעז) (Rashi, ad loc.), cf. Darmesteter and Blondheim 1929, 113 (§ 821) See also, Jastrow 1903, 9, 'אֲבָר'; Sokoloff 1992, 33, '#2 אבר'.

blackens'.[61] As seen above, Isaac ben Moses of Vienna cited Rabbi Simḥah of Speyer's statement about 'lead' ruling lines. In two quotations of Rabbi Simḥah's statement, he is said to have spoken about making ruling lines 'with *tin* or with lead' (בבדיל או בעופרת).[62] The ancient Hebrew word *neḥoshet* (נחושת) referred to both *copper* and the copper-tin alloy *bronze*. Hence, medieval Jewish 'lead' or 'tin' plummet could have been lead, tin, or some sort of alloy.

Alongside writing with solid lead, the Babylonian Talmud mentions writing with *lead water* (*maya deʿavra* מיא דאברא).[63] The nature and characteristics of *lead water* are unclear. Rashi understood it as an indelible black lead-based ink.[64] However, Italian Rabbi Isaiah di Trani (1180–1250) inter-

61   לשפשף בחתיכה של אבר על הקלף ומשחירו. Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a, 'באבר'.[2] In his commentary on Job 19:24, Rashi mentions another use of solid lead: 'בעט ברזל' יחצבון בצור, ואחר כך מעבירין את העופרת עליהם, לתת לאותיות מראה שחרורית, לה־ כירם; וכן דרך חוקק אבן. ולא יתכן לפרש עט של עופרת, שהרי רך הוא אצל האבן' ("'With an iron stylus (and lead they shall permanently hew (my words) in stone)". They hew the stone and afterwards rub lead over the letters to give them a blackish appearance, so they are discernable. This is the manner of engraving stone. It is not possible to interpret it as a lead stylus because it would be too soft against the stone').

62   One of the quotations of Rabbi Simḥah's statement mentioning 'with tin or with lead' appears as a gloss (הגה״ה), apparently by the late thirteenth-century Alsatian Rabbi Samuel ben Aaron of Sélestat, to Mordechai ben Nissan's *Sefer Mordechai* in the name of *ʾOr Zaruʿa Qaṣar* (א״ז קצר), an abridged version of *ʾOr Zaruʿa*. See Mordechai ben Nissan 2021, 4.510. On the authorship of the glosses to *Sefer Mordechai*, see Sofer 2016, 137. The other quotation of Rabbi Simḥah's statement appears in Rabbi Samson ben Eliezer's (born *c*.1330) *Barukh Sheʾamar*, a commentary on Rabbi Abraham ben Moses of Sinsheim's (*c*.1300) *Tiqqun Tefillin*. See Samson ben Eliezer 1970, 64 (§ 33).

63   The distinction between solid lead and liquid lead was introduced in a discussion about 'witnesses who do not know how to sign' their names on a *geṭ* (Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a). The mid-third-century Babylonian Amora Samuel suggested having a literate person write the names of the witnesses with 'lead' (אבר) and then having them trace their names over it in carbon ink. The early second-century Tana Rabbi Yoḥanan had already invalidated a *geṭ* in which signatures were traced over a lower layer of permanent ink, implying that lead writing is impermanent, because otherwise Samuel's solution would result in two permanent layers of ink. To complicate matters, the late second-century CE Rabbi Ḥiyya stated: 'If (one) wrote (a *geṭ*) with lead […] it is valid' (תני ר' חייא כתבו באבר […] כשר; Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a; *Sabbath* 104b) implying that lead writing is permanent after all. The Talmud reconciles the statements of Samuel and Rabbi Ḥiyya by saying that one was referring to *solid lead* whereas the other was referring to *lead water*. However, it is unclear which writing medium the Talmud assigns to which rabbi.

64   'He rubs the lead in water and they make black (with it)' (ששף העופרת במים ומשחירים). Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a, 'באבר'; 'Lead water (is) water in which rubbed (or: ground, pounded) lead was soaked' (מים ששרה בהן שחיקת אבר). Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin* 19a, 'במיא דאברא'. In his commentary on *Gittin*, Rashi

preted *lead water* as a sort of stained water incapable of producing permanent writing.[65] A recent study of carbonized papyri from Herculaneum found lead as a main component in ancient ink. This may have been a mixed ink with 'lead-based minerals, possibly added to enhance the ink black pigmentation' of carbon ink.[66] The lead additive may have been galena.[67]

Another lead-based liquid ink mentioned in ancient and medieval sources was *minium*. The Mishnah refers to it in Hebrew as *siqra* סִיקְרָא, which the Talmud translates with the cognate Aramaic *seqarta* סָקַרְתָּא.[68] Rashi explains *seqarta* as 'aiminia (אימני״א), a red paint with which (store) shutters are painted'.[69] Similarly, Menaḥem Hameʾiri explains: '*siqra* is a red colour called

interprets Rabbi Hiyya's statement about writing a *geṭ* as referring to *lead water*, implying it is a permanent ink. German Rabbi Asher ben Yeḥiel (1250–1327) adopted Rashi's interpretation of the Talmud explaining: '"And Samuel said *with lead*". It means they mark (the names of the witnesses) with (solid) lead and the (witnesses) sign on top of the marking. But not with lead water since it is established that (according to Rabbi Ḥiyya) 'if (one) wrote a *geṭ* with lead water it is valid'. Therefore, the upper writing (of witnesses tracing their names over lead water) is not (valid)] writing, and certainly they cannot write for (the witnesses) with minium (since it is a permanent ink)' (ושמואל אמר באבר פי׳ רושמים שמם בעופרת וחותמין על הרושם אבל לא במיא; דאברא דקי״ל כתבו במי אבר כשר הלכך כתב העליון לא הוי כתב וכל שכן שאין כותבין להם בסיקרא *Roʾsh on Gittin*, Chapter 2 § 11). Rashi may have changed his mind because in his commentary on Babylonian Talmud, *Sabbath* 104b ('באבר') he interprets Rabbi Ḥiyya's statement as referring to *solid lead*, implying it is permanent, which would presumably make *lead water* impermanent.

65 'Concerning the words of Samuel who said "with אבר", (Rashi) interpreted it as rubbing a piece of lead on parchment, which makes black, and it's not (considered valid) writing. This does not seem to me to be correct, since (solid lead) is a permanent thing, so why should it not be (considered valid) writing […] Samuel also only allowed lead water (to write the names of the witnesses) since it is not a permanent thing […] but lead itself when writing with it, it is permanent'. (ודבר שמואל שאמ׳ באבר, פירש לשפשף בחתיכה של אבר על הקלף ומשחיר ואינו כתב, דכיון דהוא דבר המת־ קיים למה אינו כתב […] ושמואל נמי לא הכשיר אלא במיא דאברא מפני שאינו דבר המתקיים […] אבל באבר עצמו שרשם בו דבר המתקיים הוא) Isaiah di Trani 1977, 50 (*Gittin* 19a).
66 Brun et al. 2016; Sibilia et al. 2021, 1.
67 Cf. Wagner et al. 2007.
68 Mishnah, *Sabbath* 12:4; *Megillah* 2:2; *Gittin* 2:3; Babylonian Talmud, *Sabbath* 104b; *Megillah* 18b–19a; Jastrow 1903, 1021, 'סָקַרְתָּא'.
69 שצוטבעין בה תריסין צבע אדום אימני״א. Rashi on *Sabbath* 104b, 'סקרתא'. For variants in the manuscripts and parallels (*Gittin* 19a; *Bekhorot* 58a), including *minia* (מיניא), the Italian *minio* (מיניו) and even the gibberish *miṣa* (מיצא) (based on a confusion of ṣadi for nun), see Darmesteter and Blondheim 1929, 98 (§ 711). On *terisin* in the sense of shutters that close store fronts, see Rashi on Babylonian Talmud, *Betzah* 10a, 'תריסין'; *Sabbath* 35b, 'תריסין'.

Fig. 8. Lead (Pb) plummet ruling lines in Hamburg, Staats- und Universitäts- bibliothek Hamburg Carl von Ossietzky, Cod. germ. 1 (f. 75r) appear grey in visi- ble light with black specks in near infrared (© Marco Heiles; CC BY 4.0).

visible   near infrared

Fig. 9. Minium rubrication in Codex Germanicus 1 (f. 58r) appears brown in visi- ble light with black specks in near infrared (© Marco Heiles; CC BY 4.0).
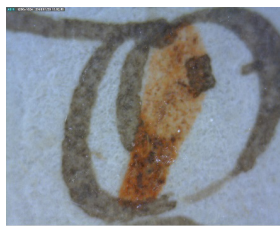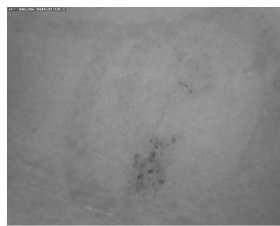
visible   near infrared

mini (מיני)'.[70] As seen above, Rabbi Simḥah of Speyer considered the possi- bility of using minium for ruling in Torah scrolls, even though he ultimately rejected it as contrary to halakhah. A fifteenth-century Judeo-Portuguese il-

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70 וסקרא הוא צבע אדום הנקרא מיני. Menaḥem Hameʾiri 1956, 31. Pliny the Elder noted that in his day *minium* could refer to both red lead (lead tetroxide) and cinnabar (mercury sulfide), with the former deliberately used to adulterate the purity of the more expensive latter (Rackham 1961, 84–95, *Natural History*, 33,36–41). Cf. *Ox- ford Latin Dictionary* 1968, 1112, s.v. 'minium'. In Mishnaic Hebrew, *siqra* סיקרא did not necessarily refer to either red lead or cinnabar. Mishnah, *Middot* 3:1 refers to a thread of *siqra* (*ḥuṭ shel siqrah* חוט של סיקרה), that is, a red-dyed thread. Hence, *siqra* could have referred to a variety of red pigments and/or dyes. Theophilus 1961, 33 describes *minium* as being made from lead. Apparently referring to lead-based paint, Cennini 1933, 25 explains (Thompson's translation): 'A colour known as red lead is red, and it is manufactured by alchemy. This colour is good only for working on panel, for if you use it on the wall it soon turns black, on exposure to the air, and loses its colour'. The translator (Cennini 1933, xiii) notes, 'It must remain for an- other volume to analyze Cennino's materials and methods in detail; but every effort has been made in this to translate them into the resources of modern commerce and the idiom of modern craftsmen. Thus, *minio* is translated as 'red lead'.' The fifteenth century Italian Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro explains *siqra* as 'a type of stone that paints red' (מין אבן שצובע אדום) presumably referring to cinnabar (Commentary on Mishnah, *Sabbath* 12:4).

visible	ultraviolet	near infrared

Fig. 10. Some of the original relief ruling lines in Erfurt 9 (sheet 29 col. 1 l. 3) are difficult to make out, which may be why the coloured re-ruling was added in some places. The horizontal ruling line passes along the top of the horizontal line of the *lamed* (right) and through the sting of the *aleph* (left). The black specks are totally absent from the relief ruling lines in near infrared (© Nehemia Gordon; CC BY 4.0).

luminators' manual describes how to make various pigments including 'very fine red lead'.[71]

The lead ruling lines in Erfurt 9 have the visual appearance of brown iron-gall ink but XRF tests revealed that lead (Pb) was the only metallic component, without any meaningful amounts of iron (Fe), tin (Sn), or copper (Cu). These ruling lines could have been drawn using lead (Pb) plummet. Lead plummet ruling lines tend to have a greyish appearance in visible light with black specks under near infrared light (see fig. 8).[72] The lead ruling lines in Erfurt 9 could have also been made using a lead-based ink similar to the *lead water* mentioned in the Talmud, perhaps based on galena. However, it is unclear whether such an ink existed in the Middle Ages, or if it did, whether Jews had access to it. Another possibility is that these coloured ruling lines were drawn using minium, which can turn brown over time.[73] When minium turns dark due to degradation, it appears blackish under near infrared. For example, the red rubrication in Codex Germanicus 1 has a brownish appearance in visible light but appears to have black specks in near infrared (see fig. 9).[74] Black specks also appear in the lead ruling lines in Erfurt 9 (see figs. 5–6). The black specks cannot be explained as dirt collecting in the grooves of the original relief ruling since they are totally absent when the original relief ruling was not re-ruled with lead (see fig. 10).

71 Blondheim 1928, 105, 123; Cruz and Afonso 2008, 24; Melo et al. 2018; Strolovitch 2005, 134, 159.
72 Heiles et al. 2018, 121 fig. 17 (top).
73 West FitzHugh 1986, 115–118.
74 Heiles et al. 2018, 118.

Conclusions

Medieval rabbinic halakhah required that Torah scrolls be produced with relief ruling pressed or scored with any implement that did not colour the writing surface with foreign material. The Talmud mentions writing with solid *lead* (ʿavar אבר), with *lead water* (*maya de ʿavra* מיא דאברא), which could have been a lead-based black ink, and with *siqra* סיקרא, a lead-based red ink, i.e. minium. Coloured ruling lines were known to medieval European rabbis some of whom acknowledged that they could be functionally superior (minium) or inferior (lead plummet, tin, or silver) to relief ruling, but either way invalidated a Torah scroll for use in Jewish liturgy.

What appear to be coloured ruling lines on some early leather Oriental Torah scroll fragments may actually be dirt collected in the grooves of relief ruling, as Beit-Arié suggested for codices. Coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9, an Ashkenazi Torah scroll from the first half of the fourteenth century, cannot be explained as dirt in the grooves. The coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9 are secondary partial re-ruling added to relief ruling lines. Beit-Arié found that secondary partial re-ruling was added to codices, which he suggested was done when the relief ruling lines were difficult to see, which may also be the reason they were added to Erfurt 9.

The coloured ruling lines in Erfurt 9 have a brownish appearance in visible light, consistent with iron-gall ink. However, XRF tests showed that lead (Pb) was the only metallic component, without any meaningful amounts of iron (Fe), tin (Sn), or copper (Cu). These ruling lines could have been drawn using lead (Pb) plummet, which tends to have a greyish appearance in visible light with black specks under near infrared light (see Fig. 8). It is unclear whether black lead-based ink was available to Jews in fourteenth century Germany. In contrast, minium was known and used by Jews and Christians in medieval illumination. Minium is even mentioned by medieval rabbis as an *invalid* option for ruling Torah scrolls. When minium degrades, it can turn brown in visible light and exhibits black specks under near infrared. The Erfurt 9 coloured ruling lines could have been made using either lead plummet or minium, both of which have black specks under near infrared light.

The Erfurt 9 coloured ruling lines come as a surprise as they would have invalidated the scroll for use in Jewish liturgy. The scroll is believed to have been written in the fourteenth century and seized during a pogrom in the city of Erfurt in 1349. This leaves a roughly fifty-year period in which the secondary partial coloured ruling lines could have been added. Until now, it was assumed that Torah scrolls would never have coloured ruling lines, in accordance with medieval halakhah. Erfurt 9 suggests that a search for further examples in medieval Torah scrolls is warranted.

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Cambridge University Library, T-S A36.18—a Fragment from the Oldest Known *Megillat ʾEster**

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Ms Cambridge, University Library, Taylor-Schechter A36.18 is a highly damaged fragment of one *yeriʿa* ('sheet') of a *Megillat ʾEster* held in the Cambridge Genizah Unit. For it to be featured in a book celebrating fifty years since the founding of the unit, it required an accompanying note and dating. Its lack of neo-*tagin*, specific script type, and sewing stitch style suggests that it hails from the 900s (perhaps earlier). Given the absence of Esther from the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus, this would make it the earliest ritual Esther scroll known.

Many scholars have remarked on the fact that the scroll of Esther is missing from the Dead Sea Scroll corpus, and whether this was purely a lack of survival or a deliberate choice on the part of the sectarians of the *Yaḥad* ('Community').[1] This is particularly notable, since in modern times the scroll of Esther is quite common and is one that would be commissioned for a household to own and to read on Purim, at home and in the synagogue.

The practical outcome of this absence, combined with the dearth of manuscripts from what is known as the 'silent period'[2] is that we do not have early witnesses to *Megillat ʾEster*. Indeed, much scholarly attention is instead paid to the, often beautifully, illustrated or illuminated versions of *Megillot ʾEster* that surfaced from the 1500s onwards.[3] However, little interest is spared for

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* Dedicated to Malachi Beit-Arié whose pioneering work in manuscript codicology and palaeography was an inspiration. I never had the good fortune to meet this esteemed scholar, which is my loss, but his books were referenced liberally in my PhD studies, and I eagerly anticipated each version of his internet *magnum opus*. Arranging for a printed version of the final work, it has pride of place on my bookshelves alongside the three volumes of *Specimens of Hebrew Script*.

1 For what might have been accepted as authoritative scripture at that time see Lim 2010. Also see *b. Megillah* 7a, and for a brief discussion over the status of Esther as a sacred text, see Michaels 2022.

2 For more about the small corpus of materials from the 'silent period' see Alexander 2019 and Longacre 2018.

3 Unlike any other ritual *STaʾʾM* (*Sefer Torah, Tefillin* and *Mezuzah*) object, a *Megillat ʾEster* is permitted to have illustrations in the margins of the parchment surrounding the text. However, some stricter authorities do not permit this as they claim that the words of God need no beautification. Nonetheless, there are many old and modern manuscripts decorated in all sorts of ways. 'The earliest extant illuminated Esther scrolls emanate from sixteenth-century Italy, commissioned by well-to-do Italian Jews […]. The decoration and illustration of Esther scrolls, mostly by unknown Jewish

Fig 1. Cambridge, University Library, Taylor-Schechter A36.18. © The Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

the actual text, since there are relatively few variants,[4] and only a handful of examples of visual *midraš* with ʾ*otiyyot mešunnot* (lit. 'strange letters').[5]

artists, reached its height during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Italy and other countries in Europe, particularly Holland', <https://magnes.berkeley.edu/collections/museum/esther-scrollmegilat-ester-collection/> (accessed 4 November 2024). See also *A Catalogue of Illuminated Esther Scrolls* (<https://cja.huji.ac.il/esther/browser.php?mode=main>, accessed 4 November 2024) where Dr Dagmara Budzioc has collected some 250 examples. Indeed, the date range slider suggests none of these are earlier than the seventeenth century.

4   The *megillah* is written to a similar exacting standard, following the same rules as that of a *Sefer Torah*. Paton (1908, 6–7) notes that despite the large number in existence, manuscripts of the book of Esther are 'practically identical with one another' and quotes exercises that gathered together many hundreds of manuscripts apparently 'few variants exist'. All this consistency speaks to the great care of *sofrim* over the centuries preserving the text. However, despite this implied consistency, there are actually variants between geographical regions and *nusaḥim* ('customs') for the Ashkenazi, Sefardi and Yemenite communities, with the latter showing the most variance. For a discussion of these differences, see <https://www.maharitz.co.il/?CategoryID=276&ArticleID=1317> (accessed 4 November 2024).

5   Large, small, dotted, reversed, oddly formed and decorated letters. In Esther, the generally accepted list comprises: a large *ḥet* in חוּר ('white') in Est. 1:16; a large *taw* in וַתִּכְתֹּב ('and [Esther] wrote') in Est. 9:29; a very large *waw* with a head angled upwards and a small *zayin* in וַיְזָתָא ('Vayzataʾ') in Est. 9:8; and additional small letters, a small *taw* in פַּרְשַׁנְדָתָא ('Paršandataʾ') in Est. 9:7; a small *šin* in פַּרְמַשְׁתָּא

There are *Megillot ʾEster* present in the Cairo Genizah, which whilst catalogued, are largely ignored, likely since the text is so ubiquitous. This article focuses on one that was shown to me,[6] since it was to feature in a new 'coffee-table' book, *The Illustrated Cairo Genizah*: *A Visual Tour of the Cairo Genizah Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library*, to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Cambridge Genizah Unit. The book consists of the more visually interesting, or historically significant fragments.[7]

This particular scroll, Cambridge, University Library (hereafter CUL), Taylor-Schechter (hereafter T-S) A36.18 was to appear largely because of its rather interesting damage pattern, such that I named it the '*hole-y megillah*'.[8] The catalogue entry is typically brief, noting that it covers Esther 5:14 to 8:6, is unpointed Hebrew on 'vellum: 22.5 x 38.9 cm; 3 columns; 1 leaf, part of a *Megillah* scroll; 21 lines; badly mutilated with many large pieces of the text missing'.[9] No mention was made of its dating, and an estimate was required for the accompanying note for the new publication.

Dating *kitvey ha-qodeš* ('holy writings') is a challenge. There are no colophons, as one might have in a text presented in a codex. Thus, to locate and date the work, we are reliant on palaeographical methods to assess the script from known dated comparators, and by reference to certain scribal features

('Parmaštaʾ') in Est. 9:9; and the special שאריח על גבי אריח ולבינה על גבי לבינה ('half brick over half brick and whole brick over whole brick') layout, as defined in *b. Megillah* 16b, for the *ʾAseret Beney Haman* ('Ten Sons of Haman'), the last word of Est. 9:6 to the first word in Est. 9:10. *Midraš de Rabbi ʿAqiva al ha-ʾOtiyyot Qetanot* and *Minḥat Šai* do bring reference to some additional small letters, but we do not see these traditions in *megillot*.

6   This research was made possible by the support of the Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe. My thanks also to Prof. Ben Outhwaite and Dr Melonie Schmierer-Lee for the opportunity and to Dr Outhwaite for his comments and suggestions.

7   Posegay and Schmierer-Lee 2024.

8   In the book, it sits below T-S AS 16.166 (p. 43), which I dated as likely being from the thirteenth century (perhaps early fourteenth). This contains a very early example (possibly the earliest) of some illustrative borders, done by a relative amateur (likely the scribe himself), as opposed to the much more elaborate illuminations that followed in subsequent centuries. As noted above, decorating *megillot* does not really become established till at least the 1500s. However, given this Genizah *megillah*, perhaps this was happening, to an extent, prior to that. The *fleur de lis*-like lily imagery in the margins is considered by some to also be a Jewish symbol and the other image is also some kind of flower, though it is not clear what it is. It may be specific flowers native to Israel, the white lily (see Hosea 14:5) or narcissus. 'From the Second Temple period (sixth to first century BCE), the lily became a popular motif in Jewish art', <http://www.flowersinisrael.com/Fleur_de_lis_page.htm> (accessed 4 November 2024).

9   David 1981, 195.

(e.g. formats of the songs *Širat ha-Yam*, *Ha-ʾazinu*, *maleʾ/ḥaser*, use or not of *wawey ha-ʿamudim*, number of lines, deployment of *ʾotiyyot mešunnot* etc). C-14 dating is also valuable here (though it does give a range, and findings can be questioned), but often has not happened.[10] Thus, there are often arguments over the provenance of scrolls by scholars.

On a more positive note, and a key methodological consideration, is that prior to normative scribal *halakha* becoming more prescriptive as regards the forms of the letters and certainly before the advent of printing, where specific *STaˮM* scripts became even more standardised,[11] scribes of sacred texts employed the same contemporary book-hand that would be in use for other non-sacred works in their locality.[12] Thus, any well-executed, 'beautiful book-hand' to borrow Tigchelaar's phrase,[13] can be used as a valid comparator, regardless of the content, sacred or otherwise, giving a wider range of similar scripts, than would otherwise be available.

The book-hand of T-S A36.18 is well executed and consistent square script and has a uniform stroke weight, characteristic of the use of a reed (as opposed to the variant stroke weight that later European manuscripts written with a quill show, with thicks and thins).[14] The *gagim* ('roofs') of the letters hang directly from the *sirṭuṭ* ('ruled lines'), the script leans ever so slightly to the left, and has a consistent baseline. It is written in 21 lines per *ʿamud* ('column')[15] with fully justified text often created through the dilation of certain

10 Occasionally, this will be institutions or conservators concern to 'desecrate' a religious object (such as a Torah) even when it is clearly *pasul* ('invalid') and could not be used for ritual purposes. In other cases, it is simply lack of interest in dating these. For a good example of C-14 testing helping establish the age of a Torah scroll that had been previously seriously mis-catalogued, see Rendsburg et al. 2023, 15–54.

11 See, for example, Yardeni 2010, 268–271.

12 With the exception of the addition of neo-*tagin* on later works.

13 Tigchelaar 2018.

14 The term often employed for this is 'shading' from *chiaroscuro*, meaning 'light-dark', and refers to the balance and pattern of light and shade in a painting or drawing' (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/chiaroscuro>, accessed 4 November 2024). This is not an entirely useful term to describe this variant stroke weight caused by the use of the full nib or the edge of the nib.

15 Line lengths for a *megillah* can vary with 11, 14, 18, 21, 28, 30 and 42 being common through the centuries. For example, eleven lines allows the ten sons of the villainous Haman to be written in one *ʿamud* without having to be enlarged. 14 lines probably represents יד (i.e. the 'hand' of God operating behind the scenes) and 18 is likely חי ('life'). A standard developed for Yemenite *megillot* of 21 lines and Baer's *Tiqqun ha-Sofer ve-haQore* is deliberately 30 lines, since he saw this as half the height of a *Sefer Torah* (i.e. 60 lines) which was the custom of many *sofrim* in his day. By this reasoning 21 lines would be a good measure nowadays, since the standard accepted *tiqqun* for a Torah is 42 lines.

Fig 2. Some examples of extra shofar-like decorative *tag* and a drawing of my shofar for comparison.

letters at the end of the line.[16] 'It's clearly a valuable item—largish, nicely produced—which is something that would be retained for a long period of time'.[17]

One of the most prominent features of the script is the downward stroke, a 'serif' of sorts on the left side of the *gag* ('roof') of the letters, a deliberately added *tag* (not the later neo-*tagin*) decoration in the ductus of the letters (see fig. 2 and table 1).

This is a feature which is very evident in early codices and other manuscripts from Eretz-Israel, Egypt (where our manuscript was likely written) and Babylonia. Calligrapher and *sofer* Izzy Pludwinski calls this a 'sloped stroke followed by a horizontal stroke',[18] and Gina Jonas a 'lozenge'.[19] This device has been adapted into a modern calligraphic script by Fred Pauker and is aptly named 'Pauker' script, though his 'slab-like lozenge stroke' is a more stylised, 'almost diamond-shaped' fashion, though with an added thorn like element.[20]

This stroke is a specific development, as opposed to the *qeren/qarnaʾ* ('horn'), a single-approach stroke, or *qarney* ('horns [of]'), a doubled-back triangular-type stroke.[21] Given the descriptions above, and the shape of this form, which is slightly wider at the top than the base, it reminds me of an upright shofar, being blown (fig. 2).[22] Thus, I suggest that this might be a more fitting term for this particular serif-like stroke.

16 Technically one is only allowed to elongate certain letters such as *dalet*, *he*, *lamed*, *mem sofit*, *reš* and *taw*. However, in the past scribes were less particular with this as would elongate a number of other letters, such as *ʾalef*, *šin* etc. The key is to ensure the letter is not stretched so much that it loses its *ṣuraʾ* ('form').

17 Prof. Ben Outhwaite's remarks when introducing the fragment to me.

18 Pludwinski 2023, 222. There are also other artists who use the Pauker Script type featured in this volume.

19 Jonas 1996, n. p.

20 Pludwinski 2012, 52–53.

21 As I have shown in my dissertation (Michaels forthcoming), decorative slab-serif *tagin* were the originally collective noun for protrusions from the monoline: *ziyyunin,* representing three strokes, which became the heads of letters (hence the need to add the line/ball on stick neo-*tagin* later); *qarney,* a doubled-back triangular horn shape representing two *tagin*; and a *qeren/qarnaʾ* that is the approach stroke (*attaque de plume*) representing one *tag* only. See also Michaels 2023.

22 An illustration of my shofar, that I used both in the Movement for Reform Judaism's *Siddur* and High Holydays *Maḥzor*.

A further key marker to the age of the script is the absence of any neo-*tagin* (either the straight line or the balls on sticks/mini-*zayin* shapes).[23] Esther like any *kitvey ha-qodeš* is supposed to have letters that are adorned with these small crowns. These had been a reinvention of *tagin* which originally were protrusions from the monoline—that in part had been forgotten, omitted, or became the heads of letters (fig. 3).

In the script of T-S A36.18, the *regel* ('leg') of the *dalet* stroke tends to start from above the *gag* crossing over. The *lamed* generally has a high ascender and is particularly high at the top of the *ʿamud* where the scribe enjoys the freedom of the marginal space. The descender of the *nun sofit* is on the right side and not from the centre. The *gimel* often has a lovely arched form.

Other markers of age include much evidence of nesting, where the foot of letters appear to 'underline' the letter that follows (see below for examples). Additionally, that the script 'breaks' the *halakha* for a *megillah* by having letters that have *negiʿot* ('joins'), as opposed to being *muqaf gewil* ('surrounded by parchment'), is an early marker. This is frowned upon by later scribal practice, but scribes of earlier periods seem less concerned about such matters, even though the halakhic prescription appears[24] to hail from Talmudic times. We also see that the writing is quite crowded with narrow gaps between words, such that they often resemble *ke-mila ʾaḥat* ('like one word') which in modern scribal practice would also make a work *pasul*.[25] Table 1 shows a full drawn abecedary with typical letter variants.

23 Which I now refer to as neo-*tagin*, to distinguish this later re-interpretation from the original meaning. These are special decorations used in *STaˮM* objects. *S*ome letters take three, שעטנ״ז ג״ץ, some have one, בדק חיה, and some none, מלאכת סופר ('work of the scribe').

24 The rule *muqaf qewil* where every letter must be surrounded by parchment and not touch is derived from *b. Menaḥot* 29b where we read אמר רב כל אות שאין גויל מוקף לה מארבע רוחותיה פסולה ('Rav said any letter that is not surrounded by [blank] parchment on all four of its sides, is invalid'). Additionally, *b. Menaḥot* 29b dictates that ובין אות לאות כמלא חוט השערה ('[the space] between [one] letter and [and the next letter, is equal [lit. like] to a full hairbreadth'), though may not have become active, *halakha* till later. For a short but pertinent discussion of this key scribal concept, see קצת כללי מוקף גויל מבעל פמ״ג ('Some of the Rules Concerning the Need for 'Surrounding by Parchment' from the Author of the *Peri Megidim*'). An Hebrew/English version appears in Orenstein 1992, 309, where it is noted that this rule is derived from מנחות דף כ״ט לפיר״ת דפסקו כוותיה רוב הפוסקים (*b. Menaḥot* 29b according to the explanation of Rabbeynu Tam, whose view is accepted as the halakhic ruling by most authorities'), which suggests it may not have been actively 'enforced' by all until at least the twelfth century, well after our *megillah* was written.

25 *b. Menaḥot* 30a also explains that ובין תיבה לתיבה כמלא אות קטנה ('[the space] between [one] word and [the next] word is equal to [lit. like] a full small letter'), i.e. a *yod*.

Fig 3. An example line from a *Megillat ʾEster* I wrote in 2018, that shows the neo-*tagin* decorations.

Table 1. T-S A36.18 *megillah* **fragment—abecedary**

dalet	*gimel*	*bet*	*ʾalef*
ḥet	*zayin*	*waw*	*he*
kaf sofit (final)	*kaf*	*yod*	*ṭeṭ*
nun	*mem sofit (final)*	*mem*	*lamed*
pe	*ʿayin*	*samekh*	*nun sofit (final)*
ṣadi sofit (final)	*ṣadi*	*pe sofit (final)*	NA *pe lefuf (curled)*
taw	*šin*	*reš*	*qof*

נתן מנכת יואתּד כתר	Some examples of nesting and *negiʿot* (joins) on letters. characteristic of this *megillah*.
לבּשׁבּו שׁנסריסיהמֱלֶ	Some examples of very tight spacing with words that look they run together *kemila ʾaḥat* (as one word).*

*   Even taking a lenient approach, given the overall tight spacing, these two examples would inval-idate the scroll, שני סריסי המלך ('two officials of the king') from Est. 6:2 and לבש בו ('[which the king] dresses in') from Est. 6:8.

Fig 4. The *ductus* for MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d.26 that I have drawn from Yardeni's suggestions. Multiple forms are provided in Yardeni 2010.

Fig 5. An example abecedary for MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich I, Heb. B.3, with an additional *gimel* allograph. A near full abecedary with alternatives is also given in Beit-Arié et al. 1987 (Script 3).

In terms of immediate comparators looking at the *ductus*, this script seems to fall somewhere between MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d.26 (fig. 4), which Yardeni assigns to eighth/ninth century because of the early Babylonian vocalisation[26] and a more developed script (with a more similar *taw*), MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich I collection, Heb. B.3, dating from 916 (fig. 5). This second comparator has similar shofar serifs in places, though is a much more polished developed calligraphic hand.[27] It is also quite crowded and displays considerable nesting. The *nun sofit*'s descender comes from the right side of the *gag*, *he* is joined on the left *regel*, and on the right side is not as rounded, *pe* on the right side, conversely, is a bit more rounded, but nonetheless a good comparator.

The example of the *gimel* that Yardeni brings in her book is somewhat different to the rather striking curved/arched *gimel* in our *megillah*. However, speaking about Heb. B.3, Olszowy-Schlanger draws attention to the long *gimel* which is much more akin to the curved shape of the one in our *megillah* (see fig. 5 left).[28] This shows the danger of looking at one example of a letter in a script. For whilst abecedaries with multiple examples are useful, there is still a need to look at allographs of the forms in the original manuscript. Ms St Pe-

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26 Yardeni 2010, 214–215.
27 Ibid. 216–218.
28 Olszowy-Schlanger 2022.
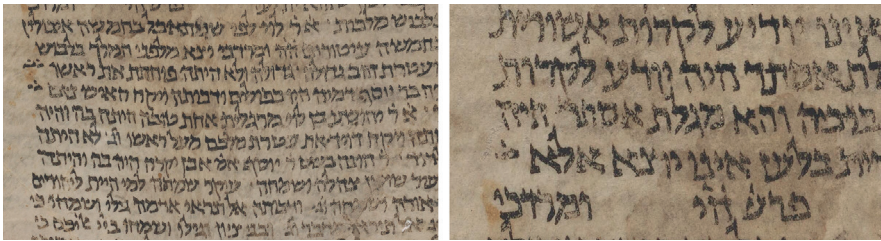
Fig 6. Example details of the script from ᴍꜱ New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 5502. © The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary.

Fig 7. Cambridge, CUL, T-S 24.35, detail. © The Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

tersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich II collection, Heb. B.17, dated to 929, also has some similarities, but less prominent shofar serif strokes.[29]

Looking wider, not an Esther scroll but an Aramaic and Hebrew *midraš* on Esther, ᴍꜱ New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 5502 (fig. 6), is described on the 'Ktiv' project page as מדרש על מגלת אסתר (קטע), dated to the tenth century.[30] The script is very similar to our *megillah*. Even the

29 Beit-Arié et al. 1987, Script 5.
30 'KTIV', the International Digital Library of Hebrew Manuscripts, is a project of the National Library of Israel. For full images see <https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts/itempage?vid=KTIV&scope=KTIV&docId=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001099370205171&SearchTxt=5502> (accessed 4 November 2024). There are documented joins to this manuscript such as Cambridge, CUL, T-S C2.184 and Cambridge (formerly Paris), CUL, Jacques Mosseri Genizah Collection, Moss. VIII,440.1 - Moss. VIII,440.2.

gimel has the arched *regel*. The *nun* is narrower and the *nun sofit* also quite different with the descender from the centre of the *gag* rather than the left.

An additional, and particularly useful comparator, with a well-executed script, is *ketubba* Cambridge, CUL, T-S 24.35 (fig. 7) for Kuzayr bat Ḥusayn (bride) and Ephraim b. [...] (groom) which has very similar features to our script, and is specifically dated to [47]40 (= 980 CE).[31]

Ms Cambridge, CUL, T-S 20.25 is also a *ketubba*, this one for Sittuna bat [...] and Yaʿir b. Ḵalaf dated Nisan 13[..] of the Seleucid Era (= 989–1089 CE) in Egypt, which has some similarities though the writing is a little 'scrappier', so slightly harder to use as a comparator.[32]

Just as dated colophons in manuscripts provided a framework for palaeography, dated *ketubbot* could be a very useful set of comparators for dating scripts. *Giṭṭin* can also be useful sometimes, but are often less well written, and so may not always be as helpful to compare against generally more calligraphic *STa"M* scripts.[33]

Of course, some features of these sorts of scripts carry on through to the 1500s including crowded spacing, nesting and the use of these shofar serifs, the overlap of the *dalet* roof and leg (e.g. Oxford, Bodleian Library Or. 23, dated to 1248/1249),[34] but later *megillot* will undoubtedly have sported neo-*tagin*, and would not 'break' the *halakha* regarding joins. The earlier ones I cite above do seem to provide a much better match. Indeed, two of the scripts do compare well to the *gimel* which is quite curved and sometimes long in the leg, and it is key. The *nun sofit* seems longer than most of the scripts and is a little different having the descender from the right of the *gag* and was perhaps my only reservation against the overall pattern seen, but its presence in MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich II collection, Heb. B.3 is reassuring.

One final marker to age is the close-knit loop stitching (fig. 8). Not as tightly packed as you get in Dead Sea Scroll fragments, but much more 'dense' than the more 'spaced out' loop stitching that then develops subsequently.[35]

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31 For the full image and description see <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-00024-00035/1> (accessed 14 May 2024).

32 See <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-00020-00025/1> (accessed 14 May 2024).

33 A search on Cambridge University Digital Library for *geṭ* yields some 104 results in the Cambridge part of the Genizah. 85 of these are complete or partial *giṭṭin*, dated between 1024 and 1399, most of which are from the 1100s, which I used as a corpus for Michaels 2024.

34 Beit-Arié et al. 1987, Script 41.

35 'Looped stitching' was a largely replaced by 'blind stitching' by the mid-1800s.

Fig 8. Cambridge, CUL T-S A36.18: detail of close-knit loop stitching.
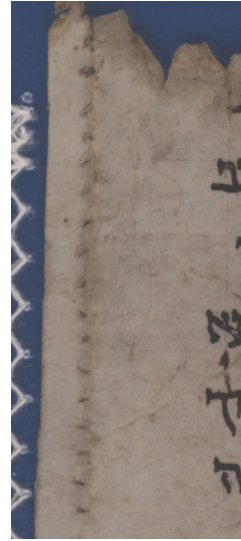
Overall, it would seem that this *megillah* represented by the surviving fragment Cambridge, CUL, T-S A36.18 was likely written any time in the tenth century. Certainly, based on the *ketubba*, Cambridge, CUL, T-S 24.35, the *midraš* on *ʾEster* and the *gimel*, in particular, of St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich II, Heb. B.3. However, it could even be a little earlier than that, based on ᴍs Oxford, Bodleian, Heb. d.26.

Looking at the wider corpus of *Megillot ʾEster*, searches on 'Ktiv' suggest that there is a tiny fragment of a *Megillat ʾEster* that is dated to the eleventh century, ᴍs Paris, Alliance Israélite Universelle, I A 214, covering Est. 1:6-1:10. Also, another very tiny fragment from the same period, ᴍs Paris, Alliance Israélite Universelle. I A 61, covering Est. 2:21-3:8. The next oldest is given as Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, D II, dated to the thirteenth century. It is described as Ashkenazi; however, I do not think it is, since the script is more Oriental. Additionally, a subsequent *sofer* has quite obviously added three line-only *tagin* onto the roofs of the *Šeʿaṭnez Gaṣ* letters to conform to the later standard. So, it may be earlier than the date given. More certain, I would argue, is ᴍs Herzogenburg, Herzogenburg Abbey, BD 9 1460. This manuscript is dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century; it is Ashkenazi and was discovered in a binding. Searching generally online for oldest *Megillat ʾEster* suggest articles or auction sites with *megillot* that are no earlier than fourteenth century.

Obviously, *ʾEster* is represented in early codices, like ᴍss St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Firkovich B 19 A (the Leningrad Codex) and Tel Aviv, Museum of the Jewish People, Codex S1 (Sassoon 1053), though miss-

Fig 9. My reconstruction of Cambridge, CUL, T-S A36.18.

ing from ᴍs Jerusalem, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Aleppo Codex, but that is not the same as a liturgical scroll such as we have here with ᴍs Cambridge, CUL, T-S A36.18. People do often conflate the two, and I have seen articles referring to the 'oldest Torahs' that then include references to the codices which have the status of a *ḥumaš* and not a *Torah*.

Given this not unreasonable dating to the 900s, ᴍs Cambridge, CUL, T-S A36.18 could then be the earliest ritual *STa"M megillah* extant, since Esther is not represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Of course, proper study of the rest of the undated *megillot* in the Genizah could always yield something earlier.

As a result, I have created a font from my abecedary and a reconstruction of the three *megillah ʿamudim* on the single surviving *yeriʿa* to give an indication of what it looked like in its full glory (fig. 9).

Based on this, it is likely, assuming a standard column width of *c*.11 cm throughout, three of four *ʿamudim* on a *yeriʿa*,[36] and a single column for the *ʿaseret beney Haman*, that the total *megillah* comprised some 17 *ʿamudim* written on perhaps 5 *yeriʿot*.

In terms of the text there are, surprisingly, some orthographical variants from the consonantal Masoretic Text (𝔐) and the standard *tiqqun* used by *sofrim* (Table 2). However, this may also speak to its age, reflecting a time when there was looser adherence to *maleʾ* and *ḥaser*. The variances are shown below and, all but one, involve words that are *ḥaser waw* or *yod*. Only one is the reverse, where the word is *maleʾ waw*. Were these mostly accidental omissions or a deliberate choice reflecting a variant *Vorlage* that our scribe was copying from? No variant present on this *yeriʿa* is particularly significant, but it is odd to see orthographic changes in a text that has been quite fixed—with the exception of a known few known and hotly debated differences between Ashkenazim, Sefardim and Teymanim.[37] These are not they.

Two examples involve the king's name. It is an established tradition to spell אחשורוש ('Ahasuerus') missing its second *waw* as אחשורש as in Est.

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36 Regarding parchment size, an individual *yeriʿa* in a Torah scroll or *megillah* has a proscribed minimum and maximum number of *ʾamudim* of text. This is, in part, a practical limitation since the size of a sheet is governed by the size of an animal's hide but is also defined as *halakha* in *Yerušalmi* 1:9:11 אֵין עוֹשִׂין יְרִיעָה פְּחוּתָה מִשְּׁלשָׁה דַפִּין וְלֹא יוֹתֵר עַל שְׁמוֹנָה ('one makes no sheet less than three columns and none more than eight') and similarly in *Menaḥot* 30a ת"ר עושה אדם יריעה מבת שלש דפין ועד בת שמנה דפין פחות מיכן ויתר על כן לא יעשה ('our teachers taught that a person may make a sheet from three columns until eight columns, [but] less than [three] or more than [eight] one must not do so'). Three, four, or five columns are thus common.

37 For a summary of the differences in Yemenite *megillot*, see <https://www.maharitz.co.il/?CategoryID=276&ArticleID=1317> (accessed 15 May 2024). For a discussion of specific disagreements between the traditions, Breuer 2017.

2:21, 3:12, 8:7 and 8:10 (and indeed as אחשרש in Est. 10:1 only). Here, how-ever, our scribe has added a further two instances that are *ḥaser waw*. Only one appears to have some support, as Breuer mentions that ד, his *siglum* for *Miqraot Gedolot* printed in Venice in 1525/26, which also has אחשורש for Est. 6:2.[38]

Table 2. Orthographic variants in T-S A36.18

Esther verse	Standard reading	Fragment variant
6:2	אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ	אחשורש
6:4	הַחִיצוֹנָה	החיצנה
6:10	הַיּוֹשֵׁב	הישב
6:11	וַיַּרְכִּיבֵהוּ	וירכבהו
6:13	לִנְפֹּל	לנפול
7:4	לַהֲרוֹג	להרג
7:5	אֲחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ	אחשורש

Minḥat Šai[39] notes that והרכבהו חסר יו״ד ('and parade him' is missing a *yod*) in Est. 6:9, but the same verb form has a *yod* in 6:11 וירכיבהו, though our scribe disagrees, but enjoys no support for this. Similarly, whilst Sassoon 1053 brings ישב ('sits') *ḥaser waw* in Est. 5:15 against the common יושב, there is no support for הישב to be similarly *ḥaser waw* in Est. 6:10. *Minḥat Šai* also makes a specific point of recording that להרוג מלא וא״ו ('to destroy' is full with a *waw*) in Est. 7:4, yet our scribe has brought להרג.

In conclusion, MS Cambridge, CUL, T-S A36.18 may have originally at-tracted attention because of its visually interesting damage pattern, but a full examination of this fragment has yielded what may be the oldest *Megillat 'Ester* fragment found to date, together with some interesting consonantal variants. This advocates for the continued study of often neglected *STa''M* manuscripts, regardless of how well-known their contents might be.

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38 Breuer 2003, 323.
39 See *Arba'ah Ve'Esrim im Minhat Šai*, Mantua, 1742–1744 (text available at <https://www.sefaria.org/Minchat_Shai_on_Esther>, accessed 4 November 2024).

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The 'Emergency Olaph':
How Big Data About Really Little Things Changes Our View of Ancient Scribes*

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This collaborative study focuses on a seemingly minute detail of Syriac manuscript production: the occasional alternation between two distinctly styled olaphs. When examining thousands of examples of the Syriac letter olaph, we found statistically significant correlations between chronology, genre, and manuscript aesthetics. Our combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis helps nuance the historical development of Syriac script. More importantly, it illustrates how not just qualitative but also quantitative approaches to ancient manuscripts have the potential to humanize medieval scribes and to better understand their agency.

In recent years, scholarship has increasingly focused on materiality, medieval studies have become more attentive to variance, pre-modern historians have more carefully explored the parameters of manuscript culture, and fields such as the History of the Book have become ever more influential.[1] Among the main beneficiaries of such developments have been ancient scribes. Historians no longer see scribes simply as passive copyists who mechanically reproduced whatever was set in front of them. Instead, scribes are increasingly perceived as historical actors in their own right, individuals who had much greater agency (and influence) than was recognized by previous generations.

Recent scholarship most often substantiates this paradigm shift through the examination of fairly large-scale scribal interventions. Consider books that address some key examples for how early scribes intentionally changed

1 For an overview of such trends, especially see Lundhaug and Lied 2017.

the bible or how Christian scribes copied the Qur'an.[2] The present study is the opposite in scale. It examines scribes writing in the rarely studied linguistic tradition of Syriac. It looks solely at their use of script (so-called Estrangela or Serto). It narrows the focus to—quite literally—a single letter (an olaph). As if that were not already small enough in scope, much of our work emphasizes the letter form that scribes used only when they encountered the ancient equivalent of a typographic emergency. It is hard to imagine a more micro micro-history. And yet, through its thousands of examples, this dataset lets one make a much larger point. For it is often in such specific and small-scale phenomena, in the most minute of the minutia, that one can best catch the ancient scribe in action.

The Unruly Olaph: How Ancient Scribes Did Not Obey Modern Narratives

According to the charts found in most introductory textbooks, one can easily divide early Syriac into two mutually exclusive scripts: Estrangela and Serto.[3] Many letters, such as zayn or nun, show little variation. For a number of letters, however, there is more substantial variance between the two scripts (i.e. olaph, dolath, heh, rish, and taw). According to text-book charts, for those letters that show variance, an Estrangela document will have only Estrangela letter forms (what we call E-forms). For those letters that show variance, a Serto document will have only Serto letter forms (what we call S-forms). Appearing in introductory Syriac text books, these descriptions were primarily intended for beginning students to use when they encounter printed text, not manuscripts. Indeed, this classification system works fairly well for printed text and even for most manuscripts written after the thirteenth century. In recent years, however, several scholars have noted the limitations of applying such a scheme to earlier manuscripts.[4] Nevertheless, because no alternative model has gained general acceptance, what appears in introductory text books primarily to classify printed text is also commonly used to classify early manuscripts.

Enter in the first letter of the Syriac alphabet, the humble olaph.

Of all Syriac letters, olaph changes the most dramatically between an E-(Estrangela) and an S-(Serto) form. The E-form olaph consists of multiple strokes that as a composite take up a rectangular space. In contrast, the S-form olaph is simply a single, almost linear stroke. But when and in what circumstances did a scribe use one of these olaph forms or the other?

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2   Ehrman 1993; Burman 2007.
3   Briquel Chatonnet 2000, 82; Bush et al. 2018.
4   Brock and van Rompay 2014, xxi–xxii; Bush et al. 2018; Kaplan 2016; Kaplan 2015; Kaplan 2008; Palmer 1989.

As part of a larger project in digital paleography, our team assembled a database of 412 Syriac manuscripts securely dated to before the fourteenth century. This dataset contains 82% of extant, securely dated manuscripts written before 1301 CE, with particularly strong coverage (91%) for securely dated manuscripts written before the twelfth century. With the 156 manuscripts from the fifth through eleventh centuries for which we had digital images, our team then used a custom designed interface to identify specific letter examples that the computer would extract, binarize, and display in customizable script charts resulting in 4369 digital images of olaphs.[5] For other manuscripts we manually compiled letter data.

But how can thousands of examples of a single letter help one better understand the choices of ancient scribes?

A standard narrative runs that Estrangela was the earliest Syriac script. Serto, a new, more easily written script, suddenly appeared in the eighth century quickly overtaking its predecessor.[6] A scribe either wrote Estrangela script, in which case all letters that show a morphological variance would be in their E-form. Or a scribe wrote Serto script, in which case all letters that show a morphological variance would be in their S-form. That is, prior to the eighth century all scribes wrote E-form olaphs. After the eighth-century invention of Serto, a scribe writing an Estrangela manuscript would still exclusively use the multi-stroke E-form olaph. A scribe writing a Serto manuscript, however, would instead exclusively use the single line S-form olaph.

At first glance, securely dated manuscripts do seem to match up with this narrative. The first time a securely dated manuscript contains only S-form olaphs is 790 CE. Starting in the ninth century, S-form olaphs become increasingly popular and by the mid-tenth century the majority of manuscripts predominately use S-form olaphs instead of E-form olaphs. That is, olaphs seem to substantiate an eight-century birth of a distinctive Serto script.

But when examined a little more carefully, the data from Syriac scribes actually fits quite poorly with script models espousing an eighth-century birth of an easy-to-distinguish Serto script. The first issue has to do with timing. With only a few exceptions, all studies of Syriac palaeography focus on book hand and ignore the palaeography of scribal colophons and reader notes. If one sticks to book hand, then indeed the earliest securely dated S-form olaph does appear at the very end of the 700s. But what if one looks beyond just a manuscript's main text?

In 2000 John Healey and in 2005 Fraçoise Briquel Chatonnet found key examples of S-letter forms in the earliest extant Syriac inscriptions, the earli-

5   For on-line access to this data visit <dash.stanford.edu>.
6   Briquel Chatonnet 2000, 82.

est Syriac mosaics, and in early documentary parchments such as a third-cen-
tury slave contract found in Dura Europos. These sources pre-date the alleged
birth of the Serto script by up to 500 years. In terms of Syriac codices, they
also found a handful of securely dated sixth-century manuscripts where a
scribe wrote the main text using only E-letter forms but the same scribe then
switched styles to write the colophon. The style of their colophons often in-
cluded S-letter forms.[7] Expanding on Healey's and Briquel Chatonnet's work,
our team identified 36 examples of securely dated production colophons or
later notes written in a script style different than that used for the main text.[8]
Here the earliest securely dated S-form olaph appears in the colophon of Lon-
don, British Library (BL), Additional 17,107 securely dated to 541 CE. But the
scribe of BL, Additional 17,107 was far from an outlier. For example, another
sixth-century colophon also contains an S-form olaph. So, too, do five of the
ten securely dated seventh-century colophons or notes.[9] In other words, the
S-form olaph first appeared long before the eighth-century. Indeed, many ear-
ly scribes used S-form olaphs in more informal parts of a manuscript. Starting
in the eighth century, scribes began to decide that the S-form olaph they had
already employed for centuries in notes and colophons might also be appro-
priate for a manuscript's main text.

　　Until now we have been looking at the S-olaph in isolation. When one
compares our project data of olaphs with that of other letters that differ be-
tween the E- and S-form, the typical way of classifying Syriac script becomes
even more problematic. According to a prevailing narrative, if a manuscript
has predominately E-form olaphs, then so, too, should all the other variable
letters appear in their E-form. If S-form olaphs, then so, too, should all the
other variable letters appear in their S-form. But of the 194 manuscripts in
our data set that predominately have an E-form olaph, 37% have an S-form of
one or more other letters. For manuscripts produced from the ninth through
twelfth century, this number jumps to 55%. That is, among later manuscripts
that have predominately E-form olaphs, the majority will have the S-form of
one or more other letters. So, too, of the 212 manuscripts that predominately
have an S-form olaph, 13% have an E-form of one or more letters. Altogether,

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7　Healey 2000. Briquel Chatonnet 2005. Much of Healey's article was previewed a
　　year earlier in Hans J.W. Drijvers, et. al. 1999, 1–19. A more recent summary of
　　these findings appears in Briquel Chatonnet 2019, 254–256.
8　Penn et. al. 2020.
9　BL, Additional 14,588, f. 171a, securely dated to 557 CE; BL, Additional 12,170,
　　f. 135a, securely dated to 604 CE; BL, Additional 14,471, f. 108a, securely dated to
　　615 CE; BL, Additional 14,478, f. 143a, securely dated to 622 CE; BL, Additional
　　17,148, f. 78a, securely dated to the 650s CE—the final digit is no longer legible;
　　BL, Additional 12,134, f. 133a, securely dated to 697 CE.

that means that just under a quarter of early securely dated manuscripts have a mismatch between their olaph form and that of one or more Syriac letters. In other words, the first letter of the Syriac alphabet is doubly unruly. Its S-form appears in colophons and notes centuries before it is 'supposed' to. So, too, its E- and S-forms often do not line up with the forms of other Syriac letters the way that they 'should'.

The Emergency Olaph

There remains, however, another unexpected use of the olaph. A given scribe might employ both olaph forms in a single manuscript on the very same page. In this case, it is not simply that early Syriac scribes occasionally used both olaph forms. Rather, they used both forms quite frequently. Among the 412 securely dated manuscripts we examined, 37% (n=154) contain both olaph forms. Among twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts this rises to just under half. Even if our team is the first to quantify how often scribes used both the E- and S-form of olaphs on the same manuscript page, we are far from the first to notice such occurrences. But despite a few scholarly references to Syriac scribes using both forms of the olaph, the question remains: why did they do this? In some cases, there is no clear pattern. Consider, for example, BL, Additional 14,719 securely dated to 1184 CE (fig. 1). This manuscript's scribes show a slight preference toward using S-form olaphs. But, E-form olaphs can still be found throughout the manuscript. So, too, the distribution of E-form and S-form olaphs seems haphazard. Each form can be found on all parts of the page, at all sections of a word, and a single word can contain both forms. It is hard to find a pattern or rationale for why these particular scribes mixed-and-matched E- and S-form olaphs.

When one first moves from the level of a single manuscript to Syriac scribes more generally, the data still seems ambiguous. 29% of the manuscript that have both olaph forms predominately have the E-form and only occasionally the S-form. 71% of manuscripts that have both olaph forms predominately have the S-form and only occasionally the E-form. In some manuscripts the minority form appears only at the end of a word, but sometimes it appears in the middle or beginning of a word. Often the minority form is found only at the end of a line, but sometimes at other places on the page as well.

Nevertheless, some modern scholars have hypothesized an underlying rationale.[10] One of the key aesthetics of many Syriac manuscripts is their tendency to be justified on both the right and the left margins. That is, not only did Syriac scribes consistently start each line exactly at the right-hand margin. While writing, they also essentially typeset each line so that the last letter

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10 For example, Kaplan 2016, 393.
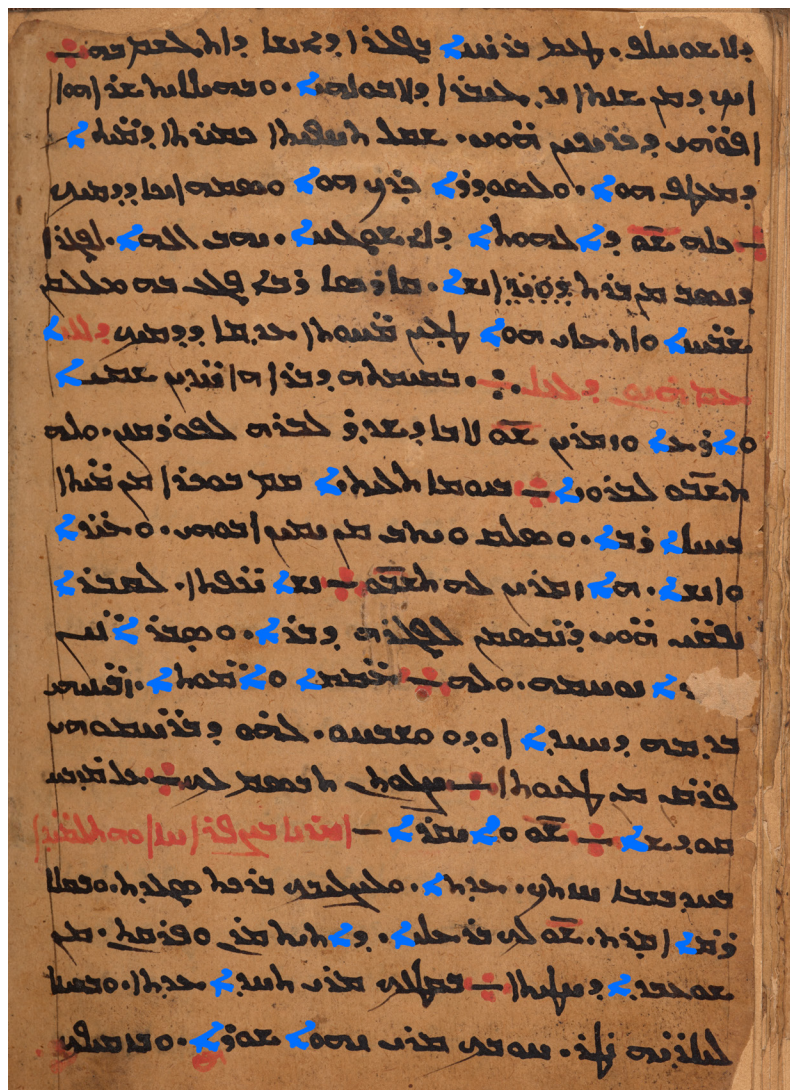
Fig. 1. From the British Library collection: London, British Library, Additional 14,719, collection of hymns, 1184 CE, f. 67b. Although the scribes (two deacons and a priest) more often used linear S-form olaphs, they also used a large number of E-form olaphs (here highlighted in blue). The distribution of the olaphs seems fairly haphazard. Although E-form olaphs most often appear at the end of a word, E-form olaphs also appear in the beginning and middle of words. Some words include both an S-form olaph and an E-form. Both forms are found throughout the page. The manuscript is unusual. Were this the typical distribution of S- and E-form olaphs, it would be very difficult to determine why so many Syriac scribes decided to use both olaph forms.
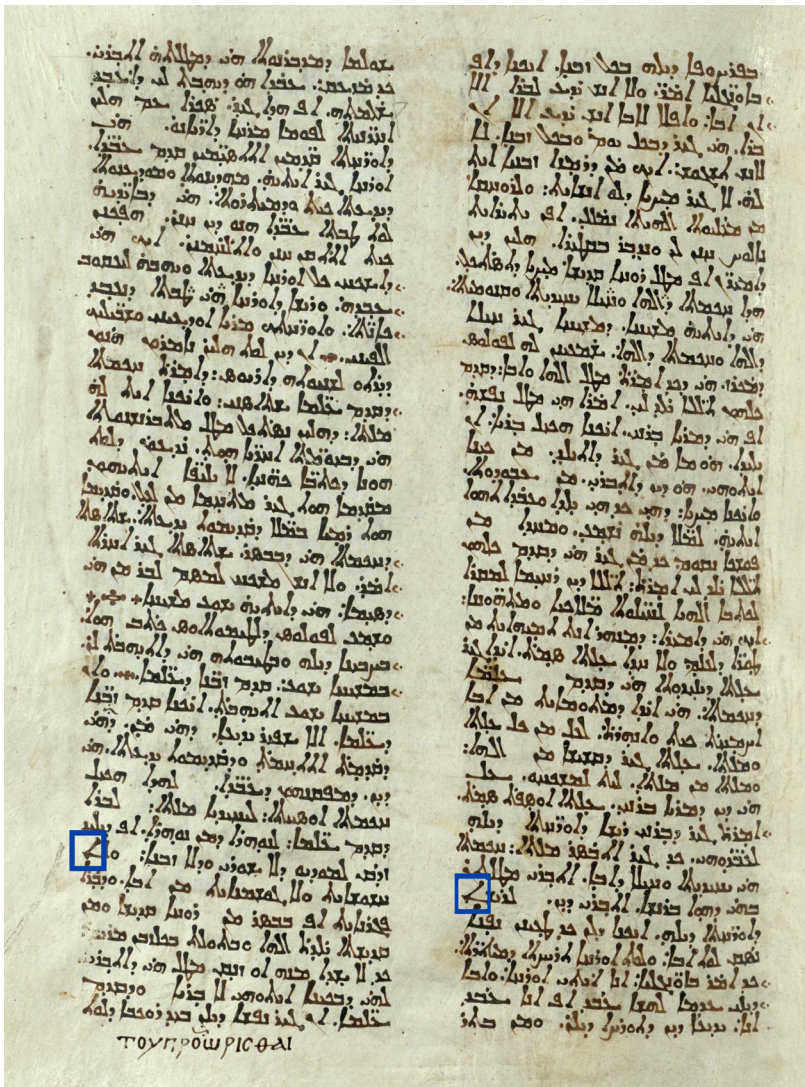
Fig. 2. From the British Library collection: London, British Library, Additional 12,159, Hom-
ilies of Severus of Antioch, 868 CE, f. 143a. Throughout the over-600-page manuscript the
scribe Addai almost always used a linear S-form olaph. But at the end of the line, Addai
would on rare occasion employ an E-form olaph. For example, on this folio the entire page
contains hundreds of olaphs of which all but two S-forms. Addai's two E-form olaphs are
here highlighted in blue.

would be flush with the left-hand margin. This was not always an easy task and Syriac scribes used a variety of methods to make every line of text exactly the same length.[11] Just as Microsoft Word does when one chooses the justify text option from the main ribbon, Syriac scribes often fudged a little with spacing between words. Unlike a modern computer or typesetter, scribes also could either expand or contract a given letter to have it take up a little more or a little less space on the line. So too, they would expand or contract ligatures connecting letters. If all else failed, they might even make a really long line after the final word on the line connecting it to the left margin (see fig. 4 below for an example of a scribe employing all of these techniques).

Our team found extremely strong qualitative evidence to support a connection between a scribe's choice of olaph forms and their attempts at line justification. Unlike the fairly fickle scribes of BL, Additional 14,719, most copyists had a strong preference for one form of olaph and, if they employed the other form, they would do so only rarely. For example, in 868 CE a scribe named Addai of Amid finished BL, Additional 12,159 (fig. 2). Addai almost always used S-form olaphs. Only on extremely rare occasions would he switch to an E-form olaph. But even then, such switches can be found only at the very end of a line. The appearance of a minority-form olaph only at the line's end strongly suggests that scribes were using these to justify a line. When it was difficult to make the last word fit into the space remaining before the left-hand margin, a narrow S-form olaph could make all the difference. When there was a little too much space, the wide E-form olaph might do the trick. One can sometimes even find a particularly long or short word forcing a scribe to switch olaph forms in a last-ditch effort to stay within the margins (fig. 3).

This results in a very specific distributional pattern found in most manuscripts that have both olaph forms. For example, BL Oriental 8731 (fig. 4) is one of numerous cases where the less-typically employed olaph appears only when it constitutes the final letter of the line. Other manuscripts, such as the most likely ninth-century BL, Additional 18,816 (fig. 5) witness more proactive scribes who were thinking a few words ahead. When these scribes steered away from their preferred olaph form, they did so not only at the very end of a line but also earlier in the final word (especially if the word did not end in olaph) or occasionally a few words prior to the left margin.

The many examples of a scribe changing olaph forms to make a long or short word fit into the end-of-line spacing, as well as the clear majority of such form switching taking place at the end of a line, present strong qualitative evidence that scribes often used both olaph forms to help with line justification. Quantitative data also points toward the same conclusion. The dual-use olaph

11 Kaplan 2016, 393; Kiraz 2012, 220–224.

is extremely common. Between 740 CE (the first securely dated appearance of an S-form olaph in the main part of a manuscript text) and 1300 CE, 43% of securely dated manuscripts (n=154) have both forms of the olaph. One can illustratively compare this ratio with that of the Syriac letter heh. Like the olaph, the Syriac heh also has a distinct S-form and E-form. If scribes simply liked to mix-and-match E and S forms, one would expect the roughly the same number of scribes would use both heh forms as did both olaph forms. But this is decidedly not the case. Between 740 CE and 1300 CE, we have found only ten manuscripts with both forms of the heh (3%) as compared to the 43% of manuscripts that used both olaph forms. The reason for this difference almost certainly lies in the fact that, although the shape of an S-form and an E-form heh differ, they are equally wide. That is, unlike with olaph, the choice of E-form or S-form heh would not help a scribe with line justification.

So, too, one can compare the ratio of manuscripts with both olaph forms with those that use both E- and S-forms of the letters dolath and rish. The morphology of dolath and rish is identical except that a dolath has a dot below the main letter form and the rish a dot above. There is a slight difference between the width of an E-form dolath or rish (slightly wider) and an S-form (slightly narrower). But the difference in width is much less than between the E- and S-form olaph. Alas, unlike the olaph, that has extremely distinct E and S forms, with some scribes it is much harder to determine exactly when we should classify a given dolath or rish as E or S. That said, there were only a handful of manuscripts that our team was even tempted to categorize as using both an E- and S-form of dolath or rish. It may be significant that the two manuscripts that have the clearest use of dual dolath and rish forms (BL, Additional 12,150 and 17,170) are multicolumn manuscripts. Because of their smaller column widths, justification is even more tricky in two and three column manuscripts and here even the slight difference between a wider E-like dolath or rish and a narrower S-like dolath or rish could make a difference.

In other words, there is an extremely strong correlation between the difference in width between a letter's E- and S-forms and how often a manuscript will have both these forms. For the olaph, the letter which shows the greatest difference in width, scribes often used both forms. For the heh which has almost no difference in width, scribes almost never used both forms. For the dolath and rish which have a slight width differences, there are a few examples of scribes using both forms, especially in multi-column manuscripts. These differences in frequency support the same conclusion that the qualitative examples did. E- and S- form olaphs have very different widths. This motivated scribes who were having trouble making a word fit snuggling against the left margin to occasionally switch from one olaph form to another.
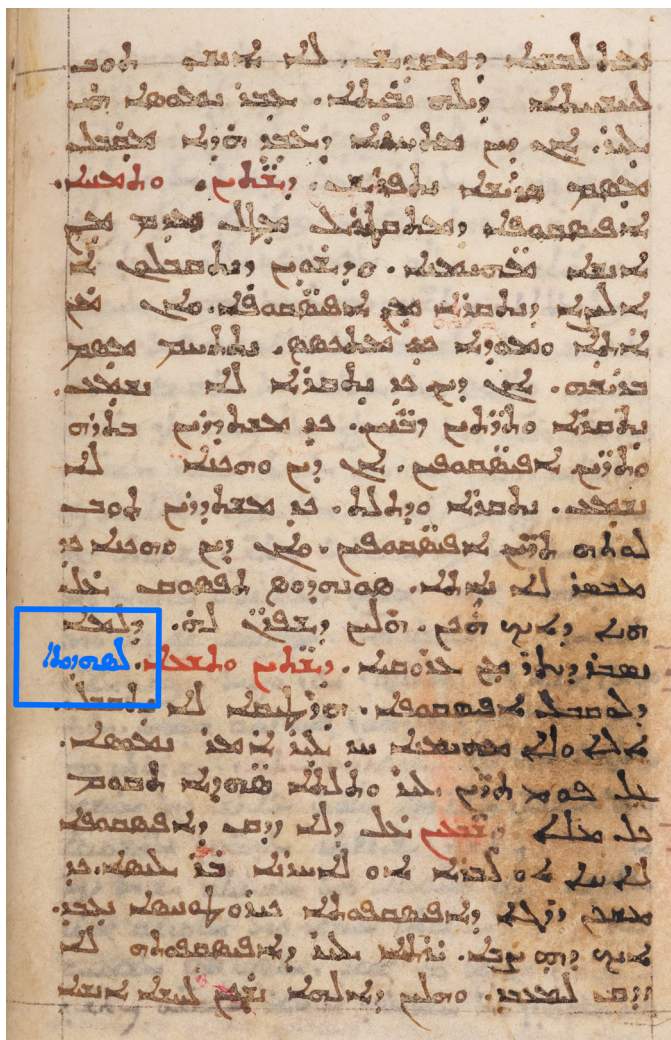
Fig. 3. From the British Library collection: London, British Library, Additional 14,527, Ecclesiastical Canons, eleventh century, f. 13b. The scribe almost always used E-form olaphs. He clearly reserved the S-form for 'typographic emergencies'. A particularly telling example can be found on l. 16 (highlighted in blue). The scribe was faced with the challenge of two relatively large words straddling the line break. Were he to have placed the last word of l. 16 on the next line, there would have been a gaping hole at the end of the line. Thus, he tried to fit this seven-letter word into a much smaller space than it needed. Having already gone over the left margin by the time he reached the sixth letter, were the seventh-letter to have been the multi-stroke E-form olaph, the word would have gone even more into the left gutter. To minimize this problem, the scribe instead ended the word with the much narrower S-form olaph.
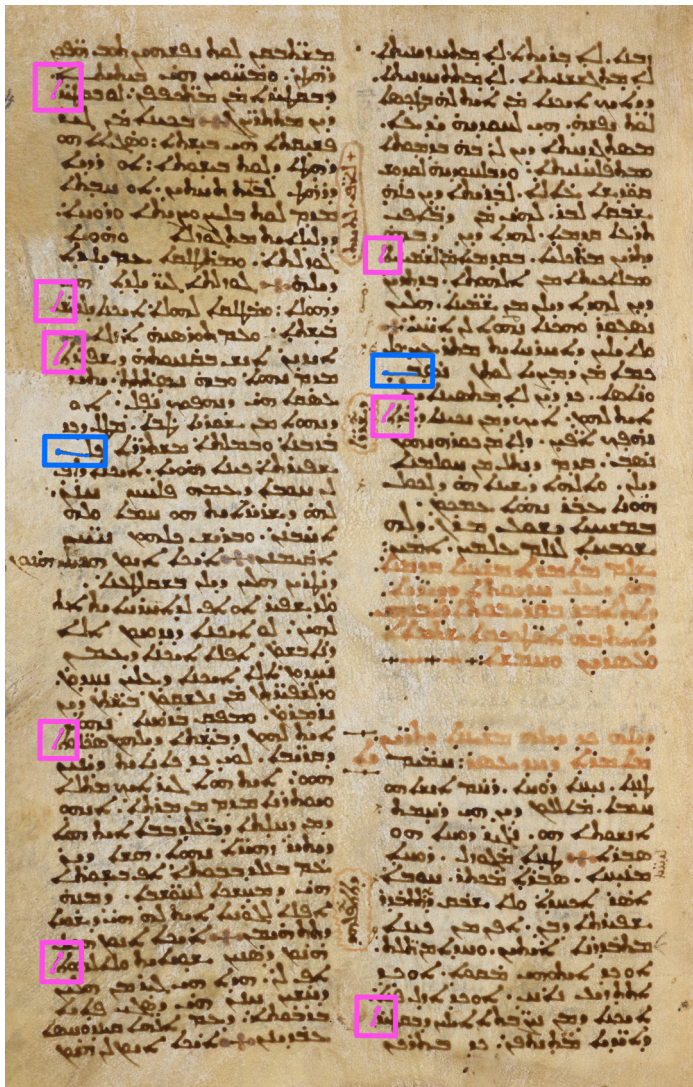
Fig. 4. From the British Library collection: London, British Library, Oriental 8731, Gregory of Nazianzus, likely ninth century, f. 24a. The scribe most often used E-form olaphs. The few times he used S-form olaphs, these always appeared at end of a line (here highlighted in magenta). The scribe almost certainly employed S-form olaphs to keep a word from extending too far into the left margin. He utilized other tools, as well, to help with line justification. For example, in several places he encountered the problem of too much space at the line's end and thus lengthened a final letter in order to maintain the justification (here highlighted in blue).

Syriac scribes were in luck. The same olaph whose E- and S-forms had substantially different widths happens to be the most common Syriac letter. The olaph exhibits a frequency of approximately 14%, a rate that is about three percentage points higher than the most common letter in the English alphabet, the vowel e.[12] But unlike the English e, olaphs are particularly prevalent at the end of a word; they are the last letter for most Syriac nouns, most Syriac adjectives, and many Syriac verbs. This made the olaph particularly useful for line justification. For just when a scribe was getting a little too close to the left-hand margin and noticed that the natural letter spacing was not going to work, there almost certainly would still be an olaph remaining that could help with last-minute line adjustments. But quantitative evidence can do more than simply substantiate qualitive evidence. It can point to other patterns as well. In the case of the emergency olaph, three correlations are particularly prominent: one related to chronology, one to script, and one to genre.

In terms of chronology, there emerge three particularly important waypoints. Among securely dated manuscripts, the E-form olaph is first found both in the main text and the colophon of the earliest known Syriac manuscript, BL, Additional 12,150, dated to 411 CE; it continues to be used throughout antiquity and the middle ages. The first dated example of an S-form olaph, however, is the colophon of BL, Additional 17,107 written in 541 CE.[13] But the first time our team detected an S-form olaph in the main text of a manuscript was not until two centuries later.[14] In this case, when writing in 740 CE the scribe of Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Syr. 26 followed precedent and primarily used E-form olaphs in the main text. But he then broke from tradition and occasionally employed an S-form olaph to help with line justification. In other words, the first S-form olaph that appears in the main part of a Syriac manuscript is an emergency olaph. One must still wait, however, another half century for BL, Additional 14,548 (securely dated

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12 Letter frequency for English based on *Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* 5th edn, and tabulated in <https://web.archive.org/web/20250306022127/https://www3.nd.edu/~busiforc/handouts/cryptography/letterfrequencies.html>. For Syriac figures, special thanks to Kristian Heal who ran a frequency analysis on 7,389,413 Syriac letters in the BYU Syriac Electronic Corpus.

13 BL, Additional 17,107, f. 68b. BL, Additional 14,558, f. 171b (dated 557 CE) contains both E and S form olaphs as does BL, Additional 17,148, f. 78a which was written between 648 and 658 CE (the last digit of the date in the colophon no longer survives).

14 Other mid-eighth century examples of primarily E-form olaphs but an occasional S-form olaph in the main text include New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 236, dated 759 CE, BL, Additional 7157, dated 766 CE, and BL, Additional 17,170, dated 774 CE.
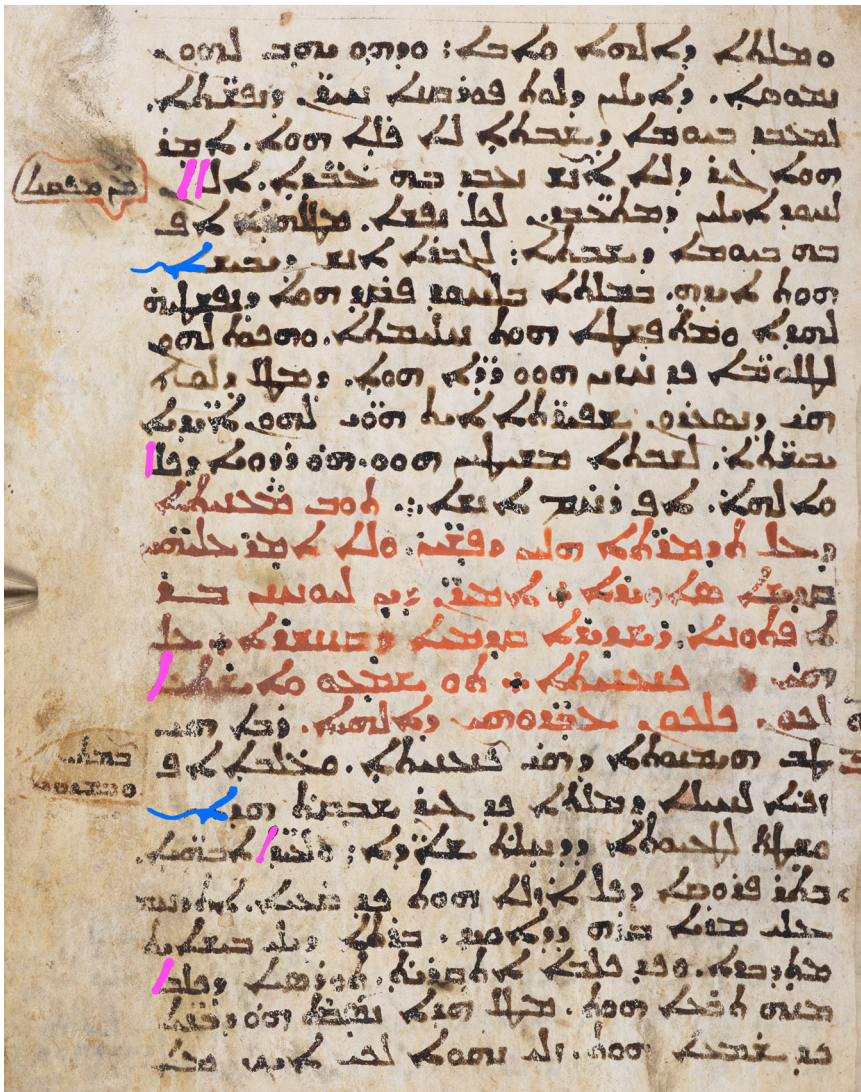
Fig. 5. From the British Library collection: London, British Library, Additional 18,816, Collection of hymns, ninth century, f. 27a. The scribe usually used an E-form olaph. But unlike most writers who employed an S-form olaph (here highlighted in magenta) only at the line's end, this scribe anticipated upcoming 'typographical emergencies' and sometimes switched olaph forms in the words leading up to the line ending. But in all cases, the S-form olaph appears in the last third of the line. To help lengthen an otherwise short line, the scribe would not only use an E-form olaph but also occasionally add a pen flourish (here highlighted in blue).
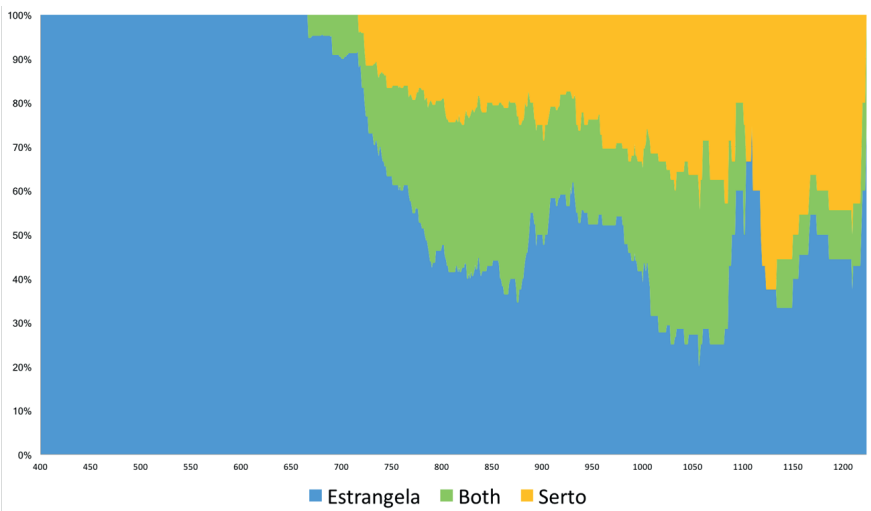
Fig. 6. *Prevalence of the Emergency Olaph over Time*. The earliest securely dated manu-
script using both olaph forms that our team found was written in 740 CE. Less than 100 years
later, almost half of produced manuscripts employ the emergency olaph (here in green) to
help with line justification. This visualization uses a hundred-year rolling window in order
to approximate prevalence over time. Because it averages over a time window, the graph
records a form's initial appearance slightly before its securely dated example.

	Emergency Olaphs	No Emergency Olaphs
'Pure' Estrangela Manuscripts (n=60)	12 (**20%**)	48 (80%)
'Pure' Serto Manuscripts (n=189)	92 (**48%**)	97 (52%)

Fig. 7. *Correlation between Script Style and the Prevalence of Emergency Olaphs*. Scribes
often intermix the E-forms of some letters with the S-form of others. Nevertheless, there are
many 'pure' manuscripts composed between the first securely dated example of an emergen-
cy olaph (740 CE) and 1300 CE in which the scribe predominately uses E-forms of all letters
or S-forms for all letters. When a scribe created a manuscript with all the more calligraphic
Estrangela letter forms, four times out of five they would prioritize a consistent script style
over proper line justification and thus would never use an emergency S-form olaph. But when
a scribe created a manuscript with all the more informal S-letter forms, half of the time they
would prioritize proper line justification over a consistent script style and thus would occasion-
ally use an emergency E-form olaph. A chi-square test confirms the statistical significance of
this observation at the level of greater than 99% (χ^2 (1, *N*=249)= 15.40, *p*< .001). That is, given
this sample size, the probability for such a large difference in emergency olaph use being solely
due to chance is less than 1%.

to 790 CE) in order to find a securely dated manuscript in which an S-form olaph is the predominate olaph form of the main text. Only at this point, did three conditions facilitating the emergency olaph come together: manuscript scribes wrote an S-form olaph (first attested in 541 CE), scribes began switching olaph forms to help line up the right margin (first attested in 740 CE), and scribes not only produced predominately E-form olaph manuscripts (411 CE onward) but also predominately S-form olaph manuscripts (first attested 790 CE). Nevertheless, it remains surprise how quickly after 790 CE the emergency olaph caught on. As fig. 6 illustrated, within just a few decades the emergency olaph moves from being an almost unique occurrence to appearing in just under half of all manuscripts.

But despite its meteoric rise in popularity, the prevalence of an emergency olaph varied greatly depending on a manuscript's overarching script style. Often Syriac scribes wrote using a combination of the E-forms of some Syriac letters and the S-forms of others. But, there are also many 'pure' manuscripts in which the letters most characteristic of Estrangela or Serto (i.e. olaph, daleth, heh, rish, taw) all line up and the scribe generally employed either all E-forms of these letters or all S-forms. Such texts epitomize what scholars often characterize as an Estrangela or a Serto manuscript. As illustrated in fig. 7, when one looks at just these 'pure' manuscripts, scribes writing predominately in Serto are more than twice as likely to employ an emergency olaph (48%) than are scribes writing predominately in Estrangela (20%).

An equally strong correlation is also observable in terms of genre. As shown in fig. 8, between 790 and 1300, non-biblical manuscripts predominately use S-olaphs 70% of the time. In contrast only 47% of biblical manuscripts mainly use S-form olaphs. Only minor genre differences appear when one sub-divides non-biblical manuscripts. For example, liturgical manuscripts have predominately S-form olaphs 70% of the time, theology/patristic manuscripts only 66% of the time. A similar genre correlation affects the emergency olaph. In this case, just under half (49%) of non-biblical manuscripts employ emergency olaphs. In contrast, under a third (32%) of biblical manuscripts have emergency olaphs (fig. 9).

But are such numbers (20% vs 48%, 47% vs 70%, and 32% vs 49%) truly significant? For example, if someone flips a coin ten times, they will not always get the same number of tails as heads. In order to address the question of how large a variance must be to be considered truly significant, statisticians developed the chi-square test. This calculation takes account not simply of the degree of difference but also of sample size (So, for example, if you flip a coin ten times and it comes up tails only four times you are unlikely to be

	Predominately S-Olaphs	Predominately E-Olaphs
Biblical Manuscripts (n=72)	34 (**47%**)	38 (53%)
All Non-Biblical Manuscripts (n=245)	172 (**70%**)	73 (30%)
Theological Manuscripts (n=62)	41 (66%)	21 (34%)
Liturgical Manuscripts (n=163)	114 (70%)	49 (30%)

Fig. 8. *S-Olaph Usage 790 CE–1300 CE by Genre*. Starting in 790 CE, scribes began to produce manuscripts that predominately used S-olaphs. This quickly became the preferred olaph style for all genres except for biblical manuscripts which use predominately S-olaphs 47% of the time versus 70% of the time in non-biblical manuscripts. This suggests that scribes often viewed E-form letters as a prestige script. Thus, when they were writing in a genre they considered particularly prestigious, such as the bible, they were more likely to use E-form letters even if they took longer to write than their S-form counterparts. A chi-square test confirms the statistical significance of the difference between how frequently biblical and non-biblical manuscripts used S-form olaphs at greater than 99% (χ^2 (1, N=317)=12.9, p< .001). That is, given this sample size, the probability for such a large difference in the use of S-form olaphs being due solely to chance is less than 1%. In contrast, a chi-square test does not find the difference in S-form olaph usage between the two largest sub-genre on non-biblical manuscript—theological and liturgical manuscripts—to be statistically significant (χ^2 (1, N=225)=.30, p=.58).

concerned. But if you flip it a thousand times and it comes up tails only 400 times, you probably have an unevenly weighted coin).

A chi-square test returns several values, the most telling is the p-value which represents the probability that the level of variance observed in a specifically sized sample is due simply to chance. Hence the lower the p-value the more likely an observed difference is truly significant. Generally, if the p-value is five percent or less, one reports a result as statistically significant. As shown in fig.7-9, in each of these comparisons the p-value is actually one percent or lower. This suggests an over 99% probability that the observed differences between emergency olaph usage in 'pure' Estrangela and Serto manuscripts, predominate S- vs E-form olaph usage in biblical and non-biblical manuscripts, and emergency olaph usage in biblical and non-biblical manuscripts represent true differences and are not due to chance. In comparison, chi-square tests deemed the frequency of observed script differences between the two largest sub-genre of non-biblical manuscripts—theological tractates and liturgical manuscripts—not to be statistically significant as both had p-values substantially over five percent.

	Emergency Olaphs	No Emergency Olaphs
Biblical Manuscripts (n=77)	25 (**32%**)	52 (68%)
All Non-Biblical Manuscripts (n=245)	126 (**49%**)	132 (51%)
Theological Manuscripts (n=58)	22 (38%)	36 (62%)
Liturgical Manuscripts (n=168)	78 (47%)	89 (53%)

Fig. 9. *Emergency Olaph Usage by Genre*. Starting in 740 CE, scribes began using emergency olaphs. But between 740 CE and 1300 CE the popularity of the emergency olaph varies by genre. The most prominent difference is between the percentage of biblical manuscripts that include emergency olaphs (32%) and the percentage of non-biblical manuscripts (49%). A chi-square test confirms the statistical significance of the difference between how frequently biblical and non-biblical manuscripts used emergency olaphs at greater than 99% (χ^2 (1, N=335)=6.42, p=.001). That is, given this sample size, the probability for such a large difference in the use of emergency olaphs being due solely to chance is extremely low. In contrast, a chi-square test does not find the difference in emergency olaph usage between the two largest sub-genre on non-biblical manuscript—theological and liturgical manuscripts—to be statistically significant (χ^2 (1, N=225)=1.34, p=.25).

Such statistically significant differences in predominate and emergency olaph usage suggest that Syriac scribes often employed Estrangela as a prestige script. That is, when writing a work that they considered to be particularly sacred (e.g. the Bible), they were more likely to employ E-letter forms even though these generally took longer to write than the more cursive like S-forms. So, too, while scribes were often fine with an occasional E-form olaph appearing in an otherwise 'pure' Serto manuscripts to help with line justification, they were much more wary of an occasional S-form olaph marring an otherwise entirely Estrangela manuscript.

From Numbers to Scribes

Such data moves one away from a paradigm of scribes as passive conduits of textual reproduction to a paradigm of scribal agency. When faced with the task of copying a manuscript, a given scribe made specific aesthetic choices. Contrary to the impression one receives in many introductory text books, that choice was not a binary decision either to write in Estrangela or to write in Serto. Rather, scribes decided what combination of E- and S-form letters they would use. They also decided whether to prioritize script consistency, in which case they did not employ emergency olaphs, or to prioritize line

justification, in which case emergency olaphs were often one of several typographical tools they chose to utilize. These choices were not, however, without constraints. Although not determinative, the genre of the work the scribe was copying and the prestige that scribe attributed to that genre influenced the likelihood of them choosing a given set of letter forms. So, too, scribes were often trendy: when they were writing affected the probability of them making certain choices and not others. The very rapid adoption of emergency olaphs, for example, shows how quickly script 'fads' could catch on.

But perhaps the most important witnesses to scribal agency are the outliers. Consider avant-garde scribes such as that of Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Syr. 26 who was the first to use emergency olaphs in a securely dated manuscript or that of BL, Additional 14,548 who was the first securely dated scribe to produce a predominately S-form olaph manuscript. One should also remember the hold-outs such as the scribe of Cambridge, MA, Harvard Library, Syriac 27 who, despite writing in 1279 CE, still refused to have an emergency olaph potentially blemish his entirely E-letter form manuscript. So, too, one can recall aggregates of such outliers. For example, although the clear majority of scribes writing predominately E-letter form biblical manuscripts avoided emergency olaphs, 26% decided to go their own way and prioritize line justification over script consistency.

Humanists sometimes consider numeric analysis to be an approach that shifts one's attention away from individuals and away from individual choices.[15] But this link between big data and little agency is far from inevitable. Although one can measure aspects of Syriac script use, emergency olaphs quickly lead towards the people who wrote them. They facilitate a case study that allows one to better conceptualize the scribe as historical agent and that explores how one might effectively (and humanistically) combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to manuscript culture.

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15 Lemercier and Zalc 2019, 14–19.

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Articles and notes

Another Harklean Gospel Lectionary from the J. Rendel Harris Collection: Colchester, Colchester Museums 1932.228*

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In 1932, Colchester Museums acquired their sole Syriac manuscript, a Harklean gospel lectionary dated to 1221 CE. Despite the brief notice published in that year's annual report, the manuscript has received no academic attention, and there was only a rumour of its existence among Syriac scholars. In this article, I introduce the manuscript, describe what is known of its acquisition history, and provide a full catalogue description.

Introduction

The Colchester & Essex Museum Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 1933 notes a second year of diminishing visitor numbers 'owing, it is presumed, to the economic depression'.[1] The museum was founded by the Essex Society for Archaeology & History in 1860 to house the society's collections, which were particularly rich in Roman and Saxon antiquities.[2] Despite the depressed economy and falling attendance in 1932, the Museum and Muniment Committee could offer some good news: 'The most valuable gift during the year, and one of the most important which we have ever received, is that of twenty-one magnificently illuminated manuscripts and early printed books from Dr. L. F. Penrose'.[3] These manuscripts, the report notes, 'fill a gap in the Museum collections, as previously we have had no examples of illuminated works'.[4] The manuscripts are each briefly described in the report and one of

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1   Museum and Muniment Committee 1933, 3.

2   Museum reports from 1907 to 1974 are found on the website of the Essex Society for Archaeology & History (<https://www.esah1852.org.uk/research/colchester-museum-reports>, accessed 3 April 2024).

3   Museum and Muniment Committee 1933, 4, with descriptions on pp. 20–25. Ker notes that manuscripts 217 and 229a–d 'were on loan from Dr. Penrose and were returned to his executors after his death in 1972' (Ker 1977, 401). However, the Annual Report for 1962–1963 reports that 'Five important manuscripts, on loan from Dr. L.S. Penrose, were returned'. Museum and Muniment Committee 1963, 6.

4   Museum and Muniment Committee 1933, 20. The preface to the collection says

them, a copy of Machiavelli's *Clizia* that was transcribed and illuminated in Florence during his lifetime, has garnered some further scholarly notice.[5]

Among these mostly European manuscripts is one in Syriac. The description in the *Annual Report* is brief: '*Syriac Lectionary,* being the Gospels in the Heraclean version, written in the year 1220. The text is prefaced by a series of illuminated squares and circles, containing a description of the successive lessons with the days for which they are intended throughout the year'.[6] This manuscript, now accessioned as Colchester, Colchester Museums (COLEM) MS 1932.228, has never been catalogued, and knowledge of it has almost completely escaped the notice of Syriac scholars.[7] William F. Macomber only knew of its existence, and that personal knowledge led to its inclusion, without any details, in the surveys of Syriac manuscripts produced by Pearson and then Desreumaux and Briquel Chatonnet.[8]

The Harklean Version and Harklean Gospel Lectionaries

The Syriac New Testament survives in four main versions.[9] The first, known only from quotations and later translation, is the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, a continuous gospel harmony produced using the four gospels and other sources

this about provenance: 'The books were formerly in the possession of the Peckover family, many coming from the collection of the late Baron Peckover, grandfather of the donor, who is remembered in Colchester as the founder of the Peckover Schools at the Royal Eastern Counties Institution'.

5 Some of the Penrose manuscripts are nicely described in Ker 1977, 400–408 (Colchester Museums MSS 1932.213–216, 218, 219, 221, 222). The collection also includes some early modern documents (Colchester Museums MSS 1932.226a, 227, 227a), early printed books (1932.220, 223, 224, 225, 225a), an early eighteenth-century copy of Saul Levi Morteria's *Providencia de Dios con Ysrael* made by Miguel López (Colchester Museums MSS 1932.226; see Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld 1975, 106 [MS 208] for another copy and further details of author and scribe), and an eighteenth-century copy of the Persian poet Saadi's *Bustan* and *Gulistan* (Colchester Museums MS 1932.229). The Machiavelli manuscript (Colchester Museums MS 1932.225b) is given further attention in Corrigan 1961 and Thomson 1965.

6 Museum and Muniment Committee 1933, 24. This description was still used, at least until 2024, in the Colchester Museums digital records (<https://cim-web.adlibhosting.com/ais6/Details/collect/122267>, accessed 3 April 2024). The manuscript is in fact dated to 1221 CE according to the colophon. See the end of the description for details.

7 I am grateful to Colchester Museums for allowing me to inspect the manuscript on two occasions and granting me permission to take photos of the manuscript, which helped with the cataloging work. Special thanks to Sophie Stevens for her expert help in working with the manuscript on site.

8 Pearson 1971, 92; Desreumaux and Briquel Chatonnet 1991, 118.

9 Brock 2020, 25–33; also Williams 2013.

and used by the Syriac church until the early fifth century. Of the second, known as the Old Syriac version, only the Gospels survive in three ancient manuscripts.[10] These old Syriac gospels are distinctive for several reasons, not least of which is that they represent a freer, target-language oriented translation from the Greek. The third, known as the Peshitta or 'simple' version, is a revision of the Old Syriac version completed in the early fifth century, and used by the Syriac churches from then onwards. The Peshitta version omitted 2 Peter, 2–3 John, Jude, and Revelation. The last version is a new translation (but based on previous revisions) of all the books of the New Testament made by Thomas of Harkel and completed in 616 CE in Egypt. This is known as the Harklean version. It is a source-oriented translation that almost mirrors the Greek original and was created and transmitted with the Harklean apparatus, learned marginalia containing variant readings.[11] The Harklean version survives in numerous manuscripts, dating from the eighth to the twentieth century, but only a few transmit the marginalia fully.[12]

Bible readings were an early part of the Syriac liturgy.[13] To facilitate liturgical use, early Syriac bible manuscripts occasionally inserted lectionary rubrics into the body of the text, or in the margins of the manuscript. Later, dedicated lectionary manuscripts were produced that simply extracted these readings and placed them in the order of the liturgical year. Most Syriac lectionary manuscripts use the Peshitta version. However, the Harklean version was used for Gospel lectionaries from the tenth century onwards, perhaps as 'a gesture on the part of the Syrian Orthodox towards the established Melkite church around them',[14] and gained greater prevalence in the twelfth century, perhaps thanks to the support of Dionysius bar Ṣalibi (d. 1171), who sponsored an official revision of the Harklean version.[15] Two main lectionary systems predominate in the Church of the East.[16] But Syrian Orthodox manuscripts show 'great variety in the choice of lections'.[17] A further development of the Harklean gospel lectionary was the 'creation of harmonized lections,

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10 A fragment of a fourth witness is described in Kessel 2023.
11 The best brief description of the Harklean version is Juckel 2011. For more detail see Juckel 2017.
12 For the earliest manuscripts see Yohanna 2015, 20–49.
13 For the development of Syriac lectionaries see Brock 2006, 4–10; Brock 2020, 46–48.
14 Coakley 2011, 316–317.
15 Juckel 1996, xxxvii–xxxix; Juckel 2017, 172. For an overview of the revisional development of the Harklean Gospels see Juckel 2011.
16 Brock 2020, 48.
17 Brock 2006, 9.

based on all four gospels, for the use during Holy Week'.[18] This gospel harmony subsequently appeared in both Peshitta and Harklean manuscripts.[19]

COLEM 1932.228 is absent from the list of manuscripts containing the Harklean version compiled by John D. Thomas, but that list does include forty-one lectionary manuscripts.[20] This list of lectionary manuscripts provides some useful comparisons, including twenty-two Harklean Gospel lectionaries that were written in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, six of which are dated to within twenty-five years either side of the Colchester manuscript.[21] I use William Wright's catalogue description of one of these manuscripts (London, British Library, Add. 14,689, dated to 1221) for comparison in describing COLEM 1932.228.[22] I have also made use of Chip Coakley's clear descriptions of the eleventh- or twelfth-century Harklean lectionary found in Manchester, Rylands, Syriac 66,[23] and the eleventh-century fragmentary Harklean lectionary found in Manchester, Rylands, Syriac 69.[24] The recent manuscript descriptions by Bernabò and Pavan has been helpful, the former especially in describing the ornamentation.[25] Bernabò's and Pavan's work refers to several thirteenth century comparisons from the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, now available online through the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library.[26] I have

18 Brock 2006, 8, where he also says, 'This seems to be the creation of Daniel of Batin in the ninth century'.
19 For more details see Metzger 1977, 74–75; Hill 2006a; Hill 2006b.
20 Thomas 1979. Several of the lectionary manuscripts, especially most of those from before the twelfth century are fragmentary. See Taylor 2017, 306–308 for a more up-to-date list of Harklean New Testament manuscripts (not lectionaries).
21 The closely dated Harklean lectionary manuscripts are Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Syr. 289 (1196); Jerusalem, St Mark's Convent, Syr. [5] (1212); London, British Library, Add. 14,689 (1221); Jerusalem, St Mark's Convent, Syr. [6] (1222); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Syr. 59 (1236). Paul Harb added several manuscripts to the list, mostly later Harklean lectionaries (Harb 1980).
22 Wright 1870, 167–169.
23 Coakley 1993, 193–198.
24 Coakley 1993, 201–202.
25 Bernabò 2017 and Pavan 2017.
26 The following list is taken from Kessel 2018, 288: Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 38, and illuminated Harklean Gospel Lectionary (1229/1230 CE); Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 41, an illuminated Harklean Gospel Lectionary (thirteenth century); Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 39, a Harklean Gospel Lectionary (thirteenth century); Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 37, a Harklean Gospel Lectionary (1272/1273); Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 40 a Harklean Gospel Lectionary (thirteenth century); and Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, MS 34, a Harklean New Testament (thirteenth century). See also Ruggieri 2017.

used these for comparison, as well as Mosul, St Thomas Church, MS 40, a twelfth-century Harklean lectionary.[27]

J. Rendel Harris and the Provenance of MS COLEM 1932.228

COLEM 1932.228 was acquired from the Middle East by J. Rendel Harris (b. 1852, d. 1941). Harris numbered it Codex Syriac Harris 78, briefly described its contents, and arranged for it to be repaired and rebound at his usual book binders in Cambridge.[28] We do not know where or when he purchased the manuscript. In fact, it is rarely possible to identify the provenance of Harris's manuscript acquisitions.[29] Nor was he interested in telling those stories. In a note prefacing the description of the manuscripts that he and Walter Wood donated to Haverford College, for example, Harris simply says,

> I have not thought it worth while to go into a detailed account of the methods by which this little handful of books was acquired, though there is no doubt that such a record would illuminate many passages in the Hebrew Scriptures and Oriental literature, from the time when Abraham purchased the field of Mamre onward. Moreover, we have a high example for the less detailed description of the local origins of books in the writings of the late Dr. Tischendorff, whose prizes were usually found 'in the dust of an Eastern Monastery'; so I will simply say that these MSS., trifling collection though they be, have had their share of the dust of the Holy Lands and the Holy Cities, but that their sanctity is locally anonymous; and I will only ask that those who may examine them will have the grace to believe that they were all acquired by the lawful, though sometimes tedious, processes of Oriental commerce.[30]

The modern reader is naturally struck by the orientalist tropes in this passage, and perhaps concerned to find Harris cite Tischendorf as his guide in not disclosing the provenance of his manuscript acquisitions.[31] Although Harris later revised his view of Tischendorf, he continued to be reticent about the prove-

27 Images in the author's possession. Neither the Mardin nor the Mosul manuscripts are included in Thomas's list.

28 Though the codex no longer bears Harris's familiar plate, Goshen-Gottstein (1979, 17) notes that many of Harris's 'codices can be recognized because they were specially bound by Wilson in Cambridge'. It seems reasonable to assume that the first hand-written description was made before the manuscript was rebound and trimmed. After it was bound, Harris made the following note on the end papers: 'Syr Harris 78. Heraclian Lectionary. 1220 AD'.

29 There are exceptions, such as the provenance of Haverford College, Hebrew MS 1 described in Falcetta 2018, 93. Falcetta 2018, 329–336 gathers the available evidence for Harris's manuscript acquisitions.

30 Rogers 1890, 28. This quotation is also cited in Falcetta 2018, 97–98 and Kessel 2021, 94, n. 42.

31 Perhaps Harris saw himself in his image of Tischendorf: 'There are many places which Tischendorf plundered, which he never mentioned, the obvious reason being

nance of his manuscript acquisitions.[32] For our immediate purposes, then, it is clear that Harris is not going to be too helpful in pushing back the ownership of COLEM 1932.228 beyond himself.[33] So, we begin with Harris.

Harris's passion for manuscripts grew in the 1880s and he became increasingly determined to venture into the eastern Mediterranean in search of manuscript treasures.[34] Harris taught himself Syriac during this period and focused much of his attention in acquiring important Syriac manuscripts.[35] He wanted to find a copy of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, for example, and asked about it repeatedly during his first trip to the Middle East during the 1888–89 academic year.[36] His journals for this trip show that he was actively trying to acquire manuscripts wherever he went and was particularly interested in acquiring older vellum manuscripts.[37] He added additional manuscripts to his collections during later trips to Palestine, Asia Minor and Greece (1892),[38] Sinai (1893),[39] Ottoman Turkey, historical Armenia, and especially the Mardin region (1896),[40] Ottoman Turkey, historical Armenia (1903),[41] Egypt (1916),[42] and the Middle East (1922–1923),[43] as well as through the efforts of friends and contacts that he made during his travels.[44] Though searching for other, more unique things, Harris also acquired several copies of the Harklean ver-

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that there was more spoil to be had there, when he could get at it' (cited in Falcetta 2018, 57).

32 Later, he called Tischendorf 'the great brigand of Leipsic' (Falcetta 2018, 71); see also Coakley 1993, 106–107.

33 Falcetta (2018, 97–98) argues that 'His omissions were rather meant to protect the anonymity of his sellers in the hope of future purchases or in compliance with their wishes'.

34 A measure of Harris's fame as a manuscript collector is his inclusion in a contemporary Syriac note included in the margins of Rylands Syriac 33 (Coakley 1993, 156).

35 Falcetta 2018, 69.

36 Ibid. 72, and the later efforts described in 148–149 and 332–336.

37 Falcetta 2018, 72–96 describes the entire trip. It is perhaps ironic that Harris's most important manuscript find was of the Odes of Solomon (Manchester, John Rylands Library, Syriac 9), a paper manuscript dated to the fifteenth to seventeenth century (Coakley 1993, 128–129).

38 Falcetta 2018, 109–114.

39 Ibid. 115–129.

40 Ibid. 153–178.

41 Ibid. 182–196.

42 Ibid. 309–326.

43 Ibid. 399–422.

44 Coakley notes that 'A special place among Harris's suppliers [of manuscripts] belongs to Alpheus N. Andrus, a missionary at the Mardin station of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (Coakley 1993, 106, with details).

sion of New Testament and Harklean Lectionaries, as well as copies of the New Testament Peshitta manuscripts that included the passion harmony in the Harklean version.[45]

Necessity periodically forced Harris to sell manuscripts from his collection. Others he presented as gifts. Over three decades, Harris gathered and disposed of a personal collection that would have been an ornament to any major university research library, and indeed his collection now resides primarily in the libraries of Harvard, Leiden, and the University of Manchester. His first trip to the Middle East resulted in his first gift in 1889, to Haverford College. In addition to Hebrew, Samaritan, Ethiopic, Armenian and Arabic manuscripts, Harris presented the college with seven Syriac manuscripts, either liturgical books or copies of the Peshitta New Testament.[46] Over the next fifteen years, Harris gathered a numbered collection of 134 Syriac manuscripts, according to a handlist that Harris sent to Harvard in 1905 in connection with an offer to sell his collection of Syriac and Armenian manuscripts.[47] That list noted, however, that, 'Seven Mss., which are missing under their respective numbers, were removed some years since and transferred to a private collection; and the Ms. numbered 8 was presented to Clare College, Cambridge, on my ceasing to be a fellow of the same'.[48] The private collection belonged to Alexander Peckover (1830–1919), Lord-Lieutenant of Cambridge. The seven manuscripts sold to Peckover were Harris Syriac 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 72 and 78.[49] The remaining 125 Syriac manuscripts on the list were sold to Harvard.[50] But Harris continued to collect, with new manuscripts arriving the following

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The relationship with Andrus and other contacts in the Middle East is further described in Falcetta 2018, 329–332.

45 Regarding the latter, in a letter to George A. Barton, Harris notes that he has 'had many copies through my hands' (Barton and Spoer 1905, 181). Several items included in Thomas's list of Harklean manuscripts (Thomas 1979) also come from Harris: Cambridge, MA, Harvard Library, Syriac 14–20 (Goshen-Gottstein 1979, 42–45), Cambridge, MA, Harvard Library, Syriac 176 (Goshen-Gottstein 1979, 110–111); Manchester, John Rylands Library, Syriac 10 (Coakley 1993, 129–130); Manchester, John Rylands Library, Syriac 38 (Coakley 1993, 160–161).

46 Rogers 1890, 42–47.

47 Falcetta 2018, 327–28. This rough catalogue, as Falcetta notes, 'is still extant and is preserved in the curator's office at Harvard Houghton Library' (Falcetta 2018, 569n14). Copy in author's possession thanks to Chip Coakley.

48 Harris 1905. Ms Cambridge, Clare College N.1.10 is described in Coakley 2018, 185–190.

49 Coakley 2018, 162–164 lists the manuscripts, as does Falcetta 2018, 570, n. 23.

50 Falcetta 2018, 327–328. The Armenian manuscripts were donated to Leiden University.

year.[51] Eventually, however, financial expediency once again intervened, and these additional manuscripts were sold to the John Rylands Library between 1909 and 1916.[52]

COLEM 1932.228, formerly Harris Syriac MS 78, was among seven Syriac manuscripts that Harris sold to Alexander Peckover sometime before the 1905 list was composed.[53] Harris had known Peckover since at least 1885, when they were both attending the same Quaker meeting in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.[54] It seems likely that a friendship with both Alexander and his sister Algerina Peckover (b. 1841, d. 1927) was quickly strengthened by their shared interest in manuscripts, an assumption supported by the fact that Harris published an article the following year on a New Testament manuscript that Alexander Peckover had acquired a decade before and given as a gift to Algerina.[55] A year later Harris was proposing manuscript purchases to Peckover.[56] Peckover also donated to Armenian relief efforts led by the Harrises.[57]

Baron Peckover of Wisbech, the first Quaker peer, came from a prominent family of Quaker financiers, whose private bank merged with nineteen

51 Falcetta 2018, 328.
52 Coakley 1993, 106–107. Regarding the financial expediency, see Falcetta 2018, 327. The Harvard manuscripts were numbered Harris Syriac 2–134, with numbers missing in between, and the Rylands manuscripts numbered 135–173, again with some missing in between (Falcetta 2018, 569, n. 10).
53 Falcetta 2018, 327, with details at p. 570, n. 23. The present locations of some of the other Harris Syriac manuscripts sold to Peckover have been identified by J. F. Coakley: Harris Syriac 1 = New York, NY, the Morgan Library & Museum M.0784 (Falcetta 2018, 570 n. 23; described in Casey 1951, 65–66); Harris Syriac 10 = New York, NY, the Morgan Library & Museum M.0783 (Falcetta 2018, 570 n. 23; described in Casey 1951, 64–65); Harris Syriac 72 = Cambridge, Bible Society Library MS 444 (Coakley 2018, 162–164). Harris Syriac 9, 11, and 12 have yet to be identified. However, it seems likely that one of them is the other Syriac New Testament manuscript that was sold for A. P. D. Penrose at Sotheby & Co in April 1933 together with the two now in the Morgan Library & Museum. This manuscript was written in the monastery of Jacob the Egyptian Recluse, beside Salach in Ṭur ʿAbdin and dated to 1475 CE. It is described in Gwynn 1909, L–LI, and this description corresponds to the surviving photographs that are now Harvard Syriac 180 (the catalogue entry for Harvard Syriac 180 incorrectly says that they are photographs of 'MS Harris 1').
54 Falcetta 2018, 62.
55 Harris 1886. Falcetta 2018, 149, notes that Algerina presented this codex to Harris is 1921. Harris donated it to the Woodbrooke Museum (Falcetta 2018, 432). It is now in the Cadbury Research Library.
56 Falcetta 2018, 68.
57 Ibid. 282.

others in 1896 to form Barclays Bank.[58] He was an inveterate bibliophile and built an exceptionally fine library at Bank House (later Peckover House) in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.[59] Peckover House was given to the National Trust in 1948,[60] but his library was by then completely dispersed. Fortunately, Alexander Peckover left a tantalizing, if brief, description of Bank House and the library as it was in 1898.[61] The bibliophile will appreciate his observation that 'The present owner, about twenty years ago, took down the old wings of the house, rebuilding them with offices on one side, and a new library on the other side, this room being approached through the old library'. 'The new library', he continues, 'is 52 feet by 21, and contains several collections of special subjects, that of early atlases and maps being one of the most extensive'. He notes other highlights of his collection, including 'a collection of all the 12 received versions of the English Bible, commencing with the extremely rare Tyndale Testament of 1534', noting further that 'it has taken many years to obtain fine copies of this series'. He also describes his collection of over 50 manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopian, Sanscrit, &c', commenting that 'Some are of great beauty'. It is perhaps not unsurprising that Peckover records later in his description that 'a second library has recently been added on the other side of the house looking into the garden'. Peckover retired from his bank in 1893,[62] and clearly had time to devote to his passions. Despite being denied a university education because he was a nonconformist, it is not surprising that Peckover was later named a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, the Linnean Society, the Society of Antiquaries, and received an honorary LL.D. from Cambridge.

Baron Peckover died on 21 October 1919, and bequeathed our Syriac manuscript to his grandson Dr Lionel S. Penrose, along with several other manuscripts and early printed books. Penrose shared Peckover's love for chess, one of the only games allowed at Peckover House on a Sunday.[63] But Penrose was not a collector like his grandfather. He did not even especially

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58 A brief history of the Peckovers and banking is given in Bidwell 1900, 363–370. Among his obituaries see especially, British and Foreign Bible Society 1919. Peckover was raised to the peerage in 1907 as Baron Peckover of Wisbech and the County of Cambridge.

59 Bidwell 1900, 370: 'His fine library is noted for a valuable collection of maps, manuscripts, and early editions of the Bible'.

60 Smith 1999, 5 (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/cambridgeshire/peckover-house-and-garden>, accessed 17 April 2024).

61 Gardiner 1898, 34–35.

62 Bidwell 1900, 369.

63 Smith 1999, 5, 40–41.

care to own fine things,[64] though he had a fine aesthetic sense and loved music, art, and nature.[65] He encouraged his aunt, Alexandrina Peckover (1860–1948), to donate Peckover House to the National Trust on her death, which she did, and then followed suit, donating his own country house too in 1965.[66] So it is perhaps not too surprising that Penrose donated his grandfather's manuscripts to the Colchester Museums in 1932.[67] The Penrose family were firm supporters of both Colchester and the Colchester Museum, during the decade that they lived in Colchester.[68] And, according to a brief biographical note about Lionel Penrose, dated to 31 July 1978, found in the Colchester Museum archives, Penrose was also 'Chairman of the pre-war Colchester Civic Society'. This unusual manuscript donation, still unique among all of Colchester Museums' holdings, is a remarkable tribute to a remarkable family.[69]

Description of COLEM 1932.228

Vellum, 31×21.5 cm.[70] Ruled area, 23×14.5 cm.[71] 184 leaves, foliated 1–182 right to left, but f. 52 and f. 167 are repeated. Left to right foliation, 1–184,

64 Smith 1999, 8: 'He cared little for what he wore, tending to stick to the same old jackets and trousers, the latter sometimes kept up with a tie, and reluctantly dashing off to a shop to buy new clothes only when it became imperative'.
65 Smith 1999, 39–42.
66 Smith 1999, 5, 22 (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/suffolk/thorington-hall>, accessed 17 April 2024).
67 Lionel Penrose's father, the painter James Doyle Penrose, died in 1932, which may have prompted the gift. His mother was Elisabeth Josephine nee Peckover. Another grandson of Baron Peckover, Roland A. Penrose, and a granddaughter-in-law, Mrs A. P. D. Penrose, sold a substantial collection of manuscripts and valuable printed books through Sotheby & Co. on 5 November 1951, according to the sale catalogue.
68 They lived at 47 Lexden Rd, Colchester CO3 3PY, UK, until they left for the USA and Canada in 1939. The family returned to England in 1945, taking a position at University College London (UCL).
69 Lionel Penrose (d. 1972) became a world-renowned psychiatrist and geneticist and ended his career as Professor of Genetics at UCL. His children also achieved significant notoriety. Oliver Penrose (b. 1929) is a theoretical physicist and Professor of mathematics at Herriot-Watt University (1986–1994). Sir Roger Penrose (b. 1931) ended his career as Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford and was the winner of the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physics. Jonathan Penrose, OBE (b. 1933, d. 2021) was a psychologist and British chess champion and grandmaster. And Shirley Penrose Hodgson (b. 1945) is a physician and geneticist who ended her career as Professor of Cancer Genetics at St George's, University of London. See Smith 1999, 21–27, 54–55 for a portrait of the Penrose family.
70 Leaves appear to have been trimmed down when the manuscript was rebound.
71 Compare the measurements in handwritten note described below. Ruled area measured from top to bottom line.

is accurate.[72] The codex is comprised of 19 quires; the first quire of eight folios contains the ornamented index, this is followed by eighteen numbered quires, seventeen quires of ten folios, and a final quire of six folios. The first quire signature is found at the end of the second quire, suggesting that the ornamented index is a *post hoc* addition, or at least created separately to the body of the manuscript. There are no catchwords, but the quire markings have (inconsistently) also been added to the inside bottom margin of the start and end of each gathering, as in folios 88v and 89r or 178v and 179r.

The writing is in two columns in black ink with red ink used for rubrics, and with 24–26 lines per column. The columns are 6.5 cm wide with 1.5 cm between them. Prickings and rulings are clearly visible. Both lines and columns have been ruled. The script is a bold West Syriac 'medial' estrangela.[73] The script has the same features as Clare College N.1.10.[74] There are ornaments in colour on ff. 1r, 2r–8v, 16v, 24v, 38r, 83r (82r), 119v (118v), 131v (130v), 132r (131r), 141v (140v), 143v (142v), 164v (163v), 171r (169r), 184v.

The binding, done by Wilson of Cambridge for J. Rendel Harris, is in full green leather with gold tooling, marbled end papers and two additional leaves at beginning and end have been added by the binder. The manuscript has been repaired prior to binding. Four items are loose within the codex:
I. A strip of vellum 3.5cm x 14.3cm. marking f. 164v.
II. A handwritten note on J. Rendel Harris's writing paper (no date):

> 5. Park Terrace, Cambridge.
>
> Cod. Syr. Harris 78.
>
> A Lectionary of the Gospels in Heraclean version, written in the year 1220 A.D. Each leaf measures 12 ¼ in. by 9. The text is prefaced by a beautifully illuminated series of squares & circles containing a description of the successive lessons, with the days for which they are intended, throughout the year: e.g. the second row of circles on the first page beginning with the right hand, is as follows: 5. Annunciation of Zacharias, Morning Lesson. 6. Annunciation of the Mother of God. Evening Lesson. 7. Do. 8. Lection for the departure of Mariam to Elizabeth (the visitation). Evening Lesson. & so on. This Heraclean version was in great favour with the Jacobites, who introduced it in all their churches, & for a while, seem to have excluded by it the more beautiful Peshito Version.

III. Notes on a slip of paper marking f. 84v (no date, but of the same size, type and hand as previous):

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72 I have used the corrected foliation throughout this description.
73 On this medial script, see Palmer 1989, 77–78.
74 Coakley 2018, 185.

The lessons for Passion week are harmonized out of the four Gospels: e.g. they begin 'Again lections collected out [of] the four Evangelists of the Holy Week of the Passion.' The names of the Evangelists are marked in the Rubric in the margin thus: ܡܬܝ in Matt. ܡܪܩܘܣ in Mark. ܠܘܩܐ in Luke. ܝܘܚܢܢ in John.

IV. Label (?) at end:

Ms. SYRIAC LECTIONARY A.D. 1220 (Heraclean Version).

Outline Contents

Ornamented frontispiece (f. 1r).
Garshuni note (f. 1v).
Ornamented index of lectionary readings (f. 2r–8v).
Garshuni notes (f. 9r).
West Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels using the Harklean version (f. 9v–183r).
Colophon (f. 183r).
Ornamented end page (f. 183v).

Detailed Contents

Ornamented frontispiece (f. 1r). An ornamental cross set within an ornamented rectangular frame. The opening words of Ps. 44.6 are divided into the four quadrants around the cross (ܒܟ ܢܕܩܘܪ ܠܒܥܠܕ ܒܒܝܐ 'By you we will trample our enemies'). There are two notes, presumably added by Harris at the top of the folio: 'Ms. Syr. 78' and 'A.D. 1220'. On the end paper facing f. 1r is written 'Syr Harris 78. Heraclian Lectionary, 1220. AD'.
Garshuni note in two columns (f. 1v).
Ornamented index of lectionary readings (ff. 2r–8v).[75] Most of the index is taken up by the 292 readings in the lectionary (ff. 2v–8r). Additional readings (for apostles, martyrs, saints, bishops etc.) are then indicated (f. 8r–v). The index is headed on f. 2r, in red, ܡܘܕܥܐ ܕܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܫܢܬܐ ('Index of Scripture readings for the whole year'). Next to this is written ܟܘܕܢܐܝܬ ('circularly, in rotation') in serto, also in red ink. The rubrics are set in roundels (ff. 2r–3r, 5v–7r, 8v) or squares (ff. 3v–5r, 7v–8r), laid out with 24 on each page (four across and six down), set within a border and with a variety of ornamentation. The final five roundels include an explicit, written in serto, which is damaged at the end (f. 8v): ܡܠܟ ܩܘܪܝܚܘ ܩܘܫܡܐ ܘܡܬܝܐ ('The index of ܘܚܠܢ ܩܝܠܐ ܟܘܕܢܐܝܬ. ܟܕ ܟܠܐ ܫܩܠ ܘܐܥܟܘܒ ܡ ܩܘܡܟܠܐ ܡ ܩܒܘܪܐ [...] [...]')

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75 A similarly ornamented index of lectionary readings is found in Mardin, Mar Hirmiz Keldani Kilisesi, ᴍs 29 (CCM 00029), ff. 1v–6r, dated to the twelfth–thirteenth century (available at <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/132231>, accessed 4 April 2024). Compare the more rudimentary index in Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs, ᴍs 34 (CFMM 00034), of the thirteenth century (<https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/123209>, accessed 4 April 2024).

scripture readings for the whole year is complete. Pray for whoever partic-
ipated either in word or deed […]').

Four Garshuni notes in two columns (f. 9r). The notes are divided into boxes,
with additional writing at the end of the second column at a right angel to
the main text.

West Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels (ff. 9v–183r) comprising 293 num-
bered readings. The title is written across the top of first opening of the
lectionary: ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܐܪܒܥܐ ('Lectionary
of the Four Gospels of the Four Evangelists'). The rubric reads (f. 9v):
ܒܚܝܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܐ ܟܠ ('With the aid
of God, Lord of All, we write the lectionary of the course of the whole
year'). Lections are given for different services, including ܪܡܫܐ (*ramsha*
(*r*) 'evening'), ܠܠܝܐ (*lilya* (*l*) 'night'), ܨܦܪܐ (*ṣafra* (*s*) 'morning'), ܩܘܪܒܐ
(*quraba* (*q*) 'Eucharist'), and ܢܓܗ (*nagah* (*n*) 'twilight, i.e. vespers').
Readings from the *Peshitta* version are marked (P). I give the lection num-
ber and, following Coakley, the folio reference for the first in a series of
lections.[76]

1. Consecration of the Church (f. 9v) *r* Mt 16.13–20 *s* Jn 10.22–38[77] *q* Mk
   8.27–33.
4. Annunciation to Zachariah (f. 10v) *r* Lk 1.1–17 (P) *s* Lk 1.18–25 (P).
6. Annunciation to Mary the Mother of God (f. 11v) *r* Lk 1.26–38 *s* Lk 1.26–
   38 (P).
8. Journey of Mary to Elizabeth (f. 12v) *r* Lk 1.39–55 *s* Lk 1.39–56 (P).
10. Birth of John the Baptist (f. 13v) *r* Lk 1.57–80 *s* Lk 1.57–80 (P).
12. Sunday before the Nativity (f. 15v) *r* Mt 1.1–17 (P) *s* Lk 3.23–38.
14. The Revelation of Joseph (f. 16r) *r* Mt 1.18–25.
15. Nativity (f. 16v) *r* Jn 1.1–17 *l* Lk 2.1–20 *s* Mt 2.1–12 *q* Jn 1.1–14 (P).
   Ornamented circle enclosing a star as headpiece.
19. Commemoration of the Mother of God (f. 19r) *r* Lk 10.38–42, 11.23–28 *s*
   Mk 3.23–35 *q* Jn 2.1–11.
22. Commemoration of the Massacre of the Infants (f. 21r) *r* Mt 2.13–18 *s* Mt
   2.19–23 *q* Lk 9.46–50.
25. Sunday after Nativity (f. 21v) *r* Lk 2.40–52 *s* Lk 2.40–52 (P).
27. Commemoration of Basil and Gregory and other Doctors (f. 22v) *r* Jn
   10.1–16 *s* Jn 7.37–43 *q* Mt 13.24b–35

76 I use the Harklean version edited by Andreas Juckel in Kiraz 1996. For details see
   Juckel 1996.
77 Note variant in Jn 10.38.

30. Epiphany (f. 24v) *n* Mk 1.1–11 *l* for the blessing of the waters Jn 4.4–30 *s*
    Mt 3.1–17 *q* Lk 3.1–22. Preceded by band-shaped headpiece with geomet-
    ric interlace.

34. Decapitation of John the Baptist (f. 28r) *r* Mk 6.14–29 *s* Mt 14.1–12 *q* Lk
    9.6–12r.

37. Commemoration of Stephen (f. 29v) *r* Mt 21.33–46 *s* Mk 12.1–12 *q* Mt
    23.27–39.

40. First Sunday after Epiphany (f. 31v) *r* Lk 3.23–38 *s* Mt 4.12–25

42. Second Sunday after Epiphany (f. 32v) *r* Mt 11.2–15 *s* Mk 1.14–31 *q* Jn
    1.43–51.

45. Third Sunday After Epiphany (f. 34r) *r* Jn 3.13–24 *s* Jn 5.30–47 *q* Mt
    20.20–28.

48. Fourth Sunday after Epiphany (f. 36r) *r* Mt 13.47–58 *s* Lk 19.47–20.8 *q*
    Jn 6.1–15.

51. Fifth Sunday after Epiphany (f. 37v) *r* Mk 4.1–20 *s* Lk 5.1–11 *q* Jn 4.31–
    42.

54. Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (f. 39v) *r* Lk 2.21–32 *s* Lk 2.33–
    39. Preceded by band-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.

56. Commemoration of Mar Severus the Patriarch (f. 40r) *r* Lk 19.11–27.
    Marginal note (40r) adds 'And of Bishops and Priests'.

57. Commemoration of Priests (f. 41r) *r* Mt 25.13–30 *s* Lk 12.32–48. Margin-
    al note (41r) adds 'And of Bishops'.

59. Commemoration of the Brothers and of the Departed (f. 42v) *r* Jn 5.19–29
    s Mt 25.31–46. Marginal note (43r) adds 'and Bishops, and Foreigners,
    and Monks, and the Saints'.

61. Sunday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 44r) *r* Lk 21.28–38 *s* Jn 2.1–11.

63. Monday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 45r) *r* Mt 4.23–5.19 *s* Mt 18.18–35.

65. Tuesday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 46v) *s* Mt 5.20–48.

66. Wednesday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 48r) *s* Mt 6.1–24.

67. Thursday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 49v) *s* Mt 6.25–7.12.

68. Friday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 50v) *s* Mt 7.13–27.

69. Saturday of the Beginning of Lent (f. 51r) *n* [Lk] 13.22–30 (MS has Mt) *s*
    Jn 4.46b–54. Marginal note (51r) adds 'And Mar Ephrem'.

71, 72. Sunday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 52r) *n* Mk 1.32–45 *s* Mt 7.28–
    8.13.

73, 74 Monday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 53v) *q* Lk 17.11–19 *s* Lk
    16.13–18.

75. Tuesday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 54r) *s* Lk 15.1–10.

76. Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 54v) *s* Mt 15.1–18.

77. Thursday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 55v) *s* Lk 16.1–13r.

78. Friday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 56r) *s* Mt 16.22–27.
79. Saturday of the Second Week of Lent (f. 56v) *n* Mt 13.36b–53 *s* Mk 1.21b–28.
81. Sunday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 57v) *r* Jn 5.2–18 *s* Lk 5.17–26 *q* Mk 2.1–12.
84. Monday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 59v) *s* Mk 10.17–27.
85. Tuesday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 60r) *s* Lk 12.13–31.
86. Wednesday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 61r) *s* Mt 9.9–17.
87. Thursday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 61v) *s* Lk 13.18–30.
88. Friday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 62r) *s* Lk 11.1–13.
89. Saturday of the Third Week of Lent (f. 63r) *n* Lk 18.1–14 *s* (and *q*, written in margin) Mt 23.1–12.
91. Sunday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 64r) *r* Mt 15.21–31 *s* Lk 13.10–17 *q* Lk 14.1–11.
94. Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 65v) *s* Lk 21.1–9.
95. Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 66r) *s* Mt 20.1–16.
96. Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 66v) *s* Mt 17.22–27.
97. Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 67r) *s* Lk 15.11–32.
98. Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 68r) *s* Lk 16.19–31
99. Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent (f. 68v) *r* Mt 5.33–48 *s* (and *q*, written in margin) Mk 9.14–29.
101. Sunday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 70r) *r* Lk 10.25–37 *s* Lk 7.11–17 *q* Mt 12.9–24.
104. Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 71v) *s* Lk 12.13–31.
105. Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 72v) *s* [Mt] 14.34–15.11 (MS has Lk).
106. Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 73r) *s* Mt 14.15–23r.
107. Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 73v) *s* Mk 10.32–45.
108. Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 74r) *s* Mk 10.17–27.
109. Saturday of the Fifth Week of Lent (f. 74v) *s* Lk 14.1–11.
110. Sunday of the Sixth Week of Lent (f. 75r) *r* Jn 9.1–41 *s* Mt 9.27–35 *q* Mk 10.46–52.
113. Monday of the Sixth Week of Lent (f. 77v) *s* Mt 20.29–34.
114. Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Lent (f. 78r) *s* Jn 5.2–18.
115. Wednesday of the Sixth Week of Lent (f. 79r) *s* Lk 13.10–17.
116. Thursday of the Sixth Week of Lent (f. 79r) *s* Lk 18.35–19.10.
117. Friday of the Forty Days [of Lent] (f. 80r) *n* Lk 4.1–13 *s* Mt 4.1–11.
119. Saturday of the Rising of Lazarus (f. 81r) *n* Jn 11.1–27 *s* Jn 11.28–45.

121. Palm Sunday (f. 83r) *n* Lk 19.29–40 *l* Mk 11.1–18 *s* Mt 21.1–16 *q* Jn
     12.12–22. The readings for Palm Sunday are preceded by square-shaped
     headpiece with geometric interlace.

Week of the Passion (ff. 85v–119v). 'Next, readings gathered from the
     four evangelists for the Holy Week of the Passion' ܗܘܐ ܡܢܟ ܡܬܥܠ ܡܢ
     ܟܬܒܬܐ ܣܘܣܒܘܡ ܐܘܢܓܠܣ̈ܛܐ. ܐܚܕܒ ܐܬܘܢܒܕ ܐܕܬܐ ܐܒܘܫܐ (f. 85v). The Harklean pas-
     sion harmony is a series of interwoven and modified lections from the
     Harklean version making up a gospel harmony for Holy Week. The read-
     ings extend from the Monday of Holy Week to the dawn of the Saturday
     of the Gospel.[78] Changes in readings between gospel books are noted in
     the margins. Harris's handwritten note (III above) was included here as a
     guide to the harmony. I give a more detailed description for this section,
     though I only indicated the Gospels marked in the rubrics without giving
     specific references since the readings are modified for this harmony rather
     than being extracted lections.

125. Monday (f. 85v) *n* Lk, Mk, Lk
126. Monday (f. 86r) *l* (1st *teshmeshto*) Mk, Mt, Lk, Mk, Mt, Mk, Mt.
127. Monday (f. 86v) *l* (2nd *teshmeshto*) Lk, Mk.
128. Monday, Commemoration of the Ten Virgins (f. 87v) *l* Mt.
129. Monday (f. 88r) *l* (3rd *teshmeshto*) Mt.
130. Monday (f. 89r) *r* Mt.
132. Monday (f. 89v) *3rd hour* Mt.
133. Monday (f. 90v) *midday* Mt, Mk.
134. Monday (f. 91v) *9th hour* Mt, Mk, Lk, Mk.
135. Tuesday (f. 92r) *n* Mk, Mt, Mk, Mt.
136. Tuesday (f. 93r) *l* (1st *teshmeshto*) Mk, Mt, Mk.
137. Tuesday (f. 93v) *l* (2nd time) Lk, Mt, Lk.
138. Tuesday (f. 94v) *s* Lk, Mk, Lk (ܡܢܟ ܕܬܚܘܬܐ), Mk, Lk.
139. Tuesday (f. 95v) *3rd hour* Jn.
140. Tuesday (f. 96v) *midday* Jn.
141. Tuesday (f. 97r) *9th hour* Jn.
142. Wednesday (f. 97v) *n* Mk, Mt, Jn.
143. Wednesday (f. 98v) *l* (1st time) Mt, Lk, Mt, Mk, Lk.
144. Wednesday (f. 99v) *l* (2nd time) Jn.
145. Wednesday (f. 100v) *s* Jn.
146. Wednesday (f. 101r) *3rd hour* Jn.

78 The origins of the Passion Harmony have been dated to the ninth century (Hill 2006r
    and 2006b). The Harklean passion harmony also appears in some Peshitta gospel
    lectionaries, such as Clare College N.1.10, a twelfth–thirteenth-century West Syriac
    lectionary of the Gospels donated to the college by Rendel Harris (Coakley 2018,
    185–190 at 187).

147. Wednesday (f. 101v) *midday* Jn.

148. Wednesday (f. 102r) *9th hour* Jn.

149. Thursday of the Mystery (of the Washing of the Feet) (f. 102v) *n* Jn.

150. Thursday (f. 103r) *l* (1st time) Lk.

151. Thursday (f. 104r) *l* (2nd time) Jn.

152. Thursday (f. 105r) *l* (3rd time) Jn.

153. Thursday of the Mystery (of the Washing of the Feet) (f. 105v) *s* Lk, Mt, Lk, Mt, Mk, Lk.

154. Thursday of the Mystery (of the Washing of the Feet) (f. 106r) *third hour* Jn.

155. The consecration of the *myron* on the Thursday of the Mystery (of the Washing of the Feet) (f. 106v) Mt.

156. The washing of the feet ܫܝܓܬܐ on the Thursday of the Mystery (of the Washing of the Feet) (f. 107r) Jn.

157. After the washing of the feet (f. 108r) Jn.

158. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 108r) Lk, Mt, Mk, Lk, Mt, Jn, Mk, Mt, Jn, Mt, Lk, Jn.

159. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 109v) *l* (1st time) Jn, Mt, Mk, Mt, Lk, Mt, Mk, Mt, Lk, Mt, Lk, Mt.

160. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 110v) *l* (2nd time) Mt, Jn, Mt, Jn, Mt, Lk, Mt, Lk, Mt, Mk, Jn.

161. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 111v) *l* (3rd time) Mt, Jn, Mt, Jn, Mk, Mt, Jn, Mt.

162. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 113r) *s* Mt, Jn, Mt, Mt, Lk, Mt, Jn, Mt.

163. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 114v) *3rd hour* Lk.

164. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 116r) *midday* Jn, Mk, Mk, Lk, Jn, Mk, Mt, Lk.

165. Friday of the crucifixion (f. 117v) *9th hour* Mk.

166. The adoration of the cross on the Friday of the crucifixion (117v) Mt, Mk, Jn.

167. Saturday of the Gospel (f. 118v) *n* Mt, Lk, Jn, Mk, Jn, Lk.

168. Saturday of the Gospel (f. 119r) *s* Mt.

End of the Harklean passion harmony. 'End of readings for the Holy Week of the saving passion of Christ the God that were gathered from the four evangelists, in which are recounted all the memorials' ܫܠܡ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܒܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܕܚܫܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܡܥܒܕ ܐ[ܘ]ܡܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܐܪܒܥܬܐ ܐ̈ܘܢܓܠܝ̈ܣܛܐ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܡܬܬܢܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܘܟ̈ܪܢܐ ܀܀ (f. 119v).[79] This colophon, pre-

79 This colophon reuses phrasing from the longer colophon preserved in several copies of the Harklean passion harmony, in which the author of the harmony is given as

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sented in alternating lines of red and black ink, is followed by a band-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.

169. Great Sunday of the Resurrection (f. 119v) *n* Mt 28.1–20 *l* Lk 24.1–12 *s* Jn 20.1–18 *q* Mk 16.2–11.

173. Monday of Rest (f. 122r) *n* Lk 24.13–35 *s* Mt 28.11–20 *q* Jn 6.30–39.

176. Tuesday of Rest (f. 124r) *n* Mk 15.37–16.7r *s* Mk 16.9–18 *q* Mk 8.11–17.

179. Wednesday of Rest (f. 125v) *n* Lk 23.46–24.11 *s* Lk 24.12–24 *q* Mk 8.27–32.

182. Thursday of Rest (f. 127r) *n* Jn 19.30–20.10 *s* Jn 20.11–18 *q* Mt 16.20–23.

185. Friday of the Confessors, of the Week of White (f. 129r) *r* Mt 20.1–16 *s* Mt 27.50–61 *q* Mk 9.9–16.

188. Saturday of Rest, of the Week of White (f. 130v) *n* Lk 24.25–35 *s* Mt 27.62–66 *q* Mt 22.23–40. Followed by a band-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.

191. New Sunday (f. 132r) *n* Jn 20.19–25 *s* Jn 20.26–31 *q* Jn 6.41–47. Preceded by an ornamented circle enclosing a six-pointed star interlaced with six circles.

194. First Sunday after New Sunday (f. 133r) *r* Jn 21.1–14 *s* Jn 21.15–25 ('of Peter and John and of the Bishops', in margin) *q* Lk 15.1–9.

197. Second Sunday after New Sunday (f. 135r) *n* Jn 6.16–29 *s* Mt 14.22–33 *q* Lk 17.37–18.8.

200. Third Sunday after New Sunday (f. 136v) *n* Lk 5.27–39 *s* Jn 3.11–21 *q* Jn 6.53–64r.

203. Fourth Sunday after New Sunday (f. 138r) *n* Jn 13.31–14.1 *s* Jn 21.15–25.

205. Fifth Sunday after New Sunday (f. 139r) *n* Jn 14.1–14 *s* Jn 16.16–30 *q* Lk 9.51–60.

208. The Ascension of Our Lord (f. 141r) *n* Lk 24.36–53. Followed by a square-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.

209. The Ascension of Our Lord (f. 142r) *s* [Mk] 16.12–20 (ms has Mt). At the end in red ܡܢ, ܕܡܩܬܟ ܗܘ ܕܢܚܟܐ ܕܗܘܠܬܟ 'Read for the Eucharist of the *ramsha* of Ascension'.

210. The Sunday after the Ascension (f. 142r) *n* Jn 21.1–14 *s* Lk 15.1–9. Followed by a square-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.

212. Sunday of Pentecost (f. 143v) *n* Jn 14.15–31 *s* Jn 15.20–16.15 *q* Jn 17.13–26.

215. First Sunday after Pentecost (f. 145v) *n* Jn 15.1–19 *s* Mt 11.20–30 *q* Jn 6.26–39.

Daniel from Beth Bātin and his disciple Isaac. The full colophon and discussion of authorship of the harmony is given in Hill 2006a, 214–216.

218. Second Sunday after Pentecost ('and of the Apostles', in margin) (f. 147v) Mt 9.36–10.15 *s* Lk 6.12–23 *q* Mk 3.7b–19r.
221. Third Sunday after Pentecost (f. 149v) *n* Mk 6.7–13 *s* Lk 9.1–6 *q* Jn 6.40–47.
224. Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (f. 150v) *n* Lk 10.1–16 *s* Lk 10.17–24 *q* Mt 14.15–22.
227. Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (f. 152r) *n* Mk 9.30–41 *s* Mt 20.17–28 *q* Lk 9.10–17.
230. Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (f. 153v) *n* Lk 17.5–10 *s* Mk 6.30–46 *q* Mt 15.32–39.
233. Friday of Gold, and of the Apostles (margin) (f. 155r) *n* Mt 19.23–30 *s* Lk 22.24–30 *q* Mt 10.24–42.
236. Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (f. 156v) *n* Mt 12.30–37 *s* Mk 3.22–35.
238. Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (f. 157v) *n* Mk 4.3–20 *s* Lk 8.4–18.
240. Ninth Sunday after Pentacost (f. 158v) *n* Mt 13.24–35 *s* Mt 13.36–43 *q* Lk 14.7–15.
243. Festival of Tabernacles (f. 160r) *n* Mt 16.27–17.13 *s* Mk 8.38–9.9 *q* Lk 9.27–36.
246. First Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 162r) *n* Mk 4.21–34 *s* Mt 13.44–52 *q* Lk 14.16–24.
249. Second Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 163v) *n* Lk 14.25–35 *s* Mt 18.28–32 *q* Mk 12.14–44.
252. The Burial of the Mother of God (f. 164v) Lk 11.23–28 *s* Mk 3.28–35 *q* Mt 12.43–50. Preceded by a square-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.
255. Third Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 165v) *n* Lk 15.1–10 *s* Mt 13.12–17.
257. Fourth Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 166r) *n* Lk 12.13–21 *s* Lk 12.22–31 *q* Lk 11.9–13.
260. Fifth Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 167v) *n* Mt 17.22–27 *s* Lk 6.27–36 *q* Mk 6.1–6a.
263. Sixth Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 168v) *n* Mk 8.27–33 *s* Mt 16.21–27 *q* Lk 13.31–35. The latter two readings are both marked 264.
265. Seventh Sunday after the Festival of Tabernacles (f. 169v) *n* Jn 3.10–21 *s* Jn 12.26–36 *q* Lk 11.29–32.
268. Festival of the Cross (f. 171r) *n* Mt 24.1–14 *s* Mk 13.1–13 *q* Lk 21.5–20. Preceded by an ornamented cross set within a square-shaped headpiece with geometric interlace.
271. First Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 173r) *n* Lk 17.20–37 *s* Mk 10.32–45 *q* Lk 9.18–26.

274. Second Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 174v) *n* Mt 14.34–15.11 *s* Mk 7.1–16 *q* Mt 15.12–20.
277. Third Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 176r) *n* Lk 11.37–48 *s* Lk 11.49–12.3 *q* Lk 9.37–43b.
280. Fourth Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 177v) *n* Mk 10.2–16 *s* Mt 19.1–12.
282. Fifth Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 178v) *n* Lk 6.43–49 *s* Mt 17.14–21 *q* Lk 13.1–3.
285. Sixth Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 179v) *n* Mt 19.13–26 *s* Mk 10.13–27 *q* Lk 18.15–22.
288. Seventh Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 181v) *n* Mk 12.18–27 *s* Lk 12.49–59.
290. Eighth Sunday after the Festival of the Cross (f. 182v) *n* Lk 4.24–30 *s* Lk 13.1–9 *q* Jn 6.47–56.
293. Commemorations of Martyrs (f. 183v) Mt 10.16–25.
Final rubric (f. 184r) 'End of the lectionary of the Holy Gospel, by the aid of Our Lord, Amen. Glory to the Father who strengthened and to the Son who aided and to the Holy Spirit who perfected and completed (this book) with us, forever and ever, Amen.'[80]

ܥܠܡ ܦܘܩ ܣܝܪܐ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܒܥܘܕܪܢܐ ܠܡܪܢ ܐܡܝܢ. ܫܘܒܚܐ ܠܐܒܐ ܕܚܝܠ ܘܠܒܪܐ ܕܥܕܪ ܘܠܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܓܡܪ ܘܫܠܡ ܒܢ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ.

Colophon (f. 184r), in two parts, is damaged, with the scribes' names and locations deliberately erased in both parts. This much of the second part containing the date can be read: 'Now it was completed, that is to say the completion of this holy book was one thousand five hundred and 32 of the Greeks, on the fourth day of the week on the eleventh of the month Ab (Wednesday 11 August 1221 CE). Now it was written […]'

ܫܠܡ ܕܝܢ ܗܟܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܝܟܢ ܕܢܫܬܡܠܐ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܠܦ ܘܚܡܫܡܐܐ ܘܠܒ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܒܝܘܡ ܐܪܒܥܐ ܒܫܒܐ ܒܚܕܥܣܪ ܒܝܪܚ ܐܒ ܟܬܒ ܕܝܢ […]

Ornamented Cross set in a roundel within a rectangular frame filled with roundels (f. 184v).

Concluding Observations

COLEM 1932.228 might seem isolated as the only Syriac manuscript in one of Britain's regional museums. But even a single manuscript is a link to multiple worlds. In this description, I have tried to show these links and invoke some of the worlds with which the manuscript is connected. Through this manuscript Colchester Museums is connected to Syriac intellectual and man-

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80 Cp. Kessel 2018, 287.

uscript culture, to the modern collecting of Middle Eastern and other manu-
scripts, to the Peckover and Penrose families, and to modern Syriac studies.

There are many copies of the Harklean Gospel lectionary. But that does
not make this manuscript any less important. Every manuscript has unique
features, and was prepared, written, and bound by specific individuals. Each
manuscript has a unique story, and sometimes that story leaves traces on the
pages of the manuscript, especially in the form of readers' and owners' notes.
This manuscript is also important because it is securely dated, and so can be
set within and forms part of a particular moment in Syriac manuscript culture.[81]
Further analysis will, it is hoped, enable a fuller reading of the colophon and
notes, and so reveal additional historical and geographical details. The manu-
script also connects to the modern history of Syriac studies. It is another part
of the dispersed J. Rendel Harris collection, and a part of that collection that
has only recently been identified. It also connects to the fascinating stories of
the Peckover and Penrose families, especially to the dispersed collection of
Alexander Peckover. This latter connection links the manuscript securely to
East Anglia and so it is only fitting that the manuscript has found a home in
one of the region's museums.

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81 Brock 2012, 32 records only three other manuscripts securely dated to 1221.

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The Decree of Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* of Yerevan Issued in 1763 on the Rights and Privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin and the Armenians

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This article presents new research in the field of Persian documentary source studies, based on a 1763 Persian decree issued by Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* of Yerevan in accordance with the petition of Catholicos Simeon I of Holy Ēǰmiacin. The decree confirms the rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin, the residence of the Catholicos of all Armenians, the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and of the Armenian people in Yerevan khanate during the second half of the eighteenth century. The text of the document kept in the Matenadaran reveals many details concerning the social-economic position, rights, and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin, the catholicoi and their subjects. Content analysis of the decree particularly of the rights and privileges mentioned in the clauses of the petition and confirmed by the *ḫān*'s order, shows the document's adherence with previous decrees of the rulers of Iran. Further, the text analysis of the document considers its differences from the decree issued earlier, in 1760, according to the petition of Catholicos Hakob Šamaxecʿi (1759–1763), as well as from the decree issued in 1763 by Karīm *Ḫān* Zand Vakīl. The document is evidence of the special and respected position of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin, strengthened due to the efforts of its catholicoi and the Armenians subject to them. The historical conditions and circumstances of the creation of the document are considered in the article after a review of the position of the catholicoi of Holy Ēǰmiacin under the rule of the *šāhs* of Persia from sixteenth to mid-eighteenth centuries. The historical background of the decree provides a better understanding of the realities of the time and region. The study reveals some of the main characteristics of Yerevan khanate as a separate semi-independent political unit in Transcaucasia, having close historical ties with Iran.

Introduction

The catholicoi of Holy Ēǰmiacin were the acknowledged leaders of the Armenian people and a kind of link between the Persian governments of the Safavid and Afsharid states and their Armenian subjects, able to protect their rights and interests. In the seventeenth century, 'Persian shakhs, profiting from the cooperation and success of the Armenian merchants, granted the church numerous privileges'.[1] Safavid decrees issued in the seventeenth century granted the catholicoi partial tax exemption, and tax-free travel of their representatives in Iran with the purpose of collection of church taxes and contributions.[2]

1   Bournoutian 1982, 31.
2   Pʿapʿazyan 1959, docs 27, 29, Kostikyan 2005, docs 8, 9.

There were also decrees allowing the performance of religious ceremonies and church service, and forbidding any encroachment upon the land and other property of the Armenian Church.[3] They increased the power of the Mother See by giving it full religious and civil authority over Armenians not only in Eastern Armenia but also elsewhere within their borders.[4] The enumerated rights and privileges of the catholicoi and Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin were confirmed later by the Afsharid rulers of Iran.[5]

Usually, the rights of the catholicoi were confirmed by the edicts of the *šāh*s of Iran; they were also granted a certain degree of autonomy and control over the inner affairs of their subjects, including, for instance, the resolution of internal disputes, the appointment and demotion of clergymen, management of church property, and the confirmation of the contracts concluded between Armenians.[6] There were a number of decrees issued after the payment of *pīškeš*[7] to confirm the rights of the Armenian catholicoi at their posts and authorizing their status.[8]

The high position of the catholicoi as the acknowledged leaders of the Armenian Apostolic Church is reflected in their title. The catholicoi of Ējmiacin and Ałvankʻ and later, from the eighteenth century onward, also bishops and archbishops bore the title of *ḫalīfa*. The Arabic word *ḫalīfa* ('viceroy, caliph, successor') was the title of the rulers of Arabic Caliphates, who were the religious and civil leaders of all Muslims. The use of this title with respect to the Catholicos of All Armenians residing in Hṙomkla is attested in the Arabic and Persian sources since the thirteenth century.[9] The same title was used for the Armenian catholicoi of Holy Ējmiacin and Ałvankʻ in Persian sources since the fourteenth century[10] symbolizing their power, religious and civil authority over all Armenians. It should be noted that the same title was not used with respect to the catholicoi of Georgia. They were addressed in Persian sources with the title كتله كوز (*katolekūz*).[11] This implies a difference in status between the catholicoi of Ējmiacin and Ałvankʻ and the catholicoi of Georgia

3   Pʻapʻazyan 1959, docs 24, 25, 38, Kostikyan 2005, docs 28, 31, 34, 50, 51, 73.
4   Bournoutian 1982, 31.
5   Kostikyan 2008, docs 5–11, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 31, 35.
6   Pʻapʻazyan 1959, doc. 41, Kostikyan 2005, doc. 62.
7   *Pīškeš* was a customary gift given from an inferior to a superior, which evolved into a tribute imposed on individuals or communities, a tax attached to the land and to certain offices in Safavid period (Lambton 1994, 157).
8   Lambton 1994, 150–151, Kostikyan 2019.
9   Danielyan 2019, 202–206. Peacock 2015, 242, 243, 260.
10   Pʻapʻazyan 1968, 428. Pʻapʻazyan 1959, 487, 511, 525, 537, etc., Kostikyan 2005, 389, 411, 430–431, 545, 549, etc.
11   Todua 1995, 383, 411, 425, 474, 476, etc.

under the Persian rule. The catholicoi of Georgia shared the rule over Georgian people with the kings of Bagratid dynasty, considered as *vālī*s subject to the *šāh*s of Persia,[12] whereas the Armenians had no other head except for the catholicos.

Historical background

The khanate of Yerevan, formed in the South Caucasus after the fall of the Afsharid rule over the region in the second half of the eighteenth century, was one of the weak, semi-independent state formations of the region. It fell sometimes under the predominance of local rulers and claimants to the throne of the *šāh* of Iran and sometimes of the kings of Eastern Georgia.[13] This khanate was formed on the basis of the former administrative unit of the *bīglarbīgī*[14] of Čoḫūr-e Saʿad[15] which was a part of the Safavid and Afsharid states. It maintained many of the characteristic features of Čoḫūr-e Saʿad, especially in its political-administrative structure. The *ḫān* of Yerevan held the title of 'bīglarbīg of Čoḫūr-e Saʿad of Iravān',[16] and many of the khanate's officials bore titles corresponding to those functioning in other former Iranian states in the region. The manuscript (Yerevan, Matenadaran, Collection of Manuscripts in Arabic Script (hereafter MCMA), 233) containing the correspondence (*monšaʿat*) of the *ḫān*s of Yerevan has information concerning the following officials functioning in the khanate: *monšī* (scribe), *vazīr* (minister), *monaǧǧem* (astronomer and astrologer), *motavallī* of *vaqfs* (the administrator of *vaqfs*), *naqīb*,[17] *qāżī*,[18]

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12 *Vālī* had the highest rank among the border *amīr*s, who belonged to ancient families of hereditary rulers and, in spite of their incorporation in the Safavid state, enjoyed functional independence (Minorsky 1943, 112).

13 Hakobyan 2021, 82–99.

14 The *bīglarbīgī* were the administrative units governed by the *bīglarbīg*, the Governors-General appointed by the central government to the frontier regions of the Safavid State.

15 Čoḫūr-e Saʿad was a term applied to the regions of Ayrarat and Yerevan between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries. As considered by H. Pʿapʿazyan, the term had originated from the name of Amīr Saʿad, a fourteenth-century leader of Turkoman tribes living in Erasxadzor, Surmali and adjacent regions (Pʿapʿazyan 1960, 25). The *bīglarbīgī* of Čoḫūr-e Saʿad was a frontier administrative unit including the regions of Yerevan, Nakhchivan, Mākū, Zārūzbīl, Sadarak, fortresses of Bāyazīd and Maghāzberd (Minorsky 1943, 101, 165–166).

16 Yerevan, Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate (hereafter MAC), folder 1f, doc. 1375, Kostikyan 2008, 179, 324.

17 According to the *Tazkirat al-muluk*, 'the duty of a *naqīb* is to fix the assessment of the guilds (*aṣnāf*)' (Minorsky 1943, 83).

18 *Qāżī*, judge who decided all cases involving questions of civil and criminal law according to the *šarīʿa*.

šayḫ ul-islām,[19] *īšīk aġāsī* (usher)[20]—offices which also existed in the Iranian states of the Safavids and Afsharids.

Teymuraz II and Erekle II, the kings of Eastern Georgia tried to subdue Yerevan khanate to their rule beginning from the end of 1740s and by the early 1750s they had succeeded in appointing their representative as local *ḫān*.[21] However, as evident from the documents kept in the Matenadaran,[22] later, in 1753–1756, Yerevan khanate was governed by Ḫalil Ḫan, appointed as local *bīglarbīg* by Āzād Ḫān Afghān, a claimant to the throne of the *šāh* of Iran who had control over the territory between Ardabīl and Urmia by 1752.[23]

At present the following chronology of the *ḫāns* of Yerevan is available for the period from 1755 to 1805: Ḥasan ʿAlī Ḫān (1755–1759), Ḥosayn ʿAlī Ḫān, the latter's brother (1759–1783), succeeded by Ḥosayn ʿAlī Ḫān's sons Ġolam ʿAlī Ḫān (1783–1784) and Moḥammad Ḫān (1784–1805)[24].

As observed by O. Markova, the *ḫān* of Yerevan paid taxes to Erekle II, king of Georgia since 1759.[25] This privilege, however, was challenged by Karīm Ḫān Zand, who also received taxes from the *ḫān* of Yerevan in the period 1763–1765.[26]

Later the relations between the king of Eastern Georgia and the *ḫān* of Yerevan much resembled the relations between an Iranian suzerain and his vassal: the king sent robes of honour (*ḫalʿat*) to the *ḫān*, who in his turn sent the king taxes, *pīškeš* gifts[27] and military aid in the form of troops. The manuscript includes also a petition, written to the king on behalf of the representatives of the local elite with a request to appoint the son of the late *ḫān* to his father's post as his successor.[28]

The catholicoi of Holy Ējmiacin tried to withstand the challenges of the period. They communicated with the powers of the region and protected the

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19   *Šayḫ ul-Islām*, the chief clergyman of a given locale. Each great provincial administrative centre had its *šayḫ ul-Islām*, who headed the religious judicial council. *Šayḫ ul-Islāms* gave resolutions (*fatvá*, a judicial or religious decision that can be produced by a *moftī* and *šarʿ*) on various questions which carried the power of law and were to be executed within the boundaries of the province or region in question (Pʿapʿazyan 1959, 227).
20   MCMA мs 233, ff. 64v, 82v, 85r, 87r, 88v, 105v, 106r, 118v, 135v, 166v.
21   Hakobyan 2021, 84–87.
22   MAC, folder 1g, doc. 1326, folder 1c, docs 409, 411, 422.
23   Perry 1989, 173.
24   Hakobyan 2021, 38–39.
25   Markova 1966, 129.
26   Hakobyan 2021, 96.
27   MCMA, мs 233, ff. 162v, 172v, 178r, 183r, 222r. See about such reciprocity expressed in gift giving in Safavid Iran in Matthee 2001.
28   MCMA, мs 233, ff. 190r–191v.

rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin, their religious in-
stitution and residence with various decrees obtained from local *ḫān*s and
the claimants to the throne of *šāh* of Iran, on the basis of previous decrees of
Iranian rulers. In the second half of the eighteenth century under the rule of
the *ḫān*s of Yerevan, the Armenian Apostolic Church and its religious leaders
in some respects maintained the safe and privileged position they had enjoyed
during the reign of the monarchs of Iran.[29] The position of the Mother See
and its catholicoi was supported by the existence of an Armenian population
in the khanate, which, as avowed by G. P. Bogolyubov, the Russian consul
in Iran, greatly exceeded the number of Muslims there in 1770,[30] and played
an important role in the defense of the khanate. The documentary sources
of the second half of the eighteenth century also present evidence of an Ar-
menian majority in the city of Yerevan.[31] According to the report of Stepan
Burnašev, a Russian military agent in Georgia in the 1780s, Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān*
of Yerevan could muster 5,000 soldiers, one third of whom were Armenian.[32]
Another factor supporting the firm position of the catholicoi of Holy Ēǰmiacin
was their economic power and financial resources accumulated from ecclesial
taxes gathered from the followers of the Armenian Apostolical church, from
charitable contributions received from wealthy Armenians and also from the
proceeds of its estates.

We have no copy or reliable evidence of the existence of any decree of
the *ḫān*s of Yerevan confirming the rights of the catholicoi and also no reliable
evidence on their existence, whereas we have the decrees of some powerful
claimants to the throne of *šāh* of Iran. There is Āzād *Ḫān*'s decree, confirming
the rights of Catholicos Alexander Byuzandacʻi[33] in 1754,[34] and that of Karīm
Ḫān Vakīl, confirming Simeon Erewancʻi[35] to the catholicosate in 1763.[36] Ḫalīl
Ḫān ruled the Yerevan khanate from 1752 until 1755 as the representative of
Āzād *Ḫān* while Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān*, the *ḫān* of Yerevan from 1759 to 1783, was
subject to Erekle II, King of Eastern Georgia.[37] The absence of *ḫān*s' decrees
regarding confirmation of catholicoi to their posts allows us to consider that the
catholicoi of Holy Ēǰmiacin did not require them, although there exist many

29   Bournoutian 1982, 32.
30   See Moscow, Archive of Foreign Policy of Russia, fund Russian-Persian Rela-
      tions 77/7, docs 111, 42–45, publ. in Čobanyan 2002, 152, n. 34.
31   Saġareli 1891, 434.
32   Burnašev 2020, 51 (tr.), 76 (text).
33   Aleksandr Byuzandacʻi was the Catholicos of Ēǰmiacin from 1753 until 1754.
34   MAC, folder 1f, doc. 1327.
35   Kostikyan 2008, doc. 49 (MAC, folder 1e, doc. 591).
36   Simeon Erewancʻi was the Catholicos of Ēǰmiacin from 1763 until 1780.
37   Hakobyan 2021, 38.

orders of the *ḫān*s concerning the *vaqf* estates,[38] tax exemption and other privileges of the Mother See and the catholicoi of Holy Ējmiacin.[39]

The abovementioned manuscript MCMA, ᴍꜱ 233 contains a copy of a decree, confirming the rights of Łukas as the Catholicos of Ējmiacin; however it contains an inaccuracy regarding the name of his predecessor: the decree names Avānis as the predecessor of the newly ordained catholicos, whereas in reality he succeeded Simeon Erewancʻi.[40] Apart from this, the language of the copy is much too long-winded, prolonged with eloquent expressions and epithets unusual for the *ḫān*s' decrees and; there is no such original document kept in the archive of the Matenadaran. The authenticity of the text is accordingly in considerable doubt.

Catholicoi Hakob Šamaxecʻi[41] and Simeon Erewancʻi, the two illustrious leaders of the Armenian Church, had understood the importance of the juridical foundations of the economic state of the Mother See. They had managed to obtain special decrees adumbrating the rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin and its subjects under the Muslim rule. Hakob Šamaxecʻi knew the Persian language well enough 'to prepare drafts (*mosavvade*) for the scribes' who would subsequently rework the petitions.[42] He assembled all the important issues of the rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin and its subjects in one petition confirmed by Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān*'s decree issued on 10 March 1760.[43] Simeon Erewancʻi knew not only Persian but also Ottoman Turkish, as he studied and classified almost all the documents referring to the estates and rights of the Ējmiacin monastery in his book 'Jambṛ' (Chambre). In 1763, after his election to the catholicos's throne, Simeon gave the decree to the confirmation of the same Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* of Yerevan and Karīm *Ḫān* Vakīl.[44] The renewed decree was needed for validating the legal status, rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, the catholicos and his subjects. Thus, the decree of Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* of Yerevan issued in 1760 to confirm the rights and privileges of the Catholicos and the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, stated in the petition of Hakob Šamaxecʻi consisting of 13 paragraphs was the prototype of the decree obtained from the same *ḫān* in 1663 by Catholicos Simeon Erewancʻi and presented in this article.

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38   *Vaqf*, land immobilized for some purpose. This status applied to lands and other estates donated to churches and mosques, which became the property of the church or mosque and were tax-exempt.
39   Regarding the *ḫān*s' decrees, see Kostikyan 2013, 111–117.
40   MCMA, ᴍꜱ 233, f. 85v.
41   Hakob Šamaxecʻi was the Catholicos of Ējmiacin in 1760–1763.
42   Ohanyan 2022, 76.
43   Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, archive, doc. 389, publ. in Kostikyan 2023, 10–21.
44   Ohanyan 2022, 176, 177.

Catholicos Simeon Erewancʻi, was one of the most outstanding figures of the Armenian Church, able to solve its problems and those of its community. He had even assumed the role of mediator during the crisis in the relations between the *ḫān* and his suzerain, Erekle II, the king of Kartli and Kakheti.[45] The importance of the contents of the document necessitated its confirmation by Karīm *Ḫān* Zand Vakīl[46], the ruler of Iran in order to ensure the protected position of the Catholicos and the Mother See in case of the establishment of his predominance over the territory of the Yerevan khanate. These documents were considered by later rulers of the Qajar dynasty and many of its points entered their decrees confirming the rights of the Armenian catholicoi until 1828 when after long wars the territory of the Yerevan khanate was annexed to the Russian Empire.[47]

Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate, folder 1h, doc. 1353

The original paper document MAC, folder 1h, doc. 1353 (figs 1, 2) measures 46.5×67 cm and consists of two parts attached together and written by different hands: the petition of Catholicos Simeon, written in *šikaste*, and the order of Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān*, written in calligraphic fine *nastaʿlīq*.

There is a slight difference in the wording of the two decrees obtained from Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* in 1760 and 1763 by Hakob Šamaxecʻi and Simeon Erewancʻi, respectively. We observe more differences between these two decrees and the decree obtained from Karīm *Ḫān* Vakīl in 1763,[48] where the petition is replaced with a general order containing fourteen paragraphs on the rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin and its subjects, and one point is added at the end concerning exemption from extraordinary taxes.

The petition of Simeon in MAC, folder 1h, doc. 1353 has nearly the same stylistic features as that of Hakob Šamaxecʻi: it contains almost the same grammatical and spelling mistakes, as well as the double plural words: (§ 10), عمالان (line 8, § 5) حكامان, (line 8) مقاصدها (line 7, 10), مراتبها (line 7) etc.[49] جوانبها (line 11), اشياها (§ 6), اجناسها (§ 6), ايامها (§ 6), جوانبها (§ 6).

45 Hakobyan 2021, 118.

46 See Karīm *Ḫān*'s decree published in Kostikyan 2008, doc. 49.

47 Kostikyan 2021, docs 8, 13, 31.

48 Compare the text of the represented document with Karīm *Ḫān*'s decree published in Kostikyan 2008, doc. 49.

49 *Marāteb-hā* is the double plural of the word *martabe* (pl. *marāteb*), 'circumstance, rank', where *hā* is the Persian plural ending added to the Arabic plural form of the word. The same occurs in *ḥadam-hā* (*ḥādem*, pl. *ḥadam*, 'servant'), *ašyā-hā* (*šay*, pl. *ašyāʿ*,'thing'), *aǧnās-hā* (*ǧens*, pl. *aǧnās*, 'goods, products'), *ayyām-hā* (*yawm*, pl. *ayyām*, 'day'), *ǧavāneb-hā* (*ǧāneb*, pl. *ǧavāneb*, 'side, part'), *ʿom-māl-ān* (*ʿāmel*, pl. *ʿommāl*, 'agent, functionary'), *ḥokkām-ān* (*ḥākem*, pl. *ḥokkām*, 'governor, judge'), *maqāṣed-hā* (*maqṣad*, pl. *maqāṣed*, 'intent, aim').
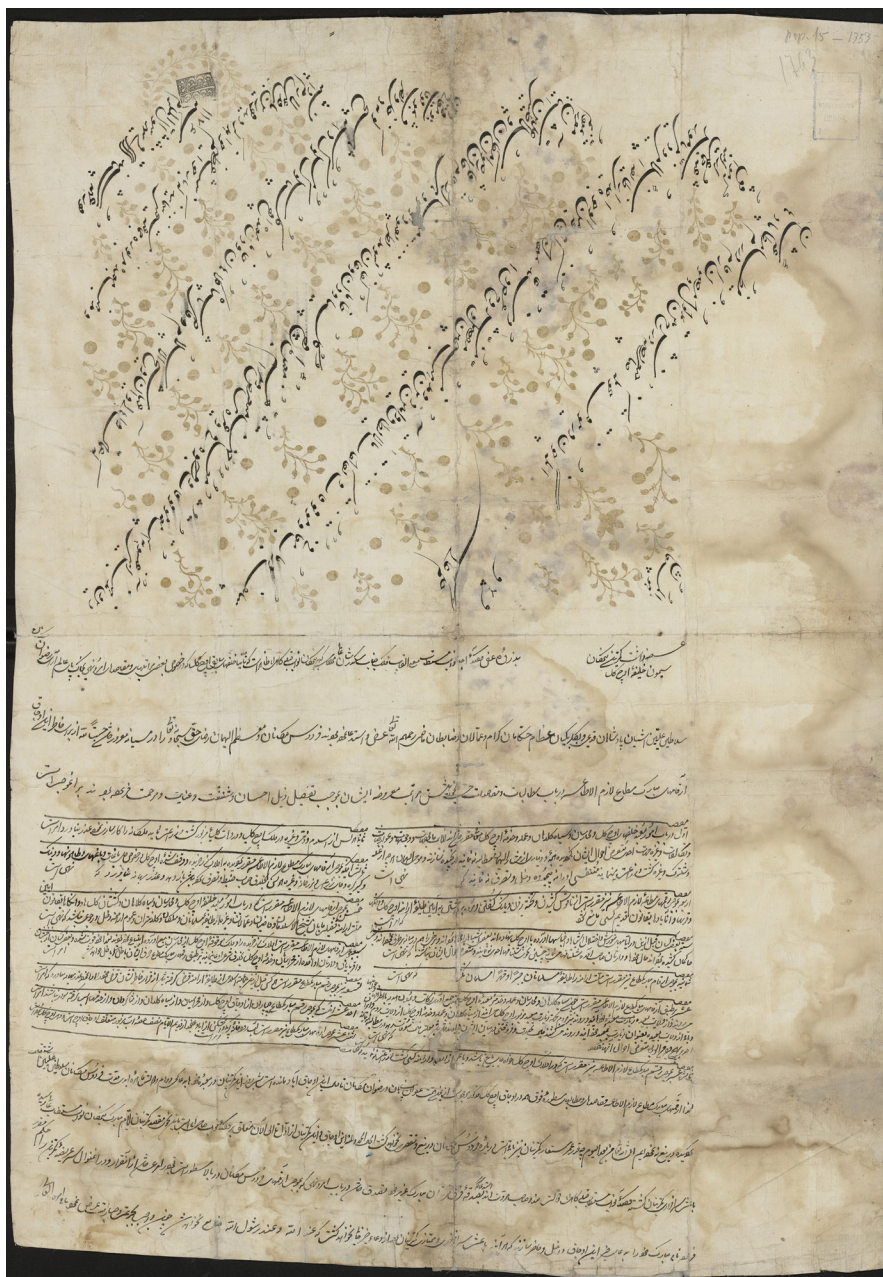
Fig. 1. Yerevan, Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate, folder 1h, doc. 1353, recto: upper part: order, lower part: petition.
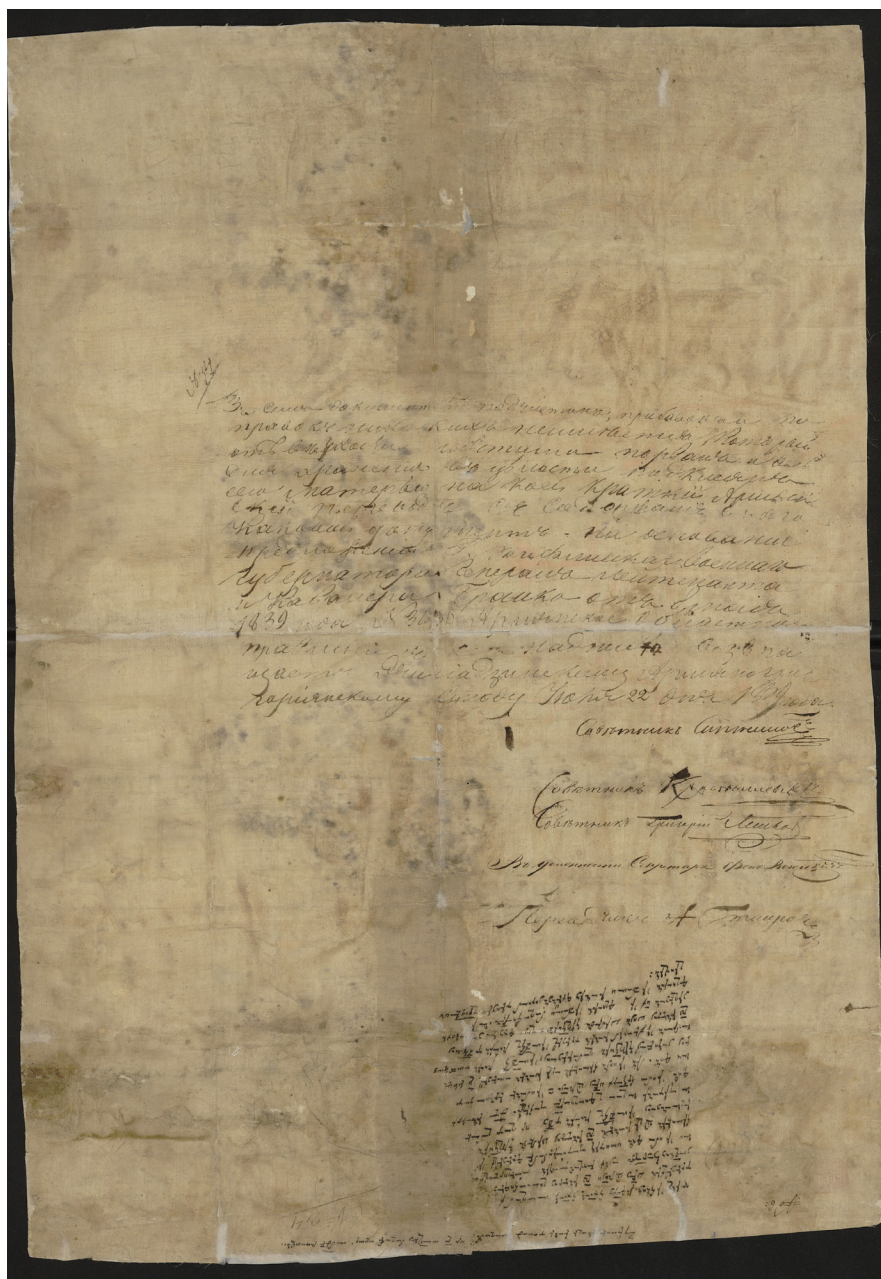
Fig. 2. Yerevan, Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate, folder 1h, doc. 1353, verso: notes on the content in Russian and Armenian.

The Persian text

[The part of the order]

1　حکم عالی شد آنکه چون درینوقت بنحویکه صاحبعریضه در شرح متن بمدلول و مضمون ارقام درر نظام مطاعه پادشاهان.

2　سلف در باب معافی و موقوفات و تکالیفات بالانطباق و آیین دین و مذهب مسیحیان مفصل و مشروح عرض و استدعا نموده اند که بهیچ وجه من الوجوه احدی از طایفهٔ اسلامی و ذمی بامور شرعیه جماعت ارامنه که موافق

3　دین و مذهب آیین عیسویه است معیه موقوفات و وجوه معافی و غیره جهات متعرض و مزاحم معبده اوج کلیسیا و خادمان و عاکفان نشوند نظر بقیود اوامر و مناهی ارقام خاقان رضوان مکان و سلاطین علیین آشیان آشیان مقرر نمودیم

4　که عمال و اهالی و اعیان و شیخ الاسلام و قاضی با سیاه کلاهان و خادمان معبده اوج کلیسیا سلوک مسلوک داشته هیچ گونه دخل و تصرف موقوفات و معافی و دین

5　و مذهب معبده مزبوره و جماعه مسیحین ننمایند که بازخواست عظیم خواهد گردید و درین باب قدغن لازم دانسته

6　و در عهده شناسند تحریرا فی شهر شوال المکرم سنه ۱۱۷۶ [مهر]: /// حسین علی

[The part of the petition]

7　عرضه داشت کمترین بندگان سیمون خلیفهٔ اوچ کلیسا بذروهٔ عرض وکلاء اجلاء نواب مستطاب معلی القاب سکندرشان عالی میرساند که بر بندگان نواب قبله گاهی ام ظاهر است که ثابتا" خلفهای سابق اوچ کلیسا که در خصوص بعضی مراتبهای و مقاصدهای امرونهی بخاکپای عالم آرای رضوان مکانان

8　سلاطین علیین آشیان پادشاهان قدیمی و بگلربیگیان عظام حکامان کرام و عمالان و ضابطان ماضی رحمهم الله تعالی عرض و استدعا نموده بودند فردوس مکانان و معظم الیهمان رضای حق سبحانه و تعالی را در میانه مفروز داشته حسبةالله از برای خاطر این اوجاق

9　ارقامهای مبارک مطاع لازم الاطاعه در باب مطالبات و مقاصدات حسب الخواهش مراتب معروضهٔ ایشان بموجب تفصیل ذیل احسان و شفقت و عنایت و مرحمت فرموده بودند برینموجب است:

§ 1　[50]مفصل اول در باب امور معبد خلفهای اوچ کلیسا و محارسان و سیاه کلاهان و عمله و خدمهٔ اوچ کلیسا معافی مقرر داشته اند از بابت مالوجهات و وجوهات و عوارضات و تکالیفات و غیره جهات احدی متعرض احوال ایشان نگردیده هبه[51] و دیناری از مشارالیهمان مطالبه نه نمایند و رنجیده نسازند و مومی الیهمان هرجه از غله و شلتوک و غیره کشت و زراعت می نمایند متنفسی اورا[52] نه پیموده دخل و تصرف نه نماید که نهی است.

§ 2　مفصل ثانی هر کس از اسلام و ذمی و غیره در ملک اوجاق اوچ کلیسا و در دهات کلیسا مزبور کشت و زراعت نماید ملکانه[53] را کارسازی نموده عذر نیاورد. امر است.

§ 3　مفصل ثالث اینکه بموجب ارقامهای مبارک مطاع لازم الاطاعه مقرر گردیده به املاک زرخریده و وقف شده اوچ کلیسا در خصوص جای باغات دباغیها و طاهونها و دینک و کرکره

50　Each point referring to a right or privilege is represented in the text separately in the sequence which we have also kept unaltered giving them successive number.

51　Should be حبه

52　Should be آنرا

53　Should be مالکانه

و جای زراعت و بزرخانه و غیره هرکس بخلاف حساب ضبط و تصرف کرده باشد باز دهد و عذر بهانه نیاورد که نهی است.

§ 4 مفصل اربعه بموجب رقمهای مطاعه لازم الاطاعه نیز مقرر است از ناقوس کشیدن و تخته زدن و بانک گفتن و مرده برداشتن به آیین طایفه ارامنه اوچ کلیسا و وانکها و قریها و آنابادها بقانون قدیم کسی مانع نشود که امر است.

§ 5 مفصل خمس بموجب ارقامهای لازم الاطاعه مقرر است که در باب امور معبد خلیفهٔ اوچ کلیسا و محارسان و سیاه کلاهان و کشیشان کلیساها و وانکها بقانون ایین ملت ارامنه فضیلت مآبان شیخ الاسلامان و قاضیان و عمالان و غیره مسلمانان و ملکان و کلانتران و عموم ارامنه دخل و رجوعی نباشند که نهی است.

§ 6 مفصل سته بعضی کسان قبل ازین در ایامهای شورش و اختلال اشیاها و اجناسها آورده با اوچ کلیسا نهاده اند بعضی اشیاها را خودها برده اند و برخی را هم در میانه برطرف نموده اند و بعضی را نیز حاکمان کشیده برده اند حال خودها و وارثان صاحب آمده شلتاقها می نمایند چنین نحوی شلتاقها احدی نه نمایند و متعرض احوال ایشان نباشند که نهی است.

§ 7 صد سبعه بموجب ارقامهای لازم الاطاعه مقرر است املاک زرخریده را و ملک موقوفهٔ اوچ کلیسا از محارسان بیع آورده ابتیاع نموده بودند بخدا خود فوت شده و بعضی کسان از خیشان[54] و اقربایان و وارثان او آمده از محراسیایان و خدمه اوچ کلیسا بخلاف شرعی ادعا مینمایند برطبق رقمهای مبارک مطاع حرف ایشان باطل است و باطل خواهد شد امر است.

§ 8 مفصل ثمانیه بموجب ارقم مبارک مطاع نیز مقرر است ملت ارامنه را طایفهٔ مسلمانان جبراً و قهراً مسلمان نکنند که نهی است

§ 9 مفصل تسعه نیز بموجب رقم مبارک مطاع مقرر است هر کس قبل ازین جماعة اسلامی از طایفه ارامنه قرض گرفته باشد از قرار خاطرنشان قرضشان خود را ادا نموده عذر بهانه نیاورد که امر است.

§ 10 مفصل عشر برطبق ارقامهای مبارک مطاع لازم الاطاعه مقرر است چون سیاه کلاهان و محارسان عمله و خدمه معبدهٔ اوچ کلیسا بجهة جمع آوری زکات و بردن هدیه به اطرافها و جوانبها می روند و از ولایت بعیده نیز مردم بجهة زیارت معبد مزبور اوچ کلیسا می آیند از سیاه کلاهان و عمله و خدمهٔ اوچ کلیسا و از ولایت روم و ایران و باقی از ولایت بعیده بعنوان زیارت بمبعد خود آیند و روند می کنند مال تجارت و فروختنی در میان ایشان همراه نه داشته باشند بعلت مال سوقات رهداری مطالبه نه نمایند احدی بهیچ وجه من الوجوه متعرض احوال آنها نگردد که نهی است.

§ 11 مفصل احد عشر اینست که بموجب رقم مبارک مطاع چپپاران[55] از اوجاق اوچ کلیسا و از محارسان و از سیاه کلاهان و از شاگردان و از خدمها اسب گرفته سوار نباشند امر است

§ 12 مفصل اثنی عشر بموجب ارقامهای مبارک مطاع نیز مقرر است آب رودخانه کربی و اشکن از اباوعنجد از قدیم الایام نصف حصهٔ آب مزبور متعلق اوجاق اوچ کلیسا است و دامن اوچ کلیسا بوده است امر است.

§ 13 مفصل ثالث عشر بموجب رقم مبارک مطاع لازم الاطاعه نیز مقرر است در املاک اوچ کلیسا خواه جای باغ باشد و یا غیره از اسلام و ارامنه کسی کشت و زراعت نه نماید که نهی است

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54 Should be خویشان.
55 The more accepted Persian form is چاپار.

بیضه

١٠ بهذا ارقامهای مطاعهٔ لازم الاطاعه مقاصدهای و مطالبهای مسطوره فوق همه در اوجاق اوچ کلیسیا مذکور موجود است از عین همت غفران پناهان و رضوان مکانان تا حال این اوجاق آباد مانده است شب روز این کمترینان بدعاگویی دوام دولت قاهره ابدی مدت فردوس مکانان سلاطین علیین اشتغال

١١ گردیده دریغ نه نموده ایم انشاء الله تعالی من بعد الیوم چه قدر عمر مستعار کمترینان نیز باقی است در بارهٔ فردوس مکانان دریغ و تقصیری نخواهد گشت الهی گشت این اوجاق و ائمه این اوجاق و این کمترینان از اول تا الی الان متعلق بروکلاء نواب صاحبی ام است باین نحوی مقصد کمترینان ایام مبارک بندگان نواب مستطاب عالی رسیده

١٢ باعث سرافرازی کمترینان گشته وکلا نواب مستطاب قبله گاهی ام دولتومند و صاحب مروت اند استدعا آنکه بصدقه فرق فرقدان مبارک عزیز خود تصدق داشته در باب امر و نهی که بموجب ارقامهای فردوس مکانان در بالا مسطور است بوده توجه را مرعی داشته از آنقرار و در آنمنوال سر عریضهٔ کمترین را حکم مقرر

١٣ فرموده نام مبارک خود را بدعای خیر این اوجاق داخل و حاضر سازند که هر آینه باعث سرافرازی و ممتاز کمترینان بوده از دعای خیر خالی نخواهد گشت که عند الله و عنده رسول الله ضایع نخواهد شد. چون واجب بجرعت و جسارت عرض نمود. مافی امره العالی

English translation

[The part of the order]

The high order was issued since at that time the petitioner applied in the manner stated in the text and having represented the contents of the *raqams*[56] of the former *šāh*s, like necklace of pearls, about the *mo'āfī*,[57] *mawqufāt*[58] and dues corresponding to the faith and religion of the Christians in detail in the petition, asked that none of the Muslim and Ẕemmī[59] people infringe upon the religious affairs of the Armenians, who are of Christian faith, Ūč Kelīsā Monastery[60] and its servants. (They) should observe the instructions, orders and prohibitions of the late monarchs dwelling in paradise. We ordered the *'āmels*,[61] the high officials, the *šayḫ ul-islām* and *qāżī* to treat the clergymen

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56 *Raqam*, term used in the period for all kind of orders in the period.
57 *Mo'āfī*, (tax) exemption, tax immunity, freeing from state taxes, sometimes from some of them. This is synonym to *mosallam, tarḫān* (P'ap'azyan 1956, 114).
58 *Mawqūfāt* pl. of *mawqūfa*, synonym to *awqāf*, plural of *vaqf*: an endowed property to pious uses. So were called the lands and other estates donated to churches and mosques, which turned the property of the church or mosque.
59 *Ẕemmī*, member of a protected community in Muslim countries, i.e. a Jew, Christian, or Sabaean, who paid *jizya* for following his faith.
60 Ūč Kelīsā (Turkish 'three churches') was the name used for Holy Ējmiacin in Persian chancellery.
61 *'Āmel*, 'tax-collector'. They were the officials who registered all the taxable objects, measured the sown areas and orchards, and listed all the ablebodied adults pursuant to the decision on how much tax should be levied on the object.

and servants of Ūč Kelīsā with no interference in the *vaqfs, moʿafī* and religious matters of the monastery and Christian community, or else they will be strictly punished. This is a strict order and their duty. Written in the blessed month of Šavāl of the year 1176.[62] [Seal]: /// Ḥosayn ʿAlī.

[The part of the petition]
The Petition of Sīmūn Ḫalīfa of Ūč Kelīsā, the Most Humble Servant
(He) brings to the notice of the high representatives (*vakīls*) of His Excellency, exalted with the titles deserving the dignity of Alexander (of Macedon), that, as it is evident to the servants of His Excellency My Patron, earlier the former *ḫalīfas* of Ūč Kelīsā having applied to the late monarchs, dwelling in paradise, the great *bīglarbīgs*, graceful *ḥākems*,[63] *ʿāmels, żābeṭs*[64] of the past, may God have mercy on them, for some purposes and beseeched them, they, for the sake of this sanctuary (*ūǧāq*); may they be blessed, and Glory be to Him, have granted high *raqams* concerning their problems and matters, expressed in their requests, that were to be practiced as follows:
- The first section referring to the affairs of Ūč Kelīsā monastery was the *moʿāfī* of its catholicoi, deacons and other clergymen, workers and servants: no one was to hinder them, no money and nothing were to be demanded from them as for *māloǧahāt*,[65] *voǧūhāt*,[66] *ʿavāreżāt*[67] and other (taxes) and no trouble caused therefore. Whatever they sow and cultivate, corn, rice or other (cereal crops), nobody may measure and appropriate it. It is forbidden.
- The second section is that whenever someone of the Muslim, *Ẕemmī* or other (community) tilled the ground and cultivated in the *molk*[68] of Ūč

62 15 April–14 May 1763.
63 *Ḥākem*, 'governor, judge'.
64 *Żābeṭ*, 'revenue collector, controller; bailiff'. In the eighteenth century *żābeṭs* were the tenants, who paid some money to the state treasury in order to have the right of getting the taxes of a certain object (Pʿapʿazyan 1959, 215).
65 *Māloǧahāt*, from *māl* ('property', here property tax) and *ǧahāt* ('sides, places, fields', here tax for cultivated lands). These two taxes were always counted together and levied from the village community in a general sum, forming the major part of the taxes levied from *raʿīyyats*, and being fixed. Thus, very often this term was also used instead of the other taxes imposed to the object. In this case the term was considered a general tax term (Pʿapʿazyan 1956, 112).
66 *Voǧūhāt* (*tavaǧohāt, motavaǧǧehāt*): the double plural of *vaǧh* ('sum'), meant all taxes, levied in cash (Pʿapʿazyan 1956, 121).
67 *ʿAvāreż, ʿavāreżāt* ('dues, tolls'), compulsory work of *raʿīyyats* during various extraordinary accidents. This duty was often substituted with the tax paid in cash (Pʿapʿazyan 1956, 105).
68 *Molk*, 'property, estate, land or other inherited or real estate' (Pʿapʿazyan 1956, 115).

Kelīsā Sanctuary and its villages, he was to pay the *mālekāne*[69] without any excuse. It is ordered.

- The third section: it was ordered by the blessed compulsory *raqams* that whoever had seized the purchased *molks* and *vaqfs* of Ūč Kelīsā, particularly its gardens, tanneries, mills, flails, *karkaras,*[70] seed-houses, cultivated lands and other (property), was to return them with no refusal [to return] under any pretext. It is forbidden.

- The fourth section: it is ordered by the compulsory *raqams* that nobody is allowed to forbid ringing church bells, calling to church service and prayer, and the burial of the dead according to the rules of the Armenian people (subject to) Ūč Kelīsā, in the monasteries and villages as it was in olden times. It is ordered.

- The fifth section is the order concerning the affairs of the *ḫalīfa*, the deacons and clergymen of Ūč Kelīsā, and other monasteries and churches. By the compulsory *raqams* the wise *šayḫ ul-islāms, qāẓīs, ʿāmels* and other Muslims, *maleks* and *kalāntars*[71] and all Armenians are not allowed to interfere (in their affairs). It is prohibited.

- The sixth section: some people have brought their goods and possessions to Ūč Kelīsā and left them there. Some of these things they have taken back later, others were destroyed, and some of them were seized by the *ḫākems*. At present they, themselves or their heirs have come and committed *šeltāqs.*[72] Nobody has the right to commit such *šeltāqs* and cause them (the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, the catholicoi and the monks) hindrance: it is forbidden.

- The seventh section is based on the orders concerning the *vaqf* or the *molks* of Ūč Kelīsā bought by the late deacons, unlawfully claimed and demanded by their relatives and heirs from the clergymen and servants of Ūč Kelīsā. According to the blessed high *raqams* their claims are invalid and should be considered void. This is ordered.

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69 *Mālekāne,* the land tax paid to the landlord (*mālik*), synonym to *bāhričah, molk*. Its size varied from 1/10 to 2/10 of the crops, depending upon agreement signed between the owner and cultivators of the land.

70 *Karkarah*, work-house where cotton was processed.

71 *Kalāntar*, an official at the head of the town community and overseer of the wards of a city.

72 The term *šeltāq* or *šeltāqāt* had different meanings depending on historical reality and era, as an illegal, unlawful tax (but only from the point of view of Islamic law) or extra taxing, as illegality, pretext, calumny, robbery and oppression. The cases of *šeltāq* were frequent in the eighteenth century and were widely practiced by Persian officials during Nādir *Šāh*'s rule as well (Kostikyan and Margaryan 2024, 172–173).

- The eighth section: it is ordered by the blessed high *raqams* that the Muslims are not allowed to convert the Armenians to Islam by force. It is prohibited.
- The ninth section: it is ordered by the blessed high *raqam* that whoever from Muslim community has taken debt from the Armenians must fix in his mind that he has to return it with no refusal at any pretext. It is ordered.
- The tenth section: it is ordered by the blessed, high, compulsory *raqams* that whenever the clergymen and servants of Ūč Kelīsā travel in different directions to gather the *zakāt*[73] and presents, and also people come from far regions to visit their monastery and have no goods for trading and selling with themselves, no *rahdārī*[74] is allowed to be levied for the presents and no one has the right to cause them hindrance. It is prohibited.
- The eleventh section: according to the blessed high *raqam* the messengers (*čapārs*) are not allowed to seize and ride horses from the sanctuary of Ūč Kelīsā. It is ordered.
- The twelfth section: it is ordered by the compulsory blessed *raqams* that the half of the water of the river of Karbī and Ošakan belongs to Ūč Kelīsā Sanctuary and should be under its disposal. This is ordered.
- The thirteenth section: it is ordered by the blessed compulsory *raqam* that no one of Muslims or Armenians is allowed to sow and cultivate in the *molks* of Ūč Kelīsā, be it a garden or other (estate). It is prohibited.
  Vacant.

All of these compulsory *raqams* with the following items and issues are kept in Ūč Kelīsā Sanctuary and owing to the efforts of the late (monarchs), dwelling in the Paradise, the Mother See has remained in welfare and these humble servants—praying for the endurance of the everlasting glorious state of the monarchs, dwelling in paradise without any stint, and henceforth, too, with the help of the Almighty, will do so for the rest of their lives, since thanks to the will of God and Imāms this sanctuary from the beginning up to now belongs to the *vakīls* of His Excellency my Patron and He complies with this purpose honoring this most humble (servant). Since the *vakīls* of His Excellency my Patron are generous and kind, (our) request is to have mercy like the highest blessed alms and observe (the request) writing the corresponding order above the petition and including His good name in the blessings of this sanctuary. This will certainly honor and distinguish these humble servants and blessings will not be vain before God and the Prophet. We had the courage to apply because it was necessary. Due to the highest order!

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73   *Zakāt*, *zakvat* are legal alms paid in the size of 1/40th part to the church or mosque.
74   *Rāhdārī*, customs tax.

Content analysis of the text

The petition contains the annotations of the rights and privileges granted to the Mother See and Catholicoi of Holy Ējmiacin by the decrees of the *šāh*s of Safavid and Afšarid dynasties. The main task of the document is to secure a legal basis for the socio-economic power and position of the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin, its catholicoi and the safety of their subjects. Therefore, many of the paragraphs contain statements aimed at securing the free flow of its revenues and protecting it from any encroachment on the part of the rulers and officials of the province.

One of the important privileges of the Mother See was its tax exemption (*moʿafī*), legalized by the royal decrees. It is no wonder, therefore, that the statement on this issue was the first point mentioned in the petition, and another point on this matter was added in the decree obtained from Karīm Ḫān Zand in the same year of 1763.[75]

The document affirms the exemption of the Mother See from taxes *māloğahāt, voğūhat* and *avāreẓāt*.[76] The extent of the Mother See's tax exemption differs at various stages of Persian rule. In the first half of the seventeenth century the *vaqf* estates of the Mother See were freed from all state taxes, and only its purchased estates (*molks*) were taxed.[77] However, in the second half of the seventeenth century the *vaqf* estates were also taxed and only the unlawful demands and tax extortion were prohibited by the decree of *Šāh* Soleymān issued in 1674.[78] The same statement is repeated in the decree of *Šāh* Solṭān Ḥosayn issued in 1712.[79] Only partial tax exemption from *māliyye*[80] for the use of one plough and *čūpānbīkī*[81] for keeping sheep (in the amount of 47.694 *dīnār* of *māloğahāt* and 52250 *dīnār* of *čūpānbīkī*) were granted to the catholicos in 1638 and 1647, 1659 by the Safavid government[82], and later in 1712 the tax exemption of *māliyye* for the two plough and of *čūpānbīkī* for keeping 500 sheep were confirmed by the decree of *Šāh* Solṭān Ḥosayn.[83]

In 1735, after the establishment of the rule of Nādir *Šāh* Afšār over the region, a survey of the estates of the Mother See was carried and its tax exemption was fixed in a general amount of 106,910 *dīnār* and annually the

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75   Kostiyan 2008, doc. 49.
76   See § 1, notes 66–68
77   Pʻapʻazyan 1959, 60–61.
78   Kostikyan 2005, doc. 39.
79   Ibid. doc. 73.
80   *Māliyye, māliyyāt*, a variant of *māl* registered since the fifteenth century; in the eighteenth and nineteenth century it became more common than *māl* or *māloğahat*.
81   *Čūpānbīkī*, tax levied mostly in cash money for keeping livestock.
82   Pʻapʻazyan 1959, docs 29, 34, Kostikyan 2005, doc. 8.
83   Kostikyan 2005, doc. 74.

sum of 175,000 *dīnār* was to be paid to the *šāh* by the catholicos for all 19 monasteries of Yerevan region.[84] In 1753 after a new survey of the estates and income of the Mother See accomplished by the order of Āzād Ḫān, who had subjugated the khanate of Yerevan, the tax-exemption was fixed in the amount of 107,100 *dīnār* and Ējmiacin was taxed with a sum of 109,125 *dīnār*, and an additional sum of 175,000 *dīnār* was imposed for the monasteries of the region.[85] Two years later Āzād Ḫān reduced the tax amount added to the sum assigned during Nādir *Šāh*'s rule equal to 175,000 *dīnār*,[86] and shortly afterwards abolished this sum as well, as it was levied for the monasteries, ruined in the period.[87]

Thus, § 1 secured this general tax-exempted state of the Mother See. This point is present in the decree obtained by the efforts of Hakob Šamaxecʻi, who managed to legalize the tax-exemption after the *ḫān* of Yerevan having profited from the vacancy of catholicos's throne[88] had imposed new taxes upon the Mother See and levied the sum of 175,000 *dīnār* for the ruined monasteries[89].

§§ 2, 3, 7, 12, 13 were intended to protect the property and estates of the Mother See. They state of the necessity of payment of landlord tax, called *mālekāne*, by those who cultivate its land property and prohibit any encroachment upon any kind of property of the Mother See: land, garden, mill, flail-house, oil-pressing house, water resources, etc. § 7 is logically continuous with these issues as it considers unlawful all the pretensions and claims of the former owners of the estates belonging to the Mother See.

This was one of the essential issues and a matter of great importance for the Mother See as it was the basis of its economic strength and sovereignty, supplying resources for safe interrelations with Muslim powers of Iran and Turkey. Shortly before the establishment at Ējmiacin, the villages of Vałaršabat, Aštarak, Batʻrinj, Noragavitʻ, Ałavnatun, Tełenis-Kʻirajlu and Mułni were bought by Catholicos Grigor Makvecʻi.[90] Hence the Mother See sometimes increased its land property and sometimes lost some of its estates, preferring to convert many of them into its *vaqf* estates, which were legally

84 Kostikyan 2008, doc. 9.
85 MAC, f. 1d, doc. 414.
86 Kostikyan 2008, doc. 45.
87 Kostikyan 2005, doc. 44.
88 After the death of Catholicos Alexander in 1755, the new elected Catholicos Sahak refused to reside in Ējmiacin and was not officially anointed as catholicos. Accordingly, the Mother See of Holy Ējmiacin had no catholicos until 1759, when Hakob Šamaxecʻi was elected and anointed as catholicos of all Armenians there.
89 Ohanyan 2022, 187.
90 Pʻapʻazyan 1968, doc. 5.

more protected.[91] By the time of Simeon Erewanc'i, Mother See had land estates in the following villages: Vałaršabat, Aštarak, Ełvard, Mułni, Mastara, Ałavnatun, Ošakan, Fṙanganoc', as well as orchards and gardens in Tabriz and Dehkharqān some of which were returned to Ēǰmiacin by the efforts of this catholicos.[92]

Water resources being necessary for irrigation and cultivation in Yerevan province were also considered important and listed in § 12. By the mid-eighteenth century, owing to the efforts of some catholicoi, the Mother See had increased the water supplies needed for its land property. Catholicos Simeon describes the water resources built and bought by the catholicoi and various encroachments on them, which Mother See withstood successfully.[93] One important measure in this direction was taken by Catholicos P'ilip'os (1633–1655). He organized building activities to increase the water of Karbi River and irrigate the fields of the Mother See, and afterwards applied to *Šāh* 'Abbās II for a royal decree confirming the Mother See's possession of the half of the water of the canal.[94]

The right of free performance of the church service, ringing church bells and religious rites, stated in § 4, was one of the privileges of the Armenian Church under the rule of Iranian states attested in various Armenian sources as well as by European travelers of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[95] This right was fixed in the *fatvás* and royal decrees issued by Safavid and Afsharid rulers.[96]

As stated above, the high position and authority of the catholicos of Ēǰmiacin and expressed also in his title was outlined and affirmed in the decrees issued by the Safavid *šāh*s.[97] Catholicos Łazar Jahkec'i even received a special decree of Nādir *Šāh* issued in 1741, forbidding interference of the local officials in matters relating to the faith of Armenians.[98] This catholicos likewise succeeded in receiving another decree of Ibrāhīm *Šāh* Afšār issued in 1748, prohibiting the interference of the *šayḫ ul-islām* and *qāžī* of the Yerevan region in the Armenians' legal affairs, and leaving the duty of their regulation

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91   For a more detailed survey of the land and other property of Holy Ēǰmiacin see the study of the history of economic state of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin 'Jambr' by Simeon Yerevanc'i (Ohanyan 2022).
92   Kostikyan 2008, doc. 29.
93   Ohanyan 2022, 230–239.
94   MAC, f. 1c, doc. 1054.
95   Arakel of Tabriz, Book of History, by G. Bournoutian, Mazda Publisher, 2010, 54–57. T'ajiryan 2017, 20–23, 54, 135–136, 143–144, 156.
96   Kostikyan 2005, docs 28, 31, 34, 37. Kostikyan 2008, docs 14, 20, 31.
97   Kostikyan 2005, docs 56, 57, 69.
98   Kostikyan 2008, doc. 20.

to the catholicos.[99] § 5 confirms the high position of the catholicos and forbids any interference of any of local officials in the religious matters relating to the Armenian Church and the monasteries.

§ 6 refers to the troublesome period (1724–1734) following the fall of the Safavid rule over the region, when it was conquered by the Ottoman troops. It states that many of local inhabitants had delivered their property to Holy Ēǰmiacin and left the region. Then, having returned they began to demand property from the monastery, which, however, had already been partially returned or lost for various reasons. This problem was also raised by Catholicos Łazar Jahkecʻi in a decree obtained in 1740 from Reżā Qulī Mīrzā, the son of Nādir *Šāh* and the viceroy of Iran during the *šah*'s campaign in India. The contents of the decree show that the disputes in question primarily related to the property of the tribes moved by *Šāh* Tahmāsb II at the end of his unsuccessful campaign against Ottoman troops in Yerevan province.[100]

Forced islamization of *Ẕemmīs* was forbidden in *ʿaqd al-Ẕemme*, the main document defining the status of a *Ẕemmī*.[101] However, violations of this point were not rare in the early modern Islamic states of the Middle East, and the khanates of Transcaucasia were not an exception.

Due to some special matters Safavid *Šāh* ʿAbbās I and his successors stimulated the conversion of Christians to Islam through economic incentives and sometimes also by force.[102] A significant number of such cases are described by the Armenian historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[103] The catholicoi, accordingly made every effort to receive royal decrees forbidding forced Islamization of the Armenians.[104] This is why this point was considered necessary to include in the petition as § 8.

§ 9 differs slightly from the corresponding point in the document obtained by Catholicos Hakob Šamaxecʻi. It states the importance of repaying the debts taken by the Muslims from the Armenians. While the paragraph in the document obtained by Catholicos Hakob indicates only the debts owed to 'the Armenians of Ūč Kelīsā', the Catholicos removed the term 'Ūč Kelīsā' and broadened the clause's meaning to indicate debts owed to the Armenians in general.

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99   Ibid. doc. 31.
100 Ibid. doc. 16.
101 See examples of such treaties in Ḥamīdallah 1999, 630–631, Pʻapʻazian 1956, 69–71.
102 Matthee 2005, 22–25, 27, 30.
103 Bournoutian 2004, 141–143, 234–239, Bournoutian 2005, 116–123, 260–261, Hasan Jalaleantcʻ 1868, 18.
104 Kostikyan 2005, doc. 35, Kostikyan 2008, docs 17, 30.

The repayment of the debts was a great problem for the Christians living in Muslim society. Fr. François Sanson, a French missionary who visited Iran during the latter half of the seventeenth century, observed that *šarīʿa* courts in general did not treat creditors fairly, allowing debtors to refuse to return the loaned money in spite of the promissory note certified by witnesses. If the indebted person refused his debt publically, the creditor had to prove that he had lent money by the evidence of 72 Muslim witnesses.[105] This was, to say the least, a difficult task for a Christian, since they were in an unequal legal position. Muslims enjoyed far more legal protection, and they could easily calumniate Christians in *šarīʿa* courts.[106] This problem was clearly an urgent one in Yerevan khanate as well, considering its inclusion in the document summarizing the rights of the Armenians.

The economic welfare of the Mother See depended also on its free communication with the Armenians living in Ottoman Turkey and Iran. It was therefore natural that the catholicoi of Ēǰmiacin would care much about the tax-free travel of their nuncios and other servants, as well as the visitation of its pilgrims; they accordingly obtained decrees of Safavid and Afsharid *šāhs* of Iran and claimants to the throne of the *šāh* of Iran on the issue.[107] In the second half of the eighteenth century the *ḫān* of Yerevan imposed a tax of one gold coin on each pilgrim to Ēǰmiacin.[108] Although it was forbidden by some rulers of the region, such as Āzād Ḫān and Moḥammad Ḥasan Ḫān in 1755 and 1757,[109] as well as by this decree, the tax put on the pilgrims continued to be levied even after the issue of this decree till the beginning of the nineteenth century.[110]

Horse of messenger (*asb-e čapār* or *čāpār*), levied as a tax by the messengers had appeared in Iran and the Caucasus region with permission of ruling powers as a consequence of the disruption of the postal service after the fall of the Safavid dynasty. Until the end of the decade the system of postal stations almost entirely came out of order. Only some stations still worked in the north of the country.[111] A messenger could take a horse wherever and from whomever he wished. The compensation for the horse was two reals, which could be reduced from his dues.[112]

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105 Sanson 1695, 193.
106 Minasyan 2017, 152.
107 Pʻapʻazyan 1959, doc. 27, Kostikyan 2005, doc. 9; Kostikyan 2008, docs 10, 15, 32, 43, 48.
108 Ałaneancʻ 1894, 104.
109 Kostikyan 2008, docs 43, 48.
110 MAC, folder 1d, docs 551, 556.
111 Floor 2001, 257.
112 Ibid.

The catholicoi Abraham Kretacʻi and Łazar Jahkecʻi succeeded in freeing Mother See and its clergymen travelling in Iran from the demands of horse of messenger with royal decrees issued in 1735, 1740, and 1748.[113] However, the fact that this problem was raised in the petition as § 11 indicates that it remained urgent also in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Conclusion

The study based on the decree of Ḥosayn ʿAlī *Ḫān* of Yerevan issued in 1763 and presented in the article with its original Persian text, English translation and content analysis, reveals the details of the rights and privileges of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin and its subjects under the rule of the *ḫāns* of Yerevan in the second half of the eighteenth century. At the same time, the contents of the decree indicate the most pressing issues faced by the catholicoi of Ēǰmiacin, the Armenian Church and its subjects in the period, matters which Catholicos Simeon Erewancʻi and his predecessor Hakob Šamaxecʻi had tried to address by obtaining the decrees from the regional authorities. The slight changes introduced in the petitionary section of the document by Simeon Erewancʻi were aimed at improvement of the contents of the 1760 decree obtained by Hakob Šamaxecʻi, in conformity with time and the interests of Holy Ēǰmiacin. The rights and privileges stated in thirteen clauses of the petition and confirmed with the *ḫān*'s order were based on the decrees of the Safavid and Afsharid *šāhs* and they were aimed at the juridical protection of the social economic welfare of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin and its community under the rule of the *ḫāns* of Yerevan. The document asserts the acknowledged juridical-political position of the Mother See of Holy Ēǰmiacin and the Armenian people in Yerevan khanate. It is a fine and original sample of *ḫān*'s decree produced in local chancellery, patterned after and legally based upon the decrees of the *šāhs* of Iran.

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113 Kostikyan 2008, docs 7, 10, 15, 32.

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Conference reports

From East to West:

Christian Literacy in the First Millennium: DeLiCaTe Workshop on Palaeography and Lectionaries

Hamburg, 18–19 March 2024

The creation of specific alphabetic scripts in the context of Christianisation in the early fifth century CE meant the beginning of literacy for three distinct ethnic groups in the Southern Caucasus: Armenians, Georgians, and the so-called 'Caucasian Albanians'. The development of these scripts during the subsequent centuries and the textual heritage preserved from those times are the object of the ERC project 'DeLiCaTe' ('The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories', PI Jost Gippert) hosted at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at the University of Hamburg since 2022. In 2024, Emilio Bonfiglio, Jost Gippert, Mariam Kamarauli, and Eka Kvirkvelia convened a workshop intended to put the Caucasian traditions in a wider context by focussing on the usage and evolution of majuscule letters as prevalent in most of the contemporary Christian manuscript cultures (Greek, Latin, Coptic, Gothic, etc.), and lectionaries, i.e. books containing the Biblical lections for liturgical use, as one of the most prominent type of manuscripts that were produced. .

The first part of the conference was dedicated to Palaeography – Majuscules and Their Development. Giuseppe De Gregorio (Bologna) opened the discussion by presenting a brief methodological overview involving the historical development of Greek majuscule handwritings in late antiquity and early Byzantine era, starting from the third/fourth century until around the tenth century in his paper entitled '"Se non è vero, è molto ben trovato". Some Remarks on Greek Majuscule Handwritings'. The challenges of Coptic palaeography, in particular as far as the attempts to establish a viable typology for the development of Coptic handwriting styles before the ninth century, were in the focus of the paper by Alin Suciu (Göttingen), 'New Perspectives on the Palaeography of Coptic Literary Manuscripts: Survey of Datable Book Hands and their Historical Development'. Dali Chitunashvili (Tbilisi) explored the trends and types of changes in graphemes found in ancient Georgian manuscripts dating from the fifth to the tenth centuries in her talk 'Palaeography as a Basis for the Dating of Manuscripts (Georgian *Asomtavruli*)'. The aim of the

paper by Emilio Bonfiglio (Hamburg), 'New Manuscript Evidence for the De-velopment of the Armenian Majuscule Script', was to revisit and problematise the earliest Armenian manuscript material and what is often considered the earliest script—the *erkʻatagir* or Armenian majuscule—by utilising hitherto unknown or unstudied material, including palimpsests.

The second part of the conference focused on 'the DeLiCaTe Approach to Lectionaries'. The earlier view of the historical development of lectionaries in the Armenian tradition was significantly revised by Hasmik Sargsyan and Jost Gippert (Hamburg), who in their paper 'Armenian Lectionaries: Types and Developments' showed how recently investigated palimpsests prove the existence of a hitherto unknown type of lectionaries combining Biblical pericopes with saints' legends. The research into the palimpsests within the framework of the DeLiCate project also significantly changed what we know about Georgian lectionaries, as Eka Kvirkvelia (Hamburg) showed in her paper 'Georgian Witnesses of the Jerusalem-rite Lectionary: Structures and Developments'. A particular case study on how the multispectral imaging can contribute to analysing the content but also the material composition of the palimpsest manuscript in Bibliothèque nationale de France, was the subject of the paper by Mariam Kamarauli (Hamburg) 'News from Paris: Updates on Paris, BnF, georg. 5'. Sandro Tskhvedadze (Hamburg) spoke of 'Georgian Gospel Lectionaries: Comparative Approaches'.

The third part of the conference grouped papers on Lectionaries: Pericopes and Liturgy. Daniel Galadza (Rome) spoke of 'Re-Examining the Jerusalem and Byzantine Pericope Orders of the Greek Lectionary'. He considered the three categories of Greek manuscripts thus far identified in scholarship: (1) the general 'Byzantine' order; (2) the Greek manuscripts of the 'Jerusalem' pericope order; and (3) the Greek manuscripts of the Constantinopolitan patriarchal Gospel lectionary type, and showed that manuscripts exist that do not fit neatly into these three categories and raise questions about the need for revising classifications and proposing new categories in the study of Greek lectionaries. Ugo Zanetti (Chevetogne) explained the lectionary of the Coptic church according to its present practice in his paper 'Les lectionnaires coptes'. Christa Müller-Kessler (Jena) spoke of 'The Old Jerusalem Lectionary in Christian Palestinian Aramaic as the Earliest Attested Witness'. This manuscript fragments have come down to us only in the form of palimpsests with Christian Palestinian Aramaic as *scriptio inferior* under Georgian, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac script. Despite its fragmentary state, this lectionary can be considered to be the earliest witness (fifth to seventh century) even preceding the Armenian transmission.The Jerusalem lectionary type, or rather the traces it left in the Syriac lectionary tradition, was also the topic of the talk by Grig-

ory Kessel (Vienna) on 'Preliminary Observations on the Reception of the Jerusalem Lectionary in the Chalcedonian Syriac Milieu'. The reception of the Jerusalem lectionary in Latin liturgy was explored by Harald Buchinger (Regensburg) who spoke on 'Jerusalem in the West: Traces of Reception and Resistance in Latin Lectionaries'. Finally, Bernard Outtier (Lavau) offered an overview on 'Less-Known Lists and Indications of Lessons of the Older Georgian Lectionary'.

The final vivid discussion will hopefully find its way into the conference proceedings, due to appear in the coming months. For more details and a programme visit <https://www.fis.uni-hamburg.de/en/weitere/aktivitaeten/detail.html?id=d5be5b81-e500-47d1-8aaa-4e8895cde4fd>.

Red.

Syriac Studies in the UK: Past, Present, Future

Durham, 21–23 March 2024

From 21 to 23 March 2024, the Durham Centre for Early Christianity hosted a conference aiming to celebrate and reflect on the work of British scholars in the field of Syriac Studies across the past centuries.

The contributions covered the biographies and intellectual contributions of scholars in/from the UK, the history and development of the field, but also the discovery, circulation and study of Syriac manuscripts, and the formation of Syriac library collections in the country.

The British manuscript collections that received particular attention included the Mingana collection at Birmingham (Sebastian P. Brock), the Erpenius Collection of the University Library, Cambridge (Erica Hunter), and, most prominently, the holdings of the British Museum/British Library. The importance of the catalogue by Wright was highlighted in the paper by John W. Watt; the project towards a digital version of his catalogue was presented by the research group represented by David Michelson and William Potter. The progress in digitization of the British Library Syriac manuscripts was reported on by Michael Erdman. Maroun El Houkayem spoke of the contribution of Claudius Rich, whose manuscripts were acquired by the British Museum.

Several papers focused on particular manuscripts, e.g. Sophia Puchkova dwelt into the marginal notes in the MS Mingana Syr 561, and Bert Jacobs studied a biblical commentary exclusively transmitted by the British Library Add MS 17274. Other text editions (completed or in progress), discussed during the conference included among others works of Nonnus of Nisibis

(Joachim Jakob), *Buch der Naturgegenstände* (Kosta Gligorijevic), Jacob of Serugh's *Homily on the Maccabees* (Ya'el Nu'emah-Kremer).

For a full programme visit <https://sites.google.com/view/conference-syriacstudiesintheuk/programme>.

Red.

Misattributions and Forgeries in Middle Eastern Manuscript Traditions

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, 16–17 May 2024

Middle Eastern Manuscript Traditions (MEMaT) is a multidisciplinary project which aims at studying various aspects of manuscript production, utilization, and transmission history. A collaboration between Sabine Schmidtke (Institute of Advanced Studies) and George A. Kiraz (Institute of Advanced Studies and Beth Mardutho), it is dedicated to organizing thematic workshops, Its 2024 workshop, co-organized by the project PIs and Grigory Kessel (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna), was dedicated to Misattributions and Forgeries in Middle Eastern Manuscript Tradition. The purpose of this workshop was to study misattribution of content in and forgeries of Middle Eastern manuscript cultures as intellectual history. This across-discipline workshop aimed to cover manuscripts in various languages, including, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Syriac and Ethiopic.

The first panels focused on Arabic and Islamic manuscripts and featured such papers as Ali Aghaei (Humboldt University, Berlin), 'Forgeries in Qurʾān Colophons: The Case of the Khayqānī Qurʾān and the Challenge of Dating Early Quranic Manuscripts'; Sigalit Chacham (Independent Scholar), 'Allah will Destroy the Life of Whoever Stole my Books'; Jan Thiele (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid), 'Misattributions in Ashʿarī Literature', and Mehmet Necmeddin Beşikci (University of Cambridge, UK), 'Uncovering Ismāʿīl Gelenbevī's Hidden Sources: An Examination of Autograph and Misattributed Manuscripts'. Nir Shafir (University of California San Diego) spoke on 'False Authorship in the Polarized Society of the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire'. Arabic language tradition was also the main theme of the papers by Sonja Brentjes (Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin; Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton) paper 'Numerous Attributions of Arabic Versions of Euclid's *Elements* to Three Actors: al-Hajjaj b. Yusuf b. Matar (d. after 827), Ishaq b. Hunayn (d. 911), and Thabit b. Qurra (d. 901) – Are They All False?' and by Valentina Sagaria Rossi (University of Rome Tor Vergata), 'Al-Safadī's Hand and Not al-Safadī's Hand in a Manuscript of *al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*'. Emily Cottrell (Laboratoire

Mondes Sémitiques, Paris; Maison Denise Masson, Marrakech) presented on 'A C-14 Dating of the *Adāb al-Falāsifa* of Hunayn b. Ishāq (808–873 CE)'. Mónika Schönléber (Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, Hungary) spoke of 'Misattributing *futūh* Works in Arabic Historiography', and Mahmoud Zaki (Qatar National Library) presented on 'Tracing Forgeries: Cases of Fake Notes in Arabic Manuscripts'. Persian 'forgeries' were the topic of the talk by Ali B. Langroudi (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen), '"I Made This Prologue and Wrote the Four Gospels in Persian." Two Authorship Claims for One Text'. A more recent definition of a forgery was used by Eléonore Cellard (Independent Scholar) in her paper on 'Modern Forgeries of Kufic Qurʾans'.

Hebrew manuscripts were in the focus of the papers by Eveline Handby (Macquarie University, Sydney), 'The Anatomy of a Bad Fake: A Closer Look at 'Ancient' Hebrew Books from Turkey' and Binyamin Katzoff (Talmud Department, Bar Ilan University), 'Could This Be a Mistake? The Strange Case of the Misleading Numeration of Chapters in the *Tosefta*'.

Christian orient represented by Ethiopic, with the paper by Ted Erho (Universität Hamburg; Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München) on 'Patristic Misattributions in Early Homiletical Literature Extant in Ethiopic', and Syriac, with papers by Ephrem A. Ishac (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna) on 'Syriac Liturgical Texts with Multi Touch Attributions' and by Catalin-Stefan Popa (Romanian Academy, Bucharest; The Institute for Advanced Studies in Levant Culture and Civilization) on 'An Unknown Harklean Version in a Syriac Gospel Fragmentary Manuscript (End of 7th c.). Attribution and Liturgical Function'.

For a full programme visit <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/imafo/events/event-details/misattributions-and-forgeries-in-middle-eastern-manuscript-traditions>.

Red.

Cataloguing Greek Manuscripts in the Digital Age

Berlin State Library, 17–18 June 2024

In a collaborative project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK, the University of London, Warburg Institute, the University of Torino and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin are cataloguing and digitizing the collection of Greek manuscripts (107 manuscripts within the Manuscripta Phillipsiana) acquired by Cardinal Guillaume Pellicier (1490–1568) during his time as French ambassador in Venice between 1539 and 1542.

The study of these manuscripts has raised questions that are best answered through the use of innovative techniques from the digital humanities field. The objective of the workshop is to better understand the current trends in manuscript description and how they may generate new areas of research. Old methods and new approaches were discussed on 17 and 18 June 2024 by specialists invited by the 'Pellicier project' and the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

The major project presentations included papers by Carolin Schreiber (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) on 'Manuscripts cataloguing in Germany: From Analog to Digital' and by Matthieu Cassin (Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes), 'Census of Greek manuscripts, Identifiers and online catalogue: Pinakes, Diktyon and Msscatalog'. The co-hosting 'Pellicier project' was introduced by Rosa Maria Piccione (Università di Torino) and Richard Gartner (Warburg Institute) who spoke on 'Investigating 16th-century Greek Manuscripts from Venice: the case-study of Guillaume Pellicier's library'. Paola Degni (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia) reviewed 'The Cataloguing of Greek Manuscripts in Italy: Trends and Open Questions'. Robert Giel (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) presented the 'Handschriftenportal: A New Infrastructure for Manuscripts in German Collections'.

In a more theoretical contribution, Paolo Eleuteri (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia) contemplated on 'Cataloguing, cataloguing, cataloguing… but how? Problems, issues, perspectives of cataloguing manuscripts'.

For a full programme visit <https://blog.sbb.berlin/termin/workshop-cataloguing-greek-manuscripts-in-the-digital-age/>.

Red.

Paratexts in Premodern Writing Cultures

and Data-driven Approaches to Ancient Languages

Ghent University, 24–26 and 27 June 2024

The project 'DBBE: Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams' at Ghent University hosted a conference on 'Paratexts in Premodern Writing Cultures' from 24 to 26 June 2024.

The study of paratexts has become increasingly crucial to the understanding of premodern book culture. Since its inception in 2010, the DBBE project has aimed to collect Byzantine book epigrams (or: metrical paratexts) in an open-access online database, conceived and developed with an interdisciplinary approach. Book epigrams, in the Byzantine Greek tradition, are poems that provide us with more information about the books they are written in. In many of these poems, scribes, patrons, and book owners reveal their presence and feelings, by means of colophons, prayers, and dedicatory

epigrams. Book epigrams may also comment on the texts transmitted in the manuscripts and their authors, or on the miniatures that appear in books. In other book epigrams the readers are addressed and involved in an imaginary dialogue with the scribe or with the book itself. The paratextual dimension of book epigrams turns out to be a fascinating aspect that connects book culture with broader historical questions.

The conference aimed to bring together scholars engaged in the exploration of premodern paratexts transmitted in a variety of languages and discuss the nature of paratextuality in medieval manuscripts, to reveal similarities and peculiarities of paratexts across language borders, and to understand the broader cultural and historical ramifications of paratexts.

The keynote paper by Szilvia Sövegjártó was on 'Unveiling Layers of Meaning: The Role of Glosses in Old Babylonian Literary Manuscripts'.

The first and the fourth sessions were dedicated to biblical paratexts and featured papers by Patrick Andrist on 'The Paratexts of the Gospels and Their Chronological Distribution on the Basis of the Nine PTB Paratext Categories: A Statistical Approach', by Matteo Domenico Varca on 'The Metrical Paratexts of the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum*', by Garrick Allen on 'The Euthalian Tradition to the New Testament: Precursors and Textual Strategies', and Jerzy Ostapczuk on 'Titulus finalis, Subscriptions and Total Stichometry to the Gospels of Mark in Cyrillic manuscripts of Tetraevangelia'. Elvira Martin-Contreras showcased the project 'PARAHeB: Understanding the Paratexts of the Hebrew Bible'. The session on Byzantine book epigrams offered contributions by Kyriaki Giannikou and Eleonora Lauro on 'Interplay of Book Culture and Poetic Creativity in Byzantine Book Epigrams: Unveiling Linguistic Threads and Palaeographic Trends', Davide Avogaro on 'The Corpus of Paratexts in Constantine Akropolites' Authorial Manuscripts', Maria Giovanna Sandri on 'An Unpublished Poem on Georgius Choeroboscus'. The session on the Visuality of Paratexts featured such papers as Maria Thomas' 'Delineating Paradise: Charts, Maps, and Paratextuality in a Thirteenth-Century Syriac Manuscript'. Paratexts in Syriac manuscripts were also the focus of the paper 'Paratexts in Syriac Liturgical Manuscripts' by Ephrem Ishac in the session dedicated to Underexplored Corpora of Paratexts. That session also featured the paper by Emmanuel Van Elverdinghe on 'An Experiment in Comparative Paratextology: Verses and Colophons in Greek and Armenian Gospel Books'. Armenian tradition was also part of the session Evolution of Paratexts in Their Transmission, where Alex MacFarlane discussed 'From Paratext to Prosimetrum: The Changing Status of Paratextual Poetry in the Armenian Alexander Romance'.

The conference was followed by a workshop on 'Data-driven Approaches to Ancient Languages'. Language traditions covered by the highly varied presentations included Greek (e.g. Kyriaki Giannikou, Colin Swaelens, Ilse De Vos, Els Lefever, and Klaas Bentein, 'Decoding Byzantine Book Epigrams: an Exploration of Machine-Assisted Extraction of Formulaic Material') and Armenian (e.g. Lilit Kharatyan and Petr Kocharov, 'Development of Linguistic Annotation Toolkit for Classical Armenian in SpaCy, Stanza, and UDPipe') alongside many contributions featuring Latin and Latin-script-based corpora.

For a full programme visit <https://www.dbbe2024.ugent.be/>.

Red.

International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition

Athens, 30 August– 4 September 2024

18th International Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition took place in Athens, Greece from 30 August to 4 September 2024.

Well over 200 papers were presented, on a wide range of topics including document image processing; physical and logical layout analysis; text and symbol recognition; handwriting recognition; document analysis systems; document classification; indexing and retrieval of documents; document synthesis; extracting document semantics; NLP for document understanding; office automation; graphics recognition; human document interaction; document representation modeling and much more. Several research teams dealt with oriental traditions and their scripts. Among them, Birhanu Hailu Belay, Isabelle Guyon, Tadele Mengiste, Bezawork Tilahun, Marcus Liwicki, Tesfa Tegegne and Romain Egele presented their work towards 'A Historical Handwritten Dataset for Ethiopic OCR with Baseline Models and Human-Level Performance'.They introduced a new dataset for historical handwritten Ethiopic script, consisting of roughly 80,000 annotated text-line images from 1700 pages of eighteenth to twentieth century documents (code accessible at <https://github.com/bdu-birhanu/HHD-Ethiopic>). Stephan M. Unter worked on the 'Text Line Segmentation on Ancient Egyptian Papyri: Layout Analysis with Object Detection Networks and Connected Components'. He tested and compared various architectures, originally designed for object detection tasks, for text line segmentation in hieratic papyri.

One of the satellite workshops to the main conference was the Workshop on Computational Palaeography, convened by Isabelle Marthot-Santaniello and Hussein Mohammed on 31 August 2024. Palaeography, understood as

the study of ancient writing systems (scripts and their components) as well as their material (characteristics of the physical inscribed objects), can benefit greatly from recent technological advances in computer vision and instrumental analytics. Computational palaeography, being truly interdisciplinary, creates opportunities for experts from different research fields to meet, discuss, and exchange ideas. Among the experts invited to the workshop, Chahan Vidal-Gorène and Aliénor Decours-Perez proposed methods for recovering lost text in Armenian inscriptions. So Miyagawa talked of creating a platform for creating HTR datasets of Coptic palaeography. Berat Kurar-Barakat and Nachum Dershowitz showcased their research on computational Quranic palaeography. Alba Fedeli, Carolin Kinne-Wall and Hythem Sidky explored the issues with approaching the vocalization in early Quranic manuscripts. Danlu Chen, Jacob Murel, Taimoor Shahid, Xiang Zhang, Jonathan Allen, Taylor Berg-Kirkpatrick, and David Smith focused on the problems connected to the multidirectionality of Arabic-script manuscripts. Giuseppe De Gregorio, Lavinia Ferretti, Rodrigo Cerqueira Gonzalez Pena, Isabelle Marthot-Santaniello, Maria Konstantinidou, and John Pavlopoulos proposed a new framework for error analysis in computational palaeographic dating of Greek papyri.

The proceedings of the conference are available at <https://icdar2024.net/procceedings/>; the palaeography workshop programme can be viewed at <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/iwcp2024/programme.html>.

Red.

Textual Transmission in the Islamic Manuscript Age: On the Variance, Reception, and Usage of Arabic and Persian Works from the Middle East to the Indian Subcontinent

University of Münster, 5–7 September 2024

The transmission processes of handwritten texts that confront today's researchers into the Islamic world before the widespread introduction of printing in the nineteenth century take different forms and can include both minor 'corrections' and additions as well as complete revisions of a text with changes to its central statements. The aim of the international cooperation between scholars in Germany and Japan is to make existing approaches and findings relating to the creation, transmission, and reception of texts from the Middle Eastern subjects of Arabic Studies, Islamic Studies, and Iranian Studies, which are strongly represented in both countries, internationally fruitful

and visible. The objective is to shed light on how historiographical, religious, scientific, legal, or literary works in Arabic and Persian were copied, handed down, received, deliberately altered, and made newly usable in the region ranging from the Near East to the Indian subcontinent throughout the extended early modern period.

Thus, a bilateral German-Japanese conference was organized in Münster by the project 'TranslAPT: TRANSLation: Arabic, Persian, Turkish' (Emmy Noether Junior Research Group (2022–2028, PI Philip Bockholt) 'Inner-Islamic Transfer of Knowledge within Arabic-Persian-Ottoman Translation Processes in the Eastern Mediterranean (1400–1750)'. It aimed at collecting case studies from various regions of the Near and Middle East, with the majority of texts written or handed down between *c*.1300 and 1800. The focus was on authors, copyists, and later recipients who composed, copied, interpreted, and used texts in new contexts, modifying them according to changing socio-cultural contexts, (religious) political necessities, or individual preferences.

The papers of Panel 1: 'Knowledge Transfer from the Islamic West to the East' included talks by Philip Bockholt (Münster) on 'Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān* in Persian: On Translation Processes in Late 15th-Century Gujarat', and by Kaori Otsuya (Tokyo) on 'Histories of Medina Transcending Regions, Time Periods, and Languages: A Preliminary Study on *Jadhb al-Qulūb ilā Diyār al-Maḥbūb* by ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Dihlavī (d. 1052/1642). Panel 2: 'Translations from Sanskrit and Arabic into Persian' featured presentations by Eva Orthmann (Göttingen), 'The Persian Śalihotra: The Transformation and Adaptation of a Sanskrit Text in Persian Treatises on Horses' and Nobuaki Kondo (Tokyo), 'Comparing Manuscripts of a Popular Romance: The Persian Classic Version of the *Ḥamzanāma*'. Panel 3: 'Transmission of Religious Texts' hosted papers by Isabel Toral (Berlin), 'The Muslim and Christian Arabic Versions of the Buddha Legend and its Trans-Religious Reception History', Ines Weinrich (Münster), 'Stability and Change in the Transmission of Arabic *Mawlid* Texts: The Case of *Mawlid al-ʿArūs*', and Ryo Mizukami (Tokyo), 'From *Aḥsan al-Kibār* to *Lavāmiʿ al-Anvār*: Reworking a Faḍāʾil Work on the Twelve Imams for Shāh Ṭahmāsp'. Panel 4: 'Changes in Historiography' included presentations by Takao Ito (Kobe), 'Was there Another Version of Ibn Kathīr's *History*?', Osamu Otsuka (Tokyo), 'The Dedication of a Universal History to Various Patrons: A Case Study of the Ilkhanid Historian Shabānkāraʾī', and Akihiko Yamaguchi (Tokyo), 'Evolving Iranian Identity in the Periphery: A Study of Ardalān Historiography'. Panel 5: Evolution of Literary Texts grouped the presentations by Kumiko Yamamoto (Tokyo), 'A Few Questions on the "Older Preface" to the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī (In Memory of the Late Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila)', Christine Kämpfer (Bam-

berg), 'Disseminating *Adab* and Mystical Thought Through Epic Imitation: Niẓāmī's *Makhzan al-Asrār* and its *Naẓīras*', and Syrinx von Hees (Münster), 'Transmission of a Literary Contest in Different Textual Contexts: Questions of Reception'. Panel 6: Development of Scientific and Legal Works featured talks by Sacha Alsancakli (Münster), 'Questions of Authorship and Readership in a Seventeenth-Century Indo-Persian Scientific *Majmūʿa*' and Ken'ichi Isogai (Kyoto), 'Making Tax-Exempted Land Out of Kharājī Land: Central Asian Ḥanafīs to Legitimize Rulers' Policies in Persian Legal Works'. Panel 7: Afterlife of Genealogical and Hadith Texts offered presentations by Kazuo Morimoto (Tokyo), ' An Eventful Life of a Sayyid/ Sharīf Genealogy: From *al-Aṣīlī* to *Ghāyat al-Ikhtiṣār*', Stefanie Brinkmann (Leipzig), 'The Circulation and Reception of al-Baghawī's *Hadith* Collection *Maṣābīḥ al-Sunna* and its Commentary Tradition'. Panel 8: Biographies Without End offered space to Paula Manstetten (Bonn), 'The Reception and Abridgement of Ibn ʿAsākir's (d. 1176) *History of Damascus* in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Period' and Maxim Romanow (Hamburg), 'A Book of 30,000 Biographies: Computational Analysis of Sources of *The History of Islam* of al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348). Finally, Panel 9: Adaptation of Texts at Courts in Anatolia featured the talks by Yui Kanda (Tokyo), '"May the World Be Slave to King Kaykāʾūs": Reception History of Qāniʿī Ṭūsī's *Kalīla and Dimna*' and Nobutaka Nakamachi (Kobe), 'Reception of Mamluk Manuscripts in the Ottoman Period: The Scattered Selimiye Collection of ʿIqd al-Jumān'.

The following questions were addressed in papers and in the discussions: What type of narrative or motif in literary and historiographical works is selectively transmitted from one context to another? What changes in content can be demonstrated here, and to what factors can they be attributed? Which actors were involved and how? How did the transmission of knowledge take shape with regard to phenomena such as collected manuscripts (*majmūʿa*) with partial sections from works or abridged versions (*mukhtaṣar*)? What does this say about the contemporaneous understanding of texts and knowledge?

For a full programme visit <https://www.uni-muenster.de/ArabistikIslam/translapt/events/textual_transmission.html>.

Red.

Materiality of Sufi Manuscripts

University of Hamburg, 19–20 September 2024

Claudia Colini (University of Hamburg), Janina Karolewski (University of Hamburg), Andrew Peacock (University of St Andrews), and Ilse Sturken-

boom (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich) of the research network 'Sufi manuscript cultures, 1200–1800' convened a workshop on the materiality of manuscripts that were created or used in Sufi contexts and/or relate to Sufism in their contents on 19 and 20 September 2024 in Hamburg.

The questions asked by the organizers included What are the relationships between Sufism and the materiality of manuscripts? Do Sufi convents as centres of manuscript production leave their hallmarks in manuscripts such as in manuscript sizes, choice of paper, page layouts or styles of painting? How is Sufism represented in painting? How are Sufi manuscripts embellished by illumination or decoration and how does this differ from other manuscripts? Is there a relationship between the patrons of and/or audiences for Sufi manuscripts and their materiality? What do later, material interventions in manuscripts have to say about their Sufi reception?

On the first panel, dedicated to the Collections of Sufi manuscripts and their materiality, Claus-Peter Haase (FU Berlin) spoke on 'Some Characteristic Features of Ottoman Tarîqa-manuscripts in the Collection of Theodor Menzel, University Library Kiel'; Joud Nassan Agha (University of Hamburg) presented 'A Study of Ṣūfī Seals through the Case of Khālid al-Naqshabandī'; Moya Carey (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin) offered a paper on 'Eye Contact: Meeting Sufi Ideas through the Museum's Material Encounter'.

The second session was dedicated to manuscript illumination. Karin Rührdanz (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto) spoke on 'Pictorial Transformation of Sufi Ideas in the Illustrations of a Fairy Tale'. Margaret Shortle (LMU Munich) illustrated the 'Divine Offerings and Creativity in Early Safavid Book Arts'. Sara Kuehn (University of Vienna) took a closer look at the 'Sufi Materiality in Islamic Painting (16th–18th centuries)'.

The third panel focused on the production and collection of manuscripts in Sufi convents. Shervin Farridnejad (University of Hamburg) spoke on 'Persianate Ṣūfī Jewry and their Manuscript Production'. Philip Bockholt (Münster University) presented the paper entitled 'Endowed at the Sufi Shrine of Ardabil: On the Material Aspects of the Selection, Storage, and Whereabouts of Shah ʿAbbās's Manuscript Collection'. Elif Sezer-Aydını (Koç University) offered 'A Material Exploration of the Manuscripts at Jerrahi Lodge (aka TT-MFAV) in Istanbul'.

The first session of the second day was dedicated to the materiality of Sufi manuscripts in Central Asia. Andrew Peacock (University of St Andrews) spoke of 'Badr al-Din Kashmiri, a Sufi Litterateur in Shaybanid Bukhara and his Atelier'. Jaimee K. Comstock-Skipp (Oxford University) presented on the 'Adorned Margins in Illustrated Mystical Manuscripts Produced in Bukhara between 1568 and 1620'. Uktambek Sultonov (Beruni Institute of Oriental

Studies, Tashkent) offered an insight into 'The Production of nasab-nama Documents for Sufi Families in Central Asia: Colour, Illumination and Composition'.

The final session focused on Sufism and decorated paper. Ilse Sturkenboom (LMU Munich) presented an overview of 'Relations between Sufism and Decorated Paper'. Claudia Colini and Valentina Yañez Langner (University of Hamburg) presented a case study of 'Material Analysis of Decorated Paper in Sufi Manuscripts'. Finally, Theresa Zischkin (LMU Munich) spoke of 'Stencilled Margins Revisited: The Panj Ganj of Jāmī Refurbished under ʿAbd al-Raḥīm'.

The workshop provided ample space for discussion. Besides, the participants had a chance to visit the laboratory for material analysis of manuscripts of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at the University of Hamburg. Proceedings are expected to appear in the following months. For a full programme visit <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/en/register/workshop60>.

Red.

Observing Nature, Interpreting Signs: Scientific Knowledge Production in the Ancient World

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, 30 September–1 October 2024

On 30 September and 1 October 2024, the project 'SciPap: Scientific Papyri from Ancient Egypt' held its fifth international conference, 'Observing Nature, Interpreting Signs: Scientific Knowledge Production in the Ancient World' at Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen. It indended to broaden access to the vast number of unpublished scientific evidence from cultures of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East. Further, by creating an opportunity for scholars of different disciplinary backgrounds to engage, we hope to encourage increased interdisciplinary discussion that will produce new insights into the cross-cultural exchange of scientific knowledge and practice in the ancient world.

Among the many papers featuring papyri with scientific, predominantly medical, content there was e.g. Claire Bubb (New York University), 'The Anonymous London Papyrus and the Relationship between Food and Disease in Early Greek Medical Thought'. She studied the papyrus containing a Greek text dating from the first century CE found in Egypt, which includes a doxography of the theories of disease causation of a variety of Greek medical authors. The text includes many otherwise unknown theories, as well as ideas attributed to Hippocrates and Aristotle, which are fascinating to compare to

the versions in our received Hippocratic and Aristotelian texts. Another sample case study was provided by Alexander Jones and Francesca Schironi (New York University and University of Michigan) who spoke of '*P.Hib*. 1.27 Revisited'. Recovered in multiple fragments from early third-century BCE mummy cartonnage, *P.Hib*. 1.27 is the earliest known Greek astronomical papyrus. The emphasis was on some of its unusual features: the structuring of its data on the civil Egyptian calendar year instead of the solar year, its inclusion of festival dates and computed lengths of day and night, its problematic references to the Sun's presence in zodiacal signs or constellations, and its textual and astronomical coincidences with other similar papyri.

For the full programme visit <https://scientific-papyri-from-ancient-egypt.org/conference-2024/>.

Red.

European Society of Textual Scholarship 2024

Budapest, 2–3 October 2024

This year, the European Society of Textual Scholarship had its annual conference in Budapest from 2 to 3 October 2024.

Many of the papers presented dealt with the digital turn in scholarly editorial practices. Besides the advances in applications involving TEI XML annotation of texts, that had been frequently the subject of past conferences and were also featured in the presentation by Gábor Palkó ('Creating Print-Ready Formats from TEI XML: Challenges and Methodologies in Born-Digital Critical Editions') and Sakari Katajamäki ('TEI Files as a Starting Point for Dialogue Research'), or issues related to stemmatological tools (e.g. Ewelina Dubicka's paper on 'Exploring Research Opportunities in Digital Editions: Genetic Criticism and Tools'), this year's edition could not help but discuss the progress in the AI engines and their applicability to textual studies. Kirsten Vad, Krista Stinne Greve Rasmussen and Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig presented on 'Automating Explanatory Commentary: AI-Driven Approaches'. Jon Tafdrup, Katrine Frøkjær Baunvig and Krista Stinne Greve Rasmussen continued with 'Modeling the Literary Archive: From Manuscripts to a Database (Using AI)'. Thorsten Ries offered a talk on 'Digital Scholarly Editing and AI as Paradigm Shift of Philology'. Kiyoko Myojo and Yasuhiro Sakamoto spoke on 'How Generative AI will revolutionize dynamic editing: Towards an intelligent edition'. Mateusz Antoniuk contemplated on 'A Man versus the Monster of a Machine. AI, poetry, and genetic criticism'. Several papers addressed the challenges of handwritten text recognition, still posing problems for many

languages, sometimes also in relation to AI, as in the paper by Albrecht Hofheinz 'Unlocking Arabic Manuscripts: Imperfect HTR as a Stepping Stone for AI-powered Analysis'.

The conference programme is accessible at <https://elte-dh.hu/ests-2024-program/>.

Red.

Cataloguing Practices in Ethiopian and Eritrean Manuscript Studies

University of Naples 'L'Orientale', 21–22 November 2024

On 21 and 22 November 2024, the project CaNaMEI (Catalogo Nazionale dei Manoscritti Etiopici in Italia), at the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies of the University of Naples 'L'Orientale', in collaboration with the Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente (ISMEO) and the Istituto per l'Oriente Carlo Alfonso Nallino (IPOCAN), under the scientific supervision of Alessandro Bausi, Gioia Bottari, Antonella Brita, Jacopo Gnisci, Gianfrancesco Lusini, and Massimo Villa, convened an international workshop dedicated to the Cataloguing Practices in Ethiopian and Eritrean Manuscript Studies.

Manuscripts cataloguing is indisputably a task of crucial significance in Ethiopian and Eritrean studies. Not only scholarly cataloguing is a fundamental prerequisite for the conservation and safeguard of the cultural heritage of a given civilization (and Christian Ethiopia and Eritrea are no exceptions), but it offers a solid an adequate basis for scientific inquiry in a variety of disciplinary fields, such as textual criticism, codicology, palaeography, linguistics, history, art history. The nucleus of historical catalogues compiled by the 'golden generation' of Orientalists between the nineteenth and the early twentieth century was expanded from the second half of the twentieth century by research projects of microfilming of Ethiopian and Eritrean manuscript collections. These initiatives have resulted in the creation of large and accessible archives of photographic copies and extensively contributed to a substantial increase of the catalogued material. Since the twenty-first century, manuscript cataloguing has finally entered the digital age. The digital change makes many of the eternal questions even more visible and crucial, including whether it is possible to standardize data sufficiently to achieve a high degree of transparency and interoperability? How to define text and text boundaries, and how to refer to a text in a catalogue? How to best represent the complex structure and history of the manuscript book in a catalogue? How to operate

in a low-resource field with much material available? These and many other questions were approached from various perspectives and backgrounds.

Two major cataloguing initiatives were presented, the host project, CaNaMEI, and the project 'Beta maṣāḥəft: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea' (Hamburg, PI Alessandro Bausi). Case studies focusing on particular challenges were presented by both project members and other guest experts. The definition of a text and various approaches as to how it can be approached in a digital framework was discussed from various perspectives by Aaron Butts, Eugenia Sokolinski, and Antonella Brita. It became evident that the high precision and high granularity in text identification is extremely important, yet it is difficult to achieve when the time constraints and the data amount are beyond the limited resources available. Yet, establishing a reliable repertory of texts transmitted in manuscripts, is an important desideratum and a highly promising research tool that can be considerably improved through inter-project and interdisciplinary cooperation. The question as to whether it should be preferrable to refer to the texts primarily by the labels used by the scribes or by more neutral titles that would be understandable also to scholars from other fields, and whether respect to the local tradition or to its connections to a wider geohistorical context should be prioritized is still a matter of discussion.

Cataloguing (or rather, handlisting) huge collections of locally preserved manuscripts is a challenge that has been taken on by ARCCH in Addis Ababa, which has produced a series of volumes little known outside Ethiopia and brought to scholarly attention by Dirbwork Bitsu Kassa.

The contribution of thoughtful cataloguing to our better understanding of textual tradition was highlighted in the papers by Vitagrazia Pisani, Massimo Villa, and Sophia Dege-Müller. Rafał Zarzeczny presented an important case study of preparing a (traditional) catalogue of a large collection. Methods in various aspects of digital cataloguing were illustrated by Denis Nosnitsin (manuscript description), Jonas Karlsson (text encoding), Guesh Solomon (art themes). The importance of reflecting the complex stratigraphy of manuscripts, that sometimes only take their present shape by the effort of librarians, was discussed in the paper by Gioia Bottari. Possibilities and necessities in describing graphical and schematic manuscript content (diagrams, tables) were illustrated by Daria Elagina.

For a full programme visit <https://www.unior.it/en/node/2537>.

Red.

Les humanités numériques et l'Orient chrétien médiéval: nouveaux outils, nouvelles approches, nouvelles perspectives

Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier, 14–25 November 2024

In November 2024, a workshop on digital methods for the study of medieval Christian Orient was convened by Florian Artaud and Isabelle Auge at the University Paul-Valéry of Montpellier.

Papers focused on research projects from various fields applying digital methods, from cartography (e.g. Florian Artaud, 'Base de données et cartographie. Pour une nouvelle approche de l'étude des monastères latins dans les États latins du Levant', Sipana Tchakerian, 'Édition numérique enrichie et cartographie interactive d'un document inédit: le journal des itinéraires archéologiques des Thierry') to archaeology (e.g. Élisabeth Yota, 'Présentation du projet MistraNum. L'usage et l'apport des nouvelles technologies sur le site archéologique de Mistra (Péloponnèse, Grèce)'), from historical geography and historiography (e.g. Simon Dorso, 'De la charte à la carte et retour: l'apport du SIG à la compréhension de la documentation sur le peuplement rural de la Galilée au XIIᵉ siècle', Ludivine Voisin, 'Outils numériques et nouvelles approches du monde monastique orthodoxe dans les pays grecs dominés par Venise au XVIᵉ siècle') to epigraphy (e.g. Clément Dussart, 'L'apport des humanités numériques à l'étude des graffiti dans les lieux saints: prospecter, enregistrer et analyser', Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, 'Traiter les inscriptions et graffitis de l'Orient latin: l'environnement numérique de l'ERC GRAPH-EAST'). Among other topics, the participants also explored how digital methods may help in approaching texts transmitted in manuscripts (e.g. Nicolas Tatessian, 'Les humanités numériques au service de l'étude des colophons arméniens').

For a full programme visit <https://www.centrechastel.sorbonne-universite.fr/en/actualites-evenements/les-humanites-numeriques-et-lorient-chretien-medieval/>.

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