

# Some Notes on the Vocabulary in a Coptic-Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch

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The bilingual Coptic-Arabic versions of the Pentateuch in MS Paris *BN copte 1* (14th century) are important lingual sources for both Coptic<sup>1</sup> and Arabic. This article presents preliminary guide-lines to the study of the vocabulary in the Arabic version, and constitutes part of some basic research I devoted to the study of the Arabic text.<sup>2</sup> This Arabic text (written in parallel columns to the Coptic version) seems to be a translation of a Coptic version that was translated from the Greek Septuagint.<sup>3</sup> Many examples show that the translator was also assisted by a certain Arabic translation of the Pentateuch (fragments,

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<sup>1</sup> See the wide-ranging study of A. Shisha-Halevy, *Topics in Coptic Syntax: Structural Studies in the Bohairic Dialect (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta)*, Leuven, 2007. Regarding the Bohairic dialect see *ibid.*, pp. 12-26. As regards the manuscript, see its description in J.F. Rhode, *The Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch in the Church of Egypt*, Washington D.C; The Catholic University of America, 1921 (Ph.D. Dissertation), pp. 46-52; Anne Boud'hors, *Appendix I*, in Shisha-Halevy, *ibid.*, pp. 675-683.

<sup>2</sup> For a preliminary approach to the Arabic text see O. Livne-Kafri, "A Note on Coptic and Judeo-Arabic on the Basis of Bilingual Manuscript of the Pentateuch", *Massorot* 12 (2002), pp. 97-101 (in Hebrew); "Some Notes concerning the Arabic Version", *Appendix II*, in A. Shisha-Halevy, *Topics*, pp. 685-694; "A Note on the Energeticus in a Coptic-Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch", *Acta Orientalia* 62 (4) (2009), pp. 405-411; cf. "On Some Characteristics of a bilingual (Coptic and Arabic) Manuscript of the Pentateuch", to be published following *The Ninth International Congress of Coptic Studies, Cairo, 15-20 September 2008*; "On Coptic and Arabic in a bilingual Manuscript of the Pentateuch", to be published in the Jubilee Volume in Honor of Prof. Yosef Tobi (in Hebrew).

<sup>3</sup> And as such the Arabic version reflects many times the Septuagint version from which the Coptic was translated. See e.g., Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 687-688.

at least) that had been translated earlier from the Hebrew.<sup>4</sup> There is of course the possibility that Judaeo-Arabic translations were at work too, especially that of Saadya Gaon (d. 942).<sup>5</sup> The Arabic text reflects a great effort to cleave to the grammatical rules of Classical Arabic,<sup>6</sup> but there are also many non-Classical characteristics of Middle Arabic, such as portrayed mainly by J. Blau in his numerous publications on Christian-Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic.<sup>7</sup> The study of the Arabic version is important from the linguistic point of view, as a source of additional documentation to Blau's findings, and to the understanding of other phenomena (especially when related to the Coptic).<sup>8</sup> But it is also 'a silent witness' to cultural changes in general.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 688-689. Hebrew elements may have also been taken from 'a lingual treasure' that had been already established among Coptic scholars (and others) earlier. See e.g., the use of the term *ṣā'ida* ('burnt-offering', a loan translation from the Hebrew עִילָה; cf. *ibid.*, p. 688) in the 11th century Muslim composition of Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Musharraf b. al-Murajjā b. Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wa-l-Khalīl wa-Faḍā'il al-Shām*, ed. O. Livne-Kafri (Shfaram, 1995), p.116, no. 137 (first identified by I. Hasson).

<sup>5</sup> See J. Blau, "Arabic Translations (of the Bible)", *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. 8, pp. 855.

<sup>6</sup> Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 686-687.

<sup>7</sup> See mainly J. Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic* (Louvain, 1966-1967); *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic* (Oxford, 1965); *A Grammar of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic*, second enlarged edition (Jerusalem, 1980; in Hebrew); *Studies in Middle Arabic and its Judaeo-Arabic Variety* (Jerusalem, 1988); *A Dictionary of Medieval Judaeo-Arabic Texts* (Jerusalem, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> The reasons for translation-choices are sometimes clearly seen in the parallel columns of the two languages. The impact of the Coptic version frequently causes disagreement with norms of Classical Arabic, but sometimes, even when the Arabic accords with Classical norms, it is a result of typical Coptic structures. There are many examples for 'ammā... fa... in the Arabic version following the use of the reinforcer of the Coptic version. (Shisha-Halevy, quoted by Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 691; cf. Livne-Kafri, "On Some Characteristics of a bilingual (Coptic and Arabic) Manuscript of the Pentateuch" (note 2 above), notes 26 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g., Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 689-690 ("The cultural influence of Muslim society").

I tend to believe that the result of what seems to be 'a too verbal translation' of the Arabic text might have been more comfortable and better understood by the intended readership at a time of linguistic transition. It would be especially true if original Coptic phenomena are proved to be preserved in the spoken Arabic among the Copts, at least at the time when the translation was done.<sup>10</sup> There are even examples from the colloquial Egyptian Arabic, but they might be partly attributed to copyists' errors.<sup>11</sup> Since the whole study of the Arabic text, especially in comparison with the Coptic, is quite recent, it is still early to sketch an overall description of the different aspects related to the Arabic version. In this article I will mainly present certain examples 'on the vocabulary' that may represent the different approaches mentioned above.

### **An old example to the problematic of biblical translating into Arabic**

An interesting instance for the problematic of cultural and lingual transition is presented in the following anecdote. It is quoted in a composition belonging to the genre of 'The Merits of Jerusalem', edited by me long back.<sup>12</sup> This Muslim composition was written in the 11th century, but it preserves older materials, especially from the seventh and the eighth centuries. This anecdote is connected with the famous Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 728 or 732) who introduced Jewish and Christian materials to the Muslim Tradition.<sup>13</sup> Wahb, according to a tradition, was telling an audience the biblical story of bringing the Ark of God to Jerusalem by David (II Samuel 6); it is mixed here with the story of sending the Ark of God by the Philistines back to the

<sup>10</sup> See Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 689, no. 2; p. 691, no. 3-5.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 687, no. 5; *idem.*, "On Coptic and Arabic in a bilingual Manuscript of the Pentateuch" (note 2 above), note 33.

<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā'il* (note 4 above), p. 165, no. 226.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the important observations of R.G. Khoury concerning Wahb b. Munnabih's activity in that respect in "Wahb b. Munnabih, Abū 'Abd Allāh", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition. Cf. H. Lazarus-Yaphe, *Intertwined Worlds, Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 111-129.

Israelites (I Samuel 6). Concerning the phrase "when David saw the ark, *hajala ilayha*", 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. Ma'qil, a nephew of Wahb said: "we asked Wahb: What does it mean *hajala ilayhā*? Wahb said: "[Something] similar to dancing". Wahb probably tried to express in Arabic "leaping and dancing" מפזז ומכרכר (II Samuel 6:16) by giving a new sense to an Arabic word of a close meaning.<sup>14</sup> This anecdote reflects the introducing of biblical materials into early Islam, especially by converts to Islam or their immediate descendants.<sup>15</sup> The need to expand the meanings of Arabic words in order to express new meanings is one of the lingual lines typical of Judaeo-Arabic biblical translations,<sup>16</sup> and what we have here is an old example of that sort in a Muslim text (even when it appears in paraphrase and through oral transmission).

### A basic problem of observation

As to interpretations of phenomena in our Arabic version, we do not have such anecdotes or guide-lines by the translator,<sup>17</sup> and we must be careful in our conclusions. The main problem here is that basic research is still in its first steps. Example is *Gen.* 47:31. The Arabic version is "and Israel bowed down upon the edge of his staff"   
وسجد اسرائيل على طرف عصاه

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<sup>14</sup> The basic meaning of *hajala* in Classical Arabic is 'to limp' (crow) or 'to hop' (shackled man). See J.G. Hava, *Al-Faraid, Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut, 1986), p. 112; see in detail Lane, *Lexicon*, Vol. 2, p. 520. On 'Abd al-Ṣamad b. Ma'qil b. Munnabih (d. 110 AH) see Muḥammad b. Ismā'il al-Bukhārī, *al-Ta'riḫ al-Kabīr* (Hyderabad, 1360-1364 AH), vol. 6, p. 104; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* (Leiden, 1904-1940), vol. 5, p. 398; Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa-l-Ta'dīl* (Hyderabad, 1371-1373 AH), vol. 3, part 1, p. 50; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Hyderabad, 1325-1327 AH), vol. 6, p. 328.

<sup>15</sup> A famous example is Ka'b al-Aḥbār. On him see M. Schmitz, "Ka'b al-Aḥbār", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition, vol. 4 (1978), pp. 316-317.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Blau, *Dictionary*, the introduction, p. XI.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. concerning Saadya Gaon in E. Schlossberg, "Basic features in Saadya Gaon's Use of Arabic Language and Literature", in Y. Tobi (ed.) *Ever and Arav* (Tel-Aviv, 1998), p. 77 (in Hebrew).

We might assume at first that this is a result of a confusion of two Hebrew words similar in sound (and writing) that was created through an earlier translation from Hebrew to Arabic. The Hebrew version is "And Israel bowed himself upon the head of the bed" (Hebrew: *mittā*; similar to *matte*, a staff)". However, the Arabic is a clear translation from the Coptic. This process had already happen in the translation of the Septuagint from which the Coptic was translated.<sup>18</sup> Had we had the Arabic translation in a separate presentation from the Coptic version, such an observation would have been more difficult to be identified.

### The vocabulary: Some selective examples

#### An impact of the Arabic on the Coptic, or visa-versa?

The following example is also a testimony to this quite common phenomenon: the role of similar sounding words in the translation choices.<sup>19</sup> It is interesting, because although it seemed to me at first that the Arabic influenced here the creation of a Coptic expression, it is not conclusive. I am not sure whether there is not an impact of the Coptic on the Arabic too: *ساهي القلب* 'deranged, mad'. In *Deut.* 28:34, the Arabic *سَاهِي الْقَلْبِ وَتَكُونُ سَاهِي الْقَلْبِ* ("and you shall be of unmindful heart, mad [*מְשׁוּגָע* in Hebrew]") is parallel to the Coptic *ΟΥΧΟΣ ΕΚΕΘΩΤΗ ΖΕΝ ΟΥΚΙΩΙ ΝΖΗΤ* "and you shall be in derangement of mind (see W.E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* [Oxford, 1979], p. 379, based on *Deut.* 28:28, 34; the basic meanings in Coptic are intr. 'to be removed, displaced' or, tr. 'to move, remove self'). This translation was probably chosen because of the similar sounding of *سَاهِي* and *ΚΙΩΙ*. The basic meaning of *سَاهِي* according to E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* [London 1865-1893], Vol. 4, pp. 1455-1456) is "unmindful, forgetful, neglectful"), which probably caused the creation of *سَاهِي الْقَلْبِ* 'unmindful of (his) mind, a mad person'. Cf. Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 314 *سَهَا* "to forget".

<sup>18</sup> And in other old sources: Cf. M. Zipor, *The Septuagint Version of The Book of Genesis* (Ramat-Gan, 2005), p. 590 (in Hebrew).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 688-689.

### The impact of Hebrew

The impact of Hebrew is generally recognized through the vocabulary,<sup>20</sup> for example by loan translations such as *صعيدة* 'burnt-offering', a loan translation from the Hebrew *עולה*<sup>21</sup> or *חוז* ('possession') which, according to Blau, (*Dictionary*, p.151), was the usual translation of Saadya Gaon to *אחוז* because of the similarity of the sounding.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the expansion of meanings of existing Arabic words (influenced by the biblical words they translate),<sup>23</sup> we find also words similar to Hebrew parallels both in common usages,<sup>24</sup> as well as rare ones.<sup>25</sup> Certain words, such as *صعيدة* or *חוז* were most

<sup>20</sup> Cf. in Judaeo-Arabic, Blau, *Emergence*, pp. 150 ff. Other elements (pp. 133-149) are less obvious in our text.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156; Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 372. Cf. my observations in Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 688-689: "This word appears in several places, such as *Gen.* 8:21 *صعيدة*, but this does not translate the Hebrew parallel. The word *עולות* in the Hebrew version, *Gen.* 8:20 is translated as *محرقات*. In the same sense as *צואלעד* ('burnt-offerings'). *עולה* is translated as *صعيدة* in *Exod.* 29:25; and in *Exod.* 30:20 it translates *אשה* (a sacrifice burnt completely, or partly). In *Lev.* 1:3 *עולה* is translated as *وقود كامل* and in *Lev.* 4:34 *מזבח העולה* 'the altar of the burnt-offering' is translated by *مذبح الوقود*. It seems that *صعيدة* translates *עולה* when it is understood not merely as a 'burnt-offering', but 'burnt-offering' related to the incense and the good smell coming from it".

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 688: "In *Lev.* 25:24, *ובכל ארץ אחוזתכם*, the Arabic is *وفي جميع وفي جميع الارض التي في حوزكم* 'and in the whole land that you possess...' (cf. the same word translated as *ميراث* 'inheritance' in *Gen.* 47:11 or *Num.* 32:32).

<sup>23</sup> Such as the last examples. Cf. note 14 above; Blau, *Dictionary*, the introduction, p. XI.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Tobi, "Remnants of an Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch prior to Tafsir Rabbi Saadya Gaon", *Massorot* 7 (1993), pp. 96-97 (in Hebrew).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. For example, Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 688: "The Hebrew *כרעים* 'shins' translated as *اكارع* (*Exod.* 12:9; 29:17; *Lev.* 1:9; 4:11; 8:21) might be related to a similar use in Classical Arabic (see J.G. Hava, *Al-Faraid, Arabic-English Dictionary* [Beirut, 1986], p. 651); note the use of the plural instead of the dual; *נשמה* 'soul' translated as *نسمة* in *Gen.* 2:7; 7:22; or even *روح نسمة* *Deut.* 20:16; *משחה* 'ointment' is translated as *مسحة* (see e.g., *Lev.* 7:35 or *שמן המשחה* as *دهن*

probably taken from Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Bible, although their usage in our manuscript is not consistent.<sup>26</sup> The translation of קהל 'the assembly of Israel' by كنيسة اسرائيل in *Deut.* 31:30 is rare,<sup>27</sup> and it seems as the introduction of a specific Jewish usage כנסת ישראל for 'the people of Israel'.<sup>28</sup> Sometimes there is a similarity of specific usages in our Christian text that are not necessarily the result of a loan translation, such as in *Deut.* 2:7 كلام (basically: 'speech, saying') in the sense of 'matter, deed, thing' (cf. Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 570, entry قول in the sense of 'matter, thing'). In fact, the impact of the Hebrew is not always clear cut. Example is 'renown men' in *Num.* 16:2. The Arabic is رجال مسمون that might be related both to the Coptic, in a reflection of the Septuagint: ΖΑΝΩΜΗ ΝΟΝΟΜΑΚΤΟΣ, or to the Hebrew: אנשי שם (cf. Blau, *Dictionary*, 312, entry (مسمي)).<sup>29</sup>

### Inconsistency

The Arabic translation of the Pentateuch is not always consistent, as we might have expect of a translation of a sacred text.<sup>30</sup> Such inconsistency and variation in expression is seen, for instance, in the translation of *Lev.* 25:25 "If your brother be impoverished [Hebrew: כי ימוך אחיך]; the Arabic is فان تمسك اخوك; in verse 35 it is translated as وان ضعف اخوك... افتكرك and in verse 39 the translation is وان ضعف اخوك .

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المسحة in *Exod.* 29:7); מחנה 'a camping place' as محلة (*Exod.* 33:7); منורה 'a lamp' as منارة. In *Exod.* 35:310. *Deut.* 8:9 بالمسكنة وبمسكنות.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. notes 21-22 above.

<sup>27</sup> The 'assembly (of Israel)', 'qahal israel' is translated in *Exod.* 16:3 and *Lev.* 16:17 by the Arabic word جماعة and so is the translation of the expression 'the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel' in *Exod.* 12:6; *Num.* 14:5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. Even-Shoshan, *Hamilon Hehadash* (Jerusalem, 1979), Vol. 3, p. 1077. On the word نسبة as 'a glorious praising (song)' for biblical שירה. See in the same verse in Livne-Kafri, "On Some Characteristics", notes 38-39.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. R. Saadya Ben Iosef Al-Fayyumi, *Version Arabe du Pentateuque*, ed. J. Derenbourg (Paris, 1893), p. 217: ד'יו אסמא.

<sup>30</sup> As in the case of صعبيدة note 21 above.

This is an excellent example not only of inconsistency in one chapter of a sacred text, but also of the knowledge of the translator in Arabic and his ability in the skill in translation (his ability to supply a variety of translation-solutions).<sup>31</sup> Another example for the inconsistency and variety of translation-choices is 'priest' (Hebrew: כהן pl. כהנים).<sup>32</sup>

### Influence of the Muslim environment

Examples of the cultural influence of Muslim society can be found in the use of Muslim terminology, even in examples concerning religious matters (cf. Blau, *Emergence*, pp.159-160), as were given earlier.<sup>33</sup> Another example (also for inconsistency and variety of translation-choices) is 'priest' (Hebrew: כהן, Pl. כהנים).

It is interesting to note that the usual translation of Saadya Gaon for כהן is אמאם<sup>34</sup> (taken from the Muslim function of imÁm in the sense of 'a religious leader', 'the man who leads the prayer'), does

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<sup>31</sup> As to the specific translations: تمسكن (related to مسكين see the Classical use in Lane, *Lexicon*, Vol. 4, p. 1393); افنكر (related to فقير see Lane, *ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 2425); ضنفت (related to ضعيف cf. *ibid.*, Vol. 5, pp. 1791-1793).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. notes 34-36 below.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, pp. 689-690: "سنة (sunna. pl. سنن sunan) 'religious conduct, generally of those who follow the way of the Prophet Muhammad; Muslim tradition; Muslim law' appears in many places. See e.g. *xod*. 27:21 'a lasting ordinance' سنة ابدية; in *Lev*. 24:22 'the alien' is translated by الذمي *al-dhimmi* (of a non-Muslim community protected by Islam); *Gen*. 8:20 'the clean birds' الطير الحلال *al-ṭayr al-al-ḥalāl*; *Lev*. 10:10 'the unclean and the clean' الحلال والحرام *al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām* (lawful and unlawful in terms of Muslim jurisprudence); *Num*. 16:2 '... leaders who had been appointed members of the council' الذين لهم الشورة *al-shūrā* those who have the *shūrā*, the council, consultation - also an important institution in Arabia and in early Muslim history". The very fact that such phenomena appear in this Christian text is significant, but it might be partly a loan from Judaeo-Arabic versions of the Pentateuch.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Y. Avishur, *Studies in Judaeo-Arabic Translations of the Bible* (Tel Aviv-Jaffa, 2001), p. 131 (in Hebrew).



note appear in our manuscript. Here we do find كاهن,<sup>35</sup> similar in sounding to the Hebrew but not Classical in its meaning ('diviner', 'soothsayer'). It has a Muslim negative connotation (cf. Qur'ān, Sū 52, verse 29). Another translation-choice for כהן (a priest) is حبر (ḥabr), Pl. احابار (aḥbār) following the Muslim use of حبر.<sup>36</sup> In Lev. 1:7 'the sons of Aharon' is translated as بنو هرون الكاهن, but in verse 5 'the sons of Aharon, the priests': is translated as بنو هرون الحبر; In Lev. 23:11 الحبر; Lev. 6:11 'every male of the sons of Aharon' كل ذكور الاحبار. Another use of a Muslim term is منافق 'hypocrite' (for biblical 'wicked') as in Gen. 18: 23.<sup>37</sup>

### An example related to daily life in Egypt

دانق 'a type of coin' (for biblical gerah):

Num. 18:16 'twenty gerahs' (geraha means: a certain coin) is translated as عشرون دانقا (twenty *dāniq*). According to El-Said Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* (Beirut, 1986), p. 274 دانق is 'type of copper coin'. This is a reflection of daily life in Egypt in the time when the translation was done. The ذ instead of د is either a copyist's error, or a kind of hyper-correction, to give the vernacular د a Classical (but incorrect) form.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> This was, according to Avishur, the reason why Saadya Gaon did not chose the word كاهن which is identical etymologically to the Hebrew כהן (*Ibid*).

<sup>36</sup> According to M. Schmitz, "Ka'b al-Aḥbār", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition) "*ḥibr* or *ḥabr*, from The Hebrew *ḥāber* [חַבֵּר], the scholarly title immediately below rabbi current in Babylonian Jewish scholars, is presumed to be equivalent to the Arabic 'ālim".

<sup>37</sup> On the term *munāfiq* 'hypocrite' in its Qur'ānic negative different meanings see A. Brockett, "Munāfiqūn", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. O. Livne-Kafri, "On Some Characteristics of a Bilingual (Coptic and Arabic) Manuscript of the Pentateuch" (note 2 above), chapter 3b: The combination ذه ها هي ذه translates the Cotic ⲙⲏⲏⲏⲏⲏⲏ s. My suggestion (with some hesitation) is that if it is not a copyist's error ذه > ده might reflect an Egyptian colloquial form.

### **An example from the Arabic colloquial language**

For the penetration of the spoken language, and in addition to the possibility raised in the last note (38), see ايش in *Num.* 13:18-20 in the sense of 'what, of what sort, how?'.<sup>39</sup>

### **Names and different terms**

There are many examples in which proper names are transferred from the Septuagint through the Coptic to the Arabic version, although sometimes the Arabic form (also in its Muslim connotation) is preferred.<sup>40</sup> As regards place-names: It is interesting to note that sometimes not the archaic form is chosen, but the common name in use at the time. In *Gen.* 2:13 'the land of Cush is translated as ارض الحبشة; Hiddekel and Euphrates (*Gen.* 2:14) are translated as دجلة and الفرات; in *Exod.* 13:17 'the land of the Philistines' is translated as ارض فلسطين.

There are also specific botanical terminology such as in *Lev.* 14:4 'cedar wood' (so is the Coptic: Ⲭⲉ ⲛⲓⲣⲓⲥⲓ), but the Arabic is صنوبر (pine-tree), maybe because a cedar tree was not known in Egypt. Cf. also *Lev.* 14:49; *Num.* 19:6. In *Lev.* 23:40 'willows' is translated correctly by صفصاف. Cf. in *Gen.* 30:14-16 'mandrakes' (דודאים) is translated as تفاح البيروح or البيروح. This is in fact the common translation<sup>41</sup> and it shows the wish of the translator to be as exact as possible. As for zoological terms, see for instance the different translation-choices in *Lev.* 11 or *Deut.* 14. In case we find specific connections to the reality of life in Egypt, we must nevertheless remember that the Septuagint (which also has an impact on the Arabic translation) was also composed in Egypt, and certain phenomena or different terms may have not really changed by the date of the Arabic translation.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 27; Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 687.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 687-688, no. 5.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Chihabi's *Dictionary of Agricultural and allied Terminology*, ed. Ahmad Sh. al-Khaṭīb (Beirut, 1982), p. 440.

### **The influence of the Coptic on the language of the Arabic version**

Still, what makes the Arabic version so different from other Christian-Arabic texts seems to be the influence of the Coptic on the language of the Arabic version of the Pentateuch (sometimes, as mentioned, reflecting the Septuagint). The Coptic version seems to be the most important source for the Arabic translation. The results are sometimes contrary to what is deemed to match the norm in Classical Arabic. But as mentioned, great efforts were made in order to keep the Arabic version in accordance with the standard of Classical Arabic grammatical rules. As to the Classical vocabulary it generally does not belong to a 'high language'.<sup>42</sup>

I wonder if when we have more evidence for the contact between the Coptic and the Arabic versions, we will be permitted to speak of "Coptic Christian Arabic". As said, I tend to believe that in a period of lingual transition, such a translation that seems to us to be too verbal, may have been easier to understand by people who were already speaking Arabic, but that the Coptic was still a part of their life as well. It seems that the Arabic version reflects, partly at least, the spoken language in cases in which Coptic elements seem "to have passed" into the Arabic and became an integral part of it. An example is the usages of الواحد الواحد "each one" that seem to have passed to the Judaeo-Arabic in Egypt also,<sup>43</sup> or to the description of 'age'.<sup>44</sup> There are many translation-choices that seem to be just a part of the literal tendency, and as such are mainly restricted to the "biblical vocabulary".<sup>45</sup>

Summary: This was a preliminary presentation and guide-lines to the study of the vocabulary in the Arabic version that will hopefully

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<sup>42</sup> For an example of 'a higher language' in regards with the vocabulary, see e.g., Livne-Kafri, "On Some Characteristics", chapter D ('Examples of Classical style and ways of expression').

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 689.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 691, no. 5.

<sup>45</sup> See e.g., Livne-Kafri, *Appendix*, p. 692, no. 11.

be enlarged later on. This, together with other elements described in my other articles, testifies to a unique text. Only further studies (especially the study of the syntactic relations between the Coptic and the Arabic versions) might help us to decide whether we can speak on Coptic Christian Language in general, or Coptic Christian Language that is specifically related to the Bohairic dialect reflected in our manuscript.