

A NOTICE ON LENITION AND HARDENING

A GARŠUNI SUMMARY ON BGĀDKPĀT PRONUNCIATION IN MS SACHAU 196

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ABSTRACT

This article provides the edition and the translation of a short anonymous treatise about Syriac bgādkpāt and written in Garšuni, the “Notice on Lenition and Hardening,” which is preserved in MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Sachau 196. The comparison with some of the major Syriac grammars (from Bar Ebrāyā onwards) is indicative of alignment of the treatise with the traditional native description of Syriac phonetics. Moreover, this shows that it was intended as a summary to be kept at hand and not as a thorough analysis. From a linguistic point of view, the study highlights a close interaction between the use of Garšuni and the influence of the Syriac milieu. This is clear from the choice of Middle Arabic forms and from the creation of a technical vocabulary under the pressure of language transfer.

1. INTRODUCTION

MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Sachau 196¹ is an interesting manuscript in many respects. It was copied by Mikā'il² who completed it in the month of Šbaṭ of the year 2149 AG (1838 CE).³ It consists of 100 paper folios and includes 21 works followed by a list of works by Bar 'Ebrāyā (ff.95r-96r), the colophon (ff.96v-97r), two blank pages, a page filled with pencil and ink notes, the enumerated solutions to the riddles of ff.21v-37v, and finally some other verses on the last page (f.100v). The pages are numbered in pencil with Arabic numbers, while there is no quire numeration. The use of a *mistara*, i.e. a ruling frame employed to create a pattern of blind lines on the page,⁴ appears on some of the leaves. The works are written in Syriac and Garšuni Arabic. The script is a thick *serṭā* disposed in a single column of about twenty-five lines per page, up to f.49r. From f.51v to f.57v, with the *Discourse on Divine Wisdom* by Bar 'Ebrāyā, the writing area of about twenty-three lines is framed at the bottom and along the external margin with additional text in a commentarial shape. Ff.81r-

¹ Property of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung. Shelf mark 198 in Sachau's personal catalogue. Cf. Eduard Sachau, *Verzeichniss Der Syrischen Handschriften*, vol. 1–2, Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse Der Könighlichen Bibliothek Zu Berlin 23 (Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1899), 632.

² The name is given in the colophon and at the end of the eighteenth text, a poetic composition in the Mār Ya'qōb metre by Basilius, where each line begins with a *semkat* and rhyme in *ās*, except for the last four lines, that rhyme in *as* and are an addition by the scribe himself. He reveals his name through the numerical value of the Syriac letters: "A fool and evil one, who has taken refuge in the name of Yah, wrote, revised and set in order this poem at the top of the sheet. He also arranged his name in those lines and took refuge in Christ. He did and contracted his name in the forty, in the ten, in the twenty and in the one" (f.60r). The riddle gives the name Mikā', which is—as stated—a contracted form of Mikā'il.

³ Cf. the colophon and the scribal note at the end of the hymn on f.61v, which was copied in Tešrin Qdem of the same year (October 1837 CE).

⁴ Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for the Readers*, Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1, The Near and Middle East 98 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 231–32.

84r, 85r-86v, 87v-90v, 95r-94v show a double-line frame. On ff.91r-94v there is some blank space left over at the bottom and at the external margin, seemingly reserved for comments and glosses. Besides *serṭā*, the Arabic script is sporadically used too, not only in some notes on the last folio but also inside the texts.⁵ The ink is black, with several rubrics and an irregular use of red diacritical dots. The notation of Syriac and Greek vowels is inconsistent. There are some geometrical and inaccurate band-decorations, especially at the beginning (e.g. f.73v) and at the end (e.g. f.40v) of a text.

In the colophon, the scribe says that the book was “at first Abū’l-Ma‘ānī, the *Book of Riddles*, [the *Book*] of the *Pupil* and the *Discourse of Wisdom* by the theologian Mār Gregory⁶ the *mapryānā*” (f.96v ll.6-8). If the adverb *qadmā* ‘it is understood as ‘at the beginning’, the sentence is not particularly significant. On the other hand, if we consider it to mean ‘initially’ in a temporal sense, it casts some light on the slightly discordant content of the manuscript itself, by underlining the fact that *originally* it was meant to consist of only the aforementioned works. In fact, in addition to these, the manuscript includes a number of hymns and other poetic liturgical compositions, as well as the grammatical treatise which is the focus of this paper, and a prayer against toothache. We might then suppose that all these additional works should have been included in the anthology during the copying of the main texts. Indeed, they are placed after the *Book of Riddles* but before the works by Bar ‘Ebrāyā, thus breaking off the original sequence. This would mean that the manuscript copied by Mikā’il—if it did ever exist, and if Sachau 196 is not an original anthology—consisted of only Abū’l-Ma‘ānī and Bar ‘Ebrāyā’s works, which would be an intriguing match.

⁵ E.g. in the Abū’l-Ma‘ānī’s *Sullāqā ḥawnānāyā*, f.14v ll.7-8, where the Arabic translation of a chapter’s title is written right after the Syriac version. In the same text there are unexpected transitions from Syriac to Garšuni, e.g. in f.11v, ll.8-14, f.12v 4-16 and f.13v.

⁶ Which is, of course, the thirteenth century well-known erudite high prelate and polymath Bar ‘Ebrāyā.

Against the background of the predominantly spiritual content of the manuscript, the short anonymous grammatical treatise in Garṣuni stands out. It bears the Syriac title *Zuhbārā meṭṭol rukkākā w-quššāyā* (*A Notice on Lenition and Hardening*) and goes from f.39v to f.40v. Ff.39v and 40r consist of 25 lines each, f.40v of only 18 lines which are organised, from the sixth onwards, in a reverse triangular shape resembling an Arabic colophon and are bordered in red. Each of them begins and ends with a black dot. On the sides of the penultimate line are written, in red, the words *tarahḥamnā ʿalā al-kuttāb*, while the last line shows only an isolated *ālap* as vertex. At the bottom of the text (slightly below the middle of the folio), there is a black and red band decoration with a stylised spiral design framed with dots. The Syriac title is written on the top of the first folio, outside the writing frame, and is fully vocalised with Greek vowels. Red *rukkākā* and *quššāyā* dots are extensively used not only in the Syriac examples explaining the phonetic rules, but also to distinguish different Arabic phones represented by the same Garṣuni letter.⁷

As the title says, the treatise is about the phenomenon of lenition of the *bgādkpāt* consonants, i.e. six consonants that can be pronounced either as plosives or fricatives. In the beginning, it is stated that the correct pronunciation of these consonants is recommended for the sake of the “rectification of speech and its elegance” (*taṣḥīḥ al-kalām wa saqlīb*, l.2). The reading, then, becomes easy, smooth and flowing; without the proper pronunciation, it would be harsh and difficult. We can compare this statement with what Bar ʿEbrāyā says in his *Book of Elucidations* about the function of lenition:

Two are the causes of lenition and hardening,
[one which is] necessary and [one which is]
suitable.⁸ It is necessary when this script is

⁷ See section 5 for some linguistic considerations on this subject.

⁸ The word *ḥāṣḥāyā*, ‘useful, suitable’, is used in contrast with *ʿalṣāyā*: this is ‘necessary to the sense’, the former is ‘used for the sake of elegance’.

complete, like other scripts, with those letters, thus homographs are distinguished in it as much as possible [...]. The suitable cause is when the language possesses ornament and elegance.⁹

We can notice here the parallelism between the Garšuni text and the one by Bar ‘Ebrāyā: the Syriac ‘ornament’ is replaced by ‘rectification’, but ‘elegance [of the speech]’ is retained. The similarity between the two definitions is so striking that it can be argued that the anonymous author of the treatise must have had in mind Bar ‘Ebrāyā’s statement. Or, at least, it had become a standard definition for the *bgadkpat* phenomenon. The absence in the *Notice* of the phonematic argument explained by the Syriac Orthodox *mapryānā* cannot be considered an indication of its incompleteness on the matter. In fact, this theoretical subdivision is not even applied to the exposition of the phonetic rules in the *Elucidations*. They are basically descriptive and do not explain whether specific instances of lenition are the result of phonematic distinction between homographs or of orthoepy.

In this paper, besides the edition and English translation of the *Notice*, I intend to point out those contents and linguistic phenomena which are relevant to the history of Arabic language and Syriac grammatical tradition. I do not expect to be able to understand and solve all the problems posed by the treatise, nor to grasp its full implications within each discipline. Instead, this paper is meant to make the modest discovery of the *Notice* available to competent experts in both fields for further study.

⁹ In Syr.: ܕܠܗ ܕܡܠܚܚܐ ܕܡܠܚܚܐ ܕܡܠܚܚܐ. Cf. Axel Moberg, *Le livre des splendeurs. La grande grammaire de Grégoire Barhebraeus. Texte syriaque édité d’après les manuscrits avec une introduction et des notes*, vol. IV, Skrifter Utgivna Av Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund (London, Paris, Oxford, Leipzig: Humphrey Milford, Édouard Champion, University Press, O. Harrassowitz, 1922), 210–11.

2. CONTENT OF THE *NOTICE*

After the definition of the importance of the correct pronunciation of the *bgādḱpāt*, the description of the subject seems to be significantly in line with the traditional native exposition of Classical Syriac phonetics. The structure is quite simple: the statement of each rule is immediately followed by some examples, introduced by the Syriac word *ayk* preceded or not by the Arabic expression *ka-naḥw qawlika*. Sometimes there are few exceptions which are explained as a separate rule or otherwise introduced by the Syriac phrase *štar men* ‘except for’. It will be now provided an overview of the content.

The first rule (ll.14-23) is the most basic one. A *bgādḱpāt* becomes fricative in initial position whenever a one-letter proclitic preposition (a so-called *bdul*) is prefixed to it. The examples take into account each preposition added to a noun for all the *bgādḱpāt* consonants, with the exception of *pē*. This latter is dealt with separately, in ll.23-31, because it can have a third pronunciation which is called in Arabic *mufarqiʿa* ‘explosive’, usually referred to in Syriac as *pē yawnāytā*, ‘the Greek *pē*’,¹⁰ and which is completely unaspirated.¹¹ The rules governing the pronunciation of *pē* are slightly different from those which apply to the other *bgādḱpāt*. From the examples, it is clear that the fricative *pē* has to follow a vowel and be itself vowelless and it cannot occur at the beginning of a word. It is also stated that the *bdul* have no influence on the lenition of an initial *pē*, the only exception being the biblical form *ba-ṗsilātā*.

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Moberg, IV:210.

¹¹ Rubens Duval, *Traité de grammaire syriaque* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881), 30–32; Theodor Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, translated by James A. Crichton (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), 10. I deeply thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing out also the following: R. Voigt, “Das Emphatische p Des Syrischen,” *Symposium Syriacum VII*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 256 (1998): 527–37; Aaron Michael Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context*, *Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic* 11 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2016), 81–84; Aaron Michael Butts, “The Integration of Consonants in Greek Loanwords in Syriac,” *Aramaic Studies* 14 (2016): 18–20.

Overall, the rule is quite confusing, since it speaks of a “fricative *pē*” which “cannot be spirant”. Either the writer confused *mutaḥarrika* with *murakkaḥa*, or he was mistaken and blended together more than one rule. If this were the case, it could be considered an instance of scribal error of which we will see more further on in the paper. As far as the plosive allophone is concerned, it can occur at the beginning of a word and must be vocalised. Finally, the Greek *pē* can occur in any position but is of course limited to Greek loan words. Although it is not specifically stressed here, it does not follow the common Syriac phonological rules.

Lenition across word boundaries is presented in lines 31-36. It depends on the presence of a final vowel-letter—i.e. an *ālāp* (for *zqāpā*), a *yod* “provided with *ḥbāṣā*” and a *wāw* “*mḥwṣ*”. The interpretation of this latter term will be dealt with in the paragraph on linguistic interference. However, according to the examples, it seems in this instance to refer to the semivowel *wāw* of the diphthong *āw*. This can be inferred from the pointing of the examples, and specifically by the *ptāḥā* vowel on the last radical of the words preceding the pronoun *hu* and by what seems to be a *linea occultans* on the *hē* of each pronoun. In any case, this would be quite unusual in the context of the modern tradition of pronunciation, because generally the presence of a diphthong prevents the lenition. In lines 37-45 it is said that the same vowel letters (and “simple” vowels not accompanied by a *mater lectionis*, as in the examples, as well) cause lenition also in the middle of a word, unless a vowelless consonant comes between the vowel and the *bgādkepāt*, with some exceptions for the feminine *tāw* ending. It is also interesting to note the allusion to the plosive pronunciation of a vocalised *bgādkepāt* after a vowel ‘*ṣāṣā*’ (a vowel noted by *wāw*), which we would rather explain as a case of gemination. Finally, among the examples, it is surprising to find the words *ṣurtā* and *burkētā*, that have a *rēš* after the *wāw* rather than a *bgādkepāt*. They may be remainders of a different rule, either not copied intentionally or accidentally overlooked, which might be another example of scribal error.

Furthermore, the rule explained at lines 45-50 with reference to vowel letters is ambiguous as the Arabic text is not easy to understand. The rule refers to the connection between a *bgādḱpāt* following a vocalised consonant, and an *ālap* that is called *uḥrāniyya*, which might mean ‘coming at the end, last’ or ‘second, following’. From the examples, we can argue that the adjective *uḥrāniyya* refers to an *ālap* which is (or has become) *mater lectionis* for a *ṣqāpā*, but also to a *ṣqāpā* not marked by an *ālap*. The influence of a *ṣqāpā* on the lenition is seen in the plural too, especially for the feminine nouns when compared with their singular which has an occlusive pronunciation instead (i.e. *-ātū* against *-tū*). However, the examples consider also masculine names whose last consonant is not preceded by a *ṣqāpā*. Therefore, the rule cannot refer strictly to the emphatic case ending, otherwise the distinction between singular and plural would fail. We should thus assume that the treatise is inconsistently summarising and overlapping several situations into only one explanation.

Dental consonants are discussed in lines 50-56. In the first place, it seems that the treatise refers to the case when a dental (*tāw* or *dālad*) is added to a first vowelless *tāw*—in a reflexive form or when the relative pronoun is used. The consonant placed before is pronounced as a plosive, whereas the first radical becomes fricative. The rule is expanded considering the addition of a *bdul* to the already existing dental cluster: the plosive pronunciation of the first dental does not change, even if it is preceded by a vowel, and neither does the fricative pronunciation of the second one. A different situation takes place when two *bdul*, i.e. firstly a *dālad* and then a *nāw* before it, are placed at the beginning of a word with a vocalised *tāw* as first radical. Both the *tāw* and the *dālad* are pronounced as plosives, and the text states that this happens because of the *nāw* vocalised in *ptāḥā*.

The last rule (ll.56-63) says that a vocalised *bgādḱpāt* occurring after another vocalised consonant must be plosive. Otherwise (the *bgādḱpāt* being vowelless) it is fricative. It is interesting to note that this is not explained in terms of

gemination but of actual hardening of the consonant, suggesting that by the date of composition of the *Notice* the knowledge and the perception of gemination might be already lost in western Syriac. The last six lines put an end to the treatise abruptly, stressing again the need to understand the rules described and, as usual, thanking God for his help and asking for forgiveness.

3. THE *NOTICE* AND THE SYRIAC GRAMMATICAL TRADITION

From the overview above, we can see that the *Notice* does not cover in full the subject of *bgādḱpāt* consonants and it simply puts aside several details. Indeed, the intention of the author might have been not to give a complete description of this aspect of Syriac phonetics, but rather to provide his reader with a basic understanding of it. This becomes clearer when we compare the content of the Garšuni treatise with that of some of the major native Syriac grammars. This allows us to highlight the similarities and the differences and to clarify the place the treatise occupies in that tradition.

In the *Metrical Grammar* by Bar ʿEbrāyā (Syr. *Ktābā d-gramatiqi*, MS Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 298), the rules concerning the lenition of *bgādḱpāt* consonants are split in two parts. The first deals with the letters that become fricative in names, the second with those that become fricative in verbs. This partition is not shown in the treatise, but we can note that almost all the examples are drawn from nouns and only two from verbs. Except for few dissimilarities, among the rules set out by Bar ʿEbrāyā, one can find all those mentioned in the *Notice*. A first discrepancy is found in the discussion about the pronunciation of an initial non-Greek *pē* when a *bdul* is prefixed. Bar ʿEbrāyā says that this *pē* undergoes lenition, while the treatise contradicts this and quotes the biblical *ba-ṗsilātā* as an exception. However, in the *Metrical Grammar* this is just one among many examples of the main rule. On the same subject, the treatise is quite clear about the fact that “a

vocalised *pē* is not fricative”;¹² Bar ‘Ebrāyā, instead, acknowledges some exceptions to this rule.¹³ The *Metrical Grammar* addresses lenition after a vowel letter, i.e. *yod ḥbiṣṭā* and *nām da-ṣiṣūtā*, as the treatise does, but the former makes no mention of cases where the vowel letter falls before a first radical *bgādkepāt*—i.e., lenition beyond word boundaries. Conversely, the *Notice* deals specifically with this in its second section and only then moves on to discuss the case of when the vowel letter falls in the middle of the word. The remaining contents of the treatise are addressed in the *Metrical Grammar* in a very similar way. Bar ‘Ebrāyā, however, even in this highly abridged poetical dissertation, discusses more rules, e.g. those related to the Greek *kāp*, to the personal pronouns beginning with *kāp* suffixed to plural nouns and to the hardness of a *tāw* following a diphthong *ay*.

The other and more thorough grammatical work by Bar ‘Ebrāyā is the *Book of Elucidations* (Syr. *Ktābā d-ṣemḥē*). Here, the very same rules are expounded with additional explanations of several exceptions. Worth noting where within the text the subject of lenition/hardening of the feminine *tāw* in singular and plural forms of the noun is addressed,¹⁴ similarly to lines 47-50 of our treatise. In the latter the rule involves not only the *tāw* of feminine nouns but also every other third radical *bgādkepāt*. On the other hand, Bar ‘Ebrāyā acknowledged this as a feature belonging to the eastern Syrians only: “The eastern [Syrians] also pronounce *ṣalgā margā ‘esbā* with hardening of *gāmāl* and *bēt*, as *ṣalgē margē ‘esbe* with lenition of *gāmāl* and *bēt*”.¹⁵ The following elucidation is quite interesting too as it states that those nouns which have a plosive third radical in the emphatic state have the fricative allophone in the ‘contracted’ form (Syr. *gdāmā*, i.e. the absolute and construct states). For

¹² ليس فَا متحركة تكون مركبة (line 30).

¹³ دبل اءد وبعلمل حدلوط هم لا محلا, “It can be fricative, in particular cases, also when it is not silent” i.e. when it is vocalised (cf. Or. 298 f.23r).

¹⁴ Moberg, *Le livre des splendeurs*, IV:210. Cf. in particular lines 16-20.

¹⁵ Ibid.

some of these names, the *Notice* approaches the issue differently and says that the plosive pronunciation of the third radical depends on the presence of a preceding vowelless consonant in the emphatic state (l.40).

In correspondence with the third section of the Garšuni treatise, regarding the rules of lenition after a vowel, we can find a similar section in the *Elucidations*.¹⁶ However, in the *Elucidations* the analysis is more thorough—compared to that of the *Metrical Grammar*—and investigates a greater number of instances and nominal categories, mainly arranged on the basis of the number of consonants the names consist of, and the place and kind of vowels that are used. For example, it discusses the nouns consisting of four consonants and two vowels, including those with the feminine *tāw* ending. And, as in the fourth section of the *Notice*, the *tāw* is generally considered plosive (like any other third consonant in names with a C₁VC₂C₃V scheme) with some exceptions. The list of possibilities, based on the consonant-vowel pattern, is huge. In the treatise, they are either summarily quoted as particular instances or, for the most part, not mentioned at all.

Closer to the time of the *Notice*¹⁷ are the didactic works by the Maronite patriarch Ġirġis ʿAmīra and the Syriac Catholic Archbishop of Damascus Joseph David. ʿAmīra,¹⁸ three centuries after Bar ʿEbrāyā, preserves in his grammar the traditional organisation of the subject: lenition and hardening are treated in several chapters, depending on whether they occur in the noun or in the verb. The influence of Bar ʿEbrāyā is clear from his presentation of the two causes for the lenition phenomenon, which are the necessity to distinguish between different words and the elegance of speech: “Two causes might be distinguished for the words to be affected by lenition and hardening. The first is that in this way the words can be

¹⁶ Ibid., from p.211, 10 onwards.

¹⁷ At least, up until the time of the *Notice* preserved in MS Sachau 196.

¹⁸ Ġirġis Miḥāʾil ʿAmīra, *Grammatica Syriaca sive Chaldaica* (Roma: Giacomo Luna, 1596).

distinguished one from the other. Sometimes in fact one can find words that, in consonants and vowels, are so similar that if you remove from them the lenition and hardening, you also necessarily remove from them any distinction. [...] The second is for the sake of the refinement, embellishment and pleasantness of speech”.¹⁹ He then continues in the traditional way, going through several possibilities which arise according to the number of consonants in the word, the position occupied by the *bgādkpāt* and the vocalic pattern.

On the other hand, David,²⁰ who wrote in the nineteenth century, adopts a completely different perspective on the matter, more in line with the modern tradition. He says that after a vowelless consonant a *bgādkpāt* “remains” hard, whereas after a vocalised letter it becomes fricative except for a double consonant which is always hard. It is interesting to note that he takes into consideration the etymology of the word through comparison with Arabic, and states that the consonant becomes fricative also when it is preceded by a theoretical short vowel, i.e. a short vowel deleted in a pretonic open syllable (this is the vowel deletion rule, characteristic of Aramaic phonetics): “But if the preceding letter is theoretically vocalised with a short vowel, then hardening does not happen, as in *barḏā barad* in which the *rēš* is theoretically vocalised”.²¹ Further on, he also speaks of a “uocalem breuem subintellectam”²² (implied short vowel) which causes the

¹⁹ “Duplex autem assignari potest causa, cur uoces lenitate et asperitate afficiantur: prima, ut uoces ab inuicem distinguantur: interdum enim reperiuntur uoces ita similes in litteris, et uocalibus, ut si ab ipsis mollities, et durities tollatur, tollatur etiam necessario ab eis omnis distinctio. [...] Secunda causa est propter elegantiam, ornatum, et suauitatem pronunciandi”. Ibid., 124–26.

²⁰ Clemens Joseph David, *Grammatica aramaica seu syriaca philologice exposita iuxta utrumque systema, orientale scilicet et occidentale* (Mosul, 1896).

²¹ “Sed si littera praecedens est uirtualiter mota uocali breui, tunc asperitas non habet locum, ut *ܚܕܐ* in quo resh est uirtualiter motum”.

Ibid., 569.

²² Ibid., 576.

lenition of a following *bgādkpāt*. He is using the *šmā* argument to explain lenition after a quiescent consonant, whereas Bar ʿEbrāyā explained it through the word-pattern. This is of course predictable, considering David adopted a comparative approach to the Semitic languages. The rest of his treatment of the subject follows more or less the traditional discussion, whereby all the classes of cases in which the rules do not always apply (e.g., with the feminine *tām* or in the defective verbs) are enumerated. The same listing method, based on the position of the consonants and on their vocalisation, is maintained by other late grammarians such as Jeremiah Maqdisī and Alphonse Mingana.²³

In conclusion, the description provided by grammarians of the *bgādkpāt* issue underwent a considerable degree of standardisation both in its form and content. The rules, as might be expected, are expressed in extremely similar terms. Furthermore, in many cases, the examples too are the very same. Thus, the effort to understand if the *Notice* has some kinds of (direct) relation with an earlier work becomes difficult. The text itself does not present any evidence of error or correction, with the exception of line 23. Here the scribe mistakenly began to present two examples for the letter *pē*, but he crossed them out and went back to discussing the rules of *pē*. This leads us to assume that the scribe was copying something and not actually composing the short treatise himself.²⁴ Moreover, the addition of a Syriac title outside the writing frame allows us to assert the same, as if the scribe added it later to the anonymous text. I have not been able to identify any original (which might have been longer) or an antigraph.

²³ Jeremiah Maqdisī, *Grammaire chaldéenne* (Mosul, 1889); Alphonse Mingana, *Clef de la langue araméenne ou grammaire complète et pratique des deux dialectes syriaques occidental et oriental* (Mosul, Paris, 1905).

²⁴ I sincerely thank Professor D. Mascitelli (University of Pisa) for his suggestions.

4. LINGUISTIC INTERFERENCE IN TECHNICAL VOCABULARY

Some considerations about the language of the text will now be attempted. As mentioned above, the *Notice* is written in Garṣuni Arabic, which is Arabic written in a Syriac script. In this case the script used is *serṭā* or Western Syriac. Two main perspectives may be adopted: the grammatical vocabulary in a mixed Arabic-Aramaic context and the non-classical language of the text itself (about which please see the comment to the Garṣuni text). The two levels are not completely separated and eventually they interact in leading to some common general observations collected in the conclusions.

The most interesting feature of the grammatical vocabulary of the *Notice* is the use of what I came to consider calques coined from Syriac and employed to refer to lenition and hardening phenomena. In my opinion, two new Arabic-flexed roots were created on the basis of the Syriac roots RKK and QŠY, to which the grammatical terms *rukakā* and *quššāyā* correspond. The first root is given in the treatise as RKḤ (in Garṣuni ܪܟܗ) where C₃, a *bgādkepāt* in Aramaic, becomes an Arabic *ḥāʾ* and is accordingly written with a Syriac *kāp metrakkā*. Instead, the second root is given as QŠW. In the text, they are always used in the II and V derived forms. These correspond to the Syriac *paʿel* and *etpaʿal* which are the verbal forms most commonly used with these roots. Thus, we find the verb *rakkaḥa* with its passive/reflexive *tarakkaḥa* as well as *qaššā* and *taqaššā*, conjugated in the finite tenses but also in the participles and *masdar*.

If we go through some of the most important Arabic dictionaries, we can see that these roots do not occur in standard Arabic, nor does any other root exist which would legitimise the Garṣuni spelling. One might wonder if they are specific technical words, not included in the common lexicon but still comprehensible to a native learned specialist. To answer this doubt, one can leaf through Syriac grammars written in Arabic and see what kind of vocabulary they make

use of. For example, David, in the Arabic version of his treatise, makes a point of explaining the meaning of *muqaššā* and *murakkah* when he addresses the *bgādkepat* subject. In fact, in the paragraph where the pronunciation of *bēt* is described, he writes:

This letter is the first among the *bgādkepat*, all of which have two pronunciations. The first of these is called *muqaššā*, i.e. which is pronounced with the *taqšīyya*—i.e., with hardening—²⁵and is marked with a dot above. The other is the *murakkah*, i.e. which is pronounced with the *tarkīh*—i.e., with lenition—²⁶and is marked with a dot below.²⁷

Only few decades later though, Buṭros Sābā completely drops the terminology based on Syriac in favour of a purely Arabic one. However, while for the lenition he retains the root LYN already used by David and translates the Syriac *metrakka* with the Arabic *mulayyan*, for the hardening he abandons the root ḠFW and chooses to use *muqassā* for the Syriac *metqaššā*.²⁸

The fact that in the *Notice* the Syriac terminology is not explained nor is flanked by clear Arabic synonyms may suggest that the treatise was meant to be used by someone who was already acquainted, to some degree, with the language. It can be argued that it was not intended to have a didactic function,

²⁵ Ar. مُقَشَّيْ أَي مَلْفُوظًا بِهِ بِالتَّقْشِيَةِ أَي بِالْجَفَاءِ.

²⁶ Ar. مَرَكَّحًا أَي مَلْفُوظًا بِهِ بِالتَّرْكِخِ أَي بِاللِّينِ.

²⁷ Qlīmīs Yūsuf Dāwud, كتاب اللعة الشهية في نحو اللغة السريانية على كلا مذهبي الغربيين والشرقيين, *Kitāb al-lumʿa al-šahiyya fi nahw al-luġa al-suryāniyya ʿalā kilā maḡhabay al-ġarbiyyina wa-l-šarqiyyina* (Mosul, 1879), 32.

²⁸ Buṭros Sābā, مرشد الطلبة السريانيين الى كلتا لهجتي الغربيين والشرقيين, *Muršid al-ṭalaba al-suryāniyyina ilā kiltā lahġatay al-ġarbiyyina wa-l-šarqiyyina* (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Kāṭūlikiyya, 1948), 5.

but rather it must have been a kind of *memento*, a brief and easy-to-use summary of the principal rules related to lenition accompanied by few basic examples. In other words, it was not designated to teach something new but to remind the readers of something they already know. Therefore, explanations of technical vocabulary taken from Syriac would have been unnecessary. In a pure hypothetical way, it can also be assumed that at the time of composition of the treatise (and we only have a *terminus ante quem*, 1838 CE) the technical words used were still somewhat clear to the readers, either because they were used extensively in the Syriac grammatical tradition in Arabic (and this deserves further investigation), or because the scholars were supposed to be able to understand both languages.

Another interesting example is to be found in lines 34, 36, 37 and 41 where the rules dealing with a *bgādēpāt* coming after a fully vocalised semivowel, i.e. after a vocalised *yod* or a vocalised *nāw*, are explained. In lines 34 and 37, the writer retains the Syriac name of the vowel, *ḥbāšā*, and uses the phrases “the *yod* which has a *ḥbāšā*” and “the *yod* which is *ḥbāšā*”. Yet, when he turns to describe the same rule applied to the *nāw*, he introduces the adjective <ʾl-mḥwšš> which I have not been able to fully understand. It might derive from the root ḤṢṢ, which means ‘to designate, label, mark’. Thus, it could be understood as a *nāw* ‘marked with a vocalic point, above or below’. Grammatically speaking, the form remains unexplained since it should be *al-maḥšūša* and we might at least suppose that a metathesis took place between *nāw* and *šādē* and forget about the *šadda*. There is, however, another possible interpretation, which is equally hypothetical. In the text, the parallelism with the *yod* should be noticed as well as the phonetic similarity between <ḥbāšā> and *ḥbāšā*. I suspect that the scribe was aware of the fact that sometimes the dots above and below the *nāw* were called *ḥbāšā* too,²⁹ and at least

²⁹ Even in Bar ʿEbrāyā’s *Ktābā d-šemḥē*, cf. Moberg, *Le livre des splendeurs*, IV:33.

once, in Severus bar Šakko, the participle *ḥbiṣtā* is applied to the fully vocalised *wāw*.³⁰ Therefore, I would not completely dismiss the possibility of reading <ʿ-*mḥwṣṣh*> as *al-muḥawwiṣa* or *al-maḥwūṣa*, which does not exist in Arabic, as far as I know, and would be another neo-coined word based on the Syriac *ḥbāṣā* or *ḥbiṣtā*. Phonetically, the *wāw* can be explained by means of the fricative pronunciation of *bet*, which passed to [w] from [v]. The use of *ḥ* instead of *h* is the main counter-argument of this hypothesis, although it comes as no surprise, at least from a linguistic perspective. Furthermore, even if the *šadda* is clearly placed on the *šādē*, in the treatise it is not infrequent for it to fall upon the consonant following or preceding the doubled letter. Rigorously, the Arabic cognate of the Syriac root ḤBṢ is ḤBṢ, although it means ‘to mingle, mix’. In fact, Duval glosses in his grammar the Syriac word *ḥbāṣā* with the Arabic *ḥafḍ*, which would be more specifically the *i* vowel when pronounced after the last letter of the word. On the whole, the possibility that the writer, when using the word <*mḥwṣṣ*>, still had in mind this web of (phonetic) affinities does not seem completely unreasonable.

Against the background of such an Aramaic environment, the use (only once in line 29) of the Arabic term *al-ḡamāʿid* is somewhat noticeable. In Arabic grammar, the term indicates every addition (suffixes, prefixes, infixes, prolongation letters and so forth) to the pure trilateral root used for morphological derivation. However, the author of the *Notice* uses it only to refer to the *bdul* consonants—i.e. the proclitic prepositions. When the text addresses the *bdul*, one usually finds the expression “the four *bdul* [consonants] are prefixed to...”, where the verb for ‘to prefix’ is *saqaṭa ʿalā*, literally ‘to fall upon’, which accurately translates *npal qdām*, the standard way to express the concept of prefixation in Syriac. In fact, the *bdul* consonants are properly known in Syriac as *maṣṣplātā* ‘those that

³⁰ Albertus Merx, *Historia artis grammaticae apud Syros*, Kunde des Morgenlandes 2 (Leipzig: Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1889), p.

fall'. Why the author chose to use the Arabic *al-ẓawā'id* in this case instead of a calque on the Syriac *mapplātā* is not clear. It is undoubtedly evidence of his deep knowledge of the Arabic grammatical tradition, which does not always match the Syriac one at the theoretical level.³¹ Another significant place from this perspective is the line where the treatise speaks about the 'ālap which is second' (*alif uḥrāniyya*, l. 46)—an *ālap* vowel letter or a *ẓgāpā* coming after the second radical. This vowel is perceived in a clearly Arabic way like a long *fatḥa*, which in Syriac is not always marked with an *ālap* as it is in Arabic. Moreover, the prevalent interpretative frame seems to be the Arabic (based on a pure triconsonantism), since "second *ālap*" refers to a vowel given to the second radical, whereas in Syriac grammar it would refer to an *ālap* in second position in the writing string.

From the analysis of the cases discussed above, it seems safe to say that these instances can be regarded as evidence of linguistic interference between cognate languages spoken and/or used in different social contexts and for different purposes. Syriac was the language of the Church, Arabic the language of the administration and cultural élite. Both of the languages held high-status. This, in turn, led to a two-way interference: of Syriac on Arabic when the author (consciously) uses Syriac lexical material and adapts it to the Arabic environment, and of Arabic on Syriac when the grammatical analysis implies (unconsciously?) an Arabic perspective. The use of calques from Syriac for 'lenition' and 'hardening' may be explained through the existing Syriac tradition and the need to preserve the technical vocabulary, while also bearing in mind that Arabic lacks these phenomena and thus lacks the specific words to describe them grammatically. Conversely, the writer did not need to create a new word to talk about the prefixes and, instead of the mnemonic word *bdul*, he could make use of

³¹ Cf. e.g. Georges Bohas, *Approche de l'organisation de la morphologie et de la phonologie chez Bar Hebraeus*. Speech given at the 15th round table of the Société d'études syriaques, held on November 17, 2017.

the extremely technical word *al-ṣawā'id* and dismiss the Syriac *mapplātā*.

5. A NOTE ON GARŠUNI AND THE ARABIC TRANSCRIPTION

Garšuni	Arabic	Garšuni	Arabic
ܐ	ا , ء	ܦ	خ
ܒ	ب	ܬ	ل
ܓ	غ	ܡ	م
ܕ	ج	ܢ	ن
ܕ , ذ , ض	د , ذ , ض	ܥ	س , ص
ܕ	د	ܥ	ع
ܕ	ذ	ܦ	ف
ܐ , ه	ه , ة	ܥ	ص
ܐ , ه , ة	ه , ة , ة	ܥ	ض
ܐ	و	ܥ	ق
ܐ	ز	ܦ	ر
ܐ	ح	ܦ	ش
ܐ	ط , ظ	ܦ	ت

ه	ض	ث	ب
و	ي , ي	سّ	قّ
ع	ك		

An Arabic transcription is provided along with the Garṣuni text for the sake of those who do not read Syriac but nevertheless might be interested in a paper dealing with Garṣuni or Christian Arabic topics. However, such a transcription is by necessity unfaithful to the original Garṣuni, since it implies a specific interpretation of the text because of its heterographic nature. Therefore, not only does my personal view emerge in the translation, but also in the Arabic transcription. All problematic forms, spellings or linguistic phenomena have been highlighted and analysed in detail in the comment, where I also point out other readings. The reader will find in it more specific information.

It is important to stress that this transcription is not a normalisation at all: all the orthographical features of the Garṣuni original have been strictly retained in the Arabic version. No *hamza* has been restored, no abnormal form corrected according to the *fuṣḥā*'s standard, no vowel or any other orthographical sign supplied except for those actually present in the manuscript. A choice has been necessarily made whenever a Garṣuni character represents more than one Arabic letter (which is quite a frequent occurrence). However, the reader should not forget that Garṣuni is neither a standardised nor a consistent system, and that its actual shape “remains totally dependent on the copyist’s cultural background, the tradition of his/her religious community, and the geographical

Many examples of such inconstancy can be found in the *Notice*. One is the representation of the Arabic *tā'* *marbuṭa* which is sometimes rendered with a simple Syriac *hē*, and sometimes with *hē* with two dots above, like the Arabic character. In addition, this last Garšuni character can also represent any feminine termination, such as the nominal *alif mamdūda* and the verbal ending *-at*. Another example is that of the Arabic *ḍād*, which is one of the most unstable graphemes, and is represented by three Garšuni letters. Kessel identified two reasons for this in addressing the core of the Garšuni issue as a whole.³³ The first is the fact that the so-called Middle Arabic language underwent several changes in its phonetic system, and this shifting can be perhaps reflected by Garšuni texts. The second is the freedom which is felt by the scribe, within certain limitations, to establish his/her own personal conventions.

6. TEXT AND TRANSCRIPTION

(1) اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
الطَّيِّبِ الْكَافِرِ وَفِي الْحَمْدِ الْكَلِمَةُ
لِلْحَمْدِ (2) اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

³³ Grigory Kessel, "The Importance of the Manuscript Tradition of the 'Book of Grace' for the Study of Garšūnī" (*Parole de l'Orient* 37 [2012]), 14–15.

(3) يسهِّلُهُ ويهيِّئُهُ على المتكلِّم لان
 بغير سَقْل (4) الكلام يُتَقَى صَعْب
 وواقف ومضّر: لاجل ذلك وَضَعُو (5)
 سَتَّ حروف تتركّخ وتتقشّأ: ح
 و م ر ف ل التي (6) تتجمّع
 تحتها: ويوضعوا نُقْطَةً حَمْرَهُ ام
 سَوَدَهُ (7) من فوق ام تحت ان كانت
 من فوق فهي علامة التقشّي (8) وان
 كانت من تحت فهي علامة التركيخ:
 كما يُبَيِّن لك افهم (9) ذلك ولو ما
 يصير هذا التركيخ والتقشّي كان كثير
 صعب (10) ولم كنت تقدر تقرا . . .
 واذا قرئت كان واقف * كنحو قولك
 (11) صَلِّتْهُ او بُحِّتْهُ او نُحِّتْهُ
 وهذا كثير صعب والسهل (12) تقول
 صَلِّتْهُ بُحِّتْهُ هُتِّتْهُ * لاجل ذلك
 جعلوا هولاء (13) السِتَّة احروف
 تتركّخ وتتقشّي التي بهذه الصورة:
 (14) تَ تَ تَ تَ تَ تَ قَ قَ لَ .

الطام (3) مهذَّجُهُ مَهْذَجُهُ
 حذ الحذف مَحْمَلٌ لَمْ حَمَلٌ
 مَحْمَلٌ (4) الحطام مَحْمَلٌ
 نَحَد ه هَامِد هَمْدٌ: لَمْ
 وَحَد هَلْهُ (5) هَلْهُ مَهْلٌ مِنْهُ
 لَمْ وَحَد هَلْهُ مَهْلٌ: تَ تَ تَ قَ قَ لَ
 قَ لَ لَمْ (6) لَمْ لَمْ لَمْ
 حَتِّتْ دَقْلٌ: هَلْهُ لَمْ لَمْ لَمْ
 مَهْمَلٌ ام مَهْمَلٌ (7) مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ ام مَهْمَلٌ ام مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 (8) هَلْ طابَة مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 طابَة مَهْمَلٌ: مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 حَمَلٌ ام مَهْمَلٌ (9) وَحَد هَلْ مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 طَل مَهْمَلٌ نَحَد (10) هَلْ مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ . . . هَلْ مَهْمَلٌ
 طَل مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 (11) حَتِّتْهُ اَهْ بُحِّتْهُ اَهْ
 نُحِّتْهُ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ نَحَد
 مَهْمَلٌ (12) مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ بُحِّتْهُ مَهْمَلٌ لَمْ
 وَحَد مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ (13)
 مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ مَهْمَلٌ
 (14) تَ تَ تَ تَ تَ تَ قَ قَ لَ .

ثم اعلم اذا سقطو على هولا
 الستت (15) حروف الاربع التي
 تتسمى حبه \ تركّخ الستة نحو
 (16) قولك. صلا خجا وبلا
 قهتا قاقا ياختا. اذا سقطت (17)
 واحده من الاربع حروف على هولا.
 [الاسما يترّكخو (18) وانما
 سقطت عليهم واحده من الاربع
 حروف يتقشّوا (19) أم صلا
 خجا وبلا قهتا قاقا ياختا. واذا
 سقطو (20) حروف البدول يترّكخو
 كنحو قولك. أم خجلا وبجلا
 (21) هجلا خجلا: خجا
 وخجا هجا خجا: خجا وبلا
 وببلا (22) هبلا جبلا: قهتا
 وقهتا ههتا حبه نا: حادا
 وببلا (23) هبلا حبلا.
 صلا صلا

واما الفا لها ثلث (24) انواع
 واضراب: تسمى مركّخه ومقشّيه
 ومفرّقه: فا (25) المركّخه أم فا
 وببلا وببلا وببلا وببلا وما

بم الحمر اوا هممه
 حد هولا الهلا (15)
 منه الاوحد الكلا الماصع
 حبه ناوحد الهلا منه
 (16) موحه صلا خجا
 وبلا قهتا قاقا ياختا اوا
 هممه (17) هاسه مع
 الاوحد منه حد هولا. [.
 الماصع مل وقه (18) هبلا
 هممه حهمه هاسه مع
 الاوحد منه مل ماصعا (19)
 أم صلا خجا وبلا قهتا
 قاقا ياختا. هوا هممه
 (20) منه الكحه
 مل وقه منه موحه: أم
 خجلا وبجلا (21) هجلا
 خجلا: حجا وبلا
 هجا خجا: جبلا وببلا
 (22) هبلا جبلا: قهتا
 وقهتا ههتا حبه نا: حادا
 وببلا (23) هبلا حبلا:
 صلا صلا..

هوا الكلا حلا باح
 (24) اوا هلا: الماصع
 منه ههممه ههممه:
 فا (25) الماصع أم فا
 وببلا وببلا وببلا وببلا

يشابه (26) ذلك: وفا المقشيه أم
 قلّة؛ وفاحها: وفا (27) المفرقة
 أم جبتا فبتا قلّة قلّة قلّة
 معنّا: اعلم (28) ان الفا المركّبه
 لم تقع في أوّل اسم ولا في آخره:
 (29) ولم تتركخ اذا سقط عليه احد
 الزوايد الا فا جصيتكلا (30) ثم
 اعرف ان ليس فا متحرّكه تكون
 مركّبه بل مقشيه: (31) ولافا ساكنه
 تكون مقشيه بل مركّبه

افهم ذلك: وايضا (32)
 تفهيم اخر اعلم ان الالف تركّخ اذا
 سقطت على حرف (33) من حروف
 حجبها: كنحو قولك: أم أم
 خجنا أم جبتا (34) أم جبتا أم
 باحبا: كذلك اليود الذي اليها مقول
 (35) تركخ أم حد ججنا حد
 ججنا وأم ججنا ججنا
 باحبا: (36) كذلك الواو المخوَّصه
 تركخ أم جانباً أم ججنا أم
 باحبا:

معارج (26) وح: هيا
 الحمصه أم قلّة؛ هيا
 هيا: هيا (27)
 الحمصه: أم فبتا
 فبتا قلّة قلّة قلّة
 احمر (28) الحيا
 الحمصه حم نامد
 أم الحمر هيا أم: (29)
 حم نامد أم هيا حم
 أم الحمر الا هيا جصيتكلا
 (30) أم الحد الحيا
 الحمصه نامد الحمصه
 (31) هيا هيا
 نامد الحمصه الحمصه
 الحمر وح: هيا
 (32) نامد أم الحد
 الحمصه نامد أم هيا حم
 (33) ح مصه
 حجبها: حصة حجب: أم
 أم خجنا أم جبتا (34) أم
 جبتا أم باحبا: حجب الحمر
 الحمر الحمر مقول (35) نامد
 أم حد خجنا ح ججنا هيا
 حجب جبتا حجب باحبا: (36)
 حجب الحمر الحمصه نامد
 أم جانباً أم ججنا أم باحبا:

(37) كذلك اليود الوسطانيه

الذي سقط تركب أم به وحبها

(38) حبها حبها حبها حبها

حبها حبها حبها حبها وان كان

(39) واحده ساكنه تنقشئ: أم

مبها مبها مبها مبها قننا مب

(40) متحلا فحلها حبها مغنقا

ه وأم نحلها مغنقا مع لحها

(41) قحها قحها قحها قحها: كذلك

الواو الوسطانيه المخصوصه (42) واو

أم لمحبها فمحلهها معمها

قحها قحها قحها قحها (43) محظا

محظا وان كان قدام الواو حرف من

احروف (44) الستة متحرك يتقشئ

أم محظا محظا محظا محظا (45)

محظا:

واذا كانت الاحرف متحركة

وسقط واحد من (46) الستة قدام

الالف الاخرانيه تتركب: أم ملاقا

(47) فحلها فحلها: كذلك المتكسر

دايم يركب: أم وبتها ليجتها

(48) مبعها لمبعها مبعها

(37) صبح الامه

الدهليته الحب سقط ناوص

أم به وحبها (38) حبها

محبا محبا محبا محبا

و محبا ه ط (39)

ه أم به محبا ناوص: أم

مبها مبها مبها مبها قننا مب

(40) متحلا فحلها حبها

مغنقا ه وأم نحلها مغنقا مع

لحها (41) قحها قحها قحها

قحها: صبح الامه

الدهليته المحصوره (42)

ه أم لمحبها فمحلهها

معها قحها قحها قحها (43)

محظا محظا محظا محظا

محظا وام الامه من مع امه

(44) الامه محظا

هوا تال الامه

محظا محظا محظا محظا

(46) الامه مام الاك

الاصبه ناوص: أم ملاقا

(47) فحلها فحلها: صبح

الاصبه وام مام: أم

وبتها ليجتها (48) مبعها

لمبعها مبعها مبعها

يَقِيحُ هَفَحِيحًا اِتْخِيحًا مَجْعَبِيحًا
(49) لَانِ الْمَفْرَدُ مَقْشِّي: اُمِ
مَبْعَدًا يَحْتَلِفُ فَحِيحًا اِتْخِيحًا
(50) حَقْنًا:

واذا كانت التاوا ساكنة وسقط
عليها دَلْدٌ (51) او تَوَ تتركخ المتحرّكة
واذا سقطت واحدة (52) من البدول
يتقشّي حرف الاولاني: اُمِ (53)
هَلَوَهْ هَلَايَاهُ: واذا كانت التاوا
متحرّكة وذخل (54) عليها دَلْدٌ وعلى
الدلد واو اعلم ان الدلد (55) تنقشّي:
اُمِ هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ
الواو (56) المفتوحة دايم تنقشي ❖

واذا كان الحرف. (57)
الاولاني متحرك وقدامه حرف من
السته متحرك. (58) يتقشّي. اُمِ
اِتْخَا نِتْخَا مَبْعَدًا: هَلِيحًا مَحِ
اُجْبَلًا. (59) اُجْبَلًا اِتْخَا: وان كان
واحد من الستة قَدَامَ. (60) المتحرّك
يكون مركخ ايك فُجْبَلًا اُجْمَعَدًا.
(61) اُجْمَعْتَمَا اُجْمَا اُجْمَا: هَلِيحًا

هَفَحِيحًا اِتْخِيحًا مَجْعَبِيحًا (49)
لَا اَلْمَفْرَدُ مَقْشِّي: اُمِ
مَبْعَدًا يَحْتَلِفُ فَحِيحًا اِتْخِيحًا
(50) حَقْنًا:

هَلَوَا حَابَا اَلْاَلَا
هَلَايَاهُ هَلَايَاهُ حَلَايَاهُ
(51) اَلَا اَلَا اَلَا اَلَا اَلَا
اَلَايَاهُ هَلَايَاهُ هَلَايَاهُ
هَلَايَاهُ (52) مَحِ اَلْحَبِ
مَلْعَدُ مَلْعَدُ اَلْاَلَا: اُمِ هَوَا
(53) هَلَوَهْ هَلَايَاهُ: هَلَوَا حَابَا
اَلَايَاهُ مَلْعَدُ مَلْعَدُ
(54) دَلْمَا اَلْاَلَا اَلْاَلَا
اَلْاَلَا هَلَايَاهُ اَلْاَلَا اَلْاَلَا
(55) اَلَايَاهُ: اُمِ هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ
هَوْبَاهُ هَوْبَاهُ: لَا اَلْاَلَا (56)
اَلْاَلَايَاهُ اَلْاَلَا اَلْاَلَا

هَلَوَا حَلَايَاهُ (57)
اَلْاَلَايَاهُ مَلْعَدُ مَلْعَدُ
مَحِ اَلْاَلَايَاهُ (58)
مَلْعَدُ. اُمِ اِتْخَا نِتْخَا مَبْعَدًا:
هَلِيحًا مَحِ اُجْبَلًا. (59) اُجْبَلًا
اِتْخَا: هَلِيحًا حَلَايَاهُ مَحِ
اَلْاَلَايَاهُ مَلْعَدُ (60)
اَلْاَلَايَاهُ مَلْعَدُ مَلْعَدُ اُمِ
فُجْبَلًا اُجْمَعَدًا. (61) اُجْمَعْتَمَا

اصبوا اصرا: صله: ص. (62)	ص. (62) فبتنا فبتنا جبتنا
فبتنا فبتنا جبتنا فبتنا.	فبتنا فبتنا جبتنا فبتنا.
(63) جبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	(63) جبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.
(64) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	(64) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.
ص. (65) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	ص. (65) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.
(66) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	(66) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.
ص. (68) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	ص. (68) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.
ص. (69) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.	ص. (69) فبتنا فبتنا فبتنا.

7. ENGLISH TRANSLATION³⁴

(1) Oh, young men committing yourself with zeal to the science of grammar for the sake of (2) the rectification of the language and its elegance, you need to know and understand that elegance (3) facilitates the speech and makes it easier for the speaker, because without elegance (4) the language is kept hard, difficult and harmful. Because of this, [the Syrians] devised (5) six letters which are pronounced as both fricative and plosive: b g d k p t, which (6) are brought together [in the mnemonic word] *bgādkpāt*. A red dot or a black one is placed (7) above or below. If it is above, it is the sign of the hardening; (8) while if it is below, it is the sign of the lenition. You should understand this as it is (9) explained to you. And if these lenition and hardening do not occur, it [i.e. the speech] would be very harsh (10) and you would not be able to read. When you read, it would be difficult [to understand]. If you say: (11) *ktābak* or *ḥabrāk* or *ṭalyāk*, this is very harsh. It is smooth instead (12) [if] you say *ktābāk*, *ḥabrāk*, *ṣubrāk*. Because of that, they set these six (13) consonants that become fricative and harden, [and] that have this shape: (14) ڪ, ڄ, ڙ, ڦ, ڻ, ڱ.

³⁴ In square brackets, additions to the text useful for its full understanding.

And again, you need to know that when the four [consonants] (15) that are called *bdul* are prefixed to these six consonants, the six become fricative. For example, if you (16) say: *baytā gabrā dinā kāhnā pāʔpā taknā*, when (17) one among the four consonants is prefixed to these names, they are pronounced with the lenition, (18) whereas if one among the four consonants is not prefixed to them, they are pronounced with the hardening, (19) as *baytā, gabrā, dinā, kāhnā, pāʔpā, tebnā*. And when the consonants (20) *bdul* are prefixed to them, they are pronounced with the lenition, as for example *b-baytā, d-baytā*, (21) *w-baytā, l-baytā, b-ḡabḡrā, d-ḡabḡrā, w-ḡabḡrā, l-ḡabḡrā, b-ḡdīnā, d-ḡdīnā*, (22) *w-ḡdīnā, l-ḡdīnā, b-kāhnā, d-kāhnā, w-kāhnā, l-kāhnā, b-tebnā, d-tebnā*, (23) *w-tebnā, l-tebnā*.

With respect to *pē*, it has three (24) kinds and varieties: it is named fricative, occlusive and explosive. The fricative (25) *pē* is like the *pē* of *napṣā, yaṭt* and *napṭālī* and what is similar. (26) While the occlusive *pē* is like *pāturā* and *pelsā*. And the explosive (27) *pē* is like *ṭirmā marṭā zuṭā ṭāwlos* etcetera. Be aware (28) that the fricative *pē* is not found at the beginning of a noun nor at its end, (29) and does not become fricative [*si*] when an affix encounters it, except for the *pē* [of] *ba-ṭsilātā*. (30) Then you need to know that there is no vocalised *pē* which is fricative, it is occlusive instead, (31) and the vowelless *pē* is not occlusive but fricative.

You need to know this, and (32) another instruction too. Know that the *ālaph* causes lenition when it falls before a consonant (33) among the *bgādkpāt* consonants, as if you say: *enā ḡabḡrā enā ḡaryā* (34) *enā kribā enā ṭbitā*. In the same way, the *yod* provided with a *ḥbāṣā* (35) causes lenition, like *lī ḡabḡrā lī ḡaryā* and like *ḥwī kribā ḥwī ṭbirā*. (36) Similarly, the vocalised³⁵ *nāw* causes lenition, like *kēna-(h)w ḡabḡya-(h)w ṭbirā*.

(37) Similarly, the *yod* in the middle and which is *ḥbāṣā* causes lenition, like the *yod* of *bitā* (38) *gbitā ṣpitā ṭlitā britā ṭbiḡā rjiḡā*. But if there is (39) one vowelless [consonant before the

³⁵ Cf. the chapter on linguistic interference for an explanation of the word which is translated this way here.

bgādēpā], it causes hardening, like *qintā siʿtā* and like *mārtā* and like (40) *ḥaltā malkā ʿabdā* and the rest like them, except for *ṭabtā* (41) *sābtā bābtā rāmtā*. Similarly, the middle vocalised³⁶ *nāw*, (42) *nāw* like *taybutā saklotā qaššyotā māloḵā māzōgā* and like (43) *moḵlā moḡlā*. And if right after the *nāw* there is a vocalised consonant out of the six (44) consonants, it is pronounced as an occlusive, like *mukkākā quddāšā šurtā* (45) *burktā*.

And if there are vocalised consonants, and one out of the six (46) falls after the *ālap* in second position, it is pronounced as a fricative, like *malāḵā* (47) *hallāḥā šayyādā*. Similarly, the plural always causes lenition, like *daḵyātā ḡabyātā* (48) *qaddištā ṭwbwt*³⁷ *sakḥwātā ʿsḥē pelḡē ṣalgē* and *ḡunābē*, (49) whereas the singular causes hardening, like *qaddištā ʿsbā pelḡā ṣalgā* (50) *ḡunbā*.

If there is a quiescent *tāw* and a *dālad* (51) or a *tāw* is prefixed to it, they cause the lenition of the vocalised [letter]; and when a *bdul* (52) is prefixed, it causes the hardening of the first consonant, like (53) *watḥun wattuḥ*. And if there is a vocalised *tāw* and a *dālad* is added (54) to it and to the *dālad* a *nāw*, be aware that the *dālad* (55) is pronounced occlusive: like *wa-d-tāwditā*, *wa-d-tešboḥtā*, because the *nāw* (56) vocalised with a *fathā* always causes hardening.

If the first consonant is (57) vocalised and there is a consonant from the six after it which is vocalised, (58) it [i.e. the first] causes hardening, like *akkārā*, *naggārā*, *qaddištā*, except *aklā* (59) *aḡirā abārā*. If there is one from the six [vowelless] after (60) the vocalised one, this latter causes softening, like *saklā takšepṭā* (61) *aksnāyā akḥdā akznā*, except (62) *sakkrā kakkrā laggrā*³⁸ *maggānā* (63) *laggtā akktā šabbtā*.

(64) Understand all of this. (65) It has been completed and finished (66) with the help of God. (67) Amen. (68) <*ālap*> (69) We asked mercy for the writers.

³⁶ See the previous note.

³⁷ I did not understand this word, which may be read as *ṭwbwātā/ṭobwātā*.

³⁸ I was not able to find any reference to this word anywhere, nor did I find a Syriac root LGR.

8. COMMENT TO THE TEXT

2 سَقْلَهُ = سَقْلَهُ 2

The word occurs twice in this same line, and then again in line 3. C₁ should be a *šād*, and the word is *šaqal* ‘elegance’, but in Garšuni there is always a *šin*. This phenomenon is well known and attested in Middle Arabic phonetics and the Garšuni manuscript tradition. In addition, in Syriac there is a root SQL with a noun *seqlē* which is perfectly equivalent to the Arabic *šaqal*.³⁹ It is not possible to determine if the Garšuni form *saqal* is due to Middle Arabic phonetics or to the Syriac influence. It might depend on both, as it occurs elsewhere.⁴⁰

3 وَيَهِيَهُ = وَيَهِيَهُ 3

This should be *yuhawminuhu*, the II form imperfect from the root HWN, but the Garšuni clearly has a middle *yod* with a *šadda*, making theoretically impossible for it to be a II or a IV form of a hollow verb. Moreover, if it were a IV form *yuhinuhu*, the meaning would not fit (‘to humiliate, mortify, despise’). The presence of a C₂ *yod* in the D-stem of hollow verbs (even those in *nān*) is typical of Syriac. There are examples of this in the Arabic dialect of Mardin.⁴¹

³⁹ See the introduction for its use by Bar ‘Ebrāyā in a similar context.

⁴⁰ Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic. Based Mainly on South Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium. Fasc. I: §§ 1-169. Introduction-Orthography & Phonetics-Morphology*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 267 (Louvain: Secretariat du CorpusSCO, 1966), 190 ff.; Adam Carter McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is: Some Observations from Reading East and West Syriac Manuscripts” (*Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 17:2 [2014]), 223. Especially for spelling irregularities due to the pressure of both Middle Arabic and Syriac environment, cf. Kessel, “Book of Grace”, 124–25.

⁴¹ George Grigore, *L’arabe parlé à Mardin - Monographie d’un parler arabe «périphérique»* (Bucarest: Editura Universității din București, 2007), 124–25.

يُتَقَى = نُحَم 4

The Garṣuni spelling suggests it be read as *yubqā*, i.e. as a I or IV passive form.

صَعِبَ وَاَقِفَ وَمَضَرَ = نَح ٥٥ ا م ف ٥ م ح ٥ 4

Being the predicates of the verb *baqiya*, these nouns should have the *tanwīn al-fath* of the accusative case. Its absence, though, is not worrying since it is common in Middle Arabic texts, where it is retained only as an ending for adverbs. For the use of *wāqif* with *kalam*, see the *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* by Dozy.⁴²

وَمَضَرَ = م ح ٥ 4

There are several possible readings of this word. One is *madar* ‘piece of dry or tough clay’, and it could suggest a comparison: ‘[tough as] a piece of clay’. From the same root, it could also be an adjective, not attested elsewhere, meaning ‘tough [as a piece of clay]’. Otherwise, considering that in Middle Arabic *dāl* can sometimes be spelled with a *dāl*,⁴³ the reading *maḍir*, which means ‘corrupt, rotten, spoiled’, is acceptable. A third possibility, which was chosen for the translation, is to consider *dālad* an aberrant Garṣuni spelling of *ḍād*. We would thus have the IV form passive participle *muḍarr* from the root ḌRR, ‘harmed, damaged, spoilt’ or, if active, ‘harmful, detrimental’. McCollum states that the spelling of *ḍād* with Syriac *dālad* is extremely rare in the manuscripts he surveyed, and it tends to appear more frequently in inscriptions.⁴⁴ Conversely, and amusingly enough, in the same journal issue, Moukarzel says

⁴² Reinhart Pieter Anne Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 3rd ed. (Leyde, Paris: Brill, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1967), 835.

⁴³ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 107 ff.

⁴⁴ McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is,” 223.

that this is the norm in the older Garšuni manuscripts, and provides the example of MS London, British Library, Add. 14493, f.181v which has ܡܪܝܢ for مرض.⁴⁵ To this, it can be added that the shift from *dād* to *dāl* is attested in Middle Arabic too.⁴⁶

4 ܐܠܗܝܐ = ܐܠܗܝܐ

This word poses many problems. The Garšuni text can be read as both ܐܠܗܝܐ and ܐܠܗܝܐ, and the first *wāw* can be either a conjunction or the first radical. Considering the *wāw* as a conjunction, the word can be read in several ways, but only *zallū* ‘to be, become, transform’ or ‘to maintain, assert’ fits in the context. However, if this were the case, the syntactical function of the *wāw* following *li-aḡl dālīka* would not be clear. On the other hand, if the first *wāw* is considered as the first radical, the only possible root is ܐܠܗܝܐ ‘to put, lay down, fix; to establish, produce, create; to devise, invent’. In this case the subject would not be “the six letters” (in the following line), but instead an implied *the speakers/users/Syrians*. The use of an implied subject is more likely than an internal passive verbal form. Thus, *waḡa’ū* is to be understood as a third-person masculine plural lacking the *aliḡ fāšila*. This is quite common in Middle Arabic spelling⁴⁷ and can also be due to the Syriac orthographic influence via Garšuni.⁴⁸ It occurs frequently throughout the *Notice*, so I will not point it out each time.

5 ܬܪܟܝܝܬ = ܬܪܟܝܝܬ

This is clearly an error for ܬܪܟܝܝܬ, with two *kāp* fully written in addition to the *šadda*. For the use of this root, see above.

⁴⁵ Moukarzel, “Maronite Garshuni Texts,” 253.

⁴⁶ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 223.

⁴⁷ Blau, 35.

⁴⁸ McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is,” 229.

وتنقشًا = ٥:١١:١٥

The *alif maqṣūra* represented by *ālap* instead of *yod* is a spelling influenced either by Middle Arabic⁴⁹ or Garšuni.⁵⁰

ويوضعا = ٦:٥٥:١٦

Cf. ٥:١٦ in line 4. This can be a passive imperfect of the I form, even though it lacks the *nūn* ending and is provided with an *alif fāṣila*. Strictly speaking, we would expect the form to be a subjunctive or an apocopate, but the mood distinction (and the *nūn* in the endings even in the imperfect) was lost in the spoken varieties of the language and affects also Middle Arabic texts. As a consequence, forms with or without the *nūn* became variants.⁵¹ The *Notice* displays a language which has a clear preference for endings without *nūn*.

حمره...سوده = ٦:٥٥:١٦

Worth noting here is the spelling of *alif mamdūda* with a *hē*, which probably stands for a *tā' marbūṭa*. That does not come as a surprise, because this spelling is quite common in Middle Arabic under the influence of pronunciation.⁵² Even if I did not find any other mention of the phenomenon, I suppose that this might depend on Garšuni itself, which usually overlooks final *hamẓas*, and it might be the case that the scribe perceived the *tā' marbūṭa* as a “universal feminine ending”.

⁴⁹ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 81 ff.

⁵⁰ McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is,” 229.

⁵¹ Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic. Based Mainly on South Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium. Fasc. II: §§ 170-368. Syntax I*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 276 (Louvain: Secretariat du CorpusSCO, 1967), 259.

⁵² Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 34; McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is,” 234.

كانة = طارة 8

This is to be read, of course, as *kānat*. Cf. the previous entry for the common use of *tā' marbūṭa* in place of other feminine endings.

ولو ما = ملة مل 9

It needs to be understood as if it were *iḏā mā*, but I have not found any reference to this phenomenon in Blau's description of Middle Arabic.

كثير = صلب 9

Middle Arabic, like many dialects (with *t > ṭ*), prefers this form to the more classical *ḡiddan*.

كنت تقدر تقرا = صلب صلب؛ نامل 10

Kāna governing the imperfect is very common in Middle Arabic, partly as a result of the influence of the Aramaic construction participle + *hwā*, and, as in Aramaic, it can mark hypothetical actions.⁵³ The auxiliary verb *qadara* is followed by the verb *qara'a* which, as we would expect, is also in the imperfect.

هرلاي = هلال 12

This is a Middle Arabic spelling for the Classical *ha'ulā'*. It is not possible to establish whether the *hamẓa* on the *nāw* was still perceived or (more probably) not, only on the basis of the Garšuni spelling. Worth mentioning is the final *yod*, which can represent both a consonantal *yā'* or an *alif mamdūda* for a

⁵³ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic II*, 434 f.

maqšūra.⁵⁴ In the text one can also find the spelling *hwlʿ* in line 14, without the final *yod*. In line 17 there is a sign, after the *alap*, which I have not been able decipher; it could be an attempt to represent the final *hamza*.

13 اءروف = ءءءءء

The pattern *afʿul* (here, *aħruf*) instead of *fuʿul* is already known in Middle Arabic, and it has been interpreted as the addition of a prosthetic vowel – represented by the *hamza* – to a previously weakened form *fʿul*. Otherwise, it can also be explained as a merging of the two Classical patterns *fuʿul* and *afʿul*.⁵⁵ This latter appears in the *Notice* (as *aħruf*) in line 45, whereas the heavy or mixed pattern *aħruf* is also found in line 43. In many places, though, and more frequently, one finds the more common and standard form *ħuruf* (ll. 15, 17, 18, 20, 33). Furthermore, the syntax of the numeral would be completely wrong in Classical Arabic, but in the Middle and Modern varieties it has become more and more common. Not only to place the *idāfa* with the numeral (determined by the article) before the *maʿdud* is the norm, but there is also a preference for the feminine form of the numerals.⁵⁶ See also lines 14-15 for the same phrase.

14 سءءور ءلى = ءءءءء ءءء

For an interpretation of this phrase, see the paragraph on linguistic interference.

15 نءء = نءء

The vocalisation given in the Garšuni text may suggest that the original third radical *nāw* became, at a certain point, a full

⁵⁴ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 136 ff.

⁵⁵ Blau, 228.

⁵⁶ Blau, 49.

vowel, possibly as a consequence of the loss of the nominal declension (*naḥw^m* > *naḥw* > *naḥu*).

17 يترڭخو = مټوټجه

This verb might be an apocopate and fits with the syntax of an apodosis of a conditional period introduced by *idā* (line 16). However, the distinction between moods is unlikely in a Middle Arabic text (cf. comment to line 6). Its subject should be *hulā^(?)* *al-samā^(?)*, with a wrong agreement in the grammatical gender and number (i.e., the plural masculine of inanimate names is no more in agreement with the singular feminine). This is not surprising as it occurs frequently throughout the *Notice*.⁵⁷

18 وانا = هټل

Considering the overall meaning of the sentence, I suggest reading it as *wa-in-mā*, and not *wa-innamā*, which would not make any sense. This must be a negative conditional and corresponds to the conditional phrase introduced by *idā* in line 16. One would expect *in lam*, but it seems that *lam* disappeared early in speech whereas *mā* became the most used negative adverb.⁵⁸

19 ڤر

This is, of course, a Syriac word, i.e. the one used to introduce comparisons or, as it is the case here, examples. It recurs often in the text to introduce examples, alone or together with the particle *d-*; there are a couple of other Syriac syntagmata used in the examples. Here a complete list of the occurrences:

1. *ak d-*, ‘as, like’ — ll. 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 33, 35², 36, 37, 39³, 40, 42², 44, 46, 47, 49, 52, 55, 58

⁵⁷ Cf. Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic II*, 275.

⁵⁸ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic I*, 203 f.

2. *w-šarkā*, ‘and the rest, etc.’ — 27, 40
3. *šar men*, ‘except for’ — 40, 58, 61

Particularly interesting is line 40, where there is an entire phrase in Syriac: *w-šarkā w-d-ak hālēn šar men*, ‘and the rest like them, except for’, where the pronoun is also in Syriac.⁵⁹

واضراب = ۵۰ ۵۱ ۵۲ ۵۳ ۵۴ ۵۵ ۵۶ ۵۷ ۵۸ ۵۹ ۶۰ ۶۱ ۶۲ ۶۳ ۶۴ ۶۵ ۶۶ ۶۷ ۶۸ ۶۹ ۷۰ ۷۱ ۷۲ ۷۳ ۷۴ ۷۵ ۷۶ ۷۷ ۷۸ ۷۹ ۸۰ ۸۱ ۸۲ ۸۳ ۸۴ ۸۵ ۸۶ ۸۷ ۸۸ ۸۹ ۹۰ ۹۱ ۹۲ ۹۳ ۹۴ ۹۵ ۹۶ ۹۷ ۹۸ ۹۹ ۱۰۰

Here one would expect to find *ḍurūb*, the broken plural of *ḍarb* meaning ‘kind, species, variety’, whereas in Classical Arabic *aḍrāb* is the plural of the same word meaning ‘similar, alike’. This can be explained perhaps by the widespread fortune of *afʿāl*-like plurals in Middle Arabic, which preferred them to the other patterns, even when a noun did not have it in the classical language. If this were not the case, the text can also be understood as follows: “Concerning the *pē*, it has three varieties and *similar* [forms]”.

ومقشيه = ۱۰۱ ۱۰۲ ۱۰۳ ۱۰۴ ۱۰۵ ۱۰۶ ۱۰۷ ۱۰۸ ۱۰۹ ۱۱۰ ۱۱۱ ۱۱۲ ۱۱۳ ۱۱۴ ۱۱۵ ۱۱۶ ۱۱۷ ۱۱۸ ۱۱۹ ۱۲۰ ۱۲۱ ۱۲۲ ۱۲۳ ۱۲۴ ۱۲۵ ۱۲۶ ۱۲۷ ۱۲۸ ۱۲۹ ۱۳۰ ۱۳۱ ۱۳۲ ۱۳۳ ۱۳۴ ۱۳۵ ۱۳۶ ۱۳۷ ۱۳۸ ۱۳۹ ۱۴۰ ۱۴۱ ۱۴۲ ۱۴۳ ۱۴۴ ۱۴۵ ۱۴۶ ۱۴۷ ۱۴۸ ۱۴۹ ۱۵۰ ۱۵۱ ۱۵۲ ۱۵۳ ۱۵۴ ۱۵۵ ۱۵۶ ۱۵۷ ۱۵۸ ۱۵۹ ۱۶۰ ۱۶۱ ۱۶۲ ۱۶۳ ۱۶۴ ۱۶۵ ۱۶۶ ۱۶۷ ۱۶۸ ۱۶۹ ۱۷۰ ۱۷۱ ۱۷۲ ۱۷۳ ۱۷۴ ۱۷۵ ۱۷۶ ۱۷۷ ۱۷۸ ۱۷۹ ۱۸۰ ۱۸۱ ۱۸۲ ۱۸۳ ۱۸۴ ۱۸۵ ۱۸۶ ۱۸۷ ۱۸۸ ۱۸۹ ۱۹۰ ۱۹۱ ۱۹۲ ۱۹۳ ۱۹۴ ۱۹۵ ۱۹۶ ۱۹۷ ۱۹۸ ۱۹۹ ۲۰۰

One would have expected a passive form, which is possible for *مقشيه*, which precedes it, but not for *مقشيه* according to classical grammar. As a verb of C₃ weak (*nāqis*, ‘defective’), it should have been *muqaššāh*, with an *alif* of prolongation followed by a *tāʾ marbūta*. There are two possible explanations: either the active form simply means ‘that takes the *rukkākā/quššāyaʾ* (and sometimes further in the text I had to translate some active forms with ‘to be pronounced fricative/plosive’); or a feminine passive form like *muqaššāh*

⁵⁹ For other examples of the use of Syriac phrases surrounding Syriac words quoted within a Garšuni context, cf. Tijmen C. Baarda, “Standardized Arabic as Post-Nahḍa Common Ground: Mattai Bar Paulus and His Use of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni,” in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, ed. S.R. Goldstein-Sabbah and H.L. Murre-van den Berg (Brill, 2016), 85.

have shifted in Middle Arabic to a more simplified form which retains the *yā'* as C₃ and simply adds the feminine *tā' marbūṭa*.

ليس = حذف 30

The negative verb *laysa*, already defective (*ǧāmid*, ‘stiffened’) in Classical Arabic, became invariable in Middle Arabic.⁶⁰

الاخراييه = اللام; ائته 46

The *alif uḥrāniyya* has been already addressed in the discussion above. Here it is worth noting that this is not a Classical form, but I suspect that it has been coined after the form *ūlānī*, for which see in line 52. Since this latter clearly means “first”, and if it is true that *uḥrāniyya* follows the same pattern of *ūlāniyya*, I think that the translation of “second, following, in second position” rather than “last, coming at the end” is preferable.

المكثر = الحذف; 47

In the Garšuni text the *šadda*-like sign is definitely on the first *tām*. However, the only way I can explain this form is to move it to the second one (it is not infrequent for the *Notice*’s scribe to place the *šadda* not right above the doubled letter) and read it as a V form participle *al-mutakattir*. Nonetheless, the meaning does not fit with the context. I suspect that we should regard it as a parallel of the Syriac *saggiyutā*, meaning thus ‘plural [form]’, probably via ‘augmented, multiplied [form]’, as the overall meaning of the sentence suggests.

دايم = و; امر 47

A colloquial form from a more Classical *dā’iman* in the adverbial accusative.

⁶⁰ Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic II*, 305 ff.

50 التاو ساكنه = التاو ساكنه

This phrase presents two problems. Firstly, in the name of the letter in the Garšuni text there clearly is a *rukākākā* under the *tāw*. Secondly, there is no determination agreement between the noun and the adjective, which lacks the definite article. I translated as if it were *al-tāw al-sākita*. The adjective can also be regarded as a *sīfā* ('the *tāw* which is quiescent').

52 الاولاني = الاولاني

This word does not exist in Classical Arabic. It is however documented at least in the *šāmī* dialect.⁶¹

56 تقشي = التقشي

It should be a II form since its subject is the *nāw* which, of course, cannot undergo lenition nor hardening.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Even if the *Notice* lends itself to several comments, the text and content analysis provides very little information about the nature, the purpose and the tradition of the text, apart from what is stated in the colophon. Through a comparison of the treatise with other Syriac native grammars (§ 3), it would appear that the former is a somewhat abridged description of the topic and is more concise than those included in the *Metrical Grammar* by Bar ʿEbrāyā and in the major Syriac grammars. The use of highly specialised vocabulary (both Arabic and Syriac, §4) leads, on the one hand, to suppose that it was aimed at learned and well-skilled readers (i.e. the *Notice* was not meant as a beginner textbook), and, on the other, to consider the *Notice* as a brief memorandum about the main rules governing

⁶¹ Adrien Barthélemy, *Dictionnaire arabe-français. Dialectes de Syrie; Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1935), 20.

the pronunciation of *bgādkpāt*. It might even be regarded as an improvised diversion of the scribe.

This last hypothesis seems to be partly supported by the interpretation of the statement in the colophon (§1) in which *qadmāʾit* can mean ‘originally’. However, even if the *Notice* was not ‘originally’ intended to be part of the anthological manuscript, it could still have been copied by an existing antigraph. Some indications of this can be found in the content analysis of the text. In fact, a couple of muddled passages (§2) seem to suggest that scribal errors may have taken place. Inconsistencies and a margin of error can of course be due to the concise nature of the text (as in lines 45-50), but sometimes I suspect a *saut du même au même* (as in lines 44-45).

Conversely, a significant amount of information can be gathered about the language of the *Notice*, i.e. a Middle Arabic variety in Garšuni script. Although these two phenomena do not represent the same thing, we can assume that they would interlock in a text written by a Christian scribe. Some elements of the text suggest that Garšuni script tends to intensify several features which are typical of Middle Arabic. It can also be assumed that Syriac, thanks to Garšuni, may have exerted a greater influence on the “intermediate, multiform variety [i.e. Middle Arabic], product of the interference of the two polar varieties [*fuṣḥā* and dialect] on the continuum they bound”.⁶² An example of this two-way influence is the spelling of *saql* as *saql*. It is difficult to establish definitively to what extent it can be regarded as a phonetic feature which is a characteristic of Middle Arabic (simplification of emphatic sounds), or whether it should be ascribed to the impact of the Syriac word *seqḷā* (see the comment to line 1). As far as the impact of Syriac is concerned, I have been able to identify Syriac as the source of non-literary and non-dialectal Arabic features. This is particularly true with reference to technical lexis (§4), which shows a high degree of permeability to external pressure and

⁶² Jérôme Lentin, “Middle Arabic,” *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 216.

neologisms. Given the close connection between the writing system (Garṣuni) and the language (Middle Arabic) and the possible conditioning of the former on the latter, it becomes an attractive hypothesis that Garṣuni

might have indicated, in its beginning, a colloquial form of Arabic used in verbal communications. [...] This vernacular Arabic spoken in everyday life by Arab new-comers, and by then also commonly used by Christian people, being a common, non-literary form of Arabic, did not need a formal, Arabic script. On the contrary, the choice of the Syriac script was perhaps a way to differentiate between ‘classical, learnt from books’ and ‘non-classical, spoken’ Arabic.⁶³

Braida’s statement is largely sharable, with certain reservations about strict separation between spoken and literary Arabic, as it does not consider the Middle variety of the language.⁶⁴ The scientific community still needs a complete survey and comparison of all the existing and available Garṣuni texts in order to draw more general conclusions. However, there is no doubt that the use of Garṣuni was not just a matter of calligraphic choice (as a result of a national or cultural identity statement, for example). It can be also suggested that it might have often led to the use of specific linguistic features, namely a certain degree of dialectal and/or Syriac influence on the Arabic structure. This is exactly what happens in Middle Arabic texts. With reference to this aspect, it is worth noting

⁶³ Emanuela Braida, “Garshuni Manuscripts and Garshuni Notes in Syriac Manuscripts,” (Parole de l’Orient 37 [2012]), 192.

⁶⁴ Which is, of course, in the case of Arabic, a longstanding *vexata quaestio*. A summary of it, with a first bibliography, in Lentin, “Middle Arabic”. See also, for some interesting considerations, Hary Benjamin, “Middle Arabic: Proposal For New Terminology,” (Al-‘Arabiyya 22:1/2 [1989]), 19–36.

with McCollum⁶⁵ that, in the colophon, the scribe of MS Jerusalem, Saint Mark Monastery (SMMJ), 167 (dated 1882 CE) refers to “the language of Garšuni” (*lisān al-garšūnī*). The use of the word *lisān* ‘language’ is striking here, even though the process which is referred to is not one of translation (*tarǧama*) but of transcription (*nash*). This fact sheds some light on the position of Garšuni, which is mainly in opposition to Arabic because of the use of Syriac script. However, it is also formally recognised as a *language*, although its status is doubtful. In fact, a Garšuni text is a result of *transcription* of an original Arabic and not of *translation*. This analysis is also in line with the observation by Harrak on the Syriac inscriptions from Iraq, where—he writes—the process of sophistication of the language during the nineteenth century corresponded to the decline of the use of Garšuni, up until the twentieth century, when there is no evidence of production of Garšuni inscriptions.⁶⁶

By contrast, we also need to mention the fact that the use of Garšuni does not imply *ipso facto* the use of a middle variety of the Arabic language. This is true in cases like the Syriac translation by Bar ‘Ebrāyā of Ibn Sīnā’s *Kitāb al-iṣārāt wa-ʾl-tanbīhāt*, which is provided as a parallel text alongside the original Arabic.⁶⁷ Even if in the most ancient witness the Arabic text is given in Arabic characters,⁶⁸ in the other manuscripts preserving the complete text the Arabic is in Garšuni.⁶⁹ Therefore, we have an Arabic text written in *fushā*

⁶⁵ McCollum, “Garshuni as It Is,” 226.

⁶⁶ Amir Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions of Iraq*, vol. 1, Recueil Des Inscriptions Syriaques 2 (Paris: De Boccard, 2010), 43. For an interesting discussion of this assessment and of the Garšuni/Middle Arabic/Syriac issue, especially in the *nahḍa* period, cf. Baarda, “Standardized Arabic as Post-Nahḍa Common Ground: Mattai Bar Paulus and His Use of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni,” 86 ff., where I also firstly read about Harrak’s considerations.

⁶⁷ I thank Prof. P.G. Borbone for having pointed that out to me.

⁶⁸ MS Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 86.

⁶⁹ Cf. for a complete reference list: Hidemi Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography* (Piscataway: Grogias Press, 2005), 266f.

using the Garṣuni scripture. A few other considerations can be made. Firstly, the only manuscript using Arabic characters is also the only extant manuscript copied during the lifetime of Bar ʿEbrāyā, whereas the Garṣuni copies date back to at least the fifteenth century; secondly, this work was not *originally written* in Garṣuni, but is rather a Muslim philosophical treatise which was copied next to the Syriac translation. It is clear that the discussion about the status and role of Garṣuni is still wide open.

Finally, we can say that the *Notice* is an outstanding example of the interdependence between different linguistic strata (the classical and the spoken) that is characteristic of a Middle Arabic variety. Furthermore, the pressure exerted by Syriac—in terms of both the content and the cultural environment—highlights a significant degree of internal differentiation of Middle Arabic. Clearly, Middle Arabic is not a fixed literal standard, but it can be best described as a “bundle” of many varieties sharing common features, differentiated by the influence of external factors (religious community, geography, and so forth).

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