The Hebrew Bible

Volume 1C Writings

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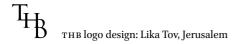
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"upon the snares" for מְבַקְשֵׁי "seekers of" (Prov 21:6). But v-Prov does not reflect metathesis as often as LXX (\rightarrow 12.3.1).

12.3.7.5.2 Vocalization and Ketiv/Qere

In the majority of cases, v-Prov anticipates the vocalization of MT (→ 12.2.2). But there are examples of alternative vocalizations, e.g., Prov 10:4, where Jerome reads a finite verb (operata est "worked" = עַּשָּה " rather than a participle (MT שָּשָה "who works"); Prov 12:16, where Jerome reads a Hiphil (indicat "makes known" = יוֹדָע " rather than a Niphal (MT יַּלַמְעַנָהוֹּ "is known"); Prov 16:4, where Jerome reads an emphatic preposition (propter semet ipsum "for his own sake" = יַלַמְעַנֵהוֹּ "for his answer"); Prov 24:15, where Jerome reads an abstract noun (impietas "wickedness" = יָשַׁעַ) instead of the substantive adjective (MT יָשַׁעִּ "wicked man").

v-Prov reflects a preference for the *Qere* over the *Ketiv*. No less than eighteen times, Jerome follows the *Qere*, e.g., Prov 3:34; 8:35; 31:4, usually matching the decisions of other ancient versions. At least three times, however, Jerome follows the *Ketiv* when all other versions follow the *Qere* (Prov 18:17; 20:30; 23:24).

Clifford, R.J., "Observations on the Text and Versions of Proverbs," in *Wisdom, You are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* (ed. E.E. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1997), 47–61.

Gordon, C.H., "Rabbinic Exegesis in the Vulgate of Proverbs," *JBL* 49 (1930): 384–416.

Kedar-Kopfstein, B., "The Vulgate as a Translation: Some Semantic and Syntactical Aspects of Jerome's Version of the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1968).

Tkacz, C.B., "Labor Tam Utilis," *vc* 50 (1996): 42–72. Toy, C.H., *The Book of Proverbs* (New York: Scribner's, 1916).

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Justin Rogers

12.3.8 Arabic Translations

12.3.8.1 A Pre-Saadian Translation

Very few translations of the book of Proverbs into Judeo-Arabic have been identified so far. The earliest fragment, T-S Ar. 53.8, which was identified by Blau, consists of two small continuous leaves that include a Hebrew-scripted Arabic translation of Prov 16:24-17:26. Based on the fragment's Hebrew orthography in the phonetic representation of Arabic, Blau suggests that it was prepared before Saadia Gaon's translation, and therefore represents the oldest extant Judeo-Arabic Bible translation. The three major characteristics of the fragment's phonetic spelling system are: the use of Hebrew /d/ rather than /s/ to represent the Arabic /d/z/; the inconsistent use of vowel letters to represent short and long vowels; and the spelling of the definite article according to phonetic criteria, omitting it altogether before sun letters. Blau suggests that the authors of this fragment were not familiar with standard Arabic orthography and therefore invented a Hebraized spelling system. As of the tenth century, the dissemination of Saadia Gaon's translations determined the standard Judeo-Arabic transcription conventions. The heterogeneous character of this fragment suggests that it is based on other earlier translations (\rightarrow 1.3.6).²

12.3.8.2 Saadia's Translation

Saadia (Gaon) b. Joseph al-Fayyumi (882–942 C.E.) prepared several Arabic translations of biblical books (see \rightarrow 1.3.6), the most widespread of which was his version of the Pentateuch (known as the $tafs\bar{v}$). It seems to have disseminated standardized Judeo-Arabic orthography, which reflected a Classical Arabic spelling system (\rightarrow 1.3.6.1.6).³ The main features of Saadia's spelling system include using *matres lectionis* to indicate long vowels according to Arabic spelling, and the representation of phonemes according to their cognates instead of following phonetic similarities. As with the Penta-

¹ Blau, "Fragment."

² Cf. Blau, "Fragment"; Sasson, "Arabic."

³ See also Polliack, "Cairo Genizah"; Polliack, "Types."

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teuch and several other books he translated, Saadia's versions are less literal than early Jewish translations and Karaite versions, and they are oriented towards the Arabic target language in their syntax and style.⁴ Other features of his translation include a tendency to succinctness, theological alterations, shortening and expanding the text for stylistic purposes, and avoidance of repetitions (\rightarrow 1.3.6).⁵

Extant manuscripts of Saadia's translation of Proverbs include Saadia's commentary on that book and an extensive introduction to his work. Saadia titles the book of Proverbs *Kitāb ṭalab al-ḥikma* "The Book of Pursuit of Wisdom." Saadia's introduction to his work on the book of Proverbs is divided into four sections: 1) the uniqueness of the human intellect compared with the animal world; 2) the characteristics of the process of learning; 3) twelve categories of sayings found in the book of Proverbs; 4) five conditions essential to the pursuit of wisdom.⁶

Modern scholarly editions of Saadia's translation and commentary on the book of Proverbs were published by Derenbourg (1893) and Qafiḥ (1976).⁷

12.3.8.3 Karaite Translations

Karaite Judaism, which emerged in the ninth century C.E., was motivated by the rejection of Jewish oral law and rabbinic authority, and an ethos of return to Scripture. Hence the Karaites inaugurated a translation enterprise of their own. Most Karaite translations were written in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the golden age of Karaite literary activity. Karaites used the same orthographical standards as Saadia. However, their translation system is different, and seems to be more akin to the literal characteristics of the pre-Saadian Jewish translation tradition (\rightarrow 1.3.6.1; \rightarrow 1.3.6.2; \rightarrow 1.3.6.3; \rightarrow 1.3.6.4; \rightarrow 1.3.6.5).8

Yefet ben 'Elī, Saadia's younger contemporary, translated the entire Bible into Judeo-Arabic, a translation that has survived in numerous manuscript sources (\rightarrow 1.3.6.1; \rightarrow 1.3.6.2; \rightarrow 1.3.6.3; \rightarrow 1.3.6.4; \rightarrow 1.3.6.5). Yefet, whose family originated in Baṣra, Iraq, lived and wrote in Jerusalem. His translation is accompanied by a commentary and the two components are meant to be studied together. Like Saadia, Yefet prefaced his work on each book of the Bible with an introduction in which he specified the nature of the book and his goals as a translator and exegete. In his introduction to the book of Proverbs, Yefet states that his intention is to produce an accurate translation and a concise commentary. His work is characterized by a threefold structure consisting of the biblical verse, a translation of the verse or cluster of verses into Judeo-Arabic, and a passage of commentary. Yefet's translation and commentary on Proverbs (as well as on Job and other books) has survived in Arabic and in Hebrew script. In the case of Proverbs, it appears that the earliest manuscripts, which are dated to the eleventh century, are written in Arabic script, and that the later manuscripts are written in Hebrew script.⁹ Nevertheless, it is also possible that the different scripts preserve different, essentially contemporaneous, Arabic renditions of the translation and commentary that Yefet intended for different audiences, and are not a linear development from early to late in the reception of his work.

Yefet's translation is characterized by an emphasis on accuracy. He laces linguistic studies and lexicographic discussions into his commentary in order to explain his translation and choice of vocabulary. In contrast to Saadia, Yefet's translation is characterized by the occasional rendering of two terms when translating a single word. In addition, translations of a few verses include insertions of small interpretive clauses into the translations. Yefet writes in Middle Arabic with great affinity to Classical Arabic but also with a certain number some degree of vernacular features. ¹⁰ Thirty manuscripts

⁴ Polliack, "Cairo Genizah"; Polliack, Karaite.

⁵ Polliack, *Karaite*; Polliack, "Concept"; Polliack, "Cairo Genizah"; Sasson, "Arabic"; Steiner, *Biblical Translation*.

 $^{^6}$ See Blau, "Saadya"; Polliack, "Arabic"; Ilan, "

Älukā," and Zucker, Rav.

⁷ Derenbourg (ed.), *Version arabe des Proverbes*; Qafiḥ (ed.), *Mishle 'im targum*.

⁸ See Polliack, Karaite.

⁹ See Khan, "Orthography."

¹⁰ See Polliack, Karaite; Sasson, "Methods."

labeled as Yefet's work on Proverbs are listed in the catalogue of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the Israel National Library. Some of these manuscripts are single units in sets of two volumes. A study of the transmission history of Yefet's translation points to mostly minor alterations that were introduced by later copyists either for the purpose of updating the vocabulary or in order to refine the literality of the translation.¹¹

A few sections of Yefet's translation of and commentary on Proverbs were published in modern scholarly publications. The earliest one is Auerbach's edition of Yefet's work on Proverbs 30, which was published in 1866.12 The second edition was prepared by Günzig in 1898 and included the introduction and the first three chapters.13 An edition of Proverbs 10-12 was prepared in an unpublished MA thesis by Hacohen in 1967.¹⁴ In 2002 and 2003, Wechsler published the edition of Proverbs 31 in two parts.¹⁵ A comprehensive edition of the entire work of Yefet on the book of Proverbs is pending publication in two volumes by Sasson.¹⁶ In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, Salmon ben Yeruḥam, the tenth-century Karaite exegete, mentions his own commentary on Proverbs three times.¹⁷ It is most likely that he designed his commentary on Proverbs in the same fashion as that on Ecclesiastes $(\rightarrow 13-17.1.8.4.2)$, meaning that it included a translation of the biblical text into Judeo-Arabic. Unfortunately, Salmon's work on Proverbs has not been identified with certainty so far.

12.3.8.4 Other Rabbanite and Karaite Translations

Several scores of anonymous translation fragments of Proverbs have been identified in the Cairo Genizah Arabic and Judeo-Arabic collections. It is possible that more exist and have yet to be identified. Usually, these Genizah fragments represent ad hoc translations, sometimes in popular style and sometimes more akin to Saadia's translation methodology. In the carrier of the carr

A translation of Proverbs is also attested in the sixteenth-century *sharḥ* by the Rabbanite commentator Rabbi Issāchār ben-Sūsān ha-Maʻarāvī, who was born in the city of Fez in Morocco and moved to Safed at a young age. Ben-Sūsān proclaimed the necessity of updating Saadia's Bible version in the comprehensible Arabic of his time $(\rightarrow 1.3.6; \rightarrow 3-5.1.8; \rightarrow 6-9.1.8)$.

David Sklare of the Israel National Library has graciously shared the following as-yet unpublished information about other translations of Proverbs into Judeo-Arabic: Ibn al-Hiti, who wrote the chronicles of Karaite sages of the Middle Ages, mentions the eleventh-century sage Ali ben Abraham al-Tawil. Ibn al-Hiti states that al-Tawil, who lived in Ramle, wrote commentaries on the entire Bible. Manuscript SP RNL EVR I 1396, which contains 146 folios in square script, is believed to be a segment of this commentary on Proverbs. This manuscript includes a translation of the biblical text into Judeo-Arabic. In addition, Sklare points to a number of unidentified manuscripts in the Firkovitch collection that contain translations of Proverbs.

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Baker, C.F. and M. Polliack, Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts in The Cambridge Genizah Collections,

¹¹ See Ben-Shammai, "Editions."

¹² Auerbach, Proverbiorum.

¹³ Günzig, Proverbien.

¹⁴ Hacohen, "Mishle."

 $^{^{15}}$ Wechsler, "The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli on Proverbs 31:1–9,"; Wechsler, "The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli on Proverbs 31:10–31."

¹⁶ Sasson, Arabic.

¹⁷ Robinson, Asceticism.

¹⁸ See the indices in Baker and Polliack, *Catalogue*; Shivtiel and Niessen, *Catalogue*.

¹⁹ See the indices in Baker and Polliack, *Catalogue*; Shivtiel and Niessen, *Catalogue*.

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