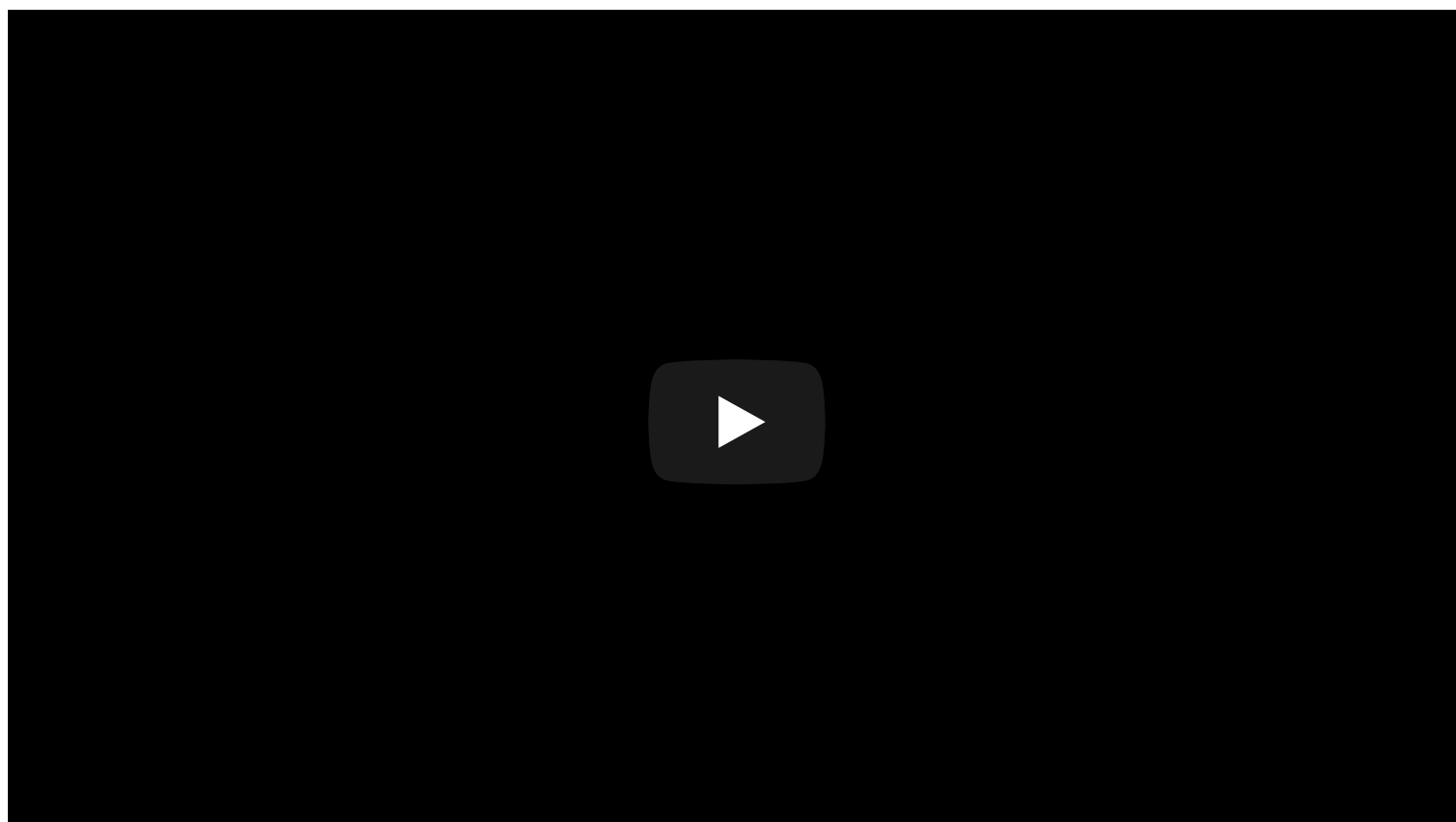


Fragment of the Month: August 2018

A Young Syriac Pupil in the Cairo Genizah: Or.1081 2.75.30

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As I was getting ready to present a paper for *The Arabic Literary Genizot Beyond Denominational Borders* workshop at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (April 20–21, 2017), I stumbled across a liturgical fragment whose text was familiar to my thirteen-year-old son Sebastian Kenoro. I called him and asked him if we could chant it together. The fragment contained the text of the *Makh^erzonutho* or Proclamation that a deacon chants prior to the reading of the Gospel which in turn is recited by either a priest or a deacon of the rank of *Ewangeloyo* or 'Gospler deacon.'^[1] As Kenoro was already an ordained lector deacon and I myself am an ordained *Ewangeloyo* deacon, all what we had to do is to play our own respective parts. We chanted the fragment and presented it at the IAS workshop.



The beginning of the Proclamation is not extant in our fragments. It begins with the younger deacon requesting the parishioners to “give heed and listen to the good tidings ... of the Holy Gospel.” Then, the priest gives the blessing (and this is where our fragment begins):

Shlo-mo l-kul-khūn.

Peace be to all of you.

(Line 1 in the text edition below; seconds 0–3 in the video recording above)

The lector deacon then responds:

Ash-wo lan Moryo Aloho. w-‘am rū-ḥo dī-lokh.

Make us worthy, O Lord God. And with your spirit.

(Lines 3–4; seconds 3–10)

The celebrant then declares the Gospel which is about to be read:

Ewangelion Qadīsho d-Moran w-Alohan w-pho-rū-ḡo dī-lan Yeshu‘ Mshīḥo [seconds 10–14]. Ko-rū-zū-tho Maḥ-yo-nī-tho men Matay shlī-ḥo ma-kh^er-zo-no [seconds 15–18]. D-makh-rez ḥa-ye w-phur-ḡo-no l-‘ol-mo [seconds 18–22].

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the life-giving [message from Matthew (or John) the Preacher, who preaches][2] life and salvation to the world.”

(Line 4; seconds 10–22)

The lector deacon then says on behalf of the congregation:

Brīkh de-tho wa‘-tīd dnī-the te-sh^eb-ḥon l-sho-lū-ḥeh d-shal-ḥeh l-phur-ḡo-nan. W-‘al kū-lan raḥ-maw l-‘ol-mīn.

Blessed is He Who came and shall come. Praises to Him Who sent Him for our salvation, and on all of us be His mercies forever.

(Lines 5–8; seconds 22–35).

The priest then says:

B-zab-no ho-khīl dam-dab-ro-nū-theh d-Moran w-Alohan w-pho-rū-ḡo dī-lan Yeshu‘ Mshīḥo [seconds 35–40]. Mel-tho d-ḥa-ye Aloho d-eth-ba-sar men bthul-to qa-dish-to Maryam [seconds 40–44]. Ho-len den ho-kha-no hway [44–48].

Now during the time of the dispensation [or depending on the liturgical season: the birth, baptism, resurrection] of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, God Who had taken flesh of the holy Virgin Mary, these things thus came to pass.”

(Line 8; seconds 35–48).

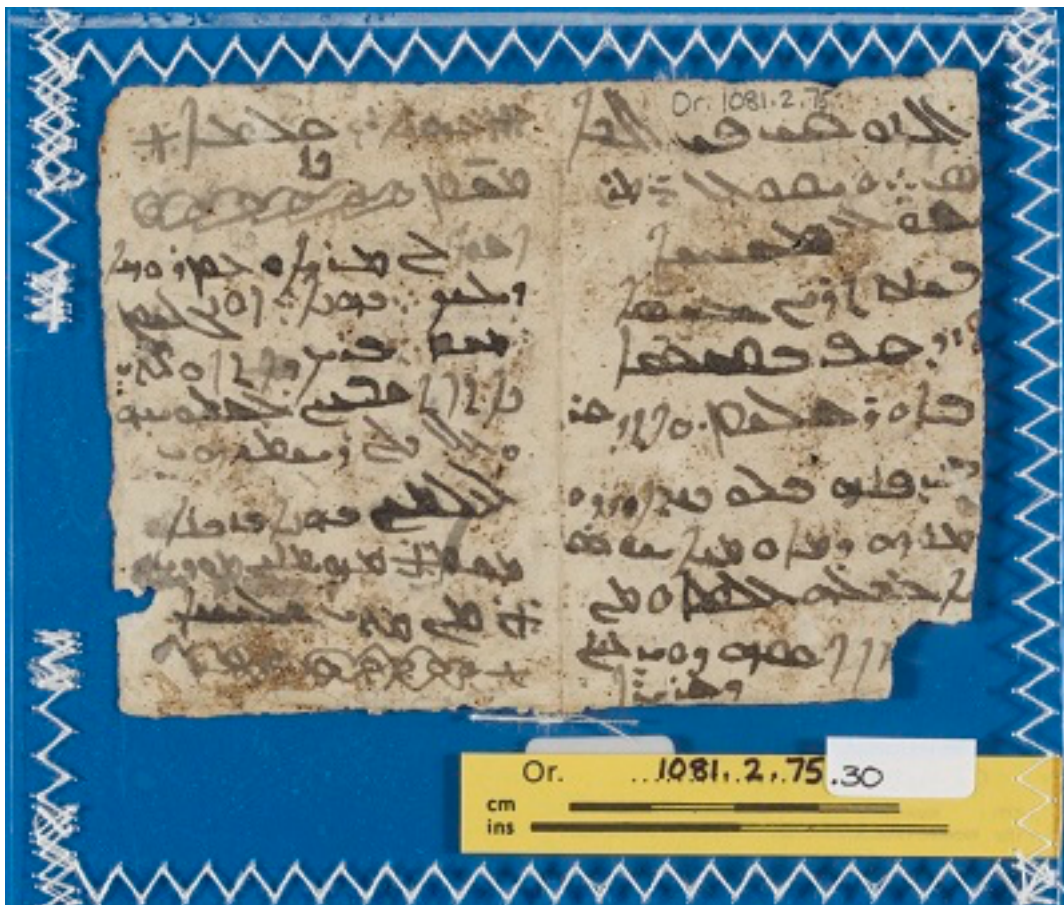
The entire parish then responds:

Mhay-mnī-nan w-maw-de-nan.

We believe and confess.

(Line 9; seconds 48–57)

Then the celebrant reads the Gospel text (not recorded).



Or.1081 2.75.30 recto

The fragment in question belongs to shelf mark Or.1081 2.75 (Item 30) and can be dated, based on paleography, to the Early Modern period (ca. 16th or 17th century). The recorded text, which appears on the left of the front (as photographed by the Genizah Unit) side, follows:

(cross)

Priest: *Peace* ܠܫܠܘܢܐ :ܘܫܠܘܢܐ 1

(decorative line)

Dea[con] ܘܫܠܘܢܐ 2

Make us worthy, O Lord. And with your

ܠܫܠܘܢܐ ܘܫܠܘܢܐ ܘܫܠܘܢܐ 3

spirit. Priest: *Gospel*

ܘܫܠܘܢܐ :ܘܫܠܘܢܐ :ܘܫܠܘܢܐ 4

Dea[con]: Blessed is He Who came

5
and shall

come. Praises to Him Who sent

6
Him,

and on all of us His mercies

7

forever. Priest: *In the time.*

8

Dea[con]: We believe and

9
confess.

[A reading] from Mathew the

10
Apostle.

(decorative line) 11

Kenoro’s chanting was based on a semi-memorized version of the received tradition text and as such he introduced two variant readings: in line 3, Kenoro read מַזְדָּא מַזְדָּא “Lord, God” instead of מַזְדָּא “Lord” and in line 6 he added דְּבַרְסַס לְפִנְיָהּ דְּמַזְדָּא “who sent him for our salvation” after מַזְדָּא דְּמַזְדָּא “his sender” (in the video, the mouse cursor appears in the margin to denote the addition). Kenoro’s addition in line 6 appears in Dolabani’s 1929 edition but with a footnote that reads “This [reading] is extra and is not found [in manuscripts]. We added it because of its increased usage.”

It is worth noting that while the deacon’s parts (the ones chanted by Kenoro in the video) are given in full, the priest’s parts (the ones chanted by me) are given merely by indicating the first word of each part (namely, שְׁלָמָא “peace” in line 1, אֲבַרְכְּכֶם “Gospel” in line 4, בְּתֵינָא “in the time” in line 8). Our scribe certainly had the deacon in mind, not the priest. At a first glance, it seems that the scribe was writing a deacon’s manual. Such manuals are called in the received liturgical tradition by the informal title *Tekso* ‘order’ and are extremely difficult to find in manuscript libraries. I have never come across one prior to the nineteenth century, and nor have any of the colleagues I asked. Dolabani, in his 1929 *Tekso* edition, does mention an “old copy from which we edited” (footnote on p. 6) but gives no date of this “old copy”. If the dating of the Genizah fragment to the Early Modern period is correct, then we are looking at the earliest attestation of a *Tekso* manual.[3]

But, alas, the last line, “[A reading] from Matthew the Apostle”, is a party pooper! If this is indeed a *Tekso* aimed at the deacon, then why would the reader care if the Gospel text that follows is from Matthew or any other Gospel?

Typically, modern editions of the *Tekso* simply have "Gospel [reading] etc." (See for example p. 7 in Dolabani.) Only a priest would need this information.

In fact, the verso of our folio gives the actual Gospel reading from Matthew 1:18–19^a in Garshuni. (Parenthetically, the Arabic, based on the word order, seems to be a direct translation from the Syriac Peshiṭta.) The rest of the bifolium (i.e. the left side of the back of Item 30 and the right side of the front) confirms that the text at hand belongs to the Eucharistic Preparatory rite during which the priest prepares himself and the Eucharistic elements for the liturgy. Fragment no. 21 from the same collection, whose text is also from the Preparatory rite that directly precedes the text in Item 30, provides an additional confirmation. It seems that we have in our hands the Book of Anaphora, the priest's manual rather than the *Tekso* deacon manual. Anaphora manuscripts work the opposite way: they give the full text of the priest's part and only one or two words of the deacon's part. Moreover, we have an abundance of Anaphora manuscripts and hence our fragment is not unique from that perspective. If we have an Anaphora in our hands, why then do we have one page (the recorded portion) that belongs to the *Tekso* genre?

To answer the question, we must look at Item 30 in the context of the other Syriac and Garshuni fragments under shelf mark Or.1081 2.75. These were described briefly by S. Brock as "a number of disparate fragments in Serto containing either jottings or liturgical materials in Carshuni or Syriac." [4] J. F. Coakley further described them as "carelessly written" scraps. [5] Indeed, I have shown elsewhere [6] that the Or.1081 2.75 material contains schooling exercises: practices of the alphabet and ligatures, repeated phrases from liturgical hymns, and snippets of Psalm readings. The carelessness in writing is simply due to the fact that we are looking at a pupil's hand. While our pupil(s) had yet to master the esthetics of calligraphy, they seem to have been thrown into writing longer texts as part of their schooling. Here, we have a case of a pupil writing the Book of Anaphora. Maybe our pupil was eager to become a priest one day. But as soon as he hit the first instance of a deacon's part (indeed, the pre-Gospel Proclamation that Kenoro chanted is the first instance in the liturgy chanted by the deacon), our pupil's mode shifted to the *Tekso* genre: He gave the full text of the deacon's portion, which he probably would have memorized by now, and gave the priest's part in an abbreviated form.

While we would have been far more excited if the entirety of Items 30 and 21 were part of the *Tekso* deacon manual, we must thank our pupil for switching from the Anaphora genre to the *Tekso* genre even if only for one page. Our pupil has given us the earliest witness of a *Tekso*. Should Kenoro or any of his fellow young deacons ever forget the pre-Gospel Proclamation while on the road, this Genizah fragment, by now available online, can come to the rescue!

[1] In the received liturgical tradition, the role of the *Ewangeloyo* deacon reading the Gospel is rarely practiced now.

[2] The text in brackets may also be, depending on the Gospel being read, “[tidings from Mark (or Luke) the Evangelist, who proclaims good tidings of].”

[3] Dolabani refers to a ܘܠܘܢ ܘܕܘܢ but gives no further information.

[4] S. P. Brock, “East Syrian Liturgical Fragments from the Cairo Genizah”, *Oriens Christianus* 68 (1984), 58–79; and “Some Further East Syrian Liturgical Fragments from the Cairo Genizah”, *Oriens Christianus* 74 (1990), 44–61.

[5] J. F. Coakley, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library and College Libraries Acquired Since 1901* (The Jericho Press, 2018), 30.

[6] G. A. Kiraz, “Learning Syriac and Garshuni in Early Modern Egypt: Evidence from the Cairo Genizah” (forthcoming).

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