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Three Fragments of a Judaeo-Arabic Translation of Ecclesiastes with Full Tiberian Vocalisation

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Abstract

Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts with complete vocalisation are rare, a problem which makes reconstructing the pronunciation of the medieval language challenging. This study presents an edition of a Judaeo-Arabic translation of Ecclesiastes from the Cairo Genizah with full Tiberian vocalisation. This manuscript exhibits noteworthy features of dialectal medieval Arabic and a palaeographic style which places it in twelfth-century Egypt-Palestine. The transcription system provides specific evidence for the pronunciation of a type of medieval Judaeo-Arabic, while the translation offers a window into the culture of popular Bible translations and scribal activity in the medieval Middle East.

Keywords

Judaeo-Arabic – Middle Arabic – vocalisation – palaeography – dialectology – Bible translation – Genizah

1 Introduction¹

One of the challenges facing scholars of Judaeo-Arabic is the limited information available concerning the pronunciation of the medieval language, particularly with respect to vowels. Only a small percentage of Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts (MS/MSS) contain written vowel signs, and the majority of those are vocalised only sporadically.² This paper presents a manuscript which breaks from that tendency, and offers a rare glimpse into the linguistic background of a twelfth-century Judaeo-Arabic translation of Ecclesiastes with full Tiberian vocalisation.

The extant manuscript is comprised of three parchment bifolia from the Cambridge University Library's Taylor-Schechter (T-S) and Lewis-Gibson (L-G) collections: T-S Ar.27.55; T-S Ar.53.12; and L-G Ar.I.150. The two T-S Ar. fragments appear in Baker and Polliack's *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, but they did not notice that the pair belong together.³ L-G Ar.I.150 has not been described in any catalogue. Khan refers to T-S Ar.53.12 several times in his studies of vocalised Judaeo-Arabic,⁴ but none of these fragments have been published as editions before now. The manuscript's text spans Ecclesiastes 2:8 to 12:12, and probably represents the writer's personal Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Hebrew original.⁵

The following discussion contains three parts. The first describes the palaeography of the manuscript, using comparative methods to demonstrate that it was most likely written in the Egypt-Palestine area during the twelfth century. The second then examines the vocalisation and orthography of the text, using the high concentration of vowel signs to identify both dialectal and pseudo-classical features that differ from Classical Arabic (CA). Finally, the third part

1 This work was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [0PP1144]. We would like to thank Ben Kantor and Joseph Habib for their insightful observations on the transcription, Nadia Vidro for her editorial comments, and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for her comments on the palaeography.

2 See Khan, "Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts," pp. 201–218; *idem*, "Orthography and Reading in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic," pp. 395–404; Vidro, "Arabic Vocalisation in Judaeo-Arabic Grammars," pp. 341–351; Blau and Hopkins, "A Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Letter," pp. 417–476.

3 Baker and Polliack, *Arabic and Judeo-Arabic Manuscripts*, nos 2155 and 7728.

4 Khan, "Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts," pp. 204–205, 208–209; *idem*, "Orthography and Reading," pp. 400–401; *idem*, "The Function of the Shewa Sign," p. 105.

5 In any case, it does not match the translations of Ecclesiastes by Sa'adya Gaon, Salmon ben Jeroham, or Yepheth ben 'Ali. See Vajda, *Deux Commentaires Karaïtes* and Bland, *The Arabic Commentary of Yepheth ben 'Ali*. A cursory comparison reveals some lexical similarities between these versions and the translation discussed in this article, likely due to no more than their shared Hebrew source material.

presents an edition and translation of the extant material, along with comments on noteworthy features from the transcription.

It is hoped that these elements will provide a useful guide for understanding the historical context and linguistic significance of this manuscript. Ultimately, it is a valuable witness to the adaptation of Hebrew vowel signs to Middle Arabic, and enhances our understanding of the phonetic realisation of spoken medieval Arabic in a period when vocalised manuscripts are relatively scarce.

2 Palaeography

The extant fragments comprise six single-column parchment leaves (three bifolia), containing all or part of Ecclesiastes 2:8–2:15, 2:22–3:5, 4:12–5:1, 5:8–5:15, and 11:8–12:12. The most complete leaf is T-S Ar.53.12, which measures 14.9 × 16.5 cm. All leaves originally contained 11 lines. The lines and margins are clearly ruled, and the outside margins are pricked. The flesh side is easily distinguished from the hair side. Hebrew incipits mark the beginning of each verse. They are smaller than the main Judaeo-Arabic text, but have a similar palaeographic style. We conducted this analysis with microscopy in visible and ultraviolet light in order to clearly see the ornamentation, stroke order, and thickness of each letter. What follows is a detailed palaeographic description of the letters of the main text as a point of comparison for future scholarship.

As a whole, the palaeographic style is typical of a professional Egyptian-Palestinian (“Eastern”) hand from the late eleventh to early twelfth century AD. It is a small yet sophisticated book-hand script. Some components of the letters are found in earlier (ninth- and tenth-century) Eastern manuscripts, but these components also persist in the Eastern book-hands of later centuries, and the overall rounded and simplified style points toward a twelfth-century date.⁶

2.1 *Branched Letters* (ʾālep, têt, ʾayin, šādê šîn)

All branched letters have the fundamental shape and stroke order seen in Eastern hands from the tenth to twelfth centuries. However, the ducti joining the

6 Many thanks to Judith Olszowy-Schlanger for her assistance in clarifying the date of the script style. For comparative references which generally match this manuscript’s script, see Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, “Eastern Book-Hand” (chart 24); David, *The Hebrew Letter*, examples 5A–6B; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92–93, 184–189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Medieval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1–36.

branches to the main strokes are thick and the serifs are significantly rounded, which are typically later features. The horizontal bottom strokes of *têt* and *shîn* are notably flat.

- *Ālep*:⁷ The top serif is not a separate stroke, but instead flows smoothly into the main stroke, which curves slightly downward at the bottom. The leftmost branch attaches to the top of the middle stroke, which is an Eastern feature. The *ālep-lāmed* ligature is comprised of integral features from both letters and fits the aforementioned script style.
- *Ṭêt*:⁸ The top fits a tenth-century palaeography, but the bottom horizontal stroke is flat, a feature seen in comparable twelfth-century MSS.
- *Āyin*:⁹ Some *āyins* are noticeably upright. The leftmost branch joins the main stroke higher than expected for the assessed script style, but the top and bottom serifs both fit it well.
- *Ṣādê*:¹⁰ Shaped like *nûn*, with a right branch proceeding almost perpendicularly from the middle stroke.
- *Shîn*:¹¹ Similar to *têt*, *shîn* has a flat base, and the middle stroke joins the left-hand stroke at a high point. These features are seen in ninth-century script styles, but the roundness of the strokes and serifs are comparable to twelfth-century MSS.

2.2 Right-Angled Letters (*bêt*, *dālet*, *hê*, *hêt*, *rêsh*, *tāw*)

The shape and ornamentation of these letters match comparative script styles for a tenth-century Eastern hand. However, these simple letters tend to keep similar shapes over longer periods of time, so they also have parallels in twelfth-century scripts.¹²

- *Bêt*: The downward stroke does not narrow significantly before being subsumed by the sweeping, slightly curved bottom stroke. It is easily distin-

7 Comparative examples: Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, figs 5B, 6A, 6B; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 184, 186, 188; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 5, 35–36.

8 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 93; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 2.

9 The closest overall comparison is Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 8, 35.

10 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 184–186.

11 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 3, 4, 35.

12 See especially, Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24 and fig. 108, and Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 35.

guished from *kāp* by a sharp edge protruding backwards beyond the downwards stroke.

- *Dālet*: The top of the downward stroke is ornamental, beginning well above the horizontal roof, which has a strong serif at the leftmost end.
- *Hê*: The same base shape as *dālet*; the left bottom branch attaches to the roof.
- *Ḥêt*: Both downstrokes begin slightly above the horizontal line, less severely than *dālet* and *hê*.
- *Rêsh* and *tāw*: The serif and angle typically appear in earlier (tenth-century) Eastern styles.

2.3 Vertical Letters (*gîmel*, *wāw*, *zayin*, *nûn*)

These letters match the fundamental shapes and stroke orders of a tenth-century Egyptian-Palestinian hand, although the ornamentation is more rounded than some comparative script styles; this rounding is more common in twelfth-century samples.

- *Gîmel*:¹³ The middle stroke is straight and extends seamlessly into the top serif, which is poorly-defined and points steeply upward. This feature deviates slightly from comparative styles which have more angular strokes. The bottom stroke attaches high in the middle of the mid-stroke, which is typical for the assessed period.
- *Wāw*:¹⁴ Closely matches the tenth-century Eastern book hand and comparable twelfth-century scripts.
- *Zayin*:¹⁵ Short, which is typical of tenth-century Eastern book hand. However, like the top of *gîmel*, there is no stroke break between the middle stroke and the serif, which is another feature seen in comparative twelfth-century scripts.
- *Nûn*:¹⁶ The serif is rounded and flows seamlessly into the main stroke, fitting a tenth-century Eastern script style as well as the later twelfth-century style.

13 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 184; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 3, 5.

14 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

15 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23, fig. 208; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

16 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, charts 23, 24, fig. 208. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 186, 189.

2.4 *Rounded Letters* (kāp, mēm, sāmek, pê)

The basic forms and ornamentation of these letters agree with the Egypt-Palestine palaeography, and small deviations in them place the script in the twelfth century.

- *Kāp* and *mēm*: Both letters match the assessed script style exactly. *Mēm* has a straight roof common in twelfth-century comparative texts.
- *Sāmek*:¹⁷ The roof is flat with no ornamentation. A slight bump is visible on the rightmost side of the top stroke, where the downward stroke begins.
- *Pê*:¹⁸ The letter is notably compact and its bottom half extends far past the left stroke. This lengthening may reflect influence from an Arabic script style.

2.5 *Tall Letters* (kāp sôpît, lāmed, pê sôpît, šādê sôpît, qôf, nûn sôpît)

These letters retain the fundamental shape of their medial counterparts.

- *Kāp sôpît*:¹⁹ Matches the twelfth-century Eastern hand.
- *Lāmed*:²⁰ Basic, without serifs, which is similar to some twelfth-century comparative scripts.
- *Pê sôpît*:²¹ The lefthand “nose” sometimes attaches below the top curve of the main stroke.
- *Šādê sôpît*: The top stroke matches that of medial *šādê*.
- *Qôf*:²² The long bottom stroke attaches to the roof a bit further past the serif, a feature seen in the twelfth-century comparative scripts.
- *Nûn sôpît*:²³ The top serif, like all serifs in this hand, is rounder than in many tenth-century comparative script styles, indicating the later twelfth-century date. The length tends to be shorter than the downstroke of other *sôpît* letters.

17 Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 92; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

18 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, figs 5A, 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 3, esp. 36.

19 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 93, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 35, 36.

20 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 23; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 5A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 92, 186; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 36.

21 David, *The Hebrew Letter*, fig. 6A; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 1, 5, but esp. 35, 36.

22 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24, fig. 208; David, *The Hebrew Letter*, chart 6; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plates 93, 186, 189; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 11 and especially charts 13, 36.

23 Yardeni, *Book of Hebrew Script*, chart 24; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*, plate 189 (but longer

3 Arabic Dialectology

The vocalisation and orthography reflect dialectal features that differ from Classical Arabic. Some of these features are fairly general, occurring in many varieties of Arabic, but a few indicate Egyptian influences on the scribe who wrote the manuscript. Simultaneously, the text follows Classical grammar and morphology in most respects, and it reflects a fairly high register of Arabic. It even contains several cases of “classicised” language with hyper- or hypo-corrected forms.²⁴ The nearly-complete state of the vocalisation is particularly useful for identifying these dialectal and pseudo-Classical forms, especially since the Tiberian pointing system can represent wider range of vowel qualities than the typical Arabic *fatha* (/a/), *kasra* (/i/), and *damma* (/u/) signs. The following discussion examines differences between Classical Arabic and the dialectal features in the Arabic of this text, mainly with respect to vowels and consonants.

3.1 Vowels

The majority of medieval Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts lack anything approaching complete vocalisation, often making it difficult to reconstruct the intended phonology of medieval Arabic words. This limitation extends to nearly all of Middle Arabic, as even most Arabic-script texts are sporadically vocalised at best. In fact, some of the most significant direct witnesses for medieval Arabic vocalisation are not in Arabic script at all, but rather transcriptions in Greek,²⁵ Coptic,²⁶ and “phonetic” Judaeo-Arabic²⁷ which record short vowels via *plene* spellings. There are also a some “classical” Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts with substantial Tiberian vocalisation, although parchment manuscripts of this type are rare.²⁸ With its near-complete Tiberian vocalisation, this Ecclesiastes manuscript provides another critical source for extracting the vowel phonology of medieval dialectal Arabic from a Middle Arabic text.

and less angular); Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, charts 5 (closest match), 8 (but shorter), 10; Beit-Arie et al., *Specimens of Mediaeval Hebrew Scripts*, chart 35.

24 See Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” p. 156.

25 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 68–71; Violet, “Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment,” pp. 384–403, 425–441, 475–488.

26 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 155–167; Sobhy, “New Coptic Texts,” pp. 234–267.

27 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 29, 136–154; see also, Blau and Hopkins, *Ha-Aravit ha-yehudit ha-qedumah*; and Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

28 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 201–218; Khan, “The Function of the Shewa Sign,” pp. 105–111; Blau and Hopkins, “A Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Letter,” pp. 417–476.

In these fragments, the Tiberian *pataḥ*, *ḥîreq*, and *qibbûṣ* signs occur regularly where CA would have *fatha*, *kasra*, and *ḍamma*, respectively. *Ṣērê* appears four times in the manuscript,²⁹ and in the two clearest readings it represents /ē/ as an allophone of CA /ā/. *Sĕgōl* does not occur except as a *ḥātēp* vowel, and there are no clear readings with *ḥōlem* or *qāmeṣ*. In general, the manuscript does not record final vowels, and the only indication of case marking is the occurrence of *ʾālep* in places where CA has *tanwīn alif*. Throughout the text, *ḥîreq* before final *ḥê* indicates the equivalent of Arabic *tāʾ marbūṭa*, while a *qibbûṣ* before final *ḥê* indicates the 3ms pronominal suffix. This latter feature is an imitation of Classical Arabic orthography, although the suffix was likely pronounced as the dialectal form *-u*.³⁰

Shûreq also occurs frequently, both where CA has /u/ and where CA has consonantal *wāw*. In these cases of consonantal *wāw*, the dot within the letter may actually be a *dāgēsh* or the equivalent of *mappiq*, and only appears to look the same as the *shûreq* vowel sign. See, for example, אַקְוֹאֵל (ʾaqwāl^{an}, “sayings,” 12:9), which has a consonantal *wāw* marked by both “*shûreq*” and *pataḥ*. Accordingly, conjunctive *wāw* is frequently marked like *shûreq*. In these cases, it may have been realised as /u/ or /wu/.³¹

Shĕwă retains both silent and vocalic functions. It appears in places where CA has *sukūn*, and also represents short /a/ in most places where it does not close a syllable. For example, see פִּקְלִי (fa-qult, “I said,” 2:14) and אֶלְמַגְרוּס (al-maghrūs, “planted,” 3:2). This vocalic *shĕwă* as /a/ nearly always appears in unstressed syllables, while *pataḥ* occurs in syllables with stressed or long /a/, but this rule does not always hold. For example, for מֶלֶךְ (*malik*, “king,” 2:12), *shĕwă* represents stressed /a/. The use of *shĕwă* for /a/ also occurs in Bible manuscripts with “non-standard Tiberian” vocalisation,³² and probably reflects the Tiberian pronunciation of vocalic *shĕwă* like *pataḥ* (i.e. /a/).³³ The *shĕwă* sign may also indicate some “reduction” of the /a/ vowel, at least in certain contexts. For example, גָּמַטַּת (*gamaʿt*, “I gathered,” 2:8) may reflect a form closer to *jamaʿt* than to CA *jamaʿtu*.³⁴ Moreover, the quality of vocalic *shĕwă* can vary in different contexts. For example, in אֶלְמִלֻךְ (*ʾal-mulūk*, “kings,” 2:8), זְהוּר (zuhūr,

29 In 5:10, 12:7, and 12:8 twice.

30 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397; but see also, Blau, *Handbook*, p. 36.

31 For a similar phenomenon in Tiberian Hebrew, see Khan, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition*, section 1.1.6.

32 For example, MS Cambridge, University Library, T-S AS 64.206 vocalises the definite article (-ה) with *shĕwă* (-ה). See Arrant, “Standard Tiberian.”

33 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 208–209; *idem*, *The Tiberian Pronunciation Tradition*, section 1.2.5.2.

34 See Lentin, “The Levant,” pp. 185–186.

“revelation,” 5:13), and כְּאַלְגְּהוּיִם (*ka-ʾal-ghuyūm*, “like the clouds,” 12:2) *shēwā* represents /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.³⁵

Shēwā also occurs once *inside* a word-final *hêt* (וְאַלְמְרִיחַ, *u-ʾal-marāḥ*, “and merriment,” 3:4). This marking with an interior *shēwā* is a known feature in Hebrew manuscripts with “non-standard Tiberian” vocalisation, where it reinforces the full pronunciation of a weakened final guttural consonant. Additionally, it suggests that the scribe’s Judaeo-Arabic /ħ/ was de-pharyngealised to /h/ in certain contexts, in this case at the end of a word-final syllable. Such de-pharyngealisation is only known in modern Arabic from peripheral dialects like Chadian and Nigerian,³⁶ but if it occurs here, then it may be due to influence from Aramaic.³⁷ Its appearance in this manuscript also suggests that this scribe had some familiarity with a type of non-standard Tiberian vowel pointing.³⁸

One of the most common variations in the manuscript is the raising of CA /a/ and /ā/ in certain phonetic contexts, a phenomenon known as *imāla* in Arabic grammar.³⁹ Both medial and final *imāla* are recorded in this manuscript, and both of these types of *imāla* are also known in dialects from the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and the Maghreb from the early Islamic period onwards.⁴⁰ This phenomenon is attested in some early Judaeo-Arabic texts by the use of the *mater lectionis* letter *yod*,⁴¹ and is often marked by vowel dots in vocalised Judaeo-Arabic sources.⁴² This Ecclesiastes manuscript represents *imāla* with the Tiberian vowel signs *hîreq* and *šêrê*. In positions where CA would have *tāʾ marbūṭa*, the manuscript has *hîreq* and *hê*. For example: לִלְגָהּ אֵלֶּה (li-*l-gahālih*, “to ignorance,” 2:12), אֵלְחִימִיחַ (al-*hikmih*, “wisdom,” 2:12, twice), אֵלְזִמִּיחַ (al-*zulmih*, “darkness,” 2:13), נִעְמִיחַ (ni-*mih*, “comfort,” 5:10), בְּאַקִּיחַ (bā-*qiyih*, “remaining,” 11:8), and אֵלְמִזְלִמִּיחַ (al-*muzallimih*, “darkened,” 11:8). This tendency to raise final /a/ can be correlated with *imāla* of the feminine ending in many modern Arabic dialects.⁴³

35 Khan, “The Function of the Shewa Sign,” pp. 105–111.

36 Janet Watson, *The Phonology and Morphology of Arabic*, p. 18.

37 See Fassberg, *A Grammar of the Palestinian Targum Fragments*, p. 27.

38 For more on this feature, see Blapp, *The Non-Standard Tiberian Hebrew Language Tradition*, pp. 47–48; Arrant, “An Exploratory Typology;” Yeivin, *Keter*, p. 17; Morag, “The Vocalization of Codex Reuchlinianus,” p. 233.

39 Levin, “The Imāla in the Arabic Dialects,” pp. 1–2, XI11; Levin, “Imāla.”

40 Lentin, “The Levant,” pp. 180–181; Levin, “The Imāla in the Arabic Dialects,” pp. 62–78; al-Nassir, *Sībawayh the Phonologist*, pp. 91–103.

41 Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” pp. 150–151; Hopkins, “On Imāla of Medial and Final ā,” pp. 195–214.

42 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” p. 204.

43 Levin, “Imāla.”

Ṣērê represents *imāla* four times, including at least three times in places where CA has long /ā/ in an open syllable: מתי (matē, “when,” 5:10), אנפא (‘ēnif^{an}, “in the first place,” 12:7), and פאניא (fēniy^{an}, “passing away,” 12:8). These instances of vowel raising are not lexical phenomena, but rather are conditioned by their phonological context, as פאניא (fēniy^{an}, “passing away”) occurs in verse 12:8 alongside כאלפאנין (ka-‘al-fānīn, “like those who pass away”). The fourth *ṣērê* appears where a lacuna allows only a cautious reconstruction of the entire word: {אנמא}א (‘ennamā, “only,” 12:8). If this reconstruction is correct, then this form is probably a hypocorrection of the CA word ‘innamā.⁴⁴

Another case of vowel raising occurs with the CA particle *man* (“who?”). It appears once as *min* with *hîreq* (יבון יבון, *u-min yakūn*, “and who is,” 5:8), reflecting the use of the word as a relative pronoun (“whoever”). This example example with *hîreq* notably occurs in the context of a *yôd* in an adjacent syllable, which may have affected its vowel quality. The use of *min* for CA interrogative *man* is common to both Egyptian and Levantine varieties of modern Arabic,⁴⁵ and lexical *min* as a relative pronoun occurs in modern Egyptian.⁴⁶

The text uses a few Tiberian *hātēp* signs in places where CA has /a/ or /i/. *Hātēp pataḥ* occurs somewhat regularly, usually on ‘ayin and hêt, including: אאלמלחנא (u-al-mulḥānāt, “female musicians,” 2:8), ועזמט (u-‘āzumt, “and I became great,” 2:9), עלי (‘ālā, “upon,” 2:9, 2:13 twice, 2:26, 4:17, 5:12, 11:10), עלמת (‘ālimt, “I knew,” 2:14), אערא (‘ārad^{an}, “judgement,” 2:14), עליך (‘ālayak, “upon you,” 4:17, 12:2), עמל (‘āmal, “labour,” 5:13, 5:14), חדאתך (ḥādāthatak, “your youth,” 11:9), אלחיא (al-ḥāyāh, “life,” 12:6), and אכימא (ḥākīm^{an}, “wise,” 12:9). However, it is not clear that the quality or quantity of *hātēp pataḥ* on these letters actually differed from that of CA *fatha* (/a/). Instead, the writer may have followed the Biblical Hebrew convention of avoiding vocalic *shēwā* on guttural consonants. *Hātēp pataḥ* also occurs twice on ‘ālep: אגג (‘āggid, “I would find,” 2:25), אסאב (‘āsābif, 12:12);⁴⁷ and once each on *tāw*, *kāp*, and *yôd*: אמתא (mutā‘amūl^{an}, “contemplating,” 2:11), אדא (kādhāk, “likewise,” 5:9), אנתאזימא (yāntaḥzimhā, “he organises them,” 12:9).

Hātēp ségōl is a lexically-specific phenomenon, appearing only on the preposition ‘ilā and its variations with pronominal suffixes. For example: אלי (‘ēlayyah, “to him,” 4:17), אלי (‘ēlayya, “to me,” 2:23 and 4:17), and [י]ל (‘ēlā, “to,

44 Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” p. 206; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 402. Compare T-S Ar.8.3 F16 verso: אנמא, ‘annamā.

45 Lentin, “The Levant,” p. 185; Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, p. 845.

46 Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, p. 835.

47 This word is probably a misspelling; see comments on transcription below.

towards,” 5:14). In all of these cases, *ḥāṭēp sēgōl* appears beneath an *ʾālep-lāmed* ligature, and it is impossible to say for sure that it does not instead represent *shēwā* on the *ʾālep* and *sēgōl* on the *lāmed*. If it does, then the expected pronunciation of אָלִי (“to me”) would be *ʾaleyya* or something similar. These examples would then also be the only places where *sēgōl* appears in the Judaeo-Arabic text.⁴⁸

In contrast to dialectal forms, the vocalisation also reflects several apparent “hypocorrections,” where the writer attempted to “classicise” a perceived dialectal pronunciation of /i/ by replacing it with /a/, but failed to produce a true CA form.⁴⁹ For example: *ʾastahsinuh* (אֶסְתַּחֲסִינֻחַ, “it deemed it beautiful,” 2:10) for *ʾstahsanahu*; *ba-ʾal-maysūr* (בְּאַלְמַיְסוּר, “at ease,” 5:11) for *bil-maysūri*; *fa-ʾiltimāsuh* (פִּאֲלִתְמַאֲסוּחַ, “for his seeking,” 5:11) for *fal-timāsuhu*; *zaltuh* (זַלְתֻּחַ, “I abandoned it,” 5:12) for CA *ziltuhu*; *ʾannahā* (אַנְהָא, “indeed it/they,” 11:8) for *ʾinnahā*; *ka-ʾal-ghuyūm* (כְּאַלְגֻיּוּם, “like the clouds,” 12:2) for *kal-ghuyūm*; and *fī-ʾal ...* (... פִּיאַל, “in the ...,” 12:3) for *fil*.

The text also contains occasional “hypercorrections” where the writer uses a grammatical form when CA does not require it. For example, verse 2:26 has אֶבְהַרְגָא (*bi-harg^{an}*, “with agitation”), marking a direct object with both *tanwīn alif* and *bi-*. Similarly, in verse 11:8, the CA word *ʾakthar* (“greater, more than”) appears as אֶאֱכֹתְרָא (*ʾakthar^{an}*), apparently marked with *tanwīn* as the predicate of *takūn*, even though CA elative adjectives do not take *tanwīn*.

3.2 Consonants

The text is “classical” Judaeo-Arabic, generally matching the orthography of Classical Arabic with corresponding Hebrew letters.⁵⁰ The Arabic definite article is almost always written אַל (with the two letters connected as a single ligature) where CA would have اَل, as well as in places where CA normally elides the initial *alif* with *hamzatu l-waṣl* (see hypocorrections above). There is one instance where the *lāmed* of the definite article is omitted before a *ḍād* (3:4: לְצַחֵךְ, *la-ḍḍaḥk*, “for [the] laughter”), but otherwise it is always written, even with “sun letters.” Similarly, geminated Arabic letters are usually written only

48 Similar lexical specificity occurs in non-standard Tiberian bible manuscripts. For example, T-S NS 68.22 and T-S NS 78.47 have *shēwā* for *ḥāṭēp sēgōl* only on the *ʾālep* of the divine name (e.g., אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ). See Arrant, “An Exploratory Typology.”

49 See Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 205–206; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” pp. 400–401.

50 This type contrasts the earlier “phonetic” orthographic system, which saw use until the first half of the tenth century. Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” pp. 150–151; Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

once in Hebrew characters—sometimes marked with a *dāgēsh*—except for two cases which reduplicate the consonant: 2:11, אֲנִי (‘*innī*, “indeed I”); 12:9, אֲלַף (‘*allaf*, “he composed”).

There is one notable instance of consonantal interchange. In verse 3:1, מְהֻדָּר (‘*mahdūr*) is probably intended as מְהֻדָּר (‘*mahdūr*, “prepared, fixed”). This spelling may be a remnant of an earlier “phonetic” Judaeo-Arabic orthography, which used *dālet* to represent Arabic *dād*.⁵¹ Alternatively, it may indicate a loss of /d/ in certain contexts in the writer’s dialect.

The writer uses two types of diacritic dots to distinguish consonants: Tiberian *dāgēsh* and a single supralinear dot. These dots are used sporadically, but when they do appear, they distinguish specific pairs of letters.

The supralinear dot appears regularly to indicate *zā’* and *dād*, two consonants which do not have a phonetic equivalent in the Hebrew alphabet. A dot above ט distinguishes *zā’* from *tā’*, and a dot above צ distinguishes *dād* from *šād*. This convention follows a typical Judaeo-Arabic practice for indicating Arabic consonants that do not have Hebrew counterparts.⁵²

The use of *dāgēsh* conforms to the standard Tiberian practice, marking stops but not fricatives. Accordingly, ב, ד, כ, and ת correspond to the Arabic stops ب, د, ك, and ت, respectively, while ט, כ, and ת correspond to the Arabic fricatives ذ, خ,⁵³ and ث. The fricative reflex of ב (/v/) and the stop reflex of פ (/p/) have no Arabic equivalents, so those letters always represent ب and ف in the manuscript. There is also a single instance of *pê* with *rāfē* in verse 12:9 (אֲלַף; ‘*allaf*, “he composed”), which presumably highlights the fricative pronunciation in that word. Then for *gîmel*, ג corresponds to the Arabic letter ج, while א corresponds to غ. This usage breaks from more common diacritical practices in Judaeo-Arabic, which typically mark *jîm* using the convention for marking Arabic phonemes that have no Hebrew equivalent (like *zā’* and *dād*). That is, they usually indicate the Arabic affricate *jîm* (/j/) using a *gîmel* with a diacritic dot either above or below it.⁵⁴ Instead, this manuscript uses *dāgēsh* to separate ج and غ in the same way as the other *bgdkft* pairs that have two Arabic equivalents. If the same pattern for those letters also holds for *gîmel* here, then it suggests the writer realised Judaeo-Arabic א as a voiced velar fricative (/gh/ or similar) and א as a voiced velar stop (/g/), and *not* like the CA palatal affricate

51 Khan, “Judaeo-Arabic,” p. 150; *idem*, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397; Blau and Hopkins, “On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography.”

52 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 397.

53 e.g. אֲלַף (‘*allaf*, “good,” 2:24) and אֲלַף (‘*al-khayt*, “the thread,” 4:12).

54 Connolly, “Revisiting the Question of Ġim,” pp. 165, 168–169.

(/j/). This “*ġīm*” reflex is a hallmark of modern Egyptian Arabic, and is also known to have occurred in Egypt between the eighth and twelfth centuries.⁵⁵

3.3 Summary

The Judaeo-Arabic of this translation reflects a fairly high register of medieval Arabic, which generally conforms to CA grammar and morphology, and also attempts to “classicise” some of its dialectal features. However, a few elements of the writer’s dialect have crept into the formal language of the text, including: the raising of *a*-vowels in certain contexts (*imāla*) and a likely realisation of the Arabic letter *jīm* as /g/. The *imāla* seen here is similar to many modern dialects, and does not contradict the Egypt-Palestine assessment of the manuscript’s palaeography. Then the /g/ reflex of *jīm* is a well-known feature of Egyptian Arabic, including during the early medieval period. These details indicate that the writer most likely spoke a variety of Egyptian Arabic. Given the dating of the palaeography and the fact that this manuscript is parchment from the Cairo Genizah, it is also probable that the writer lived in Egypt during the twelfth century.

4 Transcription and Translation

The following section contains a transcription of the manuscript. Portions in [square brackets] are reconstructed from damaged areas that still have some ink, but where either the vowels or consonants are not clear, often with the aid of ultraviolet or infrared microscopy. Those in {curly brackets} are not visible in the manuscript, but are reconstructed from the context of the contents. The actual size of the incipits is smaller than the main text, so we have transcribed them in a smaller font size. Beside the transcription is our translation of the Judaeo-Arabic text, produced as faithfully as possible within the limits of reasonable reconstruction. We have also included the Jewish Publication Society’s 1985 translation of Ecclesiastes,⁵⁶ as well as the text of the Leningrad codex from the Westminster Theological Seminary’s online edition (<http://www.tanach.us/Tanach.xml>). The rightmost column contains the line number in the manuscript, while the leftmost column contains the corresponding chapter and verse in Ecclesiastes.

55 Some Judaeo-Arabic manuscripts suggest it persisted in certain dialects until at least the sixteenth century; Connolly, “Revisiting the Question of Ġīm,” pp. 162–163, 178–179. See also, Behnstedt and Woidich, “The Formation of the Egyptian Area,” pp. 69–70.

56 Berlin, Brettler and Fishbane (eds), *The Jewish Study Bible*, pp. 1606–1622.

4.1 *Ar.53.12 F1 Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
2:8	I further amassed silver and gold and treasures of	כִּנְסֹתַי לִי גֶם־כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וְסֻגֻּלָת	I gathered silver and {gold}	כִּנְסֹתַי לִי גֶם וְגִמְעַת פְּצָה וְזָהָב {בא}.....	1
	kings and province; and I got myself male	מְלָכִים וְהַמְדִינֹת עֲשִׂיתִי לִי שָׂרִים	of kings and cities, desirously; and {I acquired} ... fine {male}	אֶלְמְלוֹךְ וְאַלְמְדַּאִין רְאִגְבָּא וְאַתְבְּךְ {דת} ... {אלמלחנין}	2
	and female singers, as well as the luxuries of commoners—	וְשָׂרוֹת וְתַעֲנוּגֹת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם	and female musicians, and some of the remaining pleasures of man,	וְאַלְמְלֹחְנָא ⁵⁷ מְחֻסְנָא וּמִן מְלַאד ⁵⁸ אֶלְאַנְסָאן אֶלְבְּאַקִיָּא {ת}	3
	coffers and coffers of them.	שָׂדֶה וְשָׂדֹת:	from time to time.	חִינָא וְאַחִינָא: וְגִדְלָתִי וְהוֹסְפָתִי וְעֲטָמַת פִּי דְאֶדְךָ	4
2:9	Thus, I	וְגִדְלָתִי	And I became great in that,		
	gained more wealth than anyone before me in Jerusalem.	וְהוֹסְפָתִי מִכֹּל שָׂהִיָּה לִפְנֵי בִירוּשָׁלַם	and I gained wealth beyond those who came before me, who were, in the house of peace,	וְזִדְתָּ קִדְרָא עָלַי וְזִדְתָּ דִּין קְבִלִי [כ] אֲנֹנִי פִּי דְאֶר אֶלְסִלָם	5
	In addition, my wisdom remained with me:	אִף חֻכְמָתִי עִמָּדָה לִּי:	great. And my wisdom was prepared	כְּבָרָא וְחֻכְמָתִי מְעַדָּא [ד] {ה}..... ל.ל. [צ]מָה פִּי...	6
			brought together in		
			my actions.	אֶפְעָלִי: וְכָל אֲשֶׁר..... [ק] טְרָפִי	7
2:10	I withheld from my eyes	וְכָל אֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלּוּ עֵינַי	..... my sight		
	I withheld from my eyes nothing they asked for, and denied myself no enjoyment;	לֹא אֶצְלָתִי מֵהֶם לֹא־מִנְעָתִי אֶת־לְבִי	anything it deemed beautiful	שִׁינָא אֶסְתְּחֻסְנָה [ח] אֶסְתְּזָאנָה.....	8
			it deemed nice;		

57 The *nûn* in this word may have *qāmeṣ* instead of *pataḥ*.

58 This word is *ملاذ*, a relatively uncommon plural of *ملاذة* (“joy, pleasure, comfort”); Wehr, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary*, p. 1013; Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, p. 985; Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 628.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	rather, I got enjoyment out of all my wealth.	מְכַל־שִׂמְחָה בְּיַלְבִּי שִׂמְחָה מְכַל־עַמְלִי	rather, my heart was with that [and it] which was	בֵּל כְּאֵן קְלִבִּי בְּדָאד א[והו] אֵלְדִי כְּאֵן.....	9
	And that was all I got out of my wealth.	וְזֶה־הִיא חֶלְקִי מְכַל־עַמְלִי:	my share from all that	קְלִבִּי חֲטִי מִן כָּל מֵא א.....: וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי תָם	10
2:11			Then,		
	Then my thoughts turned to all the fortune my hands had built up,	וּפְנִיתִי אֲנִי בְּכָל־מַעֲשֵׂי שָׁעֲשִׂי יָדַי	indeed, I turned in contemplation [of all that] ... I had built and what	אֲנִי תוֹגַהֶת מִתְּאֵמְלֵא [כָּל מֵא] ... צְנַעְתָּה ⁵⁹ וּמ[א] ⁶⁰	11

Line 1: The vocalisation of גַּמְעַת may reflect a dialectal pronunciation of the 1cs perfect verb as *jama't*, although vocalic *shěwă* tends to represent /a/ in most of the manuscript.

Line 2: The *shěwă* in אֵלְמִלוּךְ (*al-mulūk*, “the kings”) appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

Line 2: The translator probably chooses *madīna* (“city;” pl. *madā'in*) here because it shares a root with the word *mēdīnâ* (“province;” pl. *mēdīnôt*) from the Hebrew verse, even though they have different lexical meanings. This word, as well as a few others, are left unvocalised, seemingly at random.

Line 3: [ת] אֵלְבִּאקִיא [ת] (*al-bāqiyāti*, “the remaining”) apparently ends with a *ḥûreq*, although it is not clear why the vocaliser would put a case vowel here and nowhere else. It may indicate an epenthetic vowel rather than a grammatical case.

Line 5: The pointing on תִּז suggests a pronunciation of the 1cs perfect form as *zidat*, *zidət*, or *zidt*.

Line 5: There is a miniature *sāmek* or *mēm* on the left side above the *rêsh* in אֵ[ך] קֶדְר (*qadr^{an}*, “wealth”). It may be a correction to make this phrase וְזֶדַת קֶדְר וּמֵא, “and I gained some amount.”

Line 5: There may be a *qāmeṣ* beneath the *ālep* in אֵל[ל] [אֵלְלַחְנָה?] (*ʿalladhīna?*), but it is difficult to be sure. It would be the only instance of *qāmeṣ* in the manuscript,

59 It appears that the scribe began the *qibbûṣ* here too close to the *tāw*, and then wrote the full three dots under the erroneous first.

60 There is an oblique stroke above the *mēm* in this word.

and does not match the expected pronunciation of *ʿalladhīna* or *ʿelladhīna*. The scribe may have added a *qāmeṣ* as an orthoepic reminder to separate the beginning of this word from the final vowel of the previous word (i.e. *ʿalayya*).

Line 5: The translator glosses ירושלים (“Jerusalem”) as דאר אלסלם (*dār al-salām*, “the house of peace”), using a defective spelling (possibly, *al-salam*).

Line 9: א[והו] (*wa-huwā?* “and he”) may be the Hebrew pronoun הוא, or a *plene* spelling of the Arabic pronoun like هو.⁶¹

Line 11: The scribe reduplicates the geminated *nūn* in אנני (*ʿinnī* or *ʿinnanī*, “indeed I”), likely on analogy with the Hebrew forms הנני (*hinnennī*) and הנני (*hinēnī*).

Line 11: The 1cs perfect verb צנעטה (*ṣanaʿtuḥ*, “he made it”) appears to be marked like the CA 1cs perfect verb (*faʿaltu*), but the final /u/ in the Judaeo-Arabic is actually part of the 3ms pronominal object suffix. This suffix appears regularly as *-uh*.⁶²

4.2 Ar.53.12 F1 Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	to the wealth I had acquired and won—and oh,	וּבְעַמְלֵי שְׂעִמְלֵי לְעֵשׂוֹת וְהִנֵּה	..... what of it I had made. I found that all of it was	.....מֵא מִנֵּה פְעֻלָּתָהּ פּוֹגְדַת אֶלְכֵל מִנֵּה	1
	it was all futile and pursuit of wind; there was no real value	הַכֵּל הַבֶּל וְרֵעוּת רֵיחַ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן	.... vanity, without fail, nothing but the glimmer of dawn. And what of it is a certainty,	[...]בְּטֵלֵאן לְאֵבֵד אֵילֵא וּמֵא מִנֵּה יִקִּינֵא	2
	under the sun!	תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ:	persisting under the sun, debasing creation?	תַּחַת אֶלְשֶׁמֶס בְּאֵקִינֵא יְדוּס כְּאֵינֵא: וּפְנִיחֵי אֵין וְחִינֵיד	3
2:12 ⁶³			Then		
	My thoughts also turned to appraising wisdom	וּפְנִיחֵי אֵין לְרֵאזוֹת חֻקְמָה	I turned to considering wisdom and praise-worthy deeds	אֶקְבֵּלֵת נֵאטְרֵא פִי אֶלְחֻקְמָה וּמְחֻמוֹדַת אֶלְאֶעֱמֵאל	4

61 Khan, “Orthography and Reading,” p. 399.

62 For example, see 2:12, 2:23, 2:24, 5:10, 5:11, 5:12, and 12:3.

63 JPS reverses the order of the two sentences in this verse “for clarity.” We have switched them back to demonstrate the differences between the versions of this passage.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	and madness and folly. For what	וְהוֹלְלוֹת וְסִכְלוֹת כִּי | מָה	and to scrutinising ignorance and repulsive acts, wanting to know	ומתצפחא ללגהאלה ומדמומאת אלאפעאל מסתעלמא	5
	will the man be like who will succeed	הָאָדָם שְׂיָבֹוא אַחֲרָי	about he who following the approval of the	בְּאִיהַּ מֵא.....[לה] תֵּאבְעֵא רְצֵא אַל	6
	the one who is ruling over what was built up long ago?	כִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־בָּנָה עָשׂוּהוּ:	king and	מֶלֶךְ ו.....64 [ל]לְחֻכְמָה פִּי דְאָד	7
2:13	I found that	וְרֵאִיתִי אֲנִי	... regarding wisdom: in that,		
	Wisdom is superior to folly As light is superior to darkness;	שֵׁישׁ יִתְרוֹן לְחֻכְמָה מִן־הַסִּכְלוֹת כִּי־תִרְוֹן הָאֹר מִן־הַחֹשֶׁךְ:	it outranks {ignorance}.... outranks darkness.	עָלִי אֲלֵגְ {הֵאֱלֵה}..... עָלִי אֲלִטְלֵמָה חֵאֱלֵא	8
2:14	A wise man has his eyes in his head,	הֵחֶכֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֵאשׁוֹ	And I found looking straight ahead of him, while the	הַחֶכֶם עֵינָיו וּוּגַד {ת}..... [א]מֵאמָה נֵאטְרָא וְאֵל	9
	Whereas a fool walks in darkness. But I also realized that the same fate	וְהַכְּסִיל בְּחֹשֶׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ וְיִדְעֵתִי גַם־אֲנִי שֶׁמִּקְרָה אֶחָד	ignorant is in {darkness}.... I learned for certain that a single judgment,	גֵּאֵהֵל פִּי אֲלִטְלֵ [ל] {מָה}..... עֵלְמָת יִקִּינָא אֵן עֲרֵצֵא	10
	awaits them both.	קִרְהָ אֶת־כֻּלָּם:	without fail, but then I voiced a refusal.	וְאֶחָדָא לֹא בַד.. [רָצָ] מֵא [פְּקֻלַּת]65 חִינִיד מִנְכְּרָא:	11
2:15					

Line 1: The pronominal suffix at the end of פְּעֻלְתָּהּ (*fa'altuhi*, “I made it”) is marked with *hîreq*. It may indicate a defective spelling of the feminine pronominal suffix that has undergone some dialectal vowel raising, or it may be the equivalent of a *mappiq*, indicating that the *hê* is part of a pronominal suffix.

64 The incipit for verse 2:13 was most likely in this lacuna.
 65 There is a dot above this *tāw* that looks like a *hōlem*, but it is unlikely that the scribe placed it there intentionally.

Line 1: *Mappiq* occurs twice in this line in the *hé* of מְנֵה (“of it, from it”), but almost nowhere else in the text.

Line 2: Compare לֹא־בֶדֶד (*lābbud* or *lā bud*, “without fail”) with CA *lā budd* (“without fail”). There is no indication of gemination on the final Judaeo-Arabic consonant, but the scribe also does not mark gemination consistently elsewhere.

Line 2: The word אֵילָא (*ʾaylā?*) is unvocalised, but it appears to be an Aramaic noun. The translator uses it to gloss the Hebrew word רוּחַ (“wind”), apparently drawing on an idiomatic usage of אֵילָא as “the first glimmer of dawn,” ultimately based on the Hebrew idiom אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר, meaning “the light of dawn.”⁶⁶ This usage occurs again in 2:26 and 4:16.

Line 2: We have translated וְגַם as an interrogative particle, but it may be meant as a particle of negation, equivalent to the Hebrew וְאֵין. If this is the case, then the line could be translated as “nothing certain remains under the sun.”

Line 3: כְּאֵינָא here refers specifically to the “created” or “existing” world, which aligns with the translator’s treatment of life as a period of “persisting” (בְּאַקִינָא) before death.

Line 5: In CA, the form-v participle מִתְצַפְחָא (*mutaṣaffah^{an}*, “scrutinising”) indicates close examination.⁶⁷ However, the *ṣ-f-h* root is also related to “forgiveness” in certain varieties of Arabic,⁶⁸ so a more accurate translation may be “I turned to considering wisdom and praiseworthy deeds, and to *forgiving* ignorance and repulsive acts.”

4.3 L-G Ar.1.150 *Fi Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
2:22	For what does a man get for all the toiling and worrying he does under the sun?	כִּי מְהֵרָה לְאָדָם בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ וּבְרַעְיוֹן לְבוֹ שֶׁהוּא עֹמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ:	... under the sun his heart, struggling.	תַּחַת אֵלֶשְׁמַס קִלְבָּהּ מְנַאזְעָא: כִּי .....{כל}	1 2
2:23	All his days	כִּי כָל־יָמָיו	.....	

66 See the CAL entry on אֵילָא: <http://cal.huc.edu/oneentry.php?lemma=%029ylh%0232%020N&cits=all>.

67 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 1695.

68 Hinds and Badawi, *A Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic*, pp. 504–505.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	his thoughts are grief and heartache, and even at night	מְכַאֲבִים וְכַעֵס עֲנִינוּ גַם-בְּלַיְלָה	while sorrows are in view and	בְּאֵלֵאוֹנָאע מִשֶׂאֱרָף .....[ו]	3
	his mind has no respite.	לֹא-שָׁכַב לִבּוֹ	turning away, so his heart does not	מִצָּר[ה] פְּקֻלְבָּהּ לֹא	4
	That too is futile!	גַּם-זֶה הֵבֵל הוּא:	passing away {is turned} towards me.	יְכוֹן אֲלֵי אֶלְפָנָא מִנְ[צֵר]{פ}..... ⁷⁰	5
2:24	There is nothing worthwhile for a man but to eat and drink	אִין-טוֹב בְּאֲדָם שִׂיאֲכָל וְשִׂתָּה	... for a man who persists in what	לְלֵאנְסָאן בְּאֲקִיא [בְּמ]א[א] ⁷¹	6
	and afford himself enjoyment with his means. And even that,	וְהִרְאָה אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ טוֹב בְּעִמְלוֹ גַם-זֶה	from the benefit in his likeness to himself	מִן כִּיר בְּמִתְלָה אֵלֵי נַפְסָה מִגּוּ.....	7
	I noted, comes from God.	רָאִיתִי אֲנִי כִי מִיָּד הָאֱלֹהִים הִיא:	I found it completely in what is from	וּגְדַתָּה בְּאִמְלָא פִי מֵא יְכוֹן [מִן]..... ⁷²	8
2:25	For who eats	כִּי מִי יֵאָכֵל	So I never found, in my time, anyone who eats ...	אֵד כְּנֵת לֹא אֲגַד פִּי זְמַנִּי [מִן יֵאָכֵל]{ל} ...	9
	and who enjoys but myself?	וְמִי יְחוּשׁ חוּץ מִמֶּנִּי:	than me, nor hastens toward {a desire}	מִנִּי וְלֹא מִסֶּאֱרֵעָא [אֵלֵי] מִ[רֵא]{ד} .. [כִּי לְאֲדָם] ⁷³	10
2:26	To the man, namely, who pleases Him,	כִּי לְאֲדָם שְׁטוּב לְפָנָיו	Also, that {God} restores	[שְׁטוּב] וְא[ן] א[לל]{ה} [מְצַלַח] א[ן] ק[]	11

69 There is a *hîreq* below the *pê* in this word, probably marking an epenthetic vowel that separates it from the following *pê*.
 70 The incipit for 2:24 was most likely in this lacuna.
 71 There is a dot above the *mêm* in this word.
 72 The incipit for 2:25 was most likely in this lacuna.
 73 Incipit for 2:26 reconstructed based on the following line.

4.4 L-G Ar.1.150 Fi Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	He has given the wisdom and shrewdness	נָתַן חִכְמָה וְדַעַת	..... who is before Him, completely	[ו]..... אַמְאָמָה צֹאֲלַחָא	1
	to enjoy himself;	וְשִׂמְחָה	..... and celebration according to his satisfaction;	.....[ע] וְאַלְאֲחִפְאֵל עָלַי רְצֵאֲנָה	2
	and to him who displeases, He has given the urge to gather and amass—only for handing on to one who is pleasing to God.	וְלַחֹטְאָ נָתַן עֲנִיָּן לְאַסּוּף וּלְכַנּוֹס לְתַת לְטוֹב לְפָנַי הָאֱלֹהִים	..... with agitation, and what is cheated	.....[חָא] בַּהֲרַגָא וּמָא ⁷⁴ יִ[ת]ר	3
	That too is futile and pursuit of wind.	גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרֵעוּת רְיֹחַ:	.....the futility is hastening after the glimmer of dawn.	.....לְבַטְלָאן סְרִיעָא אֵילָא:	4
3:1	A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:	לְכָל זְמַן וְעַת לְכָל־חִפְצֵי תַחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: (ס)	.... {for everything under} the sun there is a time prepared, and for every	.....⁷⁵ {לְכָל שֵׁי תַחַת} [אַל]שְׁמַס וּקַת מְחֻדָּר ⁷⁶ וּלְכָל	5
			..... is enumerated.	.....[מ]עֲדוּ[ד]: עַת לְלִדְת פּוּקַת לְלִבְקָא	6
3:2	A time for being born	עַת לְלִדְת	A time for persisting		
	and a time for dying, A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;	וְעַת לְמוֹת עַת לְטַעַת וְעַת לְעֻקּוֹר נְטוּעַ:	.... a time for planting, and a time for pulling up what is planted;	[וּקַת] לְל[ג]רְס וּקַת לְקַלַּע אֶלְמַגְרוּס:	7
3:3	A time for slaying and a time for healing, A time for tearing down and a time for building up;	עַת לְהַרוֹג וְעַת לְרְפּוֹא עַת לְפְרוֹץ וְעַת לְבָנוֹת:	{a time} for killing and a time for standing down; and a time for building.	.....⁷⁷ {וּקַת} לְלִקְתֵּל וּקַת לְתַרְבֵּה וּקַת לְלִבְנָא	8

74 It is not clear that there is a space between this word and the next.

75 The incipit for 3:1 was probably in this lacuna.

76 Read *maḥḍūr*.

77 The incipit for 3:3 was probably in this lacuna.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
3:4	A time for weeping and a time for laughing,	עַת לְבִכּוֹת וְעַת לְשִׂחוֹק	A time for weeping and a time for laughing;	[עַת] לְבִכּוֹת וְ[עַת] לְשִׂחוֹק	9
	A time for wailing and a time for dancing;	: עַת סְפֹד וְעַת רְקוֹד	..... and a time for dancing and merriment.	..... [וְ] עַת לְרְקוֹד וְאַלְמֶרְחָ	10
3:5	A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones, A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;	עַת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעַת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים עַת לְחַבֹּק וְעַת לְרַחֵק מִחֻבָּק:	..... gemstones ... [for gathering them]	ק..... ⁷⁸ [רן] [אַל]גואהר ... [לגמעהא] [רת..]	11

Line 2: The **צ** in רְצֵאנָה (*raḏānih*) does not have a diacritical dot, but it seems that it should be read as **ض**. Additionally, a *ḥîreq* clearly precedes the final ה. If this word follows the trends for *tā' marbūṭa* and 3ms pronominal suffixes in the text, then it should be read as **رضانة**, although we cannot find this Arabic form attested elsewhere. If instead it is **رضانه**, then this possessive suffix is marked differently from the majority of other instances (*-ih* instead of *-uh*), and may suggest some influence from the CA genitive case ending.

Line 6: The translator glosses the Hebrew לְלֶדֶת here as לְלִבְקָא (*li-l-baqā*), indicating a time “to remain” or “to persist” rather than “to be born.” This word choice is again consistent with their idea of life as a time for “persisting” until death.

Line 11: The *hê* of אַל[גואהר] (*al-gawāhir*, “gemstones”) is superscripted, apparently as a correction to the initial spelling.

78 The incipit for 3:5 was probably in this lacuna.

4.5 *L-G Ar.I.150 F2 Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
4:12	Also, if one attacks, two can stand up to him. A	וְאִם־יִתְקַפּוּ הָאֲחֵד הַשְּׁנַיִם יַעֲמְדוּ נֹגְדוֹ	... two {before him}	אֶל־אֲתָנָאן אַמְ{אמה}.....	1
	threefold cord is not readily broken!	וְהַחוּט׃ הַמְשֻׁלָּשׁ לֹא בַמַּהֲרָה יִנְתָק׃	like the thread when	כַּאֲלֵכִיט אֲדָא .[ת.כ.].....	2
			its cord.	תְּבִלָּה׃ טוֹב יִלְד׃ [מס] וְאֵל[על]{ם אן}.....	3
4:13	Better a poor but wise youth than an old but	טוֹב יְלֵד מְסֻבִּים וְחֻכְמָם	So {know that}..... being a virtuous wretch	כִּי אֵין מְסֻבִּינָא כִּי־רָא	4
	foolish king who no longer has the sense to heed warnings.	מִמְלָךְ זָקֵן וְכִסְיֵי אִשְׁרָ׃ לֹא־יִדְעַתְּ לְהִזְהָר עוֹד׃	a powerful king when he is	מְלִכָּא מְכֻינָא אֲד כִּי־אֵין..... ⁷⁹	5
4:14	For the former can emerge from a dungeon to become king; while the latter, even if born				
	to kingship, can become a pauper.	כִּי־מִבֵּית הַסּוּרִים יֵצֵא לְמִלְכָּד כִּי גַם בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ נֹולֵד רָשׁ׃	descent, and he may not receive a warning	חֲדָרָא וְלֹא יִקְבֵּל אֲ[ד]ִאֲרָא ⁸⁰	6
			However, by bringing together, indeed, the staff	מַע דְּאֲדָב גַּבְגַּמ[ע] [א]ן אֵל[עצא].....	7
			..... his king {is}.....	וְאִשׁ[...ד]ִא[ד] מַלְכָּה יב[ן].....	8

79 The incipit for 4:14 was probably in this lacuna, but the Judaeo-Arabic arrangement differs drastically from the Hebrew.

80 There is a dot above the *nūn* in this word.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
4:15	[However,] I reflected about all the living who walk under the sun with that youthful successor who steps into his place.	רְאִיתִי אֶת-כָּל-הַחַיִּים הַמְהַלְכִים תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עִם הַיָּלֵד הַשְּׂנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד תַּחְתָּיו:		הָא...[ראיתי את כל הַחַיִּים]...דָּא ⁸¹	9
				טג.....	10
				.....	11

Line 7: Here the translator may be playing off the contrast between *jam*^c (gathering, bringing together) and the phrase *shaqq al-‘asā*—literally, “splitting the staff”—an idiom which refers to a division within a tribe or the splitting off of a person from a larger group.⁸² Note that later (12:8) they use *al-gāmi*^c (lit. “the gatherer;” “the one who brings together”) to gloss the Hebrew *Qōhelet*.

4.6 L-G Ar.1.150 F2 Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
4:16	Unnumbered are the multitudes	אִין-קֶזַץ לְכָל-הָעָם	... they ... without end	.....[עו] בְּלֹא נְהֵאִיה	1
	of all those who preceded them; and	לְכָל אֲשֶׁר-הָיָה לְפָנֵיהֶם גַּם	..... then from a king	.....[מ..][ל] דָּאדְ מן מְלֶךְ	2
	later generations will not acclaim him either. For that too is	הָאֲחֵרוֹנִים לֹא יִשְׁמְחוּ-בּוֹ כִּי-גַם-זֶה	..... they are joyful, and that all of that is not	.....[מ] רַחוּן וְאִין כָּל דָּאדְ לֹא	3

81 The scribe wrote this incipit as two lines, taking up some of the interlinear space between lines 9 and 10.

82 See Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 2068.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	futile and pursuit of wind.	הַבֶּל וְרַעְיוֹן רוּחַ:	.... the glimmer of dawn.	.... {אִי} [ל] א: שֹׁמֵר רִגְלֶךָ פְּכוּ אֶלְאֵן	4
4:17 ⁸³	Be not overeager to go to the House of God: more acceptable is obedience than the offering of fools, for they know nothing [but] to do wrong.	שֹׁמֵר רִגְלֶיךָ [רִגְלֶיךָ] בְּאֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ אֶל-בַּיִת הָאֱלֹהִים וְקִרְוֹב לְשִׁמְעַת מִתַּת הַכֹּסְיִלִּים זָבַח כִּי-אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע:	Now be being wary {of} overstepping, and it is seeking nearness to Him, but to me so do not always make the people for yourself as a guard against harm ...	שֹׁמֵר {מִן} אֶלְכֶטָא מִחֲתַרְסָא וּכְאֵנַת לְלִקְרַבָּא אֱלִיָּה מִלְתַּמְסָא וְאֱלִי פְּלֵא תִנְעַל [ל] לְנַאס דְּאִימָא עֵלְיָד דְּאִירָה עֲלֵי צָרָךְ	
5:1	Keep your mouth from being rash, and let not your throat be quick to bring forth speech before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth; that is why your words should be few.	אֶל-תְּבַהֵל עַל-פִּיךָ וְלִבְךָ אֶל-יִמְהַר לְהוֹצִיא דְּבָר לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל-הָאָרֶץ עַל-כֵּן יְהִי דְּבָרֶיךָ מְעַטִּים:	So in your speech, be an outburst	.....⁸⁴ [פ] כּוּן פִּי קוּלְדָךְ] א [ל] גְּצַבָּה	9 10
				.....	11

Line 6: קרבא is probably an Aramaic noun (*qurbā*, “nearness”), and corresponds to וְקִרְוֹב in the Hebrew text.

Line 7: דְּאִימָא here may reflect a dialectal shift of the CA glottal stop to /y/ (*dāyim^{an}*, “always”),⁸⁵ although in classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography a *yôd* can represent any CA *hamza* with a seat of *yā’*.

83 The original Judaeo-Arabic likely had more text here than would be necessary for a literal translation.

84 The incipit for 5:1 was probably in this lacuna.

85 Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 32–33.

Line 8: דַּאִירָה (*dāyirih*) is literally “a circle,” but here refers to the people who surround and protect a prince.⁸⁶ Note also the preceding comment on דַּאִימָא.

Line 8: עַלְיָד (*‘alayak*) indicates a dialectal form of the 2ms pronominal suffix, -ak.

4.7 *T-S Ar.53.12 F2 Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
5:8	Thus the greatest advantage in all the land is his: he controls a field that is cultivated.	וְיִתְרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל הַיָּא [הוּא] מְלֵךְ לְשִׂדָּה נְעַבְדִּי:	... of all than an excellent king, and whoever is	גְּמִיעָא מִן מֶלֶךְ פֶּאצְל וּמִן יְכוֹן.....	1
5:9	A lover of money never has his fill	אֶהֱב לְקֹסָף לֹא יִשְׂבַּע	Know that the lover of money	אֶהֱב כֹּסֶף וְיִשְׂבַּע אֶל מֶחֱב ...	2
	of money, nor a lover of wealth	וְקֹסֶף וּמִי־אֶהֱב בְּהֶמוֹן לֹא	seeks to increase his money; and that likewise a lover of it	יִסְתַּכְתֵּר מִן מֵאֲלָה וְאֵין בְּדָאד מִתְּחַבָּה ת[נ] מ[נ] א[א] ... ר	3
	his fill of income. That too is	תְּבוֹאָה גְּסוּזָה	to put it at his disposal; and that all of that will certainly, without fail,	יִסְתַּתָּה מִן חֵלָה וְאֵין גְּמִיעַ דָּאד יְקִינָא לֹא בְּד אֵין	4
futile.	הִבֵּל:	pass away;	יְכוֹן פֶּאנִיָּא: בְּרַבּוֹת הַטּוֹבָה וְאֵנְד אֶלְדִּי מִתִּי תְּכַתֵּר בְּמִתְלָה	5	
5:10	As his substance increases,	בְּרַבּוֹת	and that you are one who, just as you increase		
	so do those who consume it; what, then,	הַטּוֹבָה רַבּוֹן אוֹכְלִיָּה וּמֵה־כִּפְשׁוֹן לְבַעֲלִיָּה כִּי	luxury, so too does its consumption increase	נְעִמָּה יִכְתֵּר מִתְּאֲכֵלָהּ א... אַחְדָּהָא חִינִיד [נ..פל]	6
	does the success of its owner amount to but feasting his eyes?	אִסְרֵאִית [רְאוּת] עֵינָיו:	is itself righteousness, and	נְפֶסָה צְלֵאֲחָא וְלֹא [נ]..... וְאִפְלֵאֲחָא:	7
5:11	A worker's sleep is sweet,	מִתּוֹקָה עֲשֵׂנַת הָעֶבֶד	And also, that its sweetness is to	מִתּוֹקָה שְׁנַת וְאֵין עֲדָבָה [ל] ע אֲלֻצָּאנַע	8

86 See Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire Arabe-Français*, p. 747.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	whether he has much or little to eat;	אִם־מְעַט וְאִם־הַרְבֵּה יֹאכֵל	who is at ease, content in	מֵא כֵּאֵן בְּאַלְמִיסוֹר פִּי מ... [ל] קֹאנַע	9
	but the rich man's abundance	וְהַשָּׂבֵעַ לֹעֲשִׂיר	As for the wealthy man who generally his habit,	פְּאֵמָא אֶלְמוֹסָר אֶלְדִּי [ת] כְּתִי... ⁸⁷ עֵאם עֵאדְתָה	10
	doesn't let him sleep.	אֵינְנוּ מְנַיֵּחַ לוֹ לִישׁוֹן:	his seeking is thus certain, not ... being well fulfilled.	פְּאַלְתְּמֵסָה כְּדֵא יְקִינָא גִיר תֵּא ... מְסִתּוּפִי ט[יב]א	11

Line 2: The vocalisation of אֶעֱלַם (*ʾaʿlam*) suggests it is a 1cs imperfect verb equivalent to CA *ʾaʿlamu* (“I know”). However, we suspect that this word is actually an imperative verb, equivalent to CA *iʿlam*. Similar use of the imperative of *ʿalama* is a common framing device for beginning new sections in medieval treatises, and the translator was likely imitating that structure here. Then the *pataḥ* on the *ālep* is probably a pseudo-classical correction.⁸⁸

4.8 T-S Ar.53.12 F2 Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
5:12	Here is a grave evil I have observed under the sun:	יֵשׁ רָעָה חוּלָה רְאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ	Consider the enormity of evil which I have seen under {the sun}	ה[ול]ה וְאַעֲטֵם שְׂרָא רְאִיתָה תַּחַת {אלשמס}	1
	riches hoarded by their owner	עֲשֵׂר שְׂמוֹר לְבַעֲלָיו	..... a leftover which angers its owner excessively	עֲלִי... סֵאֲרָא יַחְפֹּט ⁸⁹ עֲלִי צִאחַבָּה מֵאַגְלָא	2

87 The beginning of this word appears to be אל overwritten with ת.

88 See Khan, “Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Manuscripts,” pp. 204–206.

89 One of only a few unvocalised words, which seems odd given the ambiguity of this sentence. Read as form IV, *yuhfiz* (“it angers, annoys”).

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	to his misfortune,	לְרַעְתּוֹ:	.... relinquish it, and at a time of revelation, I abandoned it.	אֵת... פּוֹתָהּ וְאוֹאֵן טְהוֹר זְלִתָּהּ: וְאֵבֵד הָעֵשׂוּ תָם ⁹⁰	3
5:13			Then		
	in that those riches are lost in some unlucky	וְאֵבֵד הָעֵשֶׂר הַהוּא בְּעֵינַיִן	one from prosperity will lose it, for some reprehensible reason—loaning it or in a loathsome	יְהִלֵּךְ דָּאֵךְ מִן יִסְאָר בְּסַבָּב מִדְּמוּסִים ⁹¹ יִרְכָּבָה אוֹ עֵמֶל	4
	venture; and if he begets a son,	רַע וְהוֹלִיד בְּוֵן	venture—squandering it. Also, if he has a son, then that son	מִסְכּוּט יַחְתַּק בַּהּ פֶּאֵן יוֹלֵד אֲבָנָא יְכוּן דָּאֵךְ מִן אֲבִין	5
	he has nothing in hand.	וְאִין בִּידוֹ מְאֻמָּה:	will not come {clearly}, {but rather} is concealed from him.	לֹא יֵגֵד מִנֶּה טָא {הֵרָא} {אֵלֵא} {ב} אֵטְנָא: כֹּאשֶׁר יֵצֵא תָם [פְּהוּ] ⁹²	6
5:14			Then,		
	As he came out of his mother's womb,	כְּאֵשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם	like how naked, likewise	פְּכֵמָא [.].... עֵאֲרִיא פְּכֵדָאֵךְ	7
	so must he depart at last, naked as he came.	יָשׁוּב לְלֶכֶת כְּשָׁבָא	he will return to .....—in what he has amassed in excess,	יִרְגַע אֲלֵי [י].... [א] לֹא יֵגֵד ⁹³ פִּימָא יִתְזוּדָה	8
	He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him.	וּמְאֻמָּה לֹא יֵשֶׂא בְּעֵמְלוֹ שְׂלִיד בִּידוֹ:	from righteous work the gathering of his hands—from that, he will not find	מִן עֵמֶל צְלֵא {ת}.... {ת} חוּיָה יֵדָאָה מִן דָּאֵךְ	9
			success.	פְּלֵא {תֵא}... [גֵּם זֶה {רַעָה}] חוּלָה... דְּאֵגְלֵט אֵלְשֶׁרוֹר מוֹקְעָא	10
5:15	Another grave evil is this: He must depart	וְגִם־זֶה רַעָה חוּלָה כְּל־עֲמָת	.... caused the worst of evils to occur,		

90 There is an oblique stroke above the *mēm* of this word. See also, Ar.53.12 F1 recto, line 11.

91 Read *madhmūm*.

92 Scribal error corrected on following line; omit.

93 It is difficult to tell whether the sign below the *gîmel* of this word is *hîreq* or *sêrê*.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
			and I will gather it to me those who were together; then just as	וּאֶגְמַעַם לְאֵל [צ] [אֵלֵי]. {אֵל} [ד] יִן מֵעַ אֵד. כִּאֵן כְּמַא	11
	just as he came. ⁹⁴ So what is the good of his toiling for the wind?	שָׁבָא בֶן יִלְדָּה וּמֵה־יִתְרוֹן לֹא שִׁיעֵמָל לְרִיחַ:	he came ...	גֵּא	12

Line 1: The ט of וּאֶגְמַעַם (*u-ʾaʿzam*, “consider the enormity”) should be read as ظ . This verb is another imperative form, following the same discourse structure and classicising hypocorrection that occurred with the imperative of ع (“know”) in 5:9 (and probably 4:13).

Line 1: The ink spot below the *hê* in רָאִיתִיהָ (*raʾaytuh*, “I have seen [it]”) is probably accidental. Based on comparisons with other 3ms suffixes, it is unlikely that the scribe meant to record a final vowel here.

Line 2: יַחַפֵּט is one of only a few unpointed words, which seems odd given the potential ambiguity of this sentence. Read as form IV, *yuhfiṣ* (“it angers, annoys”).

Line 3: In זְהוּר (*zuhūr*, “revelation”), *shēwā* appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

Line 3: The expected CA form of זִלְתוּה is *ziltuhu*, but the text reads *zaltuh*. This interchange of /a/ for /i/ is likely a pseudo-classical correction.

Line 6: { הָרַא } זָהִירָא (*zāhir^{an}*, “apparent”) and בָּאֲטָנָא (*bāṭin^{an}*, “concealed”) are notably antonyms.⁹⁵ Compare the same root in verse 5:12: זְהוּר (*zuhūr*, “revelation”).

Line 9: יָדָאָה (*yadāh*, “his hand”) is an irregular form in Arabic, and seems to mimic the corresponding Hebrew word (בְּיָדוֹ).

Line 12: The word גֵּא (*gā*, “he came”) appears as a catchword in the margin below the text, near the end of the final line. It marks the end of the bifolium, and completes the previous clause ($\text{אֵד כִּאֵן כְּמַא גֵּא}$, “then just as he came”).

94 The NJPS translation moves this sentence up to verse 14, but we have moved it back to show the contrast between the different versions of the text.

95 Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, pp. 219–221.

4.9 T-S Ar.27.55 *Fi Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
11:8	Even if a man lives many years, let him enjoy himself in all of them, remembering how many the days of darkness	כִּי אִם־שָׁנִים הֶרְבָּה יְחִיָּה הָאָדָם בְּכֻלָּם יִשְׂמַח וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־יָמֵי הַחֹשֶׁךְ	... they gladdened {him} with joys, remembering the darkened {days}.	בְּאֵלֶּפְרַחַח גְּדוּל[ו]ן[ה] יִכּוֹן לְ[ל] [אִיאם] אֶל־מִטְלֵמָה דֹּאכְרָא	1
	are going to be. The only future is nothingness!	כִּי־הֶרְבָּה יִהְיוּ כָּל־שְׂבָא הֶבְלִי:	Indeed, they are those which are most numerous among remaining days.	אָנְהָא אֶלְתֵּי תְכוּן מִן מְ ... אִיאם ב[אק]יָה אַכְתְּרָא	2
11:9	O youth, enjoy yourself while you are young!	שְׂמַח בְּחֹר בְּיִלְדוּתְיָךְ	So then, O mankind, be joyous in your youth	שְׂמַח בְּחֹר תָּם פְּכוּן אִיְהָא אֶל־אֲנִסְאָן פִּי חֹאֵל חֲדֵאֲתַתְּךָ	3
	Let your heart lead you to enjoyment in the days	וְיִטְיַבְךָ לִבְךָ בְּיָמֵי	and in your affairs. May your musings be very beautiful, in those days	בְּשֶׁאֲנֻךְ פֶּרְחָא וְלִיְחֻסָן מְנַךְ פ[כרד] [פִּי תִלְךָ מִן אִיאָם	4
	of your youth. Follow the desires of your heart and the glances of your eyes—	בְּחֹר וְתִלְךָ וְהִלְךָ בְּדַרְכֵי לִבְךָ וּבְמֵרְאֵי עֵינֶיךָ	of your youth. When your mind,	[ש]בֵּאבְךָ גְּדֵא וְתִינְיָד עֵקְלִךָ	5
	but know well that God will call you to account for all such things—	וְדַע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אַלֶּה יִבְרָאָךְ הָאֱלֹהִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט:	{then} do well in what He will reckon which is	{פ}אֲחֻסָן מִמָּא יְחֻסָּה {פ}מָא בָּאָן.....	6
11:10			..... well.	א... [א]... [כד]... ד... חֻסְנָא: וְהֵסֵר	7
	and banish care from your mind, and pluck sorrow out of your flesh! For youth and black hair are fleeting.	וְהֵסֵר פֶּעַס מִלְבָּדְךָ וְהֵעֲבֵר רָעָה מִבְּשָׂרְךָ כִּי־הֵי־לְדוּת וְהֵשְׁחָרוּת הֶבְלִי:	..... anger	{פֶּעַס}...מָא..... גְּעֻבָּא	8
			..... upon	..... לָא עָלֵי	9
			.....	.....	10
12:1	So appreciate your vigor in the days of	וַיִּזְכֹּר אֶת־בּוֹרְאֵיךָ בְּיָמֵי	.....	.....	11

Line 6: The second *mēm* of ממה is superscripted, apparently correcting *mā* to be *mimmā* (“from what, in what”).

4.10 T-S Ar.27.55 Fi Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	your youth, before those days	בְּחֹרְתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִבְאוּ יָמַי	your youth, before ... days ... and you lose	שְׁבַתְךָ קִבֵּל ... [אֵימָם] וְ... פְּתַעְפֵּר מִן	1
	of sorrow come and those years arrive of which you will say,	הַרְגָּה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר	your strength, when at it from the attainment	קוּתְךָ אֵד תִּבְלֵ [נַע...]	2
	“I have no pleasure in them”;	אֵין לִי בְהֵם חֶפְזָ:	of your desire, as you intended.	מִרְאֵד מִן דָּאד מְקַצֵּד עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא וּקְבֵל אֶן תִּטְלֵם	3
12:2	before	עַד אֲשֶׁר	And before		
	sun and light and	לֹא תִחְשַׁד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאוֹר	the sun and all the lights darken over you, and hidden from you are	עֵלִיד אֶלְשֶׁמֶס וְאֶלְאִנְוֹר גְּמִיעָא וְתַכְפִּי עֵנְד אֶל	4
	moon and stars grow dark,	וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכְבִים וְשָׁבוּ	the planets and the {moon}, at that from the {earth},	כּוֹאֲב וְאֶל {קִמַר}..... עֵנְד דָּאד מִן אֶלְאֶר {נִן}..	5
	and the clouds come back again after the rain:	הָעִבָּיִם אַחַר הַגֶּשֶׁם:	like the clouds And likewise, without	כְּאֶלְגִּיוֹם אֶל [ת]..... בְּיוֹם וְדָאד ל {א}	6
12:3	When the guards of the house become shaky, And the men of valor are bent,	בְּיֹם שִׁינְעוּ שְׁמָרֵי הַבַּיִת וְהַתְּעוּתוֹ אֲנָשֵׁי הַחַיִל	a doubt, it shall be in the	שָׁד יְכוֹן פִּיאַל..... [פ]ט[ה] אֶל.....	7
	And the maids that grind, grown few, are idle, And the ladies that peer	וּבְטָלוּ הַטְּחָנוֹת כִּי מַעֲטוּ	from it	מ [נ]ה ⁹⁶ אַר.....	8
	through the windows grow dim,	וְחִשְׁכוּ הָרְאֹת בְּאַרְבּוֹת:	and darken	וְתִטְלֵם.....	9

96 The *nûn* here may have *shēwā* or *qibbûs*. Both forms are attested elsewhere in the manuscript.

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
12:4	And the doors to the street are shut—With the noise of the hand mill growing fainter,	וּסְגְרוּ דְלֵתִים בְּשׁוּק בְּשִׁפְלֵ קוֹל הַטְּחִנָּה	.....	.....	10
	And the song of the bird growing feebler, And all the strains of music dying down;	וַיִּקְוִים לְקוֹל הַצִּפּוֹר וַיִּשְׁחוּ כָּל-בְּנוֹת	.....	.....	11

Line 6: In בְּאַלְגִּיּוּם (*ka-ʿal-ghuyūm*, “like the clouds,” 12:2), *shēwā* appears to represent /u/ in an unstressed, open syllable.

4.11 *Ar.27.55 F2 Recto*

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
			הַשִּׁיר: ... ugly things.	קבא יחא: גם מ[ג]בה יד[א]ד[א] [א...ל.]ז הם דאמא	1
12:5	When one is afraid of heights	גַּם מִגְּבֵה יִלְאוּ	Thus they always		
	And there is terror on the road.—	וְחִתְּחִתִּים בְּדֶרֶךְ	fear God on their paths terrified of Him;	מִן אֱלֹהִים יִכְאֹפוּן [פי] טְרַאיקָה {ם} [א]ד מְנָה [י]רְעֵדוּן	2
	For the almond tree may blossom, The grasshopper be burdened,	וַיִּנְאֵץ הַשְּׂקֵד וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל הַחֲזָב	and with Him, certainly, everyone is among the [rejected things], clinging to them, hurriedly seeking	וּעֲנָדָה יִקְיֵא [בל] מִן [אל]{מ}[נפאת] לְאִזְמָהּ וַיִּסְתַּרְסֵל	3
	And the caper bush may bud again;	וְתִפְרַת הָאֲבִיוֹנָה	to recombine them as their composition rapidly dissolves.	אַלְקֵטֵב מֵעֲגֵלָא [מְעָהא] וּ[תִנְחַל] ל [מ]תְּעֲאֲדִיאַת עֵן	4

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
	But man sets out for his eternal abode,	כִּי־הֵלֵךְ הָאָדָם אֶל־בַּיִת עוֹלָמֹו	But the always-righteous man is admirable,	תִּרְכִּיבָהּ אַ [וִי] כּוֹן אַלֵּא [נִ]סֵּאן [אַלְצֵאלַח] אַלְדֵּא [י]ם [כִּי] [ר] א ⁹⁷	5
	With mourners all around in the street.—	וְסָבְבוּ בְּשׂוּק הַסְּפָדִים:	and his mourners, in voices	[וּנְאֻדְבָהּ] פִּי [אַלְאִסוּאֵט] עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִרְתַּק	6
12:6	Before the silver cord snaps,	עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִרְחַק [יִרְתַּק] חֶבֶל הַכֶּסֶף	..... the back	[מ]..... [ז] אֶלְטֵהָ	7
	And the golden bowl crashes, The jar is shattered at the spring,	וְתִרְצַץ גִּלְתֵּי הַזָּהָב וְתִשָּׁבֵר כָּד עַל־הַמַּבּוּעַ	..... the living	עֵ אֶלְחֵי־אֵה ⁹⁸	8
	And the jug is smashed at the cistern.	וְנִרְצַץ הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל־הַבּוֹר:	..... dwelling.	[ח] צֵאֲרֵא:.....	9
12:7	And the dust returns to the ground As it was, And the lifebreath	וַיָּשׁוּב הָעֶפְרָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ בְּשֶׁהִיָּהּ וְהָרוּחַ	..... {was} in the first place,	[כ] אֵן אֶנְפֵּא.....	10
	returns to God Who bestowed it.	תָּשׁוּב אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַןָּהּ:	..... previously.	סֵאלְפֵּא:.....	11

Line 2: There is a *rāfê* above the *dālet* of רַעֲדוּן [י], but the reading is almost certainly with *dāl* rather than *dhāl*: ירעדון (*yar‘adūn*, “they are terrified”).

Line 11: The *pê* in סֵאלְפֵּא (*sālīfan*, “previously”) has one of only three *rāfê*s in the manuscript. Another is in רַעֲדוּן [י] on this page (see comment above), and the last is on the *pê* in אֶלְלַף (*allaf*, “he composed”) in verse 12:9. It is interesting that two of the three occur in a word that contain *‘ālep*, *lāmed*, and *pê*. This usage may be a reminder not to confuse these words with similar Aramaic words that also have אֶלְף, but which can be pronounced with a stop (/p/) rather than the Arabic fricative (/f/).

97 The vowels of this word are visible, but the first two letters are not clear.

98 There is an *‘ayin* in the margin after this word.

4.12 Ar.27.55 F2 Verso

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
12:8	Utter futility—said Koheleth – All is futile!	הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר הַקֹּהֵלֶת	And that is what al- Gāmi‘ said from the beginning, that everything is like those who pass away: {only}, without fail, passing away.	הבל הבלים וד[א]ך מא קאלה אלגאמע בד׳יא מן אן אל כל כאלפאנין א[נמא] לא בד פאניא: ויחר שהיה וכאן אל	1 2
12:9	A further word: Because Koheleth was a sage, he con- tinued to instruct the people. He listened to and tested the soundness of many maxims.	וַיִּתֵּר שְׁהִיָּה קֹהֵלֶת חֲכָם עוֹד לְמַד־דַּעַת אֶת־הָעָם וַאֲזַן וַחֲקַר תְּקוּן מִשְׁלֵים הַרְבֵּה:	And al- Gāmi‘ was thus wise and distinguished, so he taught the people complete knowledge. He composed for them whenever they would listen, and he consid- ered sayings, organising them [.....], he achieved [greatness].	גאמע אד דאך חקימא פאצלא פעלם אלשעב עלמא כאמלא אללף פיה ממא סמעו אעתיבר אקואלא ינתטמהא [אל..ל] נאל [כבר]: בקש קה[ל]ת וטו[י] לא מא	3 4 5
12:10	Koheleth sought to discover useful sayings and recorded genu- inely truthful sayings.	בִּקַּשׁ קֹהֵלֶת לְמַצֵּא דְבָרֵי־חֲפִץ וְכָתוּב יִשְׂר דְּבָרָי אָמַת:	Long he sought the he would reveal it, desir- ing it, and what he found was [written]	אלתמס פי אל...ל. יביחה ומראדה פכאן מא ו[ג]דה מכ[ת..]. {דברי}.....	6 7
12:11	The sayings of the wise are like goads, like nails fixed in prodding sticks. They were given by one Shepherd.	דְּבָרֵי חֲכָמִים כְּדַרְבְּנוֹת וְכַמְשֻׁמוֹת נְטוּעִים בְּעֵלֵי אֶסְפוֹת נְתַנּוּ מֵרַעְיָה אֶחָד:	He said: with	חכמים {כד} פקאל עגד.....	8

(cont.)

Verse	NJPS	Westminster Leningrad	Translation	Transcription	Line
			a rule in .....	..... חֲכָמָא פִי חֲצַר	9
12:12	A further word: Against them, my son, be warned! The making of many books is without limit. And much study is a wearying of the flesh.	וְיִתֵּר מִהֶמָּה בְּנֵי הַזֶּהָר עֲשׂוֹת סִפְרִים הַרְבֵּה אֵין לָזֶן וְלִהְגֵּן הַרְבֵּה יִגְעַת בָּשָׂר:	drawing together .....	..... תַּחְוִיָּה מֵעַ	10
			.....	..... אֶסְאֲבֵךְ מַ	11

Line 2: There is a superscripted miniature *yôd* above the *yôd* of כַּאֲלֵפְאֲנִין (*ka-ʾal-fānīn*, “like those who pass away”), possibly indicating that the writer perceived a consonantal *yā* here.

Line 4: A reduplicated *lāmed* marks the gemination in אֲלֵלֵף (*ʾallaf*, “he composed”).

Line 6: The second *pataḥ* in אֲלֵתַמַּס (*ʾaltamas*, “he sought”) suggests that the final syllable is stressed.

Line 11: This reading of אֶסְאֲבֵךְ is relatively clear, but it is not an Arabic word. It may be a misspelling of אֶסְאֲבֵק (*ʾāsābiq*, perhaps “premeditations?”),⁹⁹ which could result from the writer mistranscribing an unpointed Arabic-script vorlage. Alternatively, it could be אֶסְאֲכֵף (*ʾāsākif*, “thresholds”),¹⁰⁰ with the mistake coming in an interchange of בּ for כּ. There is not enough context to know for certain without more of the text.

Line 11: It appears that there is only enough space on this leaf for the text to run through verse 12. The scribe may have omitted the final two verses in order to fit the end of the book on this piece of parchment, or there may be another leaf with 4–6 additional lines of text.

99 See Blau, *Dictionary*, p. 286; although he does not list this particular form.

100 This would be an irregular form of the plural, rather than the expected *ʾaskāf*; see Blau, *Dictionary*, pp. 302–303; Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 1392.

5 Conclusion

The combination of near-complete vocalisation and the palaeographic provenance makes this manuscript a strong source for the historical dialectology of twelfth-century Egyptian Judaeo-Arabic. It also offers a glimpse into the culture of a well-trained scribe, clearly familiar with the Tiberian recitation tradition and yet comfortable copying a biblical book in a highly non-standard way. Moreover, it contains a translation of Ecclesiastes that varies considerably from the original Hebrew text. This translation does not seem to match any well-known Arabic Bible translation from the early medieval period, suggesting it could be the writer's own version, meant for personal use.

This study is not an exhaustive treatment of the linguistic features of this manuscript, nor has it explored the meaning of the Ecclesiastes translation in any significant depth. Rather, we have only aimed to produce a guide for future inquiry. In particular, the text requires further investigation with respect to its syntax, inflectional morphology, and lexical inventory.

As a potential example of a personal translation of Ecclesiastes, this manuscript also presents a unique opportunity for scholars of Bible translations. While medieval Judaeo-Arabic Bible translations by writers like Sa'adya Gaon were certainly more well-known, personal translations like the one in this manuscript deserve closer examination.¹⁰¹ Indeed, this manuscript shows that while such translations might remain largely unexplored, they have the potential to offer a wealth of information on the history of both Hebrew scribal culture and the Arabic language.

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101 Griffith notes that partial Judaeo-Arabic translations of the Bible existed as early as the ninth century, and Sa'adya may have utilised some of them in his own work. See Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 123–124, 156, 163. For a recent study that discusses some early translations and commentaries, see Blau and Hopkins, *Ha-'Aravit ha-yehudit ha-qedumah*, esp. pp. 59–112.

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