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Palimpsests from the Cairo Genizah and the Qubbat al-Khazna in Damascus

GWILLIAM'S CHRISTIAN PALESTINIAN ARAMAIC PALIMPSESTS

In 1893, George Henry Gwilliam published five fragments in the possession of the Bodleian Library containing parts of the Old and the New Testaments in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (CPA), the language used by the Christian Melkite community in Palestine from around the 5th to the 13th century.[1] It was an important addition to the known corpus of texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic at this time, the majority of which consisted of translations from Greek and were, above all, Biblical Scriptures. Only three years later, in 1896, Gwilliam—this time joined by Francis Crawford Burkitt and John Frederick Stenning—presented an edition of five additional fragments, two of them again from the Bodleian Library, containing further hitherto unknown texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic.[2] All of the fragments had something in common: they had only survived as a result of reuse and they were palimpsests.

The five fragments of the first publication and the two Bodleian fragments in the second shared another characteristic. They were written over with parts of the Mishnah and the Midrash Sifra, in Hebrew, and their provenance was just as strange as the assortment of scholars who had presented them to the public.[3]

The somewhat peculiar party of professional palimpsest scholars who had published the second set of fragments were brought together by their scholarly interest in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Aramaic more generally. Gwilliam (1846–1913), educated at King's College London and Jesus College, Oxford, was a fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, and is primarily known for having completed and published an edition of the New Testament Peshitta started by Philip E. Pusey.[4] Stenning (1868–1959) was similarly an Oxford man and had just completed his undergraduate studies in Oriental languages with first-class honours in 1891, specializing in Hebrew and Aramaic.[5] The two scholars had been planning to prepare the edition of fragments jointly when they became aware of newly discovered palimpsests that yielded further texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic.[6] This led to their eventual collaboration with an additional author; but the tale of how it came about is a complex one.

The report of new palimpsested fragments had arrived from St. Catherine's Monastery in Sinai. The Cantabrian scholar James Rendel Harris (1852–1941) had discovered parts of the Pauline Epistles in Christian Palestinian Aramaic there back in 1889, and it had proven to be an unrivaled location for finding ancient Biblical texts.[7] The sisters Agnes Smith Lewis (1843–1926) and Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843–1920), encouraged and taught basic photography skills by Harris, had embarked on a number of trips to Sinai in his wake. Harris had not only introduced them to the monks, but also instructed them on how to gain access to manuscripts.[8]

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[1] Gwilliam, *Palestinian Version*. They are today preserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Syr. c. 15–18 (formerly Syr. c. 4). Andreas Masius (1514–1573), Giuseppe Simone Assemani (1687–1768) in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Joseph White (1745–1814), Adler (1756–1834), and others had preceded him in wresting this language from the oblivion of time.

[2] Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*.

[3] For the two palimpsests of the second collection that were overwritten with Hebrew, see Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 7–28. Today they are kept as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Syr. d. 32–33 (P).

[4] Pusey and Gwilliam, *Tetraeuangelium sanctum*.

[5] Stenning later became a fellow of Wadham College, a lecturer in the Old Testament, and finally reader in Aramaic at the University of Oxford; see *Who's Who*, Stenning, John Frederick.

[6] Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 5.

[7] See Harris, *Biblical Fragments from Mount Sinai*. On his visit to Sinai, see Falcetta, *Discoveries of a Bible Scholar*, 88–93; Falcetta, James Rendel Harris.

[8] In the preface of her *Translation of the Four Gospels*, Lewis goes into great detail on how Harris prepared them for their trip. In particular, however, see Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai*; Jefferson, Sisters of Semitics.

During their first trip in 1892, the story of which is widely known, the sisters had been able to examine more closely a chest of Syriac manuscripts that Harris had not had the chance to observe. Their interest quickly centred on a palimpsest codex. The upper text exhibited a martyrology of female saints, while the *scriptio inferior* disclosed the Old Syriac Gospels. The sisters returned to Cambridge with about 400 photographs of the latter, which was soon to be celebrated as its most ancient translation of the Gospels. Its transcription was entrusted to Harris, and also to Robert Bensly—a lecturer in Hebrew and Syriac at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic since 1887—and Francis C. Burkitt, his closest disciple and the up-and-coming Biblical scholar at Cambridge. The latter had already been preparing an edition of the Cureton codex, a manuscript that had been deciphered by William Cureton after its discovery in the Monastery of St. Mary Deipara in the Nitrian Desert in 1838 by Henry Tattam; this manuscript contained the same text as the one found by Lewis and Gibson.

A year later, the sisters returned to Sinai, this time accompanied not only by Harris, Bensly, and Burkitt, but also by the wives of the latter two, Agnes and Persis. Once at the monastery, the scholars took turns comparing their transcriptions with the manuscript. However, a disagreement quickly arose as to who should be given priority for the scholarly discovery of the Old Syriac Gospels, and this split the party into two: on the one side, the Benslys and Burkitts, who believed that they should be credited with first grasping the academic value of the codex; and on the other, the sisters and Harris, who first became aware of the manuscript.[9] Meanwhile, Lewis and Gibson had commenced work on their catalogues of Syriac and Arabic manuscripts, for which they had obtained permission from Archbishop Porphyrios, and Harris assisted them and soon became interested in two lectionaries in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, one of which had been presented to Lewis by the librarian Father Galaktéon in 1892.[10]

News of the various discoveries in Sinai found its way to Oxford, and Stenning became involved, with the promise of further manuscripts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic leading him to Sinai in 1894.[11] He arrived with a variety of commissions: Harris had asked him to correct the portions of the Old Syriac Gospels that he had been transcribing;[12] Gibson commissioned him to transcribe a passage that she had lost;[13] and Lewis wanted additions to her catalogue.[14] While there, Stenning also succeeded in finding a new portion of the Bible in Christian Palestinian Aramaic: he found the hitherto unknown book of Kings in Christian Palestinian Aramaic as the undertext of an Arabic prophetologion (Sin. ar. 588).[15]

It is against the background of this story of the discoveries at St. Catherine's Monastery that the joint publication of an edition of the five additional Christian Palestinian Aramaic fragments in 1896 by the somewhat unexpected company of Gwilliam, Stenning, and Burkitt has to be understood. Gwilliam and Stenning had planned to present only the two fragments that had recently come into the possession of the Bodleian Library, but they halted publication to include further finds from Sinai. Stenning was able to add his further find to the publication.[16] Equally, it seems that with the wish to disassociate themselves completely from their three former colleagues (Harris, Gibson, and Lewis) following the rift in Sinai, Burkitt and Agnes Bensly—a widow by this time, and not acknowledged as an author—also contributed their finds to the publication.[17]

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[9] See Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai*, 166–187; Falcetta, *Discoveries of a Bible Scholar*, 120–125.

[10] Harris created an appendix of fragments, and furnished correction and additions to his *Biblical Fragments of Sinai*; see Lewis, *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS.*, ix and 93–123. On the Christian Palestinian Aramaic lectionaries, see Lewis, *Palestinian Syriac Lectionary*, v; Lewis, *In the Shadow of Sinai*, viii.

[11] He mentions this trip, which he undertook with Arthur Cowley, in Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 5. Cowley (1861–1931) had worked with Alfred Neubauer, sub-librarian at the Bodleian Library, from 1890 onwards, before he himself was appointed to that position.

[12] See Falcetta, *Discoveries of a Bible Scholar*, 127.

[13] Gibson, *Epistles of St Paul*, 8.

[14] See Lewis, *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS.*, x and 125–131.

[15] This find does not seem accidental. Lewis appeared to have instructed him carefully on where to find such texts. See Falcetta, *Discoveries of a Bible Scholar*, 525 fn. 123.

[16] Stenning's manuscript fragment is found in Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, 29–36.

[17] Burkitt's contribution is found on pp. 37–44 of Gwilliam *et al.*, *Biblical and Patristic Relics*, and Agnes Bensly's, with a translation and notes by Gwilliam and Burkitt, on pp. 45–101. As an aside, it can be mentioned that it was only with a good deal of diplomacy on the part of William Robertson Smith (Adams Professor of Arabic at Cambridge and a good friend of Gibson and Lewis) that Burkitt agreed to participate with Lewis and Harris in the edition and final publication of the Old Syriac Gospels; see Bensly *et al*., *Four Gospels in Syriac*.

Gwilliam's first edition in 1893 had provided scholarship with portions of Numbers (4:46, 47; 4:49–5:2; 5:3, 4; and 5:6–8), Colossians (4:12–18), 1 Thessalonians (1:1–3 and 4:3–15), 2 Timothy (1:10–2:7), and Titus (1:11–2:8) in Christian Palestinian Aramaic. The joint edition three years later additionally yielded Exodus (28:1–12), Wisdom (9:8–10:2), Kings (2:10–15 and 9:4–5), and Job (22:3–12), and added some homilies to the corpus. In the race for new fragments in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, the sheer number of texts had tipped the balance in favour of Gwilliam and his collaborators. The odds were even more on their side, as Gwilliam appeared to know about a secret source for manuscripts arriving at the Bodleian Library that neither Harris nor the sisters Lewis and Gibson were acquainted with. Or at least, not at this point of the story …

So where did the seven fragments from the Bodleian Library with Hebrew upper texts that Gwilliam and his colleagues presented to the scholarly public emerge from? Unlike most of the other Christian Palestinian Aramaic texts that came to light at the end of the 19th century, they were not from St. Catherine's.

A hint came from the fact that all of them were reused for Hebrew texts, and notably texts from the rabbinic period. But in the 1893 publication, Gwilliam was hesitant to disclose the source, and reported only that the fragment arrived in Oxford in 1891 'from Egypt' via the late Reverend Greville John Chester (1830–1892).[18] Chester was an Oxford alumnus and spent the latter half of his life mostly as an antiquities dealer supplying the British Museum and other major institutions. Among his customers was also the Bodleian Library and, as documented in his letters to the Bodleian Librarian Edward Williams Byron Nicholson, in 1889 Chester started to supply Hebrew manuscripts through a local dealer; some of these were evidently the ones edited by Gwilliam in 1893.[19] However, Chester insisted on secrecy in this matter. In March 1892, though, only a few months before he died, he admitted that he had lost access to any further documents of this type.[20]

In the following publication with Stenning and Burkitt, Gwilliam announced that 'shortly after the publication [of the 1893 edition] two more fragments were procured by Professor Sayce', and added that 'all the seven leaves had been discovered with other writings, in an underground chamber beneath a synagogue in Cairo'. The Assyriologist and linguist Archibald Henry Sayce (1846–1933) had visited the Ben Ezra Synagogue in 1883 and, after Chester ceased being able to supply documents, Sayce was commissioned by Adolf Neubauer (1831–1907), reader in Rabbinics and a Bodleian sub-librarian, to locate the source of Chester's fragments.[21] By 1895, Sayce informed Neubauer that 'my Cairo friend [his assistant, Count Riamo d'Hulst] has succeeded in discovering & entering the old subterranean place from which the Hebrew MSS have all come'.[22]

This 'subterranean place' belonged to what became known from the 1890s as the Cairo Genizah: an assemblage of roughly 330,000 folios of manuscript books and documents that were believed to have been preserved in the storage room of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat—that is, Old Cairo.[23] Originally built in the 10th century, the synagogue was destroyed in 1012 during persecutions following the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim's (996–1021) policies of repression against Jews and Christians, and was rebuilt some thirty years later. It functioned as a receptacle for worn-out books from its rebuilding in around 1040 onward.

What emerges from the account above is that the various palimpsests with Hebrew upper texts published by Gwilliam, Stenning, and Burkitt in 1893 and 1896 had emerged from the Cairo Genizah, and were among the earliest fragments brought to Europe from that source. Gwilliam's edition of the five palimpsests in 1893 in fact is believed to be one of the earliest publications based on texts from there. At the time, however, their importance was primarily because the *scriptio inferior* conserved texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, ancient Biblical texts that were hardly known, despite being crucial and early witnesses—such texts were the prime commodity of that time. The *scriptio superior* in Hebrew did not cause much excitement; indeed, Neubauer himself stated that 'the Hebrew of these fragments is, relatively, of little value'.[24] Furthermore, this account shows how intrinsically the process of discovering manuscripts at Cairo and at Sinai were linked, even before Lewis and Gibson acquired further fragments in the spring of 1896 on their fourth trip to the Near East, on

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18 Gwilliam, *Palestinian Version*, v.

19 Jefferson, "What cannot often be obtainable".

20 See Jefferson, "What cannot often be obtainable", 13; Jefferson, Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah", 443.

21 The reader is again referred to Jefferson, Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah".

22 See Jefferson, Cairo Genizah unearthed; Jefferson, Genizah secret.

23 There is now increasing evidence that there were materials mixed into the finds from other places in Cairo. See Jefferson, Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah".

24 Gwilliam, *Palestinian Version*, v.

which they had embarked despite not being in the greatest of health. Those latter fragments would eventually alert Solomon Schechter (1847–1915) to the existence of the Cairo Genizah.

OTHER EARLY DISCOVERIES OF PALIMPSESTS IN THE CAIRO GENIZAH

The interest and scholarly ambition of the sisters, Lewis and Gibson, in the field of Christian Palestinian Aramaic did not cease. They had continued working on the two lectionaries at Sinai, and while they were on their way to St. Catherine's Monastery in the spring of 1895—their third trip there—Lewis acquired another copy in Cairo.[25] While they had a great deal of material to work on already, they decided on a fourth trip the following year, this time to Cairo. They had at first decided not to travel that year, but the 'news we received from Cairo seemed to indicate that there might be a chance of our finding something there', as Lewis later recounted.[26] It is not unlikely that the recent activities in Oxford, and above all the 1896 publication by Gwilliam, Stenning, and Burkitt, had drawn their attention to Cairo, particularly because they had maintained a good relationship with Stenning at least.

As is well known, the sisters returned with a sack of fragments from the Cairo Genizah that included a copy of the book of Ben Sira in the original Hebrew. This fragment caused a sensation, and led to a campaign from Cambridge University led by Schechter, which retrieved about 200,000 fragments from Cairo in 1897, about two-thirds of all the Cairo Genizah fragments in existence.[27] As before, ancient Biblical texts were the main focus of attention, prominent among them palimpsests. Lewis and Gibson soon found further fragments that suited the interests of the time—in 1900 they published thirty-four new Christian Palestinian Aramaic palimpsests, four that they had brought from Cairo themselves, and thirty that had arrived in Cambridge with the large bulk of fragments three years earlier.[28] Like the palimpsests published in Oxford by Gwilliam and his collaborators, the Hebrew upper texts on these palimpsests consisted of passages from rabbinic literature, such as the Palestinian Talmud and the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah, and Hebrew liturgical poetry.

The Cairo Genizah not only stored Christian Palestinian Aramaic palimpsests, but also ones with Greek undertexts. By 1897, Burkitt and Charles Taylor, a Hebraist and at the time Master of St. John's College in Cambridge, had, for example, already discovered and edited fragments of the book of Kings according to the translation of Aquila of Sinope.[29] Aquila's 2nd-century retranslation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek is commonly described as a mirror translation, as it adheres much more closely to the Hebrew than did the Septuagint, using a peculiar calque language.[30] But the translation itself had been deemed lost, surviving only in a few quotations by Church Fathers and in the Talmud and the margins of Hexaplaric manuscripts. However, in 1897 it resurfaced—at least for 1 Kings 20:1–17 and 2 Kings 23:11–27—as the undertext of a palimpsest from the Cairo Genizah. Even more sensational was Taylor's discovery of a leaf of Origin's Hexapla, one of the only two direct manuscript witnesses in existence.[31] It contained Psalm 22:15–18 and 22:20–28, before being written over with the Hebrew liturgical poetry of Yannai, who was active in the 7th century in Palestine.

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[25] Lewis, *Palestinian Syriac Lectionary*. For Qurʾānic palimpsests from Damascus and Cairo (and elsewhere), see also the contribution by Alba Fedeli in this volume.

[26] Lewis, *In the Shadow of Sinai*, 143.

[27] See, for example, Reif, *Jewish Archive*; Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*. The sisters' involvement is described, in Lewis's own words, in her book *In the Shadow of Sinai*, 143–189.

[28] Lewis and Gibson, *Palestinian Syriac Texts*. It should be noted that the sisters kept on publishing Christian Palestinian Aramaic texts from Sinai as well; see Lewis, *Codex Climaci Rescriptus*.

[29] Burkitt and Taylor, *Book of Kings*; see also Burkitt, Aquila. Today these fragments are held as Cambridge University Library, MSS T-S 12.184 and T-S 20.50. For a more recent assessment of these documents, see Gallagher, Aquila manuscripts.

[30] The reader is referred to Salvesen, *Origen's Hexapla*; Grafton and Williams, *Transformation of the Book*. See also Bartélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila*; Grabbe, Aquila's translation; Paul, La Bible grecque d'Aquila; Salvesen, Midrash in Greek?; Salvesen, Aquila and Symmachus.

[31] Taylor, *Cairo Genizah Palimpsests*. The fragment of the Hexapla is today preserved as Cambridge University Library, MS T-S 12.182. See also Jenkins, First column. For a further Biblical palimpsest with a Greek undertext, published in 1903, see Taylor, New Septuagint fragment; Hart, New Septuagint fragment.

PALIMPSEST FRAGMENTS FROM THE UMAYYAD MOSQUE IN DAMASCUS

Exhilarated by their discoveries at Sinai and in Cairo, scholars in Oxford and Cambridge prepared their texts for publication. Not only had they retrieved important witnesses to the Old Syriac Gospels and long-lost Greek versions of the Scriptures, despite these having been erased so that the pages could be redeployed by scribes as a new book, but also large parts of the Bible in Christian Palestinian Aramaic had been rediscovered.

Then around the turn of the century, this time in Berlin, a new source of palimpsests became known. As the title of Friedrich Schulthess's study of twenty-one additional Christian Palestinian Aramaic fragments indicates, this time the source was the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus.[32] In contrast to the previous palimpsests, these mostly exhibited Islamic texts in Arabic, chiefly the Qurʾān, as *scriptio superior*. They were found at the end of the 19th century in the so-called Qubbat al-Khazna (the Treasury Dome), an octagonal chamber in the mosque's courtyard that stands on eight Roman columns and is decorated with mosaics. The chamber primarily contained old Qurʾāns and literary texts, but there were also hajj certificates and documents pertaining to everyday life, such as marriage and divorce contracts and deeds.

The existence in Damascus of this *genizah*, an established place for storing any sacred books and documents that were too fragile to remain in circulation or which had fallen out of use, had always been known to the local population, who venerated it and embellished it with many legends. But notice of the manuscript treasures in the Qubbat al-Khazna reached Hermann von Soden (1852–1914), who had been carefully following the finds his colleagues in Oxford and Cambridge had made.[33] He had been working on a new edition of the Greek New Testament in Berlin and, endowed by a patron with the right financial means, he was infected with a similar frenzy to gather new sources for textual criticism.

On von Soden's initiative, Wilhelm II, the German emperor and Prussian king, urged the Sublime Porte in Constantinople to allow a scholar to access the material in the Qubbat al-Khazna and sift through it, and permission was granted by Abdul Hamid II in the form of an *irāda*. Bruno Violet was entrusted with the task and arrived in Damascus on May 30, 1900. The mosque's authorities stipulated that he could only consult non-Muslim fragments, and put them aside for further study. About a year later, another *irāda* of Abdul Hamid II gave permission for the collection of non-Muslim fragments amassed by Violet to be sent to Berlin on loan. The collection arrived in Berlin on June 17, 1902, and was held first in the Royal Museums, then in 1904 it was moved to the State Library. It consisted mainly of Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan texts, in a variety of scripts and languages: Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and even Armenian. A significant number of these fragments were palimpsests or had been reused as the bindings of books. The analysis and publication of these fragments in Berlin continued until, unexpectedly, the Ottomans demanded their return in December 1908, after six years.[34]

The whereabouts of the fragments today are unknown.[35] However, two sets of photographs are accessible: a batch of images that Violet took before he departed for Berlin on July 2, 1901;[36] and a set of photographs taken on the basis of a prioritized list prepared by von Soden, which contains fifty-four fragments and an almost complete Syriac codex, all that could be photographed before the collection was sent back in its entirety.[37]

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[32] Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente*.

[33] For more details, see Vollandt, Beyond Arabic and, most recently, D'Ottone Rambach *et al.* (eds.), *The Damascus Fragments*. The article that sparked much of the recent interest in the Qubbat al-Khazna is D'Ottone and Radiciotti, I frammenti della Qubbat al-Khazna; see also D'Ottone, Manuscripts as mirrors; Bandt and Rattmann, Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets.

[34] A bilingual Greek-Arabic fragment of Psalm 78:20–31, 51–61 (LXX 77) was the first published text from the Qubbat al-Khazna; see Violet, Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment. Three fragments in Old French were published by Tobler, Bruchstücke altfranzösischer Dichtung. A writ of protection by Balduin IV is seen in von Soden, Bericht. As mentioned above, twenty-one fragments in Christian Palestinian Aramaic were published in Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente*. Biblical fragments in Greek received the most attention, and were included in von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, x–xiii, 74, 118, 124–126.

[35] Although there are strong indications that they returned to Damascus, see D'Ottone Rambach *et al.* (eds.), *The Damascus Fragments*.

[36] Violet's photographs are found today in the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, with the shelf mark BBAW/GCS, Akz.-Nr. 481. They can be accessed at https://bibelexegese.bbaw.de/handschriften/damaszener-handschriften/ (accessed 01.07.2023).

[37] These photographs are kept today in two folders in the Berlin State Library, Or. sim. 5 and Or. sim. 6. The former contains a Syriac translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentary on Qoheleth, which has been published in Strothmann, *Das syrische Fragment*; the digitized photographs can be accessed at http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0000AD1D00000000 (accessed

PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON PALIMPSESTS FROM THE CAIRO GENIZAH AND THE QUBBAT AL-KHAZNA

In a letter to Theodor Nöldeke, dated August 26, 1900, Violet noted with excitement the discovery of his first palimpsest.[38] The fragment showed the Qurʾān written as *scriptio superior* on erased parts of the Pauline Epistles in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (which can be identified with no. 33 in the list in the appendix). Quickly he found additional palimpsests with Biblical texts in Christian Palestinian Aramaic and decided to smuggle them out of the country on his return to Germany. His close friend Friedrich Schulthess published them in 1905.[39] For most of the 20th century research on the palimpsests from the Qubbat al-Khazna was impeded by the fact that after 1908 only the photographs remained accessible.

New fragments from Cairo emerged steadily.[40] Moshe Goshen-Gottstein was the first to gather and re-edit all known fragments of the Scriptures in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, including those from the locations discussed here and a small number from previously unknown sources.[41] His students Michael Sokoloff and Josef Yahalom presented a first comprehensive study on Christian palimpsests from the Cairo Genizah in 1987. This publication, which is based on earlier identifications, remains to date the most comprehensive investigation into the topic, comprising a masterful reassembling of over a hundred palimpsests in a variety of languages.[42] Subsequently Christa Müller-Kessler, in collaboration with Sokoloff, inaugurated the series *A Corpus of Christian Palestinian Aramaic*, which not only re-edited the fragments in Christian Palestinian Aramaic again, but also added new finds from the Cairo Genizah and other places.[43]

As for the palimpsests with Greek *scriptio inferior*, Natalie Tchernetska furnished a series of publications in which she identified further fragments and provided a paleographic study.[44] Together with Judith Olszowy-Schlanger and Nicolas de Lange, she also edited and described a palimpsest fragment that preserved a bilingual Hebrew-Greek glossary of Jewish provenance, from the 9th century.[45] Recently, Olszowy-Schlanger discovered an early Hebrew palimpsest scroll of *hafṭarot* under an anonymous book of legal formularies (*sefer šeṭarot*) written in Lucena, Spain.[46] A palimpsest with a Latin undertext, containing a sermon by St. Augustine, has been described by Ben Outhwaite.[47]

With the more ancient undertexts often the focus of study, the upper texts of fragments from the Cairo Genizah initially received little attention. As mentioned, Neubauer had declared that 'the Hebrew of these fragments is, relatively, of little value'.[48] However, Schechter pointed out that some of the fragments contain an early version of the Palestinian Talmud, that he described as 'very rare',[49] and in 1909, Ginzberg used them for his edition of the Palestinian Talmud.[50] Additional such fragments, exhibiting parts of the tractates Moʿed

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01.07.2023). Von Soden's selection of the most important fragments reflects his research interests, and thus mostly encompasses Biblical texts. This second folder of photographs was thought to have been lost in the turmoil of the Second World War, but resurfaced at the Berlin State Library in 1999, and the photographs are available at https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN685013049&PHYSID=PHYS_0002&DMDID= (accessed 01.07.2023).

38 Bandt and Rattmann, Bruno Violet, 113.

39 Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente*. In 1908 the Christian Palestinian Aramaic fragments were returned with the others.

40 There have been, however, other important discoveries of Islamic palimpsests. See Tuerlinckx, Les palimpsestes; Fedeli, Mingana; Fedeli, Qurʾānic palimpsest; George, Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana; Hilali, *Sanaa Palimpsest*. Hilali summarizes all known Qurʾān palimpsests in that work, on pp. 13–14. For a recent find, see Suciu, Sahidic Biblical text; *The Guardian*, Passages from the Bible.

41 Goshen-Gottstein, *Bible in its Syropalestinian Version*.

42 Sokoloff and Yahalom, Christian palimpsests.

43 Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *Christian Palestinian Aramaic Old Testament*; Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, vol. 1; Müller-Kessler and Sokoloff, *Christian Palestinian Aramaic New Testament*, vol. 2; Müller-Kessler, *Forty Martyrs*.

44 Tchernetska, Greek palimpsests; Tchernetska, Greek Oriental palimpsests.

45 Tchernetska *et al*., Hebrew-Greek Biblical glossary.

46 Olszowy-Schlanger, Book of Kings.

47 Outhwaite, St Augustine.

48 Gwilliam, *Palestinian Version*, v.

49 'He [Schechter] held up a large vellum leaf saying, "This is part of the Jerusalem Talmud, which is very rare; may I take it away?" "Certainly," I [Lewis] replied'. This statement by Solomon Schechter is recorded in Lewis, *In the Shadow of Sinai*, 173.

50 See Ginzberg, *Yerushalmi Fragments*.

Qatan and Sotah, were discovered by Olszowy-Schlanger and Shweka as late as 2013.[51] The Hebrew liturgical poetry found in some fragments, in particular that of Yannai, sparked a new wave of interest.[52] Sokoloff also edited a fragment that contained, as upper text, an early version of the Midrash Bereshit Rabbah.[53]

A paleographic examination of the Hebrew script of the upper texts of fragments found in the Cairo Genizah, provided by Olszowy-Schlanger, has demonstrated that the majority of the upper texts are written in a very similar script and belong to one particular script-type, which she calls an 'Oriental square of the early Western sub-type' and dates to before 1000 CE.[54] This script, she argues, exhibits a certain continuity with the script used in Byzantine Palestine and Egypt.

RULES FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF PALIMPSESTS IN JUDAISM AND ISLAM

The legal implications of erasing script on manuscripts and documents such as contracts, deeds, and so on, and then rewriting on them, is discussed in both Jewish and Islamic literature. Mishna Avot 4:20 relates the following famous dictum:

> הלומד ילד למה הוא דומה, לדיו כתובה על ניר חדש. והלומד זקן למה הוא דומה, לדיו כתובה על ניר מחוק.
>
> One who learns as a child is similar to what? To ink written on new papyrus. And one who learns as an elder is similar to what? To ink written on erased papyrus.

References to palimpsesting can thus already be found in the Mishnah, compiled at the beginning of the 3rd century CE. The Hebrew term *nᵉyār*, translated here as 'papyrus', referred in antiquity to papyrus, before extending its meaning to paper.[55] The practice alluded to in this passage therefore refers to papyrus, which could be used a second time after the first writing had been removed. And, indeed, the Elephantine papyri and the scrolls found in the Judean Desert reflect such a practice.[56]

In rabbinic literature, discussions on erasing script or rewriting on an erased surface (Heb. *nᵉyār maḥuq* or *sefer she-nimḥaq*) are presented in a number of contexts. First, there is discussion of documents (above all, marriage and divorce contracts, i.e., *ketubbot* and *gittin*) which are written on erased writing material. Using such writing material was permitted under certain conditions, although some sages suspected that this led easily to forgery.[57] Second, the practice of erasing letters is indirectly discussed with regard to the rules of Shabbat, as it is considered labour.[58] Carrying erased writing material as wrapping, for anything the size of a vial of perfume or larger, is also prohibited on the Shabbat.[59]

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[51] Olszowy-Schlanger and Shweka, Newly discovered early palimpsests.

[52] Davidson, *Machzor Yannai*.

[53] Sokoloff, *Genizah Fragments*.

[54] On the script, see Tchernetska *et al.*, Hebrew-Greek Biblical glossary; Olszowy-Schlanger and Shweka, Newly discovered early palimpsests; Olszowy-Schlanger, Greek-Hebrew palimpsests.

[55] In modern Hebrew, it means 'paper'. On the identification of *nᵉyār* with papyrus in rabbinic literature, see Naeh, Qaryana de-ʾigarta.

[56] Most famous among the palimpsested Elephantine papyri is probably the Ahiqar papyrus; see Porten and Yardeni, *Aramaic Documents*, 3:2 and 3:xiii; Sprengling, Aramaic papyri of Elephantine, 350. See also Černý, *Paper and Books*, 23; Caminos, Reuse of papyrus; Declercq, Introduction, 7. On scrolls found in the Judean Desert, see Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 73. For examples of reused papyrus, see Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, Jerusalem MS MUR17–2 at https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/manuscript/MUR17-2 (accessed 01.07.2023) or MS MUR10 at https://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/manuscript/MUR10-2 (accessed 01.07.2023).

[57] See Mishnah Gittin 2:4: 'Rabbi Judah b. Batera said: One does not write a *get* [a divorce document] on a sheet from which writing has been erased nor on not fully processed writing material, for it can be forged. The sages, however, permit [such a *get*]'. Maimonides, in his Mishneh Torah, specifies that 'He may write it [i.e., a *get*] on writing material from which previous writing has been erased, on only partially treated skin, on a potsherd, on leaves, upon a slave's hand, or a cow's horn, and may then deliver to her the slave, or the cow, or the erased writing material, or the partially treated skin, or the like, in the presence of witness'; see Klein, *Code of Maimonides*, 184 (the text here contains my emendations). See also the discussion concerning the erasure of certain words from deeds, possible affecting the context and the signatures of the witnesses, in Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra 10.

[58] On the prohibition of 'erasing in order to write two letters', see Mishnah Shabbat 7:2.

[59] Mishnah Shabbat 8:2: 'Erased writing material (i.e., papyrus or parchment), as much as is required to wrap round a small vial of perfume'.

Third, the practice is discussed with regard to Torah scrolls, *tefillin* (the parchments inside phylacteries) and *mezuzot* (the parchments fixed to a doorpost), and the validity of these should a letter or a number of letters be erased—the erasure of scribal errors is acceptable and a Torah scroll remains sacred even if partially erased, as long as it still contains eighty-five letters as the section 'And it came to pass when the ark set forward' (Numbers 10:35).[60] Some traditions forbid writing over an erased Torah scroll or writing a Torah on erased writing material. Soferim 3:8, for example, asserts: 'A Torah scroll that has been erased, don't write on it'; conversely, Soferim 1:5 relates that 'it is prohibited to write a Torah scroll on erased writing material'. Modern scholarship has suggested that the word 'erased' in the second quotation is a secondary emendation, and that the passage should therefore be understood rather to prohibit the use of papyrus as a writing material.[61] That later authorities such as Maimonides permitted the reuse of parchment for a Torah scroll seems to support this conjecture.[62]

Although these discussions show that the rabbis were accustomed to the reuse of writing material, both papyrus and parchment, the sources are primarily concerned with the soundness of two types of written texts: documents such as marriage and divorce contracts, and Torah scrolls. This is not surprising, as orality was the dominant mode of transmission of these two types, and so there were specific rules governing the exceptions under which writing them down was acceptable. The rabbinic texts themselves circulated orally and had been edited orally.[63] Only in the 9th century was a general shift to writing compositions down inaugurated, bringing with it not only a bookish and pragmatic literacy, but also a scribal economy that multiplied texts in writing and professionalized the procuring of raw materials such as parchment for this purpose. Rabbinic halakha did not explicitly forbid the use of palimpsested parchment, and the palimpsests from the Cairo Genizah bear evidence to the production of Jewish books on a larger economic scale.

Islamic manuscript production likewise emerged in a context where there had been a strong emphasis on oral transmission in the early period.[64] From the beginning, it was present in an established scribal context, and so we encounter quite early on various discussions of palimpsests.[65] The most elaborated account on this subject comes from Ibn Bādīs (d. AH 454/1062 CE). The ninth chapter of his *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb wa-ʿuddat dhawī al-albāb* (Support of the Scribes and Implements of the Intelligent) is dedicated to the discussion of erasure of various written surfaces *(fī ʿamal mā tumḥā bihi al-kitāba min-ʾl-dafātir wa-ʾl-ruqūq*). Ibn Bādīs provides different methods of erasure, with the main technique in all methods being based on washing (Arab. *ghasl*) with acidic liquids that can remove the ink.[66] However other methods of erasure that are discussed in the literature include rubbing out (*ḥakk*),[67] writing over with ink (*ṭirs* or *ṭils*)[68] and crossing out parts of the text (*ḍarb*).[69] The practice of reusing parchments as written material is thus not seen as prohibited by Muslim

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[60] Therefore it causes impurity, see Mishnah Yadayim 3:5, and has to be rescued from fire, see Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 16. The latter passage is discussed in Olszowy-Schlanger, Book of Kings, 240.

[61] See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 73; Schiffman, Jerusalem Talmud Megillah 1, 100.

[62] Cf. Maimonides, 'It is permissible to write God's name in them all [i.e., Torah scrolls, *tefillin* and *mezuzot*] in places where the writing had been scraped away or erased'; Kellner, *Code of Maimonides*, 76.

[63] See Jaffee, Writing and rabbinic oral tradition; Jaffee, Rabbinic authorship; Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah*; Alexander, Orality; Rosen-Zvi, Orality, narrative, and rhetoric; Hezser, Bookish circles?

[64] On the oral context of early Islamic literature, see Schoeler, Writing and publishing; Schoeler, *Literature in Islam*; Schoeler, *Oral and Written*.

[65] See also the contribution of Alba Fedeli in this volume for a discussion of palimpsesting practices in Islamic, particularly Qurʾānic, manuscripts.

[66] See Ibn Bādīs, *ʿUmdat al-kuttāb*, 81–83; an English translation is provided by Levey, Mediaeval Arabic bookmaking, 36–37. See also Hilali, *Sanaa Palimpsest*, 8–13. Abū Saʿd, *Adab al-imlāʾ*, 551 provides two important accounts of washing; see also al-Zayyāt, al-Julūd, 1361, 1365–1366. Washing out a text was not only practiced as a means to allow reuse, but also as a ritualized withdrawal from circulation resulting from an esteem for, a special care for, or a fear of desecration of the written word; see Sadan, Used sacred books; Sadan, Genizah and Genizah-like practices; Sadan, Disposal of books. Further, washing was used to withdraw non-canonical versions, especially of the Qurʾān; see Hilali, *Sanaa Palimpsest*, 7–8, 9. See also al-Kulaynī (d. AH 329/941 CE), *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, 673–674, on the preference for washing over burning.

[67] The most important account of this practice, mostly dealing with *ḥadīth* books, is found in Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. AH 643/1245 CE), *Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 382ff.

[68] The term *ṭirs* is found also as *ṭils,* the latter seemingly secondary to the first. Both denote the process by which writing is erased and becomes no longer readable. See Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*, 91, 93; Abū Bakr Muḥammad (d. AH 335/946 CE), *Adab al-kātib*, 137.

[69] In the opinion of al-Rāmahurmuzī (d. AH 360/971 CE), if a manuscript contains a mistake, the best way to correct it is to cross out

scholars. A more practical position prevailed rather than a religious prohibition in this regard, although scribes and all others who were involved in writing processes were required to observe certain pious behaviour, in particular for religious texts.[70]

STATISTICS

The following tables offer statistics for both the Cairo Genizah and Qubbat al-Khazna palimpsests. For each set, the data gives the number and percentage of fragments with each language as undertext and as upper text, as well as giving the figures for the genre of the *scriptio superior*. The data is based on the two lists of palimpsests given in the appendix, to which the reader is referred for details.[71]

1. Cairo Genizah

Language of undertext		
Christian Palestinian Aramaic	58	55%
Hebrew / Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew / Greek and Hebrew	16	15%
Greek	15	14%
Syriac	6	6%
Georgian	4	4%
Arabic	3	3%
Coptic	2	2%
Latin	2	2%
Language of upper text		
Hebrew / Hebrew and Aramaic	102	96%
Judaeo-Arabic / Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew	4	4%
Genres represented in the upper text		
Palestinian Talmud	38	36%
midrash	34	32%
piyyut	18	17%
masorah	4	4%
Babylonian Talmud	2	2%
other	10	9%

2. Qubbat al-Khazna

Language of undertext		
Christian Palestinian Aramaic	20	53%
Greek	12	32%
Syriac	5	13%
Coptic	1	3%
Hebrew	1	3%

part of the text (*ḍarb*), so that the error can be still be read. Scratching off the surface could lead to falsification, and so the scribe who does that is suspicious (Arab. *tuhma*); see al-Rāmahurmuzī, *al-Muḥaddith al-fāṣil*, 606. The same opinion is expressed by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. AH 255/868 CE), Riṣālat al-jidd, 253 and by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Muqaddimat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 382.

[70] For a general account, see the anthology of al-Rashīd, *al-Mutḥaf,* for instance at 36–47, 108–11, 158–174, 204–207, 419–421, 466–469, 640–2, 663–70, 688–689.

[71] For additional comparisons with the Sinai palimpsests, see the contribution by Claudia Rapp in this volume.

Language of upper text		
Arabic	31	82%
Syriac	4	11%
Greek	3	8%
Genres represented in the upper text		
Qurʾān	10	26%
Christian literature (Arabic and Syriac)	5	13%
medical or natural sciences	4	11%
Islamic literature	1	3%
Greek literature	1	3%
unidentified	17	45%

In the Cairo Genizah, only sixteen of the undertexts are written in Hebrew or Hebrew in combination with another language. However, the Greek undertexts, especially for those that preserve parts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in Greek, might also have been produced by Jewish scribes.[72] Some, in fact, provide strong indications of this: the occurrence of the Jewish version of Aquila and the employment of Paleo-Hebrew script for the Tetragrammaton.[73] Both are featured in two fragments that need to be added to the sixteen above, accounting for 17% in total. They are the result of inner-communal trade—the remaining fragments originate from non-Jewish communities. Among the palimpsests of the Qubbat al-Khazna, three contain a Christian upper text in Arabic on a Christian undertext (in Christian Palestinian Aramaic). Two exhibit Syriac on Syriac. They together make for 13% exhibiting identified upper texts of a Christian provenance. Excluding the unidentified texts, the remainder show upper texts of Muslim origin (including 26% that reflect the Qurʾān) on undertexts with a non-Muslim provenance.[74]

A great number of the Cairo Genizah palimpsests exhibit rabbinic texts as their *scriptio superior*: talmudic texts (38% of the palimpsests), midrash (32%), and piyyut (17%). It has previously been noted that all of these texts are Palestinian in terms of their geographic provenance.[75] This is reflected in the fact that 36% of the palimpsests show the Palestinian Talmud, while its Babylonian counterpart only amounts to 2%. Similarly, the piyyut (17%) and masorah (4%) are explicitly Palestinian in their origin. Some fragments even use Palestinian vocalization signs (e.g., T-S 12.741).

As well as showing this shift in genre, the palimpsests attest to another shift, namely a shift in language. The greatest percentage of undertexts in both groups of palimpsests are written in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (55% in the Cairo Genizah; 53% in the Qubbat al-Khazna). Between the 5th and the 8th centuries, Christian Palestinian Aramaic was a spoken language and a language of liturgy.[76] The monastic communities of the Judean Desert and Jerusalem had a centuries-old custom of providing interpreters for speakers of Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Even before the 5th century, a testimony of this is found in the travelogue of a 4th-century pilgrim to the Holy Land:

> In this province, there are some people who know both Greek and Syriac (i.e. Christian Palestinian Aramaic), but others only know one or the other. The bishop may know Syriac, but he never uses it. He always speaks in Greek, and has a presbyter beside him who translates the Greek into Syriac, so that everyone can understand what he means.[77]

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[72] Some of the undertexts in Greek, such as those exhibiting the New Testament, can certainly be excluded from a Jewish production context, on the basis of their content.

[73] On this issue, see Tchernetska, Greek Oriental palimpsests, 250–251, as well as Burkitt and Taylor, *Book of Kings*, 15–16.

[74] As was also the case for the Mingana Palimpsest, which also contained several Christian texts, in Syriac and Arabic, as undertexts. See Fedeli, Mingana; Fedeli, Qurʾānic palimpsest; George, Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana.

[75] See Tchernetska *et al*., Hebrew-Greek Biblical glossary; Olszowy-Schlanger and Shweka, Newly discovered early palimpsests; and Olszowy-Schlanger, Greek-Hebrew palimpsests.

[76] To be precise, Christian Palestinian Aramaic remained in limited use also after the 8th century. For a short renaissance between the 10th and 13th centuries, see Morgenstern, Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

[77] As translated in Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travel*, 146. Scholars have no doubt that the Christian Palestinian Aramaic version of the Bible derives from these oral interpretations; see, for example, Lagrange, L'origine de la version syro-palestinienne.

However, Arabic later became the language of the local lay population, who had previously spoken Christian Palestinian Aramaic—the Arabization of the region was more inclusive and more rapid than its Islamization—and this appears to have brought about the gradual decline of Christian Palestinian Aramaic.[78]

This Arabization is reflected in the palimpsests. Of the palimpsests from the Qubbat al-Khazna, 82% have an Arabic upper text (29% are Islamic and 13% Christian Arabic and Syriac texts, with the remainder unidentified or not affiliated with either religion); and the Cairo Genizah exhibits 4% of Judaeo-Arabic upper texts. The decline of Christian Palestinian Aramaic as a productive language, it appears, must have eventually led to the disassembling of books composed in this language and the reuse of their writing material.

A similar situation would seem to prevail for books in Greek, though to a much lesser extent. Greek undertexts are found in 14% of the Cairo Genizah palimpsests and 32% of those in the Qubbat al-Khazna.

CONCLUSION

Although there remains much more to be explored, I have proposed in this survey an initial step toward outlining the practice of palimpsesting in the Near East. The major sites where palimpsests have been found form a neat triangle: Cairo, St. Catherine's in Sinai, and Damascus. The historical discovery of all three find spots was achieved by members of a closely-connected network of scholars, for the most part driven by the hope of discovering old, forgotten, Biblical texts. The ensuing publications excited scholars, with attention focused at first on the undertexts. The very first Genizah fragments, which were in fact palimpsests containing Christian Palestinian Aramaic, were published by Gwilliam a few years before Schechter's mission to Cairo procured a large part of the collection and made it known to a wider audience—for which he depended on the momentous help of Lewis and Gibson, experienced hunters of palimpsests in Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

In terms of their communities of origin, the Near East palimpsests represent the three major religions of the region: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Not only did all three communities produce books using washed and reused parchment, but the upper texts and undertexts in their various combinations form the layers of an intellectual texture that, in the words of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, can itself be described as a 'palimpsest, layer upon layer, tradition upon tradition, intertwined to the extent that one cannot really grasp one without the other, certainly not the later without the earlier, but often also not the earlier without considering the shapes it took later'.[79] Palimpsests provide, both physically and metaphorically, a stratigraphic record of the cultural and intellectual history of the Near East.

An examination of the rules for the employment of palimpsests in Judaism and Islam yielded a relative laxness in both Jewish and Islamic sources. These sources show, above all, that the erasure or washing of writing material was commonly practised, and to a large extent permissible.

However, the rabbinic texts describe a Jewish scribal culture that is distinct from that which we encounter in the fragments in the Cairo Genizah. Those texts are concerned with two main types of writing—liturgical Torah scrolls (*tefillin* and *mezuzot*) on the one hand, and documents such as marriage and divorce contracts on the other—and much of the discussion is centred around the reuse of papyrus. This conforms closely to what we know about rabbinic scribality: rabbinic texts, with the exception of the abovementioned categories, emerged orally.[80] Only the final stage of this process resulted in a text in a definite, fixed, and written shape. Composition itself remained an act of oral study or recitation.[81] The earliest evidence of a written Talmud dates only to the 9th century, although the ideological prohibition against writing down the oral Torah had been broken as early as the Amoraic period (ca. 200–500 CE), as recent scholarship has demonstrated. It has been suggested that, even though parts of the rabbinic literature were committed to writing at an early date, texts were still transmitted orally in the Geonic period (traditionally dated 589–1038 CE).[82] In discussing the reuse of writing material, then, rabbinic literature reflects this older Jewish scribal culture, in which the use of writing

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[78] Rubin, Arabicization versus Islamization.

[79] Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 4.

[80] The Jewish papyri that survive from the pre-Islamic period support this picture: there we mostly find liturgical texts, documents, and private letters, but no rabbinic literature. See Sirat, *Papyrus en caractéres hébraïques*.

[81] See the references in fn. 63, and also Brody, *Geonim of Babylonia*, 156–161.

[82] See, for example, Elman, *Authority and Tradition*; Naeh, Structure and division; Mandel, Between Byzantium and Islam.

was restricted to particular categories, and the practice of palimpsesting is discussed in accordance with that; however, the fragments from the Cairo Genizah exhibit a scribal culture in which writing had shifted to being the dominant mode of circulation of texts, thus requiring a steady supply of writing material.

Finally, the practice of palimpsesting has to be understood primarily in the context of a book economy, as providing lesser quality and therefore cheaper writing material. This economy seems to be actuated by the two dynamics described above: a shift to written composition, and a shift in language that made books in the languages used in the region before the dominance of Arabic more prone to reuse. The trade seems to have had its centre in Palestine, given both the Palestinian character of the Jewish upper texts and the high presence of Christian Palestinian Aramaic in undertexts. Further, the trade in reused parchment was noticeably trans-denominational; within it, confessional boundaries seem to blur.

APPENDIX

1. Palimpsests from the Cairo Genizah

The list below offers an inventory of all palimpsests from the Cairo Genizah known to date, as identified in previous catalogues and secondary literature, as well as in the catalogues of the Friedberg Jewish Manuscript Society.[83] It is not unlikely that a systematic sifting through the various Genizah collections—aided by multispectral imaging techniques—will yield further fragments and contribute to the identification of hitherto unidentified undertexts. This, however, has to remain a *desideratum* to be fulfilled in the future.[84]

In this table, 'PT' represents the Palestinian Talmud, and 'BT' the Babylonian Talmud.

	Shelf mark	***Scriptio inferior***		***Scriptio superior***	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
	Cambridge University Library				
1	T-S F17.4	Hebrew and Greek	Hebrew and Greek glossary on Biblical words	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sotah 8:5–9:4
2	T-S K23.1	Hebrew	BT Ketubbot 101a; 107b–108b	Hebrew and Aramaic	Halakhot Gedolot, Shekhitat Hullin
3	T-S K23.3 (1)	Hebrew	Halakhot Gedolot, Pesaḥ	Hebrew	magical
4	T-S K23.3 (2)	Hebrew	ketubbah	Hebrew and Aramaic	Sefer ha-Razim
5	T-S K23.3 (3)	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
6	T-S K23.4	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	Tanhuma
7	T-S K23.5	Coptic	liturgical	Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic	children's exercise, lists
8	T-S 12.188	Greek	Aquila, Psalms	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Moʿed Qatan 1:1–3
9	T-S 12.189	Greek	Acts 24:22–25; 1 Pet 2:22–3:7	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
10	T-S 12.191	CPA	Sir 18:17–19:1	Hebrew	Pesiqta of Rab Kahana
11	T-S 12.208	Greek	Acts	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
12	T-S 12.209	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	Sifra
13	T-S 12.210	CPA	1 Kgs 14:21–15:4	Hebrew	piyyut
14	T-S 12.211	CPA	Jn 11:56–12:16	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sanhedrin 19c (56)–20a (6); 29a (61)–29b (30)

[83] https://fjms.genizah.org/ (accessed 01.07.2023).

[84] As an example of multispectral imaging techniques on Genizah fragments, see Schmierer-Lee, Palimpsests?

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
15	T-S 12.735	CPA	2 Sam 6:19–7:7	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sanhedrin 19c (56)–20a (6); 29a (61)–29b (30)
16	T-S 12.735 (small fragment)	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
17	T-S 12.739	Coptic	*Life of St. Macarius the Great*	Hebrew	piyyut
18	T-S 12.741	Georgian	Jer 12:10–11, 15–16, 26–27; 18:2–8; 20:9–16	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Bava Qamma 6–8
19	T-S 12.742	CPA	Is 36:15–37:4	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Eruvin 18c, d
20	T-S 12.743	Syriac	Sir 13:1–14	Hebrew	Midrash Mishle
21	T-S 12.744	CPA	Epistle of Jeremiah 44–54	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
22	T-S 12.745	CPA	Epistle of Jeremiah 33–44	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
23	T-S 12.746	CPA	*Life of Abraham of Qidun*	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Pe'ah 5:2–6; 7:3–5
24	T-S 12.747	Syriac	unidentified	Judaeo-Arabic	treatise on medicine
25	T-S 12.748	CPA	*Symboli Nicaeni Fragmentum*	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Shevuʿot 32
26	T-S 12.749	CPA	*Life of Philemon*	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Shevuʿot 32
27	T-S 12.750	CPA	*Life of Philemon*	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Shevuʿot 32
28	T-S 12.751	CPA	*Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Betzah 1
29	T-S 12.752	CPA	*Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Betzah 60
30	T-S 12.753	CPA	*Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Betzah 60
31	T-S 12.754	Syriac	Ez 20:9–15	Hebrew	piyyut
32	T-S 12.755–756	CPA	1 Cor 5:10–13; 5:13–6:1	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sotah 23d–24a
33	T-S 12.757	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
34	T-S 12.758	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sanhedrin
35	T-S 12.759	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Horayot 48a
36	T-S 12.764	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	responsa, Psalms 113–115
37	T-S 16.93	Greek	New Testament lectionary (Gospels; Mt 10:2–15; Jn 20:11–15)	Hebrew	Sifra
38	T-S 16.98	CPA	Jn 14:25–15:16	Hebrew	piyyutim by Yannai
39	T-S 16.319	CPA	*Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Pe'ah 18d; 20b–c
40	T-S 16.320	Greek	Pss 143:1–144:6	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Moʿed Qatan 82a–b; 83b
41	T-S 16.322	CPA	Jer 12:12–15; 13:1–65; 14:4–7	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
42	T-S 16.323	CPA	Jer 29:32–30:10; 31:4–20	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
43	T–S 16.324	CPA	Jer 31:35–32:2; 32:35–44	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
44	T-S 16.325	CPA	Hosea 14:4–10; Joel 1:1–2:20	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Eruvin 20d–21d
45	T-S 16.326	CPA	1 Thes 3:1–13; 4:1–14	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Eruvin 20d–21d
46	T-S 16.327	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	Sifra
47	T-S 16.328	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Pesahim 37c–d
48	T-S 16.329	CPA	*Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius of Alexandria	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sheqalim, 44a–b; 46b
49	T-S 16.351	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	Pesiqta of Rab Kahana
50	T-S 20.50	Greek	Aquila's Greek translation of 2 Kgs 23:11–27	Hebrew	piyyut
51	T-S 20.157	CPA	2 Cor 3:2–4:10	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sotah 24a–b; 22b–c
52	T-S 20.158	CPA	2 Tim 2:16–26; Titus 3:3–12	Hebrew	Pesiqta of Rab Kahana
53	T-S 20.182	CPA	Dt 31:3–8, 11–14, 19–20, 25–29; Jn 14:15–19	Hebrew	piyyut
54	T-S NS 172.11	Hebrew	Bible in shorthand writing ('Serugin'), 1 Chr 2:25–3:9; 3:16–6:33	Hebrew	piyyut
55	T-S NS 200.49	CPA	Jer 37:19–38:2; 38:3–6	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
56	T-S NS 249.6	Hebrew	Bible in shorthand writing ('Serugin'), 1 Chr 2:25–3:9; 3:16–6:33	Hebrew	piyyut
57	T-S NS 249.14	CPA	2 Kgs 1:12–2:3	Hebrew	piyyut
58	T-S NS 258.140	Syriac	unidentified	Hebrew	Sifra
59	T-S NS 301.63	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
60	T-S NS 313.31a–b	Arabic	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	BT Hullin 27a–31a
61	T-S NS 325.56C	Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic	legal deed (?)	Hebrew and Aramaic	ketubbah
62	T-S NS 329.300–301	CPA	Isaiah (?)	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Eruvin 18c-d
63	T-S NS 329.844–845	CPA	Jer 36:1–4, 25–44; 37:5–10	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
64	T-S NS 329.968	CPA	*Life of Philemon*	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Shevuʿot 32
65	T-S AS 78.170	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	Tanhuma
66	T-S AS 78.324	CPA	Acts 25:1–11; 27:4–14	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Yoma 41a–42d
67	T-S AS 78.402 + 410	CPA	Jn 15:4–7, 16–19	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sanhedrin 4:22a–b
68	T-S AS 78.405	CPA	Gen 49:24; 49:33–50:1	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sanhedrin 18b

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
69	T-S AS 78.411	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Bava Qamma 1:3–2:1
70	T-S AS 78.412	Greek	Pss 96:7–98:3	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Taʿanit, Moʿed Qatan
71	T-S AS 79.31	Arabic	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Shabbat
72	T-S AS 93.524	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
73	T-S AS 95.35	Arabic	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	BT Hullin 19
74	T-S AS 124.1	Georgian	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
75	T-S AS 139.1	Latin	St. Augustine's *De Sermone Domini in Monte*	Hebrew	masorah
76	Or. 1080 1.39	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
77	Or. 1080 4, a–b	CPA	Jer 36:1–4, 25–44; 37:5–10; 38:7, 12	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
78	Or. 1080 4.52	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
79	Add. 4320, a–d	Latin	St. Augustine's *De Sermone Domini in Monte*	Hebrew	masorah
	Cambridge, Lewis-Gibson (formerly Westminster)				
80	Glas I AB fols. 1–2	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Horayot 48a
	Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève				
81	MS 17	Greek	martyrological text	Hebrew	piyyut
	London, British Library				
82	Or. 6581.1	CPA	Jer 31:21, 28	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
83	Or. 6581.2	Georgian	Jer 12:10–16	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Bava Qamma 4d–5a
	New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America				
84	MS Lutzki 273.3	Hebrew	unidentified	Judaeo-Arabic	polemics
	Manchester, John Rylands Library				
85	AF 299	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Yoma 41a–42d
86	Genizah fragment 49	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
	St. Petersburg, Russian National Library				
87	Antonin Yevr. III B 958	CPA	Epistle of Jeremiah 54–63	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
	Oxford, Bodleian Libraries				
88	Heb. a. 3.30	Hebrew	letter (?)	Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic	masorah/exegesis
89	Heb. b. 13.12	CPA	Lam 1:10–18	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
90	Heb. b. 13.13	CPA	Jer 52:22–29	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
91	Heb. b. 13.14	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew	Sifra
92	Heb. d. 54.1	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Moʿed Qatan
93	Heb. d. 59.36–40	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
94	Heb. d. 62.2	Syriac	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
95	Heb. d. 62.20	Syriac	unidentified	Hebrew	masorah
96	Heb. e. 25.72	Hebrew	unidentified	Hebrew	piyyut
97	Heb. e. 73.42	CPA	Jer 21:1–22:3	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
98	Heb. e. 73.43	CPA	Jer 38:14–22	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
99	Heb. f. 27.10–22	Hebrew	1 Kgs 19:8–21	Hebrew	book of legal formularies
100	Georg. c.1(P)/1	Georgian	Jer 17:26–18:8	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Bava Qamma 4:10–5:5
101	Syr. c. 15–18 (P) (formerly C. 4)	CPA	Num 4:46, 47; 4:49–5:2; 5:3, 4, 6–8; Col 4:12–18; 1 Thes 1:1–3; 4:3–15; 2 Tim 1:10–2:7; Titus 1:11–2:8	Hebrew and Aramaic	Mishnah Hullin 4:6–end; Mishnah Bechorot 1:1–8:8
102	Syr. d. 32.1–4 (P)	CPA	Ex 28:1–12; Wis 9:8–10:2	Hebrew	Sifra
	Paris, BnF				
103	Heb 1489.1	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Moʿed Qatan 8a–4:9b
104	Heb 1489.9	CPA	unidentified	Hebrew and Aramaic	PT Sotah 22c–d
	Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum Collection				
105	E 16507	CPA	Ez 22:11–20	Hebrew	Bereshit Rabbah
	Center for Advanced Judaic Studies				
106	Halper 114	Greek	unidentified	Hebrew	Early midrash on Gen 40:18–41:3; 46:28–47:1

2. Palimpsests from the Qubbat al-Khazna

The list below is drawn from three different sources: first, the photographs that are now preserved at the Berlin State Library;[85] second, the photographs preserved at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities;[86] and third, Schulthess's work.[87] While partly overlapping, these three complement each other. Schulthess consulted the fragments while they were still in Berlin (see discussion above), and not all of the fragments described and edited were photographed. Where possible, I have marked the overlap.

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
	Berlin State Library, Or. sim 6				
1	3r–4r	Greek	Esther 8:12	Arabic	Qurʾān 7:155–162; 7:162–172[88]
2	5r–6r (= Schulthess VI)	CPA	Eccl 11:2–8	Arabic	text about the coming of the Messiah
3	9r–10r (= Schulthess VIII)	CPA	Lk 19:42–20:6	Arabic	medical (?)
4	11r–12r (= Schulthess I)	CPA	Gen 19:1–5, 7–10	Arabic	*Mukhtaṣar fī al-ṭibb*, Abū Marwān ʿAbd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb al-Sulāmī[89]
5	27r–28r	Coptic	Fayyumic fragment of Mt	Arabic	hadith (?)
6	33r–42r	Hebrew	Job 31	Syriac	Liturgical (Melkite)[90]
	Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, BBAW/GCS, Akz.-Nr. 481				
7	Image 26/27	Greek	1 Kgs 18:26–33; 18:41–19:2; 20:11–14; 22:6–10	Arabic	Exodus 3:18–4:25; 4:27–6:14; 6:16–8:2; 8:4–15
8	Image 28/29	Greek	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
9	Image 32/33	Greek	Lk 10:19–22	Arabic	unidentified
10	Image 34–39 (= Schulthess XVIII)	CPA	Lucian's epistle	Arabic	Qurʾān 7:42–57
11	Image 40/41a	CPA	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
12	Image 40/41b	CPA	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
13	Image 181	Syriac	unidentified	Syriac	liturgical (Syriac Orthodox)[91]
14	Image 193/194	Greek	unidentified	Greek	unidentified
15	Image 197–202	Syriac	unidentified	Syriac	unidentified
16	Image 203	Greek	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
17	Image 204/205	Greek	Wis 10:19–11:4; 11:5–11	Greek	Aristotle, *On Interpretation*

[85] https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN730121836&PHYSID=PHYS_0005&DMDID= (accessed 01.07.2023).
[86] https://bibelexegese.bbaw.de/handschriften/damaszener-handschriften/ (accessed 01.07.2023).
[87] Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente*.
[88] See the contribution of Alba Fedeli in this volume, who describes this fragment in great detail.
[89] The identification is by Matteo Pimpinelli, see his *Due frammenti inediti*.
[90] See Kessel, Fragments of Syriac manuscripts, 281
[91] See Kessel, Fragments of Syriac manuscripts, 280.

	Shelf mark	*Scriptio inferior*		*Scriptio superior*	
		Language/script	Text	Language/script	Text
18	Image 206a	Syriac	Gen 49	Syriac	Isaac of Nineveh, *First Part*
19	Image 206b	Greek	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
20	Image 207/208	Syriac/Greek	1 Sam 7:16–8:9; 10:5[92] (Syriac), unidentified (Greek)	Arabic	unidentified
21	Image 209/210	Greek	unidentified	Arabic	unidentified
22	Image 211	Greek	Gal 5:13–17	Arabic	unidentified
23	Image 212	Greek	Song of Sol. 2:1–6; 2:17–3:2; 5:8–13	Arabic	unidentified
24	Image 197–203	Syriac	unidentified	Syriac	liturgical (Syriac Orthodox)[93]
	Schulthess				
25	II	CPA	Gen 49:24–50:12; Eccl 7:10–24; Sir 46:4–8; Mk 13:20–32; Jn 11:31–41	Arabic	unidentified
26	III	CPA	Ex 36:16–18, 20–23; 39:11, 14, 39–40; 40:4–17	Arabic	Qurʾān 2
27	IV	CPA	Num 13:19–33	Arabic	Qurʾān 7
28	IX	CPA	Jn 11:8–9, 20–22	Arabic	unidentified
29	X	CPA	Jn 11:44–54	Arabic	medical (?)
30	XI	CPA	Jn 11:25–35	Arabic	apocrypha (?)
31	XII	CPA	2 Pet 3:1–11	Arabic	Qurʾān 11:85–120
32	XIII	CPA	Rom 1:14–27; 3:25–4:9	Arabic	unidentified
33	XIV	CPA	Phil 1:25–2:12; 3:18–4:23; Col 1:1–9; 2:15–3:12; 1 Cor 9:23–10:15; 12:21–13:7		Qurʾān 51:47–59:21
34	XV	CPA	Eph 6:19–24; Phil 1:1–9; 3:8–4:1; Hebrews 1:1–2:4; 4:10–6:4; 7:16–8:5	Arabic	Qurʾān 6:164–27:37; 27:84–28:38
35	XVI	CPA	apocryphal Gospels	Arabic	Qurʾān 27:37–84
36	XVII	CPA	1 Sam 7:14–8:9	Arabic	medical (?)
37	XX	CPA	apocryphal Gospels	Arabic	Qurʾān 6:49–64; 34:8
38	XXI	CPA	apocryphal Gospels	Arabic	Qurʾān (?)

[92] See Kessel, Fragments of Syriac manuscripts, 276–277.
[93] See Kessel, Fragments of Syriac manuscripts, 281.

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