GARSHUNI AS IT IS: SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM READING EAST AND WEST SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS

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ABSTRACT

Syriac script has been used to write several languages other than Syriac, the most well known of which is Arabic, a phenomenon known generally and simply as Garshuni. While both Syriac and Arabic belong to the Semitic family of languages and thus share some phonological similarities, there are also differences. In addition, we are dealing with well-established written traditions on both sides, Syriac and Arabic, but we are also dealing with, on the Arabic side, a reading tradition influenced more or less by the reader's own Arabic dialect, and thus a reading tradition that does not necessarily have Classical Arabic as its absolute model. Syriac script has a smaller inventory of letters than Arabic script, and while scribes often used diacritical marks to fill out this deficiency, that practice was hardly universal. In an ideal situation, there might be exact correspondences between this Syriac letter (or letter plus diacritic) and that Arabic letter, and such an ideal appears in published charts to describe Garshuni, but manuscripts vary widely from this tidy ideal, and it is the purpose of this paper to highlight that variety with examples from several manuscripts.

文字書百事之名 *Wén zì shū bǎi shì zhī míng*. The writing of words writes the names of many things.

尚書注疏 *Shàng shū zhù shū* by (pseudo-)Kong Anguo¹

Ainsi, bien qu'elle-même étrangère au système interne, il est impossible de faire abstraction d'un procédé par lequel la langue est sans cesse figurée; il est nécessaire d'en connaître l'utilité, les défauts et les dangers. La langue a donc une tradition orale indépendante de l'écriture, et bien autrement fixe; mais le prestige de la forme écrite nous empêche de le voir.

...l'écriture voile la vue de la langue: elle n'est pas un vêtement, mais un travestissement.

Ce qui fixe la prononciation d'un mot, ce n'est pas son orthographe, c'est son histoire.

Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Intr., ch. VI

1. INTRODUCTION

De Saussure's remarks about writing over against language as spoken do not always broadly apply to Arabic as written in Syriac letters, the phenomenon usually known simply as Garshuni. It lacks the more fixed systematization found in the writing systems as envisioned by him, and the prestige he speaks of, where present, was a prestige probably known and appreciated only by a relatively small number of readers. In this paper, I do not aim to offer a general presentation of ideal or standardized Arabic Garshuni (hereafter referred to simply as "Garshuni"), for which there are some brief introductions. My goal is rather to highlight the *variety* in which Arabic texts were presented in Syriac letters: that is to say,

¹ Translation adapted from Yushu Gong, Haiying Yan, Yinghui Ge, "The Accounts of the Origin of Writing from Sumer, Egypt and China — A Comparative Perspective," *WZKM* 99 (2009): 137-158, here 146 and 156, where the sentence is quoted. Kong Anguo (孔安國 *Kǒng ān guó*) lived c. 156–c. 74 BCE (Wilkinson, p. 696, gives the year of his death as 100 BCE), but this work is a fourth-century forgery. See further Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual* (Harvard University Asia Center: Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2013), 370, 696-697; and Dominik Declercq, *Writing Against the State: Political Rhetorics in Third and Fourth Century China*, *Sinica Leidensia* 39 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 169-170.

that it is hard to seriously envision any ideal or standardized Garshuni if we take manuscripts as our evidence. By accepting without a grain of salt a simplified and tidy survey of Garshuni, unwary readers unexposed to manuscripts might be misled into assuming that Garshuni is more uniform than it really is, and I hope to dispel any such notions. What follows, then, is a focus on some of this variety as found in a sampling of Garshuni manuscripts written in both the East and West Syriac scripts.

For convenience, here is a table of most of the manuscripts cited below, with indication of whether they are in East or West Syriac script and their date.

Shelfmark	Date	Script	City	Collection
CCM 3	18 th /19 th	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 7	18 th	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 8	1681	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 10	18 th	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 11	17 th /18 th	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 13	1719	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 16	17 th	WS	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 18	1609/10	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 54	1628	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CCM 63	17 th	ES	Mardin	Chaldean Cathedral
CFMM 10	18 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 125	18 th /19 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 256	1665	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 287	1717/8	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 289	17 th /18 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 293	19 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 303	18 th /19 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 306	16 th /17 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 391	1722	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty Martyrs
CFMM 556	16 th /17 th	WS	Mardin	Church of the Forty

				Martyrs
DIYR 241	1934 ²	WS	Diyarbakir	Meryem Ana Church
MGMT 137	1881/2	WS	Midyat	Mor Gabriel Monastery
SMMJ 10	1474/5	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 43	1552	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 44	1889 ³	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 46	1852	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 133	1678/9	ES	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 140	1866	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 167	1882	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 168	17 th	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 201	1903	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 238	18 th /19 th	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SMMJ 239	15 th (?)	WS	Jerusalem	St. Mark's Monastery
SOAA 148	16 th	WS	Aleppo	Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese
SOAH 3	1720	WS	Homs	Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese

As the rest of the papers in this and the previous issue of *Hugoye* illustrate, the use of Syriac for writing another language is hardly confined to Arabic, but there are more manuscripts of Arabic Garshuni than other languages (Armenian, Kurdish, Turkish, etc.) in Syriac script.⁴ (To these languages the mention of Georgian may be added, thanks to a trisagion in Georgian [and other languages] written in East Syriac script in CCM 10, f. 8r.⁵)

² This is the date for the part of the manuscript that is cited below.

³ The part of this manuscript referred to below was completed in 1889, but what is now the second part of the manuscript was completed in 1506.

⁴ George Anton Kiraz, *Ṭūrrāṣ Mamllā: A Grammar of the Syriac Language, vol. 1: Orthography* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 291-322.

⁵ See a photograph and my brief discussion of it on the *hmmlorentalia* blog (Oct. 24, 2013) at <http://wp.me/p21AWp-zw>. Elsewhere, the Georgian trisagion is written in Armenian letters: in Matenadaran 4618 and 7117 (in the latter also the names of the letters of the Georgian alphabet). See Andrea Schmidt, "Arménien et syriaque," in C. Mutafian, ed., *Arménie : la magie de l'écrit (exposition, Marseille, Centre de la vieille charité, 17 avril-22 juillet 2007)* (Paris, 2007), 345-348, and J. den Heijer and A. Schmidt, "Scripts beyond borders: Allographic traditions and their social, cultural and philological aspects. An analytical introduction," in J. den

Julius Assfalg⁶ characterizes Garshuni evidence as mostly coming from Maronite and West Syriac manuscripts, with less in East Syriac, but thanks especially to the accessibility of digital photographs of a large number of manuscripts in Iraq and elsewhere from predominantly East Syriac collections,⁷ this picture can be challenged.⁸ Similarly, while at the time of his writing, the Mingana collection was the richest known in Garshuni,⁹ the digital photographs of collected manuscripts now available through HMML from various churches, monasteries, and private libraries in Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Jerusalem, and Iraq make this the single most copious stopping-place.

There are over eight hundred manuscripts in Arabic Garshuni that have been cataloged in HMML's recent work. These come from collections in Turkey (Mardin, Diyarbakır), Jerusalem, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. I emphasize that these are several hundred *manuscripts*: the number of *texts* is, of course, far greater, not a few individual manuscripts containing upwards fifteen to twenty separate texts, or more (especially in the genres of hagiography and homilies). Many more Garshuni manuscripts remain to be cataloged.

Garshuni sometimes appears in unexpected places, as in SMMJ 281, a twentieth-century Gə'əz manuscript that has a Garshuni note at the bottom of f. 181r. It says that the copy was presented (to Saint Mark's, presumably) from Empress Zawditu in 1916 by Gābrä Šölase "the minister (*waṣīr*) of Ethiopia." It is notable that whoever penned this note used the etymological Arabic spelling

Heijer, A. Schmidt, and T. Pataridze, eds., *Scripts Beyond Borders. A Survey of Allographic Traditions in the Euro-Mediterranean World*, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 62 (Louvain-la-Neuve, 2013), 1-63. I thank Hidemi Takahashi and Andrea Schmidt for referring me to these articles.

⁶ "Arabische Handschriften in syrischer Schrift (Karšūnī)," in Wolfdietrich Fischer, ed., *Grundriß der arabischen Philologie, Bd. 1: Sprachwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1982), 297-302, here 298.

⁷ This digitization work was carried out by the Centre numérique des manuscrits orientaux (CNMO) in partnership with the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HMML).

⁸ Just a few East Syriac Garšhūnī manuscripts, some of which are also mentioned below, are the following: CCM 3, 6 (16th cent.?), 7, 8, 69 (1720), 74 (1647), 88 (1635), 338 91699/1700), 388, and 390; SMMJ 133.

⁹ Assflag, 298, n. 14.

with /θ/ to spell the name Šēlase (سِلْسَة), rather than a phonetic spelling.

In addition, there are some unexpected works to be found in Garshuni manuscripts. While biblical texts, homilies, works of Christian theology and liturgy, and kindred works occasion no surprise, to find *The Story of Sindbad*, medical books, and Catholic writings translated from Latin are another matter. Since some Catholic traditions use Arabic, the last mentioned kind of work is not a complete surprise, however, and we actually have some details about how such works came to appear in Garshuni. CFMM 114 and 115, for example, contain part of Cornelius a Lapide's (1567-1637) voluminous commentary on the Bible. (His surname, originally van den Steen and latinized as Lapide, becomes *al-ḥaḡārī* in Arabic.) These copies are the work of the same scribe, ʿAbd al-Masīḥ b. Buṭrus, a Maronite of Aleppo; CFMM 115 is dated 1717. Sponsored by Michael Farḥāt (brother of Germanos Farḥāt), a Maronite scholar named Yūsuf b. Ġirḡis al-Bānī translated them into Arabic in 1715, as stated in the rubrics. Significantly, these Mardin copies are quite early, earlier than any of the manuscripts that Graf (GCAL III 386-387) lists for the work. It might be unexpected to find a Maronite text in a Syriac Orthodox collection, but this one has been in place there for a rather long time, because, according to donation-notes in each book, they were donated to Dayr al-Zaʿfarān by Patriarch George III of Mosul (1745-1768). While the colophons of some Garshuni manuscripts have phrases like "translated into Garshuni" (see below), the rubrics for both of these texts have only "into Arabic." Given the very early date of these copies, however, it is certainly possible that Cornelius a Lapide's work first appeared in Arabic with Syriac letters, not Arabic letters.

We must also mention Syriac-Garshuni parallel texts. Not all, but many, of these are biblical texts, such as SMMJ 239; there are many others. These deserve further study from several viewpoints because in their arrangement they show us a specific fossilized relationship of Syriac and Arabic/Garshuni. What is the text type of the Arabic version(s)? How does it stand in relation to the Syriac parallel? Did the same scribe write both columns? If so, why is there nevertheless sometimes a difference in ductus, etc., as in the case of SMMJ 239, in which the Garshuni column was written with a pen of finer nib than the Syriac column, while in other cases, such

as CCM 64, there is no such difference in the writing? In SMMJ 239, too, many of the Syriac titles are in Eṣṭrangēlā, but the corresponding Garshuni titles are simply in Serṭo, like the rest of the text in both languages.

The presence of Arabic in manuscripts that mostly consist of texts in Syriac often means that the Arabic there is also written in Syriac characters: at the margins of SOAA 148, f. 58v, for example, a reader has penciled in the names of the planets in Garshuni beside the Syriac text of Bar ʿEbrāyā’s short poem “On the Nature of the Seven Planets.” But this is certainly not always the case. As an example, CCM 24 (Mardin 66), of the sixteenth century, has the metrical grammar of Bar ʿEbrāyā, along with the usual commentary, but there are also a number of contemporary notes and titles to the text in Arabic written in Arabic characters. This manuscript and others (e.g. CFMM 306 and SMMJ 133) also have quire identifiers—*al-kurrās al-awwal*, etc.—written in Arabic script; SMMJ 133 and CFMM 306 also have (at least some) catchwords in Arabic script, and at the end of the texts in the latter come short closing statements such as *كمل بعون الله تعالى بالكمال* (f. 38r). CCM 18, f. 78v shows a fine *basmala* in Arabic script, and elsewhere in the manuscript are other brief extraneous parts in Arabic script (e.g. *kamulat* on f. 216v). SMMJ 133 has several words, rubricated and not, in Arabic script: on f. 70r, at the end of one line, it has the last three letters of *Sulaymān* in Arabic script rather than Syriac, *Dāwūd* is written completely in Arabic script at the end of a line on f. 72r, and the same for *al-nasr* on f. 73r.

Cases of what we might call “reverse Garshuni”—Syriac language in Arabic script—are rare, but they do occur.¹⁰ Two notable examples are manuscripts of *The Book of the Translator* (*Kitāb al-turḡumān*), Eliya of Nisibis’s Syriac-Arabic lexicon arranged by topic:¹¹ Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese of Homs (SOAH) 56 (1858 AG = 1546/7 CE), ff. 4r–132v; and CCM 466 (18th c.?), f. 13v–140r.¹² Manuscripts of this work are most often found with two

¹⁰ Kiraz, 323–325.

¹¹ Adam McCollum, “Prolegomena to a New Edition of Eliya of Nisibis’ *Kitāb al-turḡumān fī ta’līm luḡat al-suryān*,” *JSS* 58 (2013): 297–322, esp. 310.

¹² I thank Grigory Kessel for pointing out the latter manuscript to me.

columns, Syriac and Garshuni, but these two copies have three columns: Syriac, Arabic, and Syriac in Arabic script. Another example, much less extensive, will be found in two words in CFMM 360, f. 283r.

A few manuscripts have been adduced as possible examples of the oldest Garshuni. Assfalg points to BL Add. 14722, from the 13th century,¹³ about which Wright notes, “The language is very incorrect and ungrammatical.”¹⁴ BL Add. 14493,¹⁵ which Wright dates to the tenth century, is mostly Syriac, but there are prayer-salutations in Garshuni on f. 181r, introduced with the words, ܕܠܗ ܕܡܠܚܐ ܕܡܠܚܐ, “Prayers in Arabic [*tayyāytā*], written in Syriac [letters].”¹⁶

Garshuni is not confined to manuscripts. Thanks to Amir Harrak’s edition of the inscriptions from Iraq,¹⁷ we have, for example, an easily accessible corpus of Garshuni inscriptions. One of these inscriptions (AD.01.01) with Garshuni is on a cross dated

¹³ Assfalg, 298.

¹⁴ *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838, vol. 2* (London, 1871), 1023.

¹⁵ Cf. Martin R. Zammit’s forthcoming article, “British Library Add. 14493: A Very Early Garshuni Text,” *JSS*.

¹⁶ *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838, vol. 1* (London, 1870), 219-223. Further on early Garshuni, see Françoise Biquel-Chatonnet, Alain Desreumaux, and André Binggeli, “Un cas très ancien de garshouni? Quelques réflexions sur le manuscrit BL Add. 14644,” in Pier Giorgio Borbone, Alessandro Mengozzi, and Mauro Tosco, eds., *Loquentes linguis: Studi linguistici e orientali in onore di Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti = Linguistic and Oriental Studies in Honour of Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti = Lingvistikaj kaj orientaj studoj honore al Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 141-147; and Alessandro Mengozzi, “The History of Garshuni as a Writing System: Evidence from the Rabbula Codex,” in Frederick Mario Fales and Giulia Francesca Grassi, eds., *Camsemud 2007: Proceedings of the 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, Held in Udine, May 21st-24th, 2007*. History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs 10 (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), 297-304. Another relatively early Garshuni text is SMMJ 16, ff. 168r-177v (ms dated 1396/7); the scribe seems to be less skillful with Garshuni than with Syriac, assuming the same scribe wrote it as the one who wrote the Syriac parts of the manuscript.

¹⁷ *Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions of Iraq, 2 Vols.*, Recueil des inscriptions syriaques 2 (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2010).

1629/30 that has some Armenian on the same side, and Syriac and more Garshuni on the other,¹⁸ and the seventeenth century is indeed the time period of the earliest Garshuni inscriptions in Iraq.¹⁹ A very interesting feature of some of the Garshuni inscriptions that are translations from Syriac is that the translations rhyme, while the originals do not.²⁰ As Harrak notes, the orthographic presentation of the Garshuni inscriptions is along the same lines as that seen in manuscripts,²¹ and in these we do find some stranger phenomena that occur, albeit rarely, in manuscripts, such as for *s* and for *t*; the appearance of for *d*, which appears in inscription AD.01.15, I have not seen in manuscripts.

While Assfalg mentions the variability of scribal presentation of Arabic in Syriac letters,²² the simplicity of charts showing equivalents between typical writing of Arabic in Arabic letters and that in Garshuni in Syriac letters, such as that on p. 302 of his survey chapter,²³ might deceive the unwary reader and belie for them this inconsistency. François Déroche describes as follows the time of the Arabic Ḥijāzī script, which was used in the second half of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth:²⁴ “an age unaffected by official rules governing the script, unconcerned by a teaching of writing aiming at a perfect imitation of the model. Each scribe was writing in his way, following a general rule....”²⁵ Adam Gacek adds, “The scribes [of this period] may in fact have been more concerned about the transmission of the Qur’anic text than

¹⁸ Harrak, vol. 1, 222-223.

¹⁹ Harrak, vol. 1, 42.

²⁰ Harrak, vol. 1, 42.

²¹ Harrak, vol. 1, 43-44.

²² “Es wird...weniger eine möglichst genaue Transliteration einer in arabischer Schrift vorliegenden (oder nur gedachten) Vorlage angestrebt, sondern mehr die Wiedergabe der Lautgestalt, jedoch ohne Konsequenz” (301). “A transliteration as exact as possible of something existing (or only thought) in Arabic script was aimed at less than merely the rendering of its form as it was pronounced, yet not consistently.”

²³ See also Kiraz, 295-297.

²⁴ On this script, see Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers*, Handbook of Oriental Studies 98 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 123-125, where the following remark of Déroche is also cited.

²⁵ *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script*, (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006), 641.

the appearance of their work.”²⁶ These descriptions of Hījāzī manuscripts may also obtain for Garshuni manuscripts, not necessarily in terms of letter forms, but in terms of orthography, pointing, and vowels.

I will say a little more about dialect below, but at this point, I want to acknowledge that what is behind the written text is something that may fluctuate within certain parameters depending on the reader, whose own dialect and inherited reading tradition will, consciously or not, direct the act of reading. While we do well to keep this fact in mind, our focus here is the written text itself, without investigating in every case what possible dialectal realizations of that written text are possible.

The observations offered here derive mostly from my cataloging work, and thus, while I adduce manuscripts from both East Syriac and West Syriac provenance from various places, the picture presented here is not a comprehensive one based on all or even most known Garshuni manuscripts. Collections from Lebanon, for example, are not represented here, although there are hundreds of Garshuni manuscripts in those collections (and easily available through HMML). Nevertheless, I do not expect that the main point of this paper—that Garshuni ought not be thought of as more regular and consistent than the manuscripts show it to be—will be seriously challenged following a closer and more purposeful look at Garshuni manuscripts of a broader range of provenance than those included here.

2. “INTO GARSHUNI”

We meet commonly enough with simple references in Garshuni manuscripts to translation from Syriac into Arabic, as in the note on CFMM 414, p. 282, to pray for the translator of a certain polemical work, Zaytun of Anḥel (d. 1855),²⁷ who translated from Syriac (*luḡat al-suryānīyā*) into Arabic (*lisān al-‘arabīyā*), and we have this mention of Syriac-Arabic translation in CCM 13, f. 120r:

²⁶ Gacek, 124.

²⁷ Ignatius Afram Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, trans. Matti Moosa (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003), 522.

ܡܢ ܕܩܬܝܢܐ ܕܠܚܢܐ ܕܠܥܒܕܐ ܕܡܡܠܟܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ
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Remember in your prayers the poor scribe, Muṭrān Basilius, that he might be delivered from the torment of purgatory, because he translated these [texts] from Syriac into Arabic in the year 1719 of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and praise forever and ever. Amen.

CFMM 104, ff. 464v-495r refers to translation from Syriac to Arabic, yet also with subsequent transliteration from Arabic into Garshuni. (This colophon belongs to the text itself, not the particular manuscript: it is also in CFMM 105, p. 678.) Similarly, in CFMM 95, p. 723, we find reference to the *Gospel Commentary* of Dionysius bar Ṣalibi as translated from Syriac into Arabic by Rabbān ʿAbd al-Nūr of Amid at Dayr al-Zaʿfarān, and then transliterated into Garshuni by a deacon named Dāwūd b. Yaʿqūb:

ܡܢ ܕܩܬܝܢܐ ܕܠܚܢܐ ܕܠܥܒܕܐ ܕܡܡܠܟܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ
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The deacon Dāwūd, son of Yaʿqūb Qaṣūrānī the priest, also transliterated it from Arabic letters—that is, in a rough draft [*musawwada*]¹—into Garshuni letters in Diyarbakır, which is named Āmid, in the cell of the Church of our Lady Maryem Ana.

Before presenting below some examples of Garshuni from several manuscripts, I would like to share a few places where scribes were conspicuously cognizant of Garshuni as a unique entity. As just seen, scribes sometimes make reference to their transcriptions from Arabic script into Syriac script. Scribes may also mention translation specifically from Garshuni into Syriac: in CFMM 256 (dated 1665), p. 344, at the end of *The Story of Job the Righteous*, the scribe records, “It was translated from Garshuni into Syriac...”

(*وَمَعَهُ مَعَ الْكَلَامِ الْعَرَبِيِّ*).²⁸ Such statements show that scribes certainly considered Arabic and Garshuni distinctly.

The colophon of SMMJ 167 (dated 1882) has a reference, not to the Garshuni “text” or “copy” (*nusḥa*, as in SMMJ 140, f. 132v), but rather to “the Garshuni language” (*lisān al-Garshuni*). The scribe refers to a text unavailable at his own monastery, but a Greek priest from Beit Jala, “a friend of ours,” had a copy to loan for his use. The scribe of SMMJ 167 says the following about this copy (ff. 322r-322v):

It was written in Arabic [*mansūḥ ‘arabiyyan*], so we, the wretched, with his holiness, our revered lord, the honored Muṭrān, Ġirġis Mār Grigorios, were interested in transcribing it into the Garshuni language [*bi-nashīhi fī lisān al-Garshuni*], so that reading it might be easy for the novice monks, that they might obtain the salvation of their souls.

This is not the only place where a Garshuni text is considered more readable to at least some section of the literate population. In this case, the audience in view is a group of beginning monks, and in the aforementioned manuscript SMMJ 140 the transcription from Arabic into Garshuni was made “to facilitate the understanding of its contents for every reader” (*likay yusha²⁹ fabm maḍmūnibi ‘alā kull qārī*, f. 132v). In the colophon of SMMJ 46, f. 365r, the scribe mentions that few Syriac Orthodox readers could read Arabic letters.³⁰ A text in SMMJ 44 was transliterated from Arabic into Garshuni, as the scribe says on f. 227v: “at the command [of Muṭrān Ġirġis of Ṣadad], it was transliterated [*wa-ṣāra naqluhu*] from

²⁸ In the same manuscript, p. 349, after a Syriac story of Jonah, we have in Arabic script “...who transcribed and copied [*naqala wa-kataba*] from Arabic into Syriac” (رحم الله من ترجم علي اللذي نقل وكتب من العربي الى) (السرياني).

²⁹ Or *yusabbala*. The vowel *a* of the second syllable is so marked in the manuscript, but there is no *šadda*.

³⁰ As in SMMJ 44 and 144, the root *n-q-l* refers, not to translation, but to transliteration from Arabic letters into Syriac letters. Similarly a seventeenth-century lectionary manuscript refers to the books’ transliteration from Arabic into Syriac as *مَعَهُ مَعَ الْكَلَامِ الْعَرَبِيِّ* (CCM 45, f. 181r; the same in CCM 33, f. 155v, from the next century).

(۱۰) حامیہ

(يصله مع النذرة المذكورة ١٠٠٠ وحدة الفانوس).

- MGMT 137, p. 50, has in the rubric **مجلس** **الحج** **السنوي**.

- The label at the beginning of CFMM 104 has **مسا**.

- The colophon of SOAH 3 specifically refers to its text's having been translated "into Garshuni."

- In SMMJ 10, f. 118v, a Garshuni-Syriac parallel Psalter, some of the Odes at the end of the book are only in Syriac, and the scribe apologizes for not having written those parts “in Garshuni” due to his not having a text for them to copy from.

Here, given the goal of this paper, I will do little more than list various instances of words or phrases from a number of Garshuni manuscripts. Each instance might well allow for lengthy comment and discussion, but for now it must suffice merely to emphasize the variety of Garshuni as realized in these manuscripts.

Before turning to some specific features of Garshuni, orthographic and otherwise, it bears mentioning, without going into details here, that at least some of these features reflect the spoken Arabic that the scribes and intended readers and hearers were used to, as in some other literary traditions.³¹ To mention only two relevant examples, I cite, for vowels, *imāla*³² and, for consonants, the shift of interdental to dentals in the (later) Christian Arabic dialect of Baghdad:³³

³¹ For Middle Arabic, see Geoffrey Khan, “Middle Arabic,” in Stefan Weninger, ed., *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, in collaboration with Geoffrey Khan, Michael P. Streck, and Janet C.E. Watson (Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36. Berlin, De Gruyter, 2011), 817-835.

³² See, for example, Wolfdietrich Fischer and Otto Jastrow, eds., *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte*, Porta Linguarum Orientalium, N.S. 16 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1980), 55, and Haim Blanc, *Communal Dialects of Baghdad* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1964), §3.36.

³³ Farida Abu-Haidar, *Christian Arabic of Baghdad*, Semitica Viva 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1991), 7-9; cf. Fischer and Jastrow, 50;

ayyām as ܐܝܡ. (The common verb *qāla*, however, generally is written in this manuscript with *ālap*.) (Conversely, another manuscript, CFMM 287, p. 393, has ܩܠܡ for ܩܠܡ!) Even an idiosyncratic scribe like the one of CCM 11 could include a floating Syriac *ālap*, like the Arabic “dagger *alif*,” in the word *dālīk* (f. 46r). The same scribe also very often includes Arabic vowel-signs, even though the accusative-marking *alif* is sometimes omitted, as in ܡܚܝܬܐ (f. 48r) for ‘*aḡaban* ‘*aẓīman*, where both words are marked with the appropriate Arabic vowel-sign, but the second word has no accompanying *alif* (see further below on *tanwīn*).

Alif maqṣūra may be spelled with *ālap*: CFMM 289, p. 45 and CCM 10, f. 42r, (and *passim*) have ܐܠܐ for ܐܠܝ, CCM 10, f. 41v, has ܐܠܐ for the ubiquitous ܐܠܝ, CCM 63, f. 27v (Garshuni colophon to a Syriac lectionary), has ܐܠܐ for ܐܠܝ, and SMMJ 133, f. 67r, has ܐܠܐ for ܐܠܝ. The spelling with *yod*, however, also occurs, as ܐܠܝܐ (DIYR 241, f. 88v), for example. Immediately after the aforementioned ܐܠܐ in SMMJ 167, f. 67r, we find ܐܠܐ, that is, in a single line of this manuscript we have two different ways of writing *alif maqṣūra*. In CCM 10, f. 41v, and CCM 11, f. 43v, *mūsā* is spelled with *ālap*, not *yod*, which is more usual (e.g. CFMM 303, p. 2 and *passim*) and agrees with Arabic orthography. The spelling of the verb in ܐܠܐ ܠܐܠܐ (DIYR 241, f. 89v) is probably a hypercorrection for *tufā*, in either case with -*a*' > -*ā*, written with an assumed *alif maqṣūra*, just as in the first verb of ܐܠܐ ܠܐܠܐ (CCM 16, f. 21r; *bada'a* > *badā*). Strangely, ܐܠܐ, which does not end in *alif maqṣūra*, appears as ܐܠܐ in CCM 10, f. 46v.

The *alif otiosum* is usually written, but not always, as in ܐܠܐ (CCM 11, f. 44r) and ܐܠܐ (ibid., 44v).

A number of manuscripts regularly indicate the *alif* and the *tanwīn* of the accusative, as in CCM 54 and SMMJ 238, e.g. ܐܠܐ (f. 41v of the latter manuscript).³⁴ As in CCM 11, mentioned above, the *alif* to mark the accusative *tanwīn* is not always written; another example is ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ (SMMJ 133, f. 67r), instead of ܐܠܐ. The scribe of DIYR 241 (e.g. *ḥimāran* and

³⁴ The work here is a copy of 'Alī b. al-'Abbās' *Complete Book of the Medical Art*.

The *-in* is often marked with the Arabic vowel, as with **سِين** in CCM 8, f. 84v (and elsewhere).

[illegible]

In SMMJ 133, ḡ is represented by *gāmāl* with an angled tilde-like symbol, or even an extended form that looks like a small Arabic (dotless) *ḡim* (as in CCM 11), beneath it, the common way for East Syriac Garshuni,³⁵ while in Serto manuscripts it is generally represented by *gāmāl* and a dot within it. In both WS and ES Garshuni, *gāmāl* with a dot below often serves for *ḡayn*, as in (CCM 10, f. 51r). It is, however, not uncommon to find an unadorned *gāmāl* to indicate either the *ḡim* or the *ḡayn*.

³⁵ It is used also in Syriac manuscripts for the same sound, as in the colophon of CCM 62 (dated 1543), f. 201r, for the Islamic month-name *Raḡab*. Syriac text editions by Bedjan sometimes have the *gāmāl* with this mark in certain place names, as in his edition of the *Chronography* of Bar ʿEbrāyā, p. 2, line 11: ܠܗܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ, and for the wife of Muḥammad, p. 97, line 7: ܡܪܝܡܐ.

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- Hardly unusual are copies that have less of the sought-after clarity and specificity. We may consider as an example just a few lines from CFMM 556 (an unidentified medical text that catalogs about 200 ailments):
- الذين المزم الطيعة ٥٥٥ المزم العندة ف حاجه
العهد له هـ اءا المزم اءا مع حليم سء الله حله الالهة حفلى المزم
المزم (the words *al-ʿarāḍ* and *al-sabab* are rubricated). There are many letters that, in a more thoroughgoing and exact manuscript, would bear the expected diacritics.

- for *dād*:

- **مَنْهَب** (CCM 11, f. 43v and 45v, but with no dot on 44r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 11, f. 44r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CFMM 391, p. 26)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 10, f. 49r; CCM 11, f. 43v; yet with no dot often, as in DIYR 241, f. 88v)
 - **مَنْهَب** (SMMJ 167, f. 106v; no dot, yet just below there is **مَنْهَب**)³⁶
 - **مَنْهَب** (CFMM 556, p. 337)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 11, f. 44r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (DIYR 241, f. 88v; CCM 10, ff. 48v, 50r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 16, ff. 37v, 40v)
 - **مَنْهَب** (SMMJ 133, f. 70r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 3, f. 29r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 10, f. 51r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 10, f. 51r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (SMMJ 201, f. 135r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (SMMJ 133, f. 67r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (DIYR 241, f. 88v, no dot)
- for $zā'$:
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 11, f. 43v and 45v, but also **مَنْهَب** and **مَنْهَب** [no dot on 44r])
 - **مَنْهَب**, **مَنْهَب**, **مَنْهَب** (CCM 10, f. 49r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 16, f. 38v)
 - **مَنْهَب** (DIYR 241, f. 88v, no dot)
 - **مَنْهَب** (SMMJ 133, f. 67r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 10, f. 49r)
 - **مَنْهَب** (CCM 16, f. 38v)

Needless to say, even when dots are present, they are not always correct. In SMMJ 43, f. 276v, for example, **مَنْهَب** simply stands for **المطابق**.

³⁶ In the same manuscript, on f. 111v, we find the expression **مَنْهَب** both with and without (in a rubric) a dot.

3.3 Tašdīd, hamza, tā' marbūṭa, and related matters

For the doubling of consonants (*tašdīd*) in Garshuni, the *šadda*, written just as in Arabic script, appears frequently, as in SMMJ 59, ff. 72r-73r (and in many other manuscripts, too). Elsewhere, a very obvious *šadda* (and a dot over the *he*) in *li-llāb* (CCM 11, 43v), but elsewhere without the *šadda* (as on the next page of this manuscript). SMMJ 201 frequently marks the *šadda*. Just on f. 211v, for example, we have, among others, *al-ʿaqlīyya*, *al-abadiyya*, *ammā*, *al-ardīyya*, and *fa-innabū* all marked with *šadda*. The *šadda* in SMMJ 201 appears more like a tilde than the typical Arabic shape, as in the phrase *bi-quwwati sayyidina* on f. 130r, in *ṣamāniyya*, and other words elsewhere, but the same sign appears over words that do not regularly have a *šadda*, such as *abl* on f. 131r and *ūlā'ika* on ff. 128v and 135r.

The *hamza* is very often simply omitted in the writing, as in ܐܕܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 83v and passim), two words which should both technically have *hamza*. Other examples with medial *hamza* are ܐܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 84v, 85r) and ܐܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 85r). For *hamza* at word-end: ܐܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 86r) and ܐܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 11, f. 44r). While it is more usual for the *hamza* to be omitted, it is sometimes written in Garshuni just as in Arabic script.

The *tā' marbūṭa* is indicated sometimes merely with *h*, sometimes with *h* having two dots above, just as in Arabic, and in East Syriac Garshuni sometimes with *h* and only one dot above. The last mentioned way is evident even in manuscripts of Syriac works that cite Arabic words, as in a fifteenth-century (1458/9) copy of Yoahnnān bar Zo'bi's grammar, where he mentions the Arabic words *luḡa* and *lafza* (CCM 20 f. 57v). (The corresponding words in the margin in Arabic script, which may have been written by the original scribe, have only a *hā'* at the end, no dots.)

It is not uncommon to find feminine nouns with the *hā'* having two dots, but adjectives having only *hā'* (no dots), as in ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 83r). (The last word in this phrase has the *ṣlāmā qaṣyā* vowel as the vowel of the *tā' marbūṭa*.) This goes for place-names, too: ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (CCM 8, f. 85v). On the other hand, we do also find adjectives with the *tā' marbūṭa* clearly marked as such, as in ܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ (DIYR 241, f. 88v).

At CFMM 294, p. 23, the fem. pl. ending is spelled with -*b*: عاتامات *ʿatāmāt*, but العسلا occurs in the next line! The Arabic -*aṭ* of the 3fs perf. can be marked, instead of with the Syriac *taw*, with the same means as that for the *tā'* *marbūṭa*, that is, the *bē* having two dots, as in لعلت على نفسي ذمها للعتة علقت حبلتي مني (CCM 8, f. 84v) and لعنتك لعنة الله (SMMJ 133, f. 69v, but sometimes also with *taw*, as in لعن). Three verbs with this phenomenon are in the following sentence: فلعنا بجمعهم وبعثوا في كل بيت منهم رجلاً يفتشون عن الخبائث والنجاسات التي فيها (CCM 8, f. 85v). Finally, the word *bint* is even written as though the -*t* were a *tā' marbūṭa* in CCM 11, f. 45v: بنت.

The Chinese quotation given at the beginning of this article reminds us that writing—of whatever kind—when tied to a reading tradition has the effect of bringing to hearers and readers “the names of many things.” While there are among the world’s languages some very close ties between script and language, those ties are not necessarily absolute and exclusive. In the case of Garshuni, those scribes who write it and the members of their intended audience know the speaking or reading tradition—that is, Arabic (the language, regardless of their knowledge of Arabic script)—and they know Syriac script, a writing system in any case not greatly differing in structure from that of Arabic script. Syriac script, even bare of the available diacritics that might otherwise help it mimic Arabic script more precisely, was apparently considered sufficient by these scribes and readers. Garshuni writing, to judge from its abundant attestation, served well for “writing the names of many things.”

The upshot of this look at some Garshuni phenomena from several manuscripts is that Garshuni is not quite so simple a matter as one might expect (and hope for) at first, and indeed as simple as one finds in some references to it in scholarly literature. Thankfully, with the easy availability of Garshuni manuscripts through HMML and other means, interested readers have vast opportunities to see Garshuni in action, not as described by this or that scholar (including the present one!), and not only in a published transliteration into Arabic script.

As I hope the mere presentation of the features above has shown, there is need for more research on Arabic Garshuni, as there is for other varieties of Garshuni. A systematic survey of the manuscripts, whether broadly, or of those from specific regions or times, may reveal certain practices that were regular in some places and at some times that were not the norm in others, and thus give us a better idea of how the phenomenon has developed.