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Article

The Gə'az Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a: Introductory Notes

Aethiopica 15 (2012), 22–52
ISSN: 2194–4024

Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik
der Universität Hamburg
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

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The Ga’az Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a: Introductory Notes

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Premise

The fragment with Philo of Carpasia’s explanation of Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a bears the title ṭ[Cqtn] ḫ[ęż]ě Targame Salomon “Interpretation of Salomon”. In his shelf list of the Ethiopian manuscripts kept at the Ethiopian archbishopric in Jerusalem,1 Ephraim Isaac makes the following remarks in relation to the manuscript JE300E (MS 119 at the Ethiopian archbishopric in Jerusalem):

This is the title given to the work which contains, beside other composite monastic works, a commentary to Song of Songs 1:2–14a (fols. 3a–20a). This commentary is the work of Philo of Carpasia (Philon Philgos) (c. 400). I thank Prof. Sebastian Brock who helped to identify this work with the help of Rev. Roger Cowley.2 The commentary incorporated into the catena of Procopius is published in PG KL. (In Latin, see Epiphanius of Salamis). As far as I know this is the only known Ms of this work in Ge’ez.

Ephraim assigns the manuscript to the 14th/15th century3 and it is the only manuscript in the shelf list that has been commented. While this clearly

1 It would be logical to seek an explanation of how those manuscripts in Ga’az and Amharic got to Jerusalem, especially in the case of the particularly rare specimen dealt with in this paper. A likely setting of our manuscript’s location is described in the following historical overview: “From the 14th cent. on, a variety of sources report of the Ethiopian community: dedication in books sent as gifts to the community from Ethiopian rulers; letters from Ethiopian kings and nobles; marginal notes in manuscripts; descriptions by foreign historiographers and in numerous itineraria of foreign pilgrims; documents from legal processes; letters from foreign missionaries in Jerusalem; two historiographic manuscripts in Amharic written by members of the community in the late 19th cent.; books published by members in the late 20th cent. From these writings it becomes clear that the community flourished in the 14th–15th cent.”, STOFFREGEN PEDERSEN 2007: 274; cf. also, VAN DONZEL 1983: 93–101.
2 The manuscript appears in Cowley’s shelf list, cf. COWLEY 1988: 437.
helps to attract the attention of researchers, Ephraim’s description which
has been fully reproduced here, does contain a few minor lapses.4

In PG 40, the title of the commentary to the Canticle reads: ΦΙΛΟΝΟΣ
ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΑΣΙΟΥ ΣΥΝ ΘΕΩ ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΑ
ΑΣΜΑΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ Πρὸς Εὐστάθιον πρεσβύτερον καὶ Εὐσέβιον
dιάκονον, followed by the Latin translation: Philonis episcopi Carpasii, Deo
juvante, Enarratio in Canticum Canticorum, Ad Eustathium presbyterum et
Eusebium diaconum. Thus, the commentary in PG 40, coll. 27–154, is not a
catena5 but rather the production of a single hand: Philo of Carpasia.6 It is
true that there is a catena of Procopius of Gaza (5th/6th century) in PG 87/2,
coll. 1545–1753. In the collection of Procopius there are 48 passages of the
commentary to the Canticle by Philo of Carpasia. Moreover, in the catena
of Pseudo-Eusebius (end of the 5th century/beginning of the 6th century),
Philo’s commentary is quoted thirty seven times, and there are three refer-
cences in the Topographia Christiana of Cosmas Indicopleustes (mid-6th
century).7 Ephraim identifies Philo of Carpasia with “Philon Philgos”
without any explanation. Perhaps he has taken for granted that the author
of the Commentary of the Canticle is the same as the interpreter of the
Pauline Corpus known as Torgwame Felon Felgos.

The manuscript

JE300E is a small size parchment: 15 x 11 x 5 cm with 120 leaves, of which
fol. 120v is blank. It is written on a single column with an average of 16/17
lines. In fols. 117–120 there are rudimentary drawings of horses, in fol.
117rv two horses, the one in the verso with a rider. Apart from a rough
geometrical drawing in the upper margin of fol. 3v, the manuscript does not
have any ornamental motif, nor a particularly elaborate sign system in the
punctuation. In fol. 1v there is a seal that is green in colour, unfortunately
so fuzzy that it is impossible to decipher the legenda. The only recognizable

MS no. JE300E: “1) Fl. 4a–20a: from Philo of Carpasia’s commentary on the Song of
Songs. It includes the introduction and the commentary up to Cant. 1:14. Incomplete at
the beginning; the Greek text is found in MIGNE, Patrologia graeca, t. 40, cc. 23B: 3–56B:
4”, with a careful three-page long description of the manuscript.
4 The shelfmark is PG XL (i.e. 40) rather than “PG KL.” The statement that the “com-
mentary incorporated into the catena of Procopius is published in PG KL” does not
seem accurate.
6 For a list of the Greek fragments of Philo’s Commentary on the Canticle, cf. CERESA
7 Cf. WOLSKA-CONUS (éd.) 1973. Philo’s passages are the comment to Canticle 1:2.4,

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element is the cross in the middle. The palaeographic characteristics place
the manuscript in the category of the so-called “Monumentalschrift”.

The manuscript is in good condition. The binding consists of two woode
en plates, without any additional cover. The upper plate was torn but it has
been repaired again. The upper borders have been partially damaged, pre
sumably by rats; the written parts though have survived.

Some of the leaves are thick and hard, others are thinner. The script, except
for the first leaf, is homogeneous throughout the manuscript. It is archaic but
clear and easily readable. The letters are bulky and often angular. The codex
displays the orthographic exchange between \( \text{اهتمام}/\text{اهتمام} \), \( \text{xv}/\text{xv} \), \( \text{xv}/\text{xv} \), common to all
G♂az manuscripts. The interchange between the first and fifth order (for
example, fol. 2r \( \text{اهتمام}/\text{اهتمام} \); fol. 2v \( \text{اهتمام} \)) is so frequent that it allows us to believe
that this is a scribal habit. There are exchanges between the first and fourth
(fol. 9r \( \text{اهتمام}/\text{اهتمام} \)), as well as between the first and seventh order (fol. 9r \( \text{اهتمام} \) for
\( \text{اهتمام} \)). Hybrid letters are also featured, for instance in fol. 3v, where the
letter \( \text{اهتمام} \) has a double hook; it looks like an overlap of the second and third
order. It is difficult to distinguish the \( \text{اهتمام} \) from \( \text{اهتمام} \). There are instances in which a
fusion of two voices occurs, such as \( \text{اهتمام}/\text{اهتمام} \) for \( \text{اهتمام}/\text{اهتمام} \) in fol. 12v.

Philo’s commentary begins abruptly and is preceded by an alien text
(from fol. 2r to two words in fol. 4r).

Philo of Carpasia

Philo, the abridged form of Philemon, bishop of Carpasia in the island of
Cyprus, was a contemporary of Epiphanius of Salamis († 403?). In fact it
was the latter who ordained him bishop (\textit{Vita S. Epiph.}, II, 49). There has
been skepticism on the reliability of the information about Philo, similar to
that on the more famous Epiphanius. Philo died in Carpasia at the begin
ning of the 5th century and was buried in his church in the town of Rizocarpas.

The \textit{Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles} is the only work of
Philo Carpasianus registered in \textit{CPG} (no. 3810).

Philo’s commentary on the Canticle

The aim of the present paper is not to reopen a discussion on the authorship of
the commentary. I will rather summarize the data of researches conducted so
far. Philo composed a \textit{Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles} in Greek
\textit{(PG} 40, 28–153, from now on = G) which has survived in an epitome published
by Michelangelo Giacomelli in 1772, and in a Latin version edited by Epiphani-

us Scholasticus (6th century), who was an expert in translations from Greek to Latin and worked as a secretary (scholasticus) of Cassiodorus at Vivarium (Calabria). It was on the orders of the latter that Epiphanius has carried out the translation of Philo’s commentary. In 1750, Pietro Francesco Foggini published the editio princeps of the Latin version in Rome: *S. Epiphanii Salaminis in Cypro episopi commentarium in Canticum Canticorum prodit primum ex antiqua versione latina opera et studio P.F.F.* (from now on = L.). The edition was performed on the Latin manuscript Vaticanus lat. 5704 (probably belonging to the second half of the 6th century), the only witness of the Latin version. Scholars maintain that L is closer to the original. The Commentary has been edited again more recently. In antiquity Philo’s authorship of the Commentary to the Canticle was questioned. Cassiodorus, in a plausible attempt to enhance the prestige of the work, ascribed it to Epiphanius of Salamis (*Institutiones* I, 5,4). Pietro Foggini shared the same view. The issue of authorship was laid to rest after Giacomelli, unanimously followed by subsequent researchers, denied that Epiphanius of Salamis had written the *Commentary to the Canticle*. Since then, it has been firmly established that albeit there are some discrepancies, L is simply a translation from Greek.

Concerning the language of the commentary Ceresa Gastaldo says: “Il testo greco filoniano, quale si legge nell’edizione del Giacomelli, non presenta molte difficoltà, dato lo stile estremamente semplice richiesto dalla spiegazione letterale di ogni singolo versetto al *Cantico*. Solo saltuariamente compaiono vocaboli di uso postclassico.” Scholars have expressed various and not always flattering views on the quality of Philo’s Commentary on the Canticle. Indeed, it has often been dismissed as mediocre and a compilation in character. Siegmund’s verdict on the work is sharp: “… ziemlich wertlos.” One of the most important features of Philo’s exegesis is the traditional identification of the bridegroom with Christ and of the bride with the Church.

**Philo in Go‘az literature**

There are at least three works in the Go‘az language that are associated with the name of Philo, a Paschal homily, a fragment of the *Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles*, and a vast commentary on the Pauline Corpus. Even

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10 CERESA GASTALDO 1979; SAGOT 1981.
11 Cf. GIACOMELLI 1772, *Praefatio*, col. 15.
13 SIEGMUND 1949: 128.
14 Neither Philo nor Carpasia are registered in the section of Dillmann’s Lexicon reserved for nomina propria, cols. 1408–1423. There is no mention of them in KIDANA WÄLD KEPFLE 1948 ‘A.M.'
though it can be safely excluded that the trilogy belongs to Philo of Carpasia, nonetheless, there is a multifaceted common thread shared by the three works that carry the name of Philo. The similarities range from an apparently peculiar translation strategy to linguistic characteristics as well as a common Weltanschauung which seems to privilege an ascetic/monastic life style. The three works contain passages with anti-Judaic polemics and seem to be fond of the so-called “Theology of Substitution”.  

Paschal homily

In one of the three ancient manuscripts, the same text of a Paschal homily is ascribed to Philo (or Theophilus) bishop of Carpasia. The title in EMML 1763, no. 64, fols. 201v–204v, reads: “Homily of Felon, bishop of the town of Qerpesyas for Easter Wednesday”. The text is part of a large “collection of homilies for the year” and has been dated at around 1336/37 or 1339/40. Bausi maintains that EMML 1763 “contains traces” of what he calls “The Aksumite collection”. The Paschal homily has elements that confirm the antiquity of the homiliary’s language.

The second witness is Or. 8192 of the British Library, and presumably belongs to the 14th century. The title is: In his catalogue, Strelcyn translates: “Homily by Theophilus, Patriarch of Qarnelos, at Easter, for Wednesday in Easter-Week.”

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15 One example of the “Theology of Substitution” which advocated the idea that the Old Testament and Israel have been replaced by the New Testament and by the Church is the Epistle of Barnabas (2nd cent.).


17 BAUSI 2006a: 54, n. 21. With regard to the place and time of the “Aksumite collection”, Bausi states: “La Collezione aksumita, almeno il suo nucleo principale fu verosimilmente redatta in Egitto, come provano i documenti di origine alessandrina in essa incorporati, e in lingua greca. La data probabile della sua costituzione non è anteriore alla seconda metà del V sec.: il termine post quem è il 477 d.C., data della morte di Timoteo Eluro, il più tardo degli autori identificati i cui scritti vi siano compresi; come termine assoluto ante quem vale probabilmente il 686/87, come si evince da probanti elementi filologici”, ibid.: 45.

18 Catalogued in STRELCYN 1978: 92, ms. 56, no. 19 (fols. 72va–77ra).

19 The toponym is written in five different Gǝ’dǝ z syllabic signs, of which the third is partially stained (-ne-?; -me-?). Perhaps Qärnelos could have been a more obvious choice of the copyist.

20 This is a free translation. “Wednesday in Easter-Week” is not part of the title. "Wednesday in Easter-Week” is a liturgical indication placed in the upper margin.
Among the texts of EMML 8509, no. 40 (fols. 99r–102r) is a “homily for the 4th Sunday of Easter”, ascribed to “Theophilos Bishop of Carpathias”. Sergew dates it “not before the 10th and not after the 13th century”.

The variant “Theophilos”, a name more familiar than Philo to Ethiopian ears, can be explained as an adjustment of “Philo”, which perhaps looked awkward to the copyists. The difference in the spelling of names in the above Go’az manuscripts, and especially the identification of the text behind the Go’az version have been a great challenge to the editors and translators into Italian of the homily. The daunting task of searching for the Vorlage and retrieving it, an enterprise that at that time appeared beyond reach, did not discourage me from dealing with the Go’az text which I found extremely puzzling and irresistible at the same time. The publication of the homily with its translation into Italian was rightly criticized for its failure to hunt out the Vorlage, but it is also true that the Italian translation has been decisive in tracing the presumed Greek text behind the Go’az version of the homily. The “provisional conclusions” of Professor Voicu, formulated...
eight concise points raise some of the core issues\textsuperscript{27} and yet it seems that they are far from sorting out the question of the Vorlage of the Ga\'az version.

**Commentary on the Pauline Corpus**

The T\textsuperscript{rg}\textsuperscript{wame Felon Felgos is a bulky commentary of the Corpus Paulinum in which each Pauline pericope is followed by explanations ascribed alternately to Felon and to Felgos.\textsuperscript{28} The manuscripts inspected so far do not provide any additional information about the plain names of the two presumed commentators. The commentary\textsuperscript{29} is preserved in at least four manuscripts:

1) Vatican Library, Raineri 127,\textsuperscript{30} a parchment of 81 large folios, belonging approximately to the late 14\textsuperscript{th} century;
2) British Library, Or. 13,964,\textsuperscript{31} a copy on paper by a very recent hand;
3) British Library, Cowley 35, a replica of Or. 13,964;
4) Giustino de Jacobis (1800–1860) in his letter, dated 11 September 1846 gives an account of his visit to Dâbrä Bizän (Eritrea) where he was allowed to see the manuscripts of the monastery. Among the texts he saw, he mentions: “Un’esposizione rimarcabile di S. Paolo; opera, come dice l’autore della prefazione premessa al libro, di Filone e di Fileguos”\textsuperscript{32}

In the first three manuscripts parts of the commentary are missing. Raineri 127, which is much older than Or. 13,964, has many gaps on several accounts and the manuscript is in a poor state. The present order of the leaves is generally messy. The original binding has fallen apart for reasons difficult to under-

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\textsuperscript{27}VOICU 2004: 23.

\textsuperscript{28} An edition of this commentary with an annotated translation by the undersigned is well underway.

\textsuperscript{29}-registration in RAINERI 2004: 641.

\textsuperscript{30} Cf. COWLEY 1988: 445. Cowley acknowledges that the commentary’s lemmas “represent an old Geez text-type” but he dismisses the commentary as “somehow flat and pedestrian” (ibid.: 282). I doubt that Cowley has read the whole commentary, otherwise his judgement would have perhaps been different.

\textsuperscript{31} Cf. SAN GIUSTINO DE JACOBIS 2003: 823.
stand. The fatal result is the irretrievable loss of several parts of the original manuscript.

The text is clearly a servile translation from author(s) and text(s?) that so far remain unknown. Nonetheless, the commentary is of huge interest, among several other aspects, due to the amount of Ge'ez hapax legomena and to entries attested only once or twice elsewhere. I am skeptical though that the Targum Felon Felgos has been translated directly from Greek. The comment on Heb 7:1-3 clears ground. Philo of Carpasia at any rate cannot be the author. It says:

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\[ \text{The } \text{first explicit quotation in the Targum Felon Felgos.} \]
Felgos interpreted and said: And Mâlkà Şeqeq [Melchizedek] is the King of Peace, priest of the high God. When he says, ‘King of Salem’, it is because he (God) appointed only him to the grave of our father Adam and its name is Salem, no one else before him resided in that town. Because of this he was named king, for he alone did priestly ministry within her. That is Jerusalem, a prophecy of the one who was to come, Jesus, Saviour of the world. And Abraham held a meeting with him as he returned from the battle against the kings, when he killed the kings of Amalek, since he is a prophet, he knew that God would have sent his Word on earth and he said: ‘Will you send your Word on earth during my days?’ And he manifested himself to Abraham to whom the word of prophecy was given, and told him: ‘It is not now, but cross the Jordan and I will manifest to you’. And he told him that he encountered Melkisedek and he blessed him. And Mâlkà Şeqeq blessed our father Abraham and gave him the typoi of the flesh and blood of Christ. Thus Abraham saw in prophecy through the hands of Mâlkà Şeqeq, and Abraham rejoiced and gave the tenth from all he received, and gave a tithe to Mâlkà Şeqeq, his first interpretation means ‘king of Peace’, who did not have a father and who did not have a mother and whose birth is unknown, and whose life has no end and has no beginning. When he says this, ‘he has no father and he has no mother’ do not mislead your heart as Severus of Antioch, and he said: ‘He is from the essence of the divinity and Mâlkà Şeqeq is the Holy Spirit’. And for this reason he committed a great mistake. If he says: ‘He has no father and he has no mother’ it is because his father and his mother were idol worshippers who did not fear the Lord. And for this reason Sem too, after stealing from his father and mother, as his father had ordered, because Noah knew from the Holy Spirit, that he would have become priest of the high God inside Salem. With this knowledge he was crucified there in Kranio, where our father Adam was buried, and there appointed Mâlkà Şeqeq that he may praise, sing, incense and do priestly ministry. When he said ‘king of righteousness’, it was because only he lived and did not commit sin; when he said ‘king of peace’, it was because only he lived and there was nobody with whom he quarrelled, and no end to the

35 Anacoluthon.
37 For sources on Golgotha as the place of Adam’s burial, cf. SU-MIN RI 2000; ANDERSON – STONE – TROMP (eds.) 2000.
length of his days. Until the coming of Christ again, he will live as God has hidden and concealed him, until he dies, according to his (God’s) will.

This is a literal translation which is meant to be faithful to the Ga’az and also to allow the reader to have an insight into the nature of the text. The background of this comment will be discussed in due course in the edition of the commentary. For our purpose now, it is sufficient to observe that Severus of Antioch died one century after Philo, in 540 ca.

The Commentary to the Canticle of Canticles

Premise

In the introduction to his seminal work on the Targum and Andomma of St. John’s Apocalypse, Roger Cowley divides Ga’az commentaries into three categories:

1) translations representative of an earlier period of Greek sources;
2) translations representative of a later period of Syriac, Coptic, and Arabic sources, principally of Ibn at-Tayyib and various Syriac writers, or of substantial reworking of earlier sources, as in the “Coptic-Arabic gospel catena”;
3) original Ga’az compositions.

Cowley places our fragment of Philo’s commentary on the Canticle among the translations of the earlier period.38

As mentioned earlier, the commentary is introduced as an “Interpretation of Solomon”. The Ga’az version is anonymous. There are several elements shared by the aforementioned texts associated with Philo that I could not observe in other Ga’az texts translated from Greek. As a general term of comparison between “Philo’s” Ga’az versions and literature rendered from Greek, I have taken into consideration three homilies in EMML 1763 published by Getatchew Haile,39 the Qerlos,40 the Fasalgos,41 the Anti-Christ of Pseudo-

38 COWLEY 1983: 35–36.
39 They are: (1) GETATCHEW HAILE 1979: 309–318; Getatchew Haile in his remark that introduces the text of the homily states that “the story of Fru mentius was composed by Rufinus in Latin, retold by Socrates in Greek, translated anonymously as a homily into Ga’az, perhaps during the Axumitic period, and finally re-edited for the Synaxary by someone (sic) with good command of Ga’az, but who misunderstood and ‘rectified’ the homily in several places”. The connection with Latin and Greek texts is not demonstrated. (2) Id. 1981: 117–134. (3) The other homily is contained in fols. 110v–113v, cf. Id. 1990: 29–47. The vocabulary and especially the grammar of the Paschal homily is considerably different from the language of these homilies.
40 The Qerlos, a compendium of patristic and theological works, gathers together writings which were not all written by Cyril of Alexandria. It includes: a) Ḫṣṭḥḥba’i’s
Hyppolytus\footnote{Cf. Hommel 1877.} to mention a few. In the search for models that can help to figure out translation patterns that could eventually shed light on Philo’s version, it is essential to keep a close eye on the Bible, especially on the critical editions of the Gospels. There is an important difference though between the “Philonian” writings and the texts of Sacred Scripture. The aim of the biblical translators was to allow readers and listeners to grasp the message while in “Philo’s” versions the purpose seems to be to reproduce a spitting image of the original. It is the classical case in which “… ancient translators were satisfied with their work at a point where a modern translator would begin to manipulate his, not to change the meaning but to create the proper aesthetic effect”.\footnote{Miles 1985: 2. For a more recent and useful work, see, Van der Louw 2007, especially chapters 2 and 3 which deal with “Translating and translations in Antiquity”, “Inventory of Transformation”, pp. 25–92.}

“Philo’s” Gǝzǝz versions have a syntax which differs from the early Gǝzǝz texts and reflects a translation technique of their own. The linguistic harshness and the hermeneutic system are basically the same in the three “Philonian” texts. There is a consistent number of terms not found elsewhere, or rarely attested outside these scarcely copied and virtually unknown works. Even though, at least for the time being, it is difficult to reconstruct the identity of the translator and of his milieu, there is no doubt that the trilogy contributes to the knowledge of archaic Gǝzǝz as well as to a particular brand of translation technique.

The translator and the translation

The present paper does not pretend to engage in a full-fledged speculation about the translation strategy at the heart of the Gǝzǝz version, whose texture is elusive in its kind. Instead of providing an essay on translation techniques that elaborate on theories about a hypothetical school training translators, the scope is limited to highlighting the more evident elements of renderings that do not have (known) equals in Gǝzǝz literature. The linguistic hurdles, the paleness of the comments that do not match exactly with the

(Compilation) in which we find the De Recta Fide and the Prosphoneticus ad Reginas; b) Pǝlladyos or ḡssawǝ dǝrsǝn, that is, Quod Christus sit unus; c) Tǝrǝf Qerlos ‘The Rest of Cyril’ is a collection of homilies and extracts, eight by Cyril himself, fourteen by other writers, one epistle of the Council of Ephesus and one passage of the Council of Nicea. Most of this material has been critically edited and translated by Manuel Bernd Weischer; cf. Bausi 2010: 287a–290a.

\footnote{Cf. Caquot 1965: 165–214.}
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hermeneutic taste of the Ethiopic tradition, engender a couple of obvious questions: why Philo, a commentator who did not enjoy fame even in his own milieu was translated into Gǝ’ǝz? The morphology, syntax and vocabulary of this commentary are similar to those of the Paschal homily attributed to the same author about which I made the following assessment: “... as it stands, the language of this homily is linguistically untenable. In fact, rather than a sequence of orderly thoughts, the text presents a pile of words, put side by side without any care to provide a logical connection among them. The morphology and syntax do not correspond to the most elementary rules of Gǝ’ǝz grammar which in this text appears to be visibly disfigured. This text is a test bed, a unique challenge even to people who are familiar with Gǝ’ǝz.” This evaluation suits perfectly the *Commentary on the Canticle* and the *Targwame Felon Felgos*.

Having the original in front of you though, makes a difference. This is the case with the *Commentary on the Canticle*. Nonetheless, unanswered queries remain: who took upon himself the herculean task of producing such a translation that demanded, not only relentless discipline in strictly adhering to the Greek copy but also a great deal of creativity? Why did the translator deliver such a thorny text? Who was the target reader, if there was one at all? It is the virtually inaccessible character of the Gǝ’ǝz version in its totality, that elicits these questions and more, like for instance through the vocabulary, that is often apparently created ad hoc to reproduce the original faithfully. The phrasing as well is extremely difficult to understand and to handle. Some token examples will help us see these difficulties for ourselves.


Such a slavish translation is doomed because it fails to make sense. The phrase would have been easier to understand if it were formulated differently: ὧδε ἔλθας ἀποκαθιστήσῃ: ἔγινεν: ἐποικισάτα: ὧδε ἔλθας ἀποκαθιστήσῃ: ἔγινεν: ἐποικισάτα: ὧδε ἔλθας ἀποκαθιστήσῃ: ἔγινεν: ἐποικισάτα: ὧδε ἔλθας ἀποκαθιστήσῃ: ἔγι

44 Usually Ethiopic hermeneutics is generous in offering lengthy explanations, in resorting to symbolism, analogy and multiple interpretations of the same item, whenever it is possible to do so.


46 Perhaps this is one of the reasons that can explain the “death” of the text that did not have either circulation or resonance.
been rendered with אָתְמוֹפָא from יִתְמוֹפָא “mente percipere, sentire, sibi consciun esse” (Dillmann 1865, col. 997.3).

A comparison between the Greek and the Goʾaz leads to conclude that the technique followed by the translator seems to be the “mirror type” translation: a paratactic rendering, totally subservient to the language the translator had before his eyes and at the expense of the reader. It seems that the latter is excluded from the translator’s horizon. A few illustrative cases allow us to see the pattern: fol. 4v ἀθίονος = ineffable; fol. 4r, ἰκεφή : ἰκεφή “marriage of theft” for κληρεγμένη. Even for a pedantic translation, ἰκεφή : ἰκεφή would have been more tolerable than ἰκεφή : ἰκεφή, an opposition behind which we can see the verbs κλέπτω and γαμέω. Instead of the artificial ἰκεφή : ἰκεφή, attested nowhere else except in this text, ιωνοφή “adultery, fornication” could have easily cut the Gordian knot.

There is a passage in the Goʾaz version which in my opinion, can be perceived as a glimpse of the translator’s identity. Fol. 13r reads: Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ : Λάμπ : Φαλόπ = “... which comes from the black preacher of glory, who receiving the Only-Begotten through Philip the Apostle saying: ‘Ethiopia stretches her hand towards God’” (Psalm 67:32). For: ἐναρχουμένη ἄρτῳ τοῦ Ἰερουσαλημίου τῆς κόρης ἤστηθα τοῦ Μοναστηρίου τοῦ Ἑλέατος τοῦ Ἑλέατος. While it cannot be excluded categorically, the question is whether an Ethiopian would have translated Ιερουσαλημίου with Ἐκαροί “black” because the predicate “black” is usually derogatory. On the other hand, if the proper noun Ethiopia is of Greek origin, as many scholars support, the term αἰθιω from αἰθω “burn”,

49 The method of translation in rendering Philo’s works into Goʾaz is also featured in the so-called Yowshaban doproc Armenian “Hellenistic School”, which flourished between the fifth and sixth centuries. The translators (t’argmantičk) carried out translations from Greek to Armenian: “... puntiglosamente sotto forma di vera e propria ‘glossa continua’. Ne consegue una lingua armena artificiale, una sorta di ‘metalingua’, costruita interamente sulla base di commutazioni automatiche”, SGARBI 2001: 115–122.
50 “Ethiopia” is according to the text of the LXX: Αἰθιοπία προεπήθαι χεῖρα αὐτῆς τῷ ὖρο. The Massoretic text (68: 32) reads: יִתְמוֹפָא, יִתְמוֹפָא וְהָרִים.
52 For the confusion around the nomenclature “Ethiopia (Abyssinia), Nubia and India”, cf. MUNRO-HAY 1997: 11–14. Levine states: “For the early Greek writers Ethiopia
and ὀψες “face”, would mean “scorched face, black”, thus conceding a scope of possibility that ἀθηος is, if not a translation, perhaps an interpretation of Αἰθιοπος.53 In the New Testament Αἰθιος occurs twice in Acts 8: 27 and there is no evidence so far that it has ever been rendered with ἀθηος.54 The LXX uses Αἰθιος 28 times where the Hebrew reads שֵׁל.

**Relationship between the Greek text and the Goʾaz version**

It is a well established fact that there has been an interaction between the two languages. Numismatics, inscriptions, the first translations of the Bible and of other Christian writings into Goʾaz express Greek as an undisputed witness that has been a source language.55 There are a good number of Greek terms that have made their way into Goʾaz, directly or through other languages.56 Some of them are still used in the liturgy.57 The divide between the two languages can hardly be exaggerated. Translating from Greek, a language with an incomparably wider vocabulary, and a more complex syntax, must have been a unique challenge. The intricate web of the Greek verbal system, with its subtleties and nuances is impossible to transfer effectively not only into Goʾaz but also into other Semitic languages. The Goʾaz version of Philo’s commentary is a meaningful example that confirms the distance separating the two languages and how troublesome their encounter can be.


53 It is wise to leave this question open, taking into account the fact that until the Middle Ages the country identified itself as Βαβερᾶ Αγ’αξγυαν. Dillmann states: “Die Abessiner des Mittelalters haben ... den Namen [Αθιοπι] für sich und ihr Land ... adoptiert”, cf. DILLMANN 1878: 179.


55 There is no point in giving a bibliographical list on this subject which has been extensively studied. In the entry “Goʾaz Literature”, Getatchew Haile begins the periodization of Goʾaz literature with the “Greek Period”, cf. GETATCHEW HAILE 2005: 736b–737a; cf. also LUSINI 1988: 469–493.

56 Indirectly, especially via Arabic.

It has already been mentioned that so far, there is no critical edition of Philo’s Greek commentary to the Canticle of Canticles based on the whole of the manuscript tradition. While waiting for the production of such a work, a comparison of the Ga’az version with the available printed material can be a starter to put forward a preliminary evaluation. The Ga’az translation is closer to the Greek and in several places distant from the Latin. This will be highlighted in the footnotes of the translation.

The quality of the Ga’az version of Philo’s commentary is not completely homogeneous. Sometimes it seems to stick meticulously to its Vorlage, while elsewhere the impression is that it is a loose translation. In the comparison between the Ga’az text with the Greek the following aspects deserve particular attention:

Punctuation of the Ga’az version in JE300E

Generally the four dots appear fairly often after short units which in many cases do not represent a full concept, and rather than helping to understand the text they often throw it into darkness. As we do not know which Greek text was used to translate the Commentary into Ga’az it is difficult to get to the origin of the messy punctuation. It is also impossible to establish whether the punctuation belongs to the first draft or more likely to a subsequent copyist. We have an example of absolute anarchy in the punctuation of Ṭargame Felon Felgos in the copy of Or. 13,964, which is very different from that of Raineri 127. The passages below have been selected to show the phenomenon:

fol. 4v:

Which perfumes a perfume without limits, which has a glory that is not amazing, of the angels. Which leads to honour.

The punctuation does not correspond to the Greek:

I will see a way which is in Paradise. Again it will lead me [where] they disobey the law.

The Ga’az punctuation needs to be emended accordingly:

... which perfumes a perfume without limits, which has ineffable glories, which carries honours equal to those of the angels;

... and I will see a way which is in Paradise. Again it will lead me [where] they disobey the law.

59 The translator has often faithfully rendered the passive forms of the Greek verbs, which is not a frequent habit in Ga’az literature.
For one is the legislator, in the two of them he ordered it will be said also in her memory what she did: the perfume which says the perfume. Apostles Paul said: ‘everyone was poured of with the fear of God and the perfume of the world. Like one of them, the Apostle Paul said: ‘...’; “where this Gospel is going to be preached [...] in the whole world will be told also this she has done to the Church”. The Greek says: ‘οὐ γὰρ λέει με ὀψερη τῇ μέθῃ τούτῳ κοῦμα, γηνίν ἡ Ἐκκλησία “for it does not lessen me like drunkenness this drink, says the Church ...”’. The Ḡǝz punctuation has to be slightly modified: λαθοῦν: λ.φ.: "... and his rule all and everywhere perfumes. Behold in this is bright and moreover ...”; The passage has to be split differently: λαθοῦν: λ.φ.: "... everyone was poured of with the fear of God and the perfume of the world. Like one of them, the Apostle Paul said: ‘...’; “where this Gospel is going to be preached [...] in the whole world will be told also this she has done to the memory of these two Testaments I consider she indicates God’s book. Which says the perfume ...”. This version displays a number of syntactic problems and differs remarkably from the Greek, as far as punctuation and contents are concerned. The Greek reads: ὅπου ἔτοιγ κηρυγγίᾳ τῷ Εὐαγγέλῳ τούτῳ ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ, λαλαθηείη καὶ ὁ ἑποίησεν αὐτήν εἰς μιμήσιον αὐτής. Τῶν τάς δύο τρόπος αἰμα ὑποσμηαίεν τὴν θείαν τάσσην Γραφῆν, φασκῶςον “wherever this Gospel will be proclaimed in the whole world, it will be said also in her memory what she did”. I consider that these two figures want to indicate this divine Scripture which says: ‘...’; “For one is the legislator, in the two of them he ordered rules and from a source that does not die [laws] which have life and milk of the spirit”. The Greek says: εἰς γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς νομιμεῖς ἐκατέρως διεστάτευ Σιαθήκας. Δύο τοῖν ποτὶ αὐτοῦ αἱ δύο κέλλησαι Διαθήκας καὶ ἕκ μιᾶς τῆς

60 ἐνεκόμημαι; λ.φ. 1 literally means: the one who arranges/establishes the law.
for there is one and the same legislator, who was disposed, in each alliance. Her two breasts are called two alliances and from the only immortal source have the flow of spiritual milk.

The examples above are only a few of the many twists, difficult, if not impossible to sort out without the help of the Greek original.

The difference between G and the Ga’az: omissions

The textual vacua in the Ga’az version can be interpreted in various ways, starting perhaps with the textual type the translator used namely, a translation carried out on an inadequate specimen. Parts could have been left out, due to the translator’s insurmountable linguistic difficulties. As a matter of fact, some of the Greek terms are impossible to render literally into Ga’az. Either the translator needed to be gifted with extraordinary creativity and resilience, otherwise, and this is the more common situation, it was necessary to resort to paraphrasing. There are instances in which gaps seem to have occurred involving terms and grammatical constructions within the range of the translator’s capacity, due to distraction or perhaps sheer negligence. A few token examples of one or more terms that disappeared in the translation will be listed here-after:

- fol. 4v: ἐσπαρταῖος from ἐσπαρτακός “to show as in a mirror, reflect”;
- fol. 4v: καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς “and on earth”;
- fol. 5r: πρὶν “sometimes”;
- fol. 5r: ἐπεξεύροντος [τῆς λαμπρόφωτος] “excess of [brightness]”;
- fols. 6v and 7r: φησιν “says”;
- fol. 8r: the translator gets rid of: ἐν ταύτῃ δὲ προφητικῶν σημαίνει τρόπον “for in that he indicates a prophetic figure”, with two words only: ἠθημαμεν ἐν ὑπακοή “and in this makes known”;
- fols. 8v–9r: ἔξεστι νεώνα ἐξείλαν τὴν τῷ σώματι ἀσθενεστέραν, ψυχής δὲ πρῶτες ἀρχοστήραν “Watch that girl very weak in the body, but stronger in the soul for the faith”. The Ga’az version reads: ἠθημαμεν ἐν ὑπακοή ἐν προφητικῶν τρόπων, λαμπρὸν τὸ πρόσωπον ἀλλαμαόμενον καὶ σημαίνει “the virgins in the faith, but not a virgin which is weak in the flesh but the spirit is firm in the faith”. The omission of the initial verb βλέπε, has a fatal consequence for the whole period: it strips off its meaning;
- fol. 10v: καὶ περὶ τὸν ἐαυτῆς ἐγαλλομένη νυμφίον “and rejoicing in her groom”.

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Peculiarities of some of the translations

Fol. 4v: παρηγορεύον προξένουσα “providing firmness”. Προξενουσα is a present participle, feminine, singular of the verb προξένεω “to procure, secure for”.61 In theory there is no identical verbal form in Gəzəz. Λησσάς : Ραής : Βαρής “faith which gives”, is the way our translator renders the Greek expression. The translation does not represent the Greek perfectly but it is an acceptable adaptation. Παρηγορεύον can mean “confidence, trust, frankness in speech”.62 The choice of the verbal noun Λησσάς (from Λησσάς) meaning “fides a) quae creditur, religio; b) confessio”,63 cannot pass unnoticed. The entry Λησσάς does not occur in the Bible.64 In the New Testament there is no uniformity in the rendering of παρηγορεύον.65 In Mk 8: 32; Acts 4: 31 it is translated with ἰς; in Jn 7: 13; Acts 2: 29 with Κοινωνία. Both entries correspond to the meaning of the Greek. However there is no notable occurrence of Λησσάς/Λησσάς translating παρηγορεύον.

In the Gəzəz version of Philo’s commentary there is a twofold rendering of δείκτης: in fol. 5v δύο Διάκης is read as: ἱδίον “two laws”. In fol. 11r: Κύριος Ιέρσαλημ “two statutes” for δύο Διάκης.

The term τρόπος which means: a) direction; b) mode, manner; c) character, nature; d) style, in Gəzəz (fol. 7v) is rendered with ՃԽԹԳԽՂ “two statutes” for δύο Διάκης.

In fol. 6r Հայրորդուն i չե “drink of the spirit” is an example of a common pattern which instead of an adjective makes use of the apposition of proper nouns. None of the Gəzəz witnesses of 1 Cor 10: 4 reads Հայրորդուն i չե for σουμενων ἐπον. The more obvious rendering is: չե : Κոινωνία. Likewise the translator renders θεία γλωσσή with Κοινωνία : Βαβλώτος (fol. 7v) instead of the more common expressions like Κοινωνία : Κοινωνία or Κοινωνία : Βαβλώτος.68

Fol. 8r reads: Սանտուր : Βαβλώτος “fear of God”, but also Կերի “fear of God” for εἰρήνη.

61 LAMPE 1961: 1159.
62 Ibid. 1045, III.
63 DILLMANN 1865, col. 738.
64 As a matter of fact, traditional Gəzəz language teachers describe the word with the derogatory amharic epithet, ճԽԹԳԽՂ “incorrect, useless”.
65 Ibid., col. 14. There has been a long-standing discussion on the origin of Λησσάς which is close to the Syriac λασσα. Re-opening the debate on this issue is not relevant to our purpose here.
66 Heb 10: 19.35 has 产业基地 for παρηγορεύον even though the former means “grace, gentleness …”, cf. Ibid., col. 937.
67 Ibid., col. 1346.
68 Ibid. col. 153.
Fol. 5v: σκοπέως “contemplation” is adequately translated with ἰσχυρός “mind, thought”.

Fol. 10v: πληθυντικός λέγει “it speaks at the plural”. It is likely that the expression was too difficult to translate, therefore it is reduced to: ἰσχυρός: ὁμοίως “like many”.

Fol. 13r: There is a needless stop after Βάφτισμα as well as a confusion between ἐκολούθησα to begin, ἐκκόλοθησα “to come, go”.

As already said, the translation of Βάφτισμα is curious. The translator always reads Βάφτισμα inadequately, namely ἀνεμόνοι, ἔφηδη, or ἀνεμόνοι together with ὡς puella. From the general treatment reserved to νεάνις in the Gסז versions, it is difficult to establish why Philo’s commentary has opted for Βάφτισμα.

Free translations (?)

On fol. 11r we read: ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως, a sentence that needs to be fixed again as follows: ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως ὅπως μετά τρία ἄρθρα. The Gסז version does not correspond perfectly to the Greek: ταμεῖον δὲ βασιλέως, ὅπως πάντα ἔποντα ἐπεξεργάζεται τὰ θησαυρότατα “treasury of the king is thus, where all treasures lie”.

Compound terms translated literally

This is a frequently used translation technique in Philo’s commentary. There is an impressive strict adherence to the original, quite bold indeed, but the result seems to be a parody of the Gסז language. A few illustrative examples will follow:

69 Also Ex 2:8 renders νεάνις with Βάφτισμα, cf. BOYD 1911: 3.
70 Sunday’s Mak’a Woddase reads: ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι; ἀνεμόνοι = ‘you have been named: “beloved” o blessed among the young girls’, cf. ὁμοίως: ὁμοίως: ὁμοίως 1983 A.M.: 17.
71 DILLMANN 1865, col. 664.
The Gǝǝz Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a

The translator renders the Greek word for word, but some of these versions remain dead because the Gǝǝz fails to make sense. On the other hand, there are “mirror type” translations the grammar of which is acceptable and the meaning perfectly understandable. Here is a short list of examples:

The Latin version and the Gǝǝz text

The Gǝǝz version has been performed on a Greek text. There are occasional connections though with the L. Obviously this does not suggest that there has been an interaction between L. and the Gǝǝz version. The traces of L. in Gǝǝz indicated in the footnotes of the translation, derive from the relationship between the Greek Vorlage and L.

The Gǝǝz text of the Commentary to the Canticle

In the edition of 2008 the choice was to publish the text as it appears in the Jerusalem manuscript with a literal Italian translation. As already stated, the vocabulary, grammar, and the type of translation of the Gǝǝz version do not suit Gǝǝz linguistic schemes. They will be discussed briefly hereafter.

Vocabulary

Verbal forms apparently created by the translator

There are several instances with the uncommon fourth (reciprocal) form of the Gǝǝz verbal root. In fol. 4r we find IMATEH-, employed to render

72 ὁμητ = ὁμητ has to be emended with ὁμητ = ὁμητ.
73 A defective form for ἔμητ.
75 I tried to read some parts of this manuscript to two native scholars of Gǝǝz language. One of them listened for a few minutes and rejected the text, complaining that the idiom cannot qualify as Gǝǝz. The reaction of the second scholar was not much different.
76 Traditionally known as ἡμιήτ “pillars” or basic verbal forms. For a detailed description on the meaning of ἄσματ, cf. Kidanawald Kifle 1948 A.M.: 59; cf. also Guidi 1906: 915.
It would be the reciprocative form of ἀπῆλθεν = traxit. 77 I have not been able to trace any other occurrence of ἀπῆλθεν. In the same fol. 4r the text reads ἀπεκάλυψε, the reciprocal form of the verb ἀπέκαλύπτω = libidine corrumpere. 79 Once again, ἀπεκάλυψε = ἀπεκάλυψε, which is meant to render δεινοτάτη φαύλη οἰσπρηλατούμενη. 80 is not attested elsewhere. In fol. 19r the translator presents ἀπεκάλυψε from λαμβάνω, an otherwise unattested reciprocal form of λαμβάνω. 81

Verbal nouns apparently coined by the translator

In fol. 17r we read ἁγιάζω-α, of which there is no other witness. The translator has obtained it from the verb ἀνέβας. There is ἀνάβας 82 but ἁγιάζω-α is unheard of. It should be acknowledged though, that in theory the translator has followed a legitimate path in his effort to produce the new entry. The root ἁγιάζω will be picked up to show how a Gες verb is processed until nouns and adjectives are derived from it; it will help to try to figure out the itinerary followed by the translator to get to the form ἁγιάζω-α.

Thus the form ἁγιάζω-α from ἀνέβας velocem esse or rather from ἀνέβας alium alium praevenire studere, 83 corresponds to ἁγιάζω-α congregatio of the verb ἁγιάζω.

Voices impossible to decipher

In fol. 4v there is ἀποκάλυψε, a non-existent term which does not express anything. If the translator’s intention was to render γιαζόμενης, he should have used ἁγιάζω-α. 84 In fol. 5r we have ἀρχαί, instead of ἀρχαί, which can be taken as an orthographic error. There are more of such cases and they will be indicated in the footnotes of the upcoming edition and translation of the text.

77 LIDDELL – SCOTT 1968: 534.
78 DILLMANN 1865, col. 179.
79 Ibid., col. 168.
80 From οἰσπρηλατεῖν = ‘to be maddened, to be driven mad’, LAMPE 1981: 946.
81 DILLMANN 1865, col. 764.
82 Ibid., col. 541.
83 Ibid., col. 540.
84 Ibid., col. 207.
The Ga’az Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a

Morphology and syntax

From what has been said so far, it has become clear that the Ga’az version of the commentary offers a number of new and sometimes awkward entries. There are also forms that occur rarely in Ga’az, such as ṭawrāl, ṭawrāl, which is Dillmann’s (col. 141) comment on the enclitic particle ṭawrāl, the regular form is ṭawrāl. The manuscript always has ṭawrāl instead of the more common ṭawrāl, as it stands, remains an anacoluthon: it would demand a complement, otherwise it was necessary to use the intransitive ṭawrāl; fol. 7v reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 9r: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl. The objection is to the undue employment of the accusative; fol. 9r reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 10v reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 18v reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 18r reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl. From at least the 17th century onwards the use of the accusative with ṭawrāl, ṭawrāl, will be abandoned. Disagreement in number and gender, an aspect that does not only belong to this text, is very widespread here.

Impossible cases

These are passages that resemble inaccessible fortresses. An example of such desperate cases is the passage in f. 10r: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 10v reads: ṭawrāl instead of the usual: ṭawrāl; fol. 18r reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl; fol. 18v reads: ṭawrāl instead of ṭawrāl. The first casualty of this version, impossible to translate into English, is Ga’az syntax. The only aim of the translator seems to be to render the Greek (harsh in the original too) faithfully. The positive score of the Ga’az version is that it manages to preserve the substance of the Greek.

Biblical quotations

Almost all of the biblical quotations in this manuscript differ considerably from the known Ga’az textual tradition. The biblical references look like translations carried out together with the rest of the commentary without reference to existing biblical texts:

fol. 9r Mt 9:23 reads: ṭawrāl = But the disciples said: “Send away the one that is crying behind us!”. The earliest available witnesses read: ṭawrāl.
And his disciples came and told him: “Send her away for she is crying behind us!”;

in fol. 10v. 2Tm 4:7-8 is quoted: ἐὰν γὰρ ἀδελφοὶ ὑμῶν ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα, ἐπιτρέψατε ὑμεῖς ἄντων ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα. “I have finished the running. And I have kept the faith, and now for me is ready the crown of justice that God will give me on that day. The judge of righteousness, and not only to me, but also to all of those who love his teaching”. This quotation displays several peculiarities. The voice ἐὰν a gerund which here, together with ἐπιτρέψατε seems to have the function of an infinitive is not attested elsewhere. The form for ὄνομα is ὄνομα. The oldest available witnesses of these verses read: ἐὰν γὰρ ἀδελφοὶ ὑμῶν ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα, ἐπιτρέψατε ὑμεῖς ἄντων ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα. “And I have indeed finished my race and I have kept my faith, and now for me is ready the crown of justice that God will give me on that day, the judge of righteousness. And not to me alone, but to all of those who love his coming”;

fol. 11v: ἐὰν γὰρ ἀδελφοὶ ὑμῶν ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα, ἐπιτρέψατε ὑμεῖς ἄντων ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα. “those who suffer and walk the cramped gate and the narrow way” is an allusion to Mt 7:14. In the earliest manuscripts Mt 7:14 reads: καὶ ἐγείρας ἀπὸ τὸ ὄρος καὶ αὐξήσετέ τοὺς ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ καταπέσας ὀπίσω τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὑμῶν. “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”. There are several Greek versions of this passage: the A-Text: ἐὰν γὰρ ἀδελφοὶ ὑμῶν ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα, ἐπιτρέψατε ὑμεῖς ἄντων ἔχωσιν κακόν ὄνομα. “Love your enemies and bless those who curse you and do well to those who hate you and pray for those who do violence to you

85 The proper form of the infinitive though is ἐὰν.
86 Ibid., col. 308.
87 E.g., Pentaglotto Ambrosiano B. 20 inf. (14th/15th century); Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Eth. 29 (compiled in 1419).
88 The references “A-Text”, “B-Text” are Zuurmond’s classifications of the textual types according to their antiquity.
and persecute you”. B-Text: ἀγαπήσε τὸν παραδίκο σου καὶ πραγματεύε στὸν παραδίκο σου ἐκ τοῦ ἄκενο. “Love your enemy and pray for those who do violence to you and persecute you”;

fol. 12r quotes Ex 23:5: ΛΟΧΟΥ ἐστιν ἡ μέτρια ὁδός. “If you find your enemy’s donkey that fell down while loaded do not pass by, raise it”.

The oldest available text reads: ΛΟΧΟΥ ἐστιν ἡ μέτρια ὁδός. “If you saw the donkey of your enemy and has strengthened his adversary do not oppress it but help it”. In most of the other texts collated by Boyd there is ΒΟΔ “its load” instead of ΒΟΔ “its adversary”. The LXX reads: ἢττιν δὲ ἵδος τὸ ὑποζύγιον τοῦ ἐχθροῦ σου πεπτωχός ὑπὸ τὸν γόμον αὐτοῦ ὑποκείμενον αὐτό, ἀλλὰ συνεργάζεται αὐτῷ μετ’ αὐτοῦ “if you see the donkey of your enemy fallen under his freight, do not pass it by, but you shall lift it”. Philo’s quotation seems to be closer to the LXX than the ᾽Αὐσζ version;

fol. 13r quotes Jer 2:10: Χλεοσι Φαραονι: οὗτοι ἔδωκαν. Whether the nations change their gods. This differs from the text edited by Schäfers: Χλεοσι: οὗτοι ἔδωκαν. “I moved in the islands of Kittim and look you! In Kedar too send, understand well whether anything like this was done, whether the nations change their gods”. This differs from the text edited by Schäfers: Χλεοσι: οὗτοι ἔδωκαν. “I moved in the islands of Kittim and look you! In Kedar too send, understand well whether anything like this was done, whether the nations change their gods”.

Francesco da Bassano’s edition reads: οὗτοι ἔδωκαν. “Cross to the islands of Kittim and look and dispatch and send to the children of Kedar and examine thoroughly and look if [something] like this has happened. Whether the nations change their gods”.


89 There are very minor differences among the Paris Codex and the other manuscripts collated by Boyd. οὐκ ἔδωκαν. “and do not pass over” is the one of the variants which is shared by our commentary, cf. Boyd 1911: 68.

90 Schäfers 1912: 3.
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They worked for one hour and you equated them with us who have borne the weight and the flame of the day. The Greek reads: μέν αὐτός ἠμίσυς ἐποίησες τοις βασανίσσοι τὸ βάρος τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τὸν καῦσον. “They worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.”

Proper nouns

In fol. 8r there is ֚ for ֚; fol. 9r Syro-Phonicia; fol. 13r Schäfers reads: .

Philo’s commentary and the other Ethiopian commentaries on the Canticle of Canticles

There is no trace at all of this Commentary either in the A.D. or in the andomita.

Abbreviations:

A.D. = Anno Domini
‘A.M. = ‘Amàta Msbrât (year in Ethiopian calendar)

Bibliography


92 “name split” is the formula traditional morphology employed to indicate partial or defective forms of proper nouns, as in the present case. a פ for a פ is a further example of this scribal habit. The cut of the last letter, which is often intentional, is aimed at obtaining the rhyme, cf. ֚ in T&samma Hâbbât MIKÂ’EL 1951 ‘A.M.: 890. ֚ is a Greek calque, like a פ or a פ and more than anything else is a form close to the Syriac א, Hebrew יי, and Arabic א.
93 The context is Jer 2: 10.11a.
94 There is no similarity with the edition of EURINGER 1937: 257–276, 369–382.


The Ge’ez Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a


Foggini, P.F. 1750, S. Epiphani in Cypro episcopi Commentarium in Canticum Cantorum, Romae: Typis Paleariniannis.


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The Gǝz Version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary on Canticle of Canticles 1:2–14a

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The Book of the Sanctification [Mass] in Gǝz and in Amharic) 1918 ‘A.M. [1925/26 A.D.], s.l.


SIEGMUND, A. 1949, Die Überlieferung der griechischen christlichen Literatur in der lateinischen Kirche bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert = Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Benediktiner-Akademie 5 München: Filser.


The aim of the paper is to provide an overview of little known Ga’az texts ascribed to Philo, namely: fragments of a Paschal Homily, a bulky but incomplete commentary on the Pauline Corpus and a fragment of Philo of Carpasia’s commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. While concentrating mainly on the latter, the present article wants to draw attention to linguistic characteristics common to the trilogy which is associated with the name Philo. The Ga’az version of Philo of Carpasia’s Commentary is a rare example of a strictly paratactic translation which is keen to reproduce literally the Greek text from which it depended. The outcome is a hardly understandable Ga’az text which is however interesting as a unique witness of an ancient translation technique. The Philonian trilogy is among other aspects, a mine of unknown or little attested Ga’az terms.

Summary