

Secular Šarḥ? The Curious Case of the Marquis' Daughter

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Šarḥ

“The **šarḥ** is a genre composed of literal translations of Jewish religious sacred texts from Hebrew into Judeo-Arabic.”

(Hary 2009:30)

Šarḥ and its language

1. Translation strategy

- overly literal translation (Hary 2009:51-90)
- translation as exegesis (Bar-Asher 1999)

2. Language

- mixed Low register (intelligibility) and High register (respect for the text) (Bar-Asher 2004)
- conservative features unique to *šarḥ* (tradition) (Bar-Asher 2004)

Šarḥ: For religious purposes only?

“Le **šarḥ** marocaine ... portait avant tout sur de larges parties de la Bible; la **littérature autre que biblique y était moins représentée.**“

(Bar-Asher 2004:245)

“The first **translations of sacred texts** into Jewish religiolects date back to the Gaonic period in Babylonia in the early Middle Ages. In Late Judeo-Arabic the genre is known as **šarḥ** (pl. šurūḥ) ...”

(Hary 2009:52)

Non-religious translations

R. Yosef Renassia - "ספר איסטוואר דליהוד (ספר יוסיפון)"
(Djerba 1956)

"כונתי די מונטי כריסטו" - יעקב שמלה
(Tunis: Vazan ve-Kastro, 1889-?)

"חכאית רובינסון כרוסוי" - חי בן אלהו שתרוך
(Tunis: Vazan ve-Kastro, 1940)

"אלבשאר אלקדשא עלא לסאן לוקס / אעמאל אלמרסולין"
(British and Foreign Bible Society, 1897/1899)

Evangile selon Saint-Matthieu en Judéo-Arabe de l'Afrique du Nord
(British and Foreign Bible Society, Algiers 1924)

The work

Title: חכאית בנת אלמרכיז ונקקאש פאריז

Translator: יוסף די אברהם ביג\אוי

Date: 193?

Original: *Le Buste*
(from *Les Mariages de Paris*)

Author: Edmond About

Date: 1856



Religious *šarḥ* vs. secular translation

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Translation strategy

| | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|-----|-------|----------|-------|---------|
| אָסמו | אִיוב | עוץ | אַרץ' | פ'י | כאַן | רַגְוֹל |
| שְׂמוֹ | אַיִוב | עוץ | | בְּאַרְץ | הָיָה | אַיִשׁ |

Šarḥ of Job 1:1 (ספר קול בכיי), Leghorn 1896-97

“Si vous avez de bonnes jambes et si les voyages au long cours ne vous font pas peur, nous irons de notre pied jusqu’au château du marquis de Guéblan.”

If your have good legs and are not afraid of long walks, we will go on our feet up to the castle of marquis de Guéblan.

אלאנסאן אלדי ישתהי ינצ'ר קצר מן אלקצור אלאכתר עג'יבה, אלפ'אצ'ל מן אייאם חכם אלאשראף, ויעג'בהו אדולאש, נקדרו ננעתו להו אלקצר אלמעתר, והו קצר אלמארכיז די גיבילאן אלדי ג'א פ'י אחואז פאריס.

A person who wishes to see one of the most amazing castles which dates back to the time of the noble rule and who likes walks, we can describe to him a respectable castle, a castle of marquis de Guéblan which lies in the environs of Paris.

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Varieties represented: Features

Phonology

Pronouns

Verbal morphology and syntax (Cohen 1975)

Functional words

Lexis and usage

Varieties represented: Phonology

Loss of [h]

... אִיֶּצָא אָדָא הֶבְאָל וְדוֹנִיָּא כְּבִירָא.

“... **this** too is vanity and great evil.”

Šarḥ of Qohelet 2:21 (Libya?), Leghorn 1896-97

Sifflant/chuintant alternation (Yoda 2006)

... וַגֵּרְסָתָּ פִּיהוּם צִזְרֵ גְ'מִיעַ תְּמָאָר.

“... and planted in them **trees** (bearing) all (kinds of) fruits.”

Šarḥ of Qohelet 2:5 (Libya?), Leghorn 1896-97

=> Not represented in *Bint al-markiz*

Varieties represented: Pronouns

Personal pronouns

| | Low | High |
|------------|-------|------|
| <i>2sg</i> | אנתי | אנת |
| <i>1pl</i> | אחנא | |
| <i>3pl</i> | הומאן | הם |

Interrogative pronouns

| | Low | High |
|-----------------|--------|------|
| <i>what</i> | אש | |
| <i>who</i> | אשכון | |
| <i>why</i> | עלאש | |
| <i>how</i> | כיפ'אש | כיף |
| <i>how much</i> | קדדאש | |

Varieties represented: Verbs

Verbal morphology

1SG.IMPF

*3PL.PERF verba
tertiaie infirmae*

IVth stem

| Low | High |
|-----|-------|
| | -נ |
| | ין- |
| | aFɤaL |

“... I want to return home.” (p. 28)

“... נחב נרג'ע לביתי.”

“Twelve or fifteen sessions will suffice, madam.” (p. 12)

“אתנאש או כ'מסתאש אן ג'לסה יכפ'יו
י א סתתי.”

“... after the death of his father, he left him 200.000 francs ...” (p. 18)

“... בעד ופ'את ואלדהו אבקא להו
בעדהו מאיתין אלף פ'רנך ...”

Varieties represented: Verbs (cont.)

Verbal auxiliaries

PROG

קאעד

CONT/DUR

באקי

CONT/DUR

מאזאל

“Are you (f.) listening?” (p. 21)

"קאעדה תסמע?"

“I’m still waiting, waiting!” (p. 9)

"באקי נסתונה , נסתונה!"

“... I still don’t know any of them...” (p. 12)

"... מאזאלת לם נעלם אשכון מנהם ..."

Varieties represented: Functional words

| Conjunctions | | Low | <i>f</i> | High | <i>f</i> |
|--------------|----------------------|-------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | <i>that</i> | | | אן | 85 |
| | <i>in order to</i> | באש | 107 | לאן | 18 |
| | <i>if</i> | לוכאן | 24 | | |
| | <i>if</i> | אידא | 10 | | |
| | <i>despite</i> | | | רג\מן עלא | 6 |
| | <i>except for</i> | | | אלא | 33 |
| | <i>when</i> | | | ענד מא | 23 |
| | <i>however</i> | | | ואנמא | 11 |
| Particles | <i>GEN</i> | מתאע | 54 | | |
| | <i>interrogative</i> | | | הל | 42 |

Varieties represented: Usage

| | Low | <i>f</i> | High | <i>f</i> |
|-----------------------|-------|----------|--------|----------|
| <i>now</i> | דלחין | 5 | אלאן | 14 |
| <i>human</i> | בנאדם | 1 | אנסאן | 22 |
| <i>also</i> | | | איצ'ין | 7 |
| <i>there is</i> | | | יוג'ד | 21 |
| <i>very</i> | יאסר | 18 | | |
| <i>[interjection]</i> | תרא | 8 | | |
| <i>see</i> | שאף | 8 | רא | 13 |
| <i>want</i> | חב | 66 | אראד | 8 |

Varieties represented: Judeo-Arabic register

| | Low | High | JA | |
|--|------|--------------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Relative pronoun/ conjunction</i> | אללי | אלד'י/אלתי/אידי'ין | אלדי | Blau 1980: 241-244 |
| <i>obj.3sg.m</i> | ן- | הי- / הו- | הו- | Blau 1980: 60 Hary 1992: 272-273 |

Relative pronoun

“This is a story I have never heard in my life!” (p. 65)

"האדי כ'ראפ'ה אלדי מן עמרי
מא סמעתהא!"

Conjunction / Complementizer (Cohen 1975: 257-258, Hary 2009: 242-243)

“Do you mean to tell me that he has a weak name!” (p. 47)

"תחב תקול לי אלדי ענדהו אסם רכיך!"

Verbal negation

| Form | Frequency | Register |
|------|-----------|----------|
| לא | 11 | High |
| מא | 156 | Low |
| לם | 138 | JA |
| ליס | 64 | JA |

Verbal negation: לא

| Use | Frequency |
|----------------|-----------|
| לא + imperfect | 11 |

“... And the was is the most ignorant who do not read, do not write and do not understand anything of these matters ...” (p. 3)

“... ופ'י אלבאקי כאנו אעצ'ם
אלג'הלא לא יקראו ולא יכתבו ולא
יפ'המו שי מן האדו אלאומור...”

Verbal negation: מא

| Use | Frequency |
|-----------------|-----------|
| מא + perfect | 91 |
| מא + imperfect | 50 |
| מא + pseudoverb | 14 |
| existential | 1 |

מא + שי:

מא כאנשי
מא יאכלשי
מא קצצרשי
מא יסאלשי
מא תממאשי
מא תזידשי
מא ג'בנישי
ומא כונאשי

Verbal negation: לֹם

| Use | Frequency |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| לֹם + perfect | 49 |
| לֹם + imperfect | 84 |
| לֹם + pseudoverb | 3 |
| לֹם in nominal sentences | 1 |

(Blau 1980:142)

“I didn’t say that...” (p. 43)

"אנא לֹם קלת האדא ..."

“Don’t forget my address...” (p. 13)

"לֹם תנסא אלאדרים מתאעי ..."

Verbal negation: לֹא

| Use | Frequency |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| לֹא + perfect | 16 |
| לֹא + imperfect | 24 |
| לֹא + pseudoverb | 14 |
| לֹא in nominal sentences | 10 |

(Blau 1980:142-143)

“I didn’t come here because of this...” (p. 12)

"... אֲנִי לֹא בָּאָה הֵּרָא הַזֶּה ..."

“Don’t you know what happened?” (p. 51)

"הֲלֹא יָדָעְתָּ מַה בְּעָלָה וְקָעָה?"

ליס as pseudoverb

| Form | Frequency |
|-------|-----------|
| ליסהו | 9 |
| ליסהא | 5 |
| ליסני | 2 |
| ליסנא | 1 |
| ליסך | 1 |

(Blau 1980:144 for medieval Judeo-Arabic, also with full pronouns)

“But this is not money, twelve sittings ...” (p. 12)

"ולאכן האדא ליסהו פ'לוס, אתנאש אן ג'לסה ..."

“... because I'm not wrong ...” (p. 43)

"... חיתני ליסני ג'אלטה ..."

“... And if he weren't in love ...” (p. 49)

"... ולוכאן מאהושי עאשק ..."

“I am not mistaken...” (p. 69)

"מאנישי ג'אלטה ..."

Summary

| Feature | Religious <i>šarḥ</i> | Bint al-markiz |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Literal translation | X | |
| Mixed High and Low varieties | X | X |
| Conservative JA features | X | X |

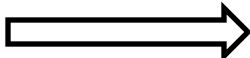
Summary

Traditional explanation:

“... despite the penetration of vernacular features, the numerous conservative traits as well as certain dialectal features that were perceived as characteristic of the *šarḥ* indicate that the **language of the *šarḥ* was significantly elevated** compared to the spoken dialect of [the Algerian Jewish] community, **reflecting the revered status of this text.**”

Tirosh-Becker 2012:426 (on *šarḥ* of *Haftarot*)

Alternatively:

elevated language of the *šarḥ*  elevated translationese / written language

Cf. Cohen 1965: 16 on written JA of Tunisia and the use of conservative JA elements in journalistic language