

The Hebrew Manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon*

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1 Introduction¹

Sefer Yosippon stands among the most widespread medieval Hebrew works. This description of the history of the Second Temple and its destruction by the Romans provided the background for the medieval notion of exile and the self-understanding of the Jewish diaspora communities in Europe and the Middle East. It was transmitted in more than 60 manuscripts in three different recensions copied in Central Europe, the Mediterranean region, and in the Near East. Along with its wide dispersion and many copies, the book was subject to changes and alterations made sometimes by mistake and sometimes intentionally. Steven Bowman was the first to label it an “open book,”² similar to many works copied and altered by Jewish scribes and scholars during the Middle Ages.³ These alterations started to become more substantial when the text was not only changed in wording and phrasing but enlarged by whole passages or even chapters, called ‘interpolations.’ The most famous interpolations are parts of the Alexander Romance in the chapter on Alexander’s visit to Jerusalem (SY 10) and based on the Hebrew translations of the Greek and Latin Alexander tradition, and a Jewish version of the Testimonium Flavianum in the chapter on Philo’s embassy to Rome (SY 58). In contrast to other Medieval Hebrew compilations, however, the text never completely lost its literary structure due to its historiographical nature.⁴ Its narrative framework, based on the

1 I thank the editors for their advice and help in improving this article in content and form. I am especially grateful to Carson Bay, who invited me to Bern on several occasions and shared with me his writings and thoughts. His arrival in Bern has reignited scholarly interest in *Yosippon* and elevated research on this seminal text to a much higher level over the past few years.

2 Bowman, “Yosippon and Jewish Nationalism,” 31.

3 Ta-Shma, “The ‘Open Book;’” Beit-Arié, “Transmission of Texts.”

4 Cf. the “fuzzy” character of Rabbinic or Hekhalot literature; see the discussion by Peter Schäfer and Chaim Milikowsky, “Current Views on the Editing of the Rabbinic Texts of late Antiquity,” and earlier portions of this longstanding debate. For medieval literature see Marcus, *Sefer Hasidim* and Ta-Shma, “The ‘Open Book;’” Beit-Arié, “Transmission of Texts.”

chronology of events, beginning with the table of nations and ending with the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, was not altered, but rather expanded, by phrases, interpolations within the text, and additional passages at the end.⁵

The standard Hebrew text of *Sefer Yosippon* was published in 1980/1981 by David Flusser, including a long discussion of the text's nature, transmission, and reception in a second volume.⁶ Flusser reconstructed the manuscript tradition and divided the manuscripts into three larger groups: Recensions A, B and C. He based his edition on a group of manuscripts of Recension A, especially on one of them, MS Jerusalem oct. 4120, written in Italy in 1282.⁷ According to Flusser, the manuscripts of Recension A provide the earliest version of the text, Recension B mainly includes the interpolation on Alexander,⁸ while Recension C represents a text that is thoroughly revised and rewritten, resulting in a much longer version, first printed in Constantinople in 1510 and again in Venice in 1544. Until Flusser's critical text in the 1980s, this long version had been the *textus receptus* of *Yosippon* among scholars.⁹

Despite the fact that David Flusser's edition of *Sefer Yosippon* is a major achievement, it has become clear that the text he published does not represent any of the manuscripts.¹⁰ It also does not provide the oldest version of the text. In fact, the early manuscripts of *Yosippon*, at least in certain passages, look different. Most striking is Flusser's decision to integrate the end of Chapter 3 and Chapters 4–6 into his text, containing the stories of Daniel in the lion's den, Daniel and Bel, and Zerubabel at the Babylonian court, sub-narratives not present in the Recension A manuscript group upon which Flusser based his edition. Yet Flusser integrated them into his published text.¹¹ Furthermore, he

5 On the various additions at the end see below and the contribution by Andrea Schatz in this volume.

6 Flusser, *Josippon* [*Josephus Gorionides*]; hereafter cited as Flusser I (text of *SY*) and II (introduction).

7 This manuscript was also published in a facsimile edition; Flusser, *Josippon. The Original Version*.

8 Also as an early print: Mantua 1475.

9 Modern edition Hominer, *Josiphon*; see also Bowman, "Yosippon and Jewish Nationalism."

10 The recently published translation of *Yosippon* by Steven Bowman into English is based on this edition: Bowman, *Sepher Yosippon*; the same goes for the German translation published in 2010: Börner-Klein, *Josippon: Jüdische Geschichte vom Anfang der Welt*.

11 He argued that these chapters existed in the original version of *SY* and were deleted afterwards because of chronological problems; see Flusser II, 47f. However, none of the early manuscripts has these chapters; see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 39f. and below.

did not account sufficiently for the Genizah fragments of *Yosippon*, more of which have been discovered during the past decades. However, their role in the transmission is crucial for the reconstruction of the history of the text.¹² During my examination of the transmission and reception history of the book, I reviewed all extant manuscripts and was able to discover additional textual witnesses that were unknown to Flusser. This led me to the hypothesis that *Yosippon*'s oldest text was contained in the Cairo Genizah fragments, while the complete manuscripts represented later editorial stages.

In this article I will provide a discussion of the Hebrew manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon* together with a reconsideration of their relation to and relevance for the textual history of the book, based on the findings presented in my first book and on more recent discoveries in the past several years.¹³ My research has shown that a stemma of *Yosippon*'s manuscripts cannot be established without uncertainties.¹⁴ The variants suggest that the transmission history has to be seen as a fluid one.¹⁵ Nevertheless, I maintain the division into three recensions, although some of the manuscript witnesses display features for which they should be assigned to more than one recension. Those I define as manuscripts standing in between two recensions, i.e. they illustrate the transition. My analysis is based on considerations of textual development in light of inspection made of each and every manuscript. It allows me to present a modified schema of the classification of *Yosippon* manuscripts based on the fact that not every manuscript meets the criteria of only one single group. Below I present the manuscripts in turn and discuss their features, after which a complete list of the manuscripts of *Yosippon* examined here is provided in an appendix. Incomplete manuscripts, fragments, and excerpts are only included in the discussion of Recensions A and B, because here these fragments contribute substantially to the textual history. The other incomplete manuscripts will be surveyed in a different context.

12 The same is true for the history of the Judeo-Arabic version of the book; see Sela, *The Arabic Josippon*.

13 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*.

14 Flusser provided a stemma in the Facsimile publication of MS Jerusalem oct. 4120, 9 and in Flusser II, 53, which should be used with caution.

15 Cerquiglini, *Eloge de la variante*.

2 New Findings concerning the Manuscript Tradition of *Sefer Yosippon*

The following reconstruction of the textual witnesses and their classification is based to a large extent on the interpolations in *Sefer Yosippon*.¹⁶ Flusser's establishment of three major recensions is kept. However, recent manuscript findings, in particular the fragments of the Cairo Genizah and the old and new witnesses for Recension B, allow us to draw a modified and more refined picture of the classification of *Yosippon*'s manuscripts.

The manuscript witnesses for Recension A are organized into three sub-groups. The first group contains the Genizah fragments originating from Southern Italy and the Near East, which were produced in the 11th and 12th centuries. Their textual version is the one that found its way into Recension B and C. The second group represents a different editorial stage of the text, characterized by certain features like attribution to Gershom Me'or ha-Golah and a different, longer ending.¹⁷ It is called the "Ashkenazic" Recension A, since it circulated in Ashkenaz and Italy and deviates from the Cairo Genizah text. The third group encompasses later manuscript copies that continue the textual tradition of the Cairo Genizah fragments while at the same time adding elements of Recension B (transitional stage).

In contrast to what Flusser's text would have us believe, all of the witnesses of Recension A do not contain *SY* 3–6 on Daniel and Zerubavel. These are added only in the transitional stage to Recension B. Furthermore, while Flusser thought that the first of the two interpolations to *Yosippon*'s chapter on Alexander's visit to Jerusalem was appended only in manuscripts of Recension B, a newly discovered witness of the Cairo Genizah fragments proves otherwise.

Also due to new manuscripts findings, Recension B is now represented by more than one manuscript.¹⁸ The textual variances within these manuscripts show that Recension B can be subdivided into groups as well, one conveying a shortened version (also in the early printed edition of Mantua 1475), while the other continues the text of Recension A/Cairo Genizah. All witnesses of Recension B include Chapters 3–6 on Daniel and Zerubavel and the first Interpolation on Alexander.

16 For a table of the interpolations and their distribution see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 276–277. For some chapters, textual variants have also been taken into account; however, a thorough textual comparison still needs to be done.

17 See below.

18 Flusser only listed one, see Flusser II, 16–17.

Regarding Recension C: this version of *Sefer Yosippon* was produced by Judah Mosqoni, who expanded the wording of the text and added several passages, including parts of Abraham ibn Daud's *Divre Malkhe Yisrael* (*History of the Kings of Israel*), which itself is a reworking of *Yosippon* (see discussion of Recension B and C). Mosqoni's text was printed in the 16th century and was seen as "the" *Yosippon* until the publication of Flusser's text (based on Ashkenazic Recension A) in 1980/1981. Ever since, Flusser's text has served as the basis of research on *Yosippon*. Yet, the true story of the manuscripts and their features has yet to be told.

3 Manuscripts of Recension A

A review of the manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon* which constitute Recension A can be seen to establish three subgroups. The first group encompasses the fragments of the Cairo Genizah, which will be discussed in section 3.1. The second group consists of the three manuscripts that share several textual features and deviate from the other versions. Flusser based his edition mainly on this group, in particular on MS Jerusalem oct. 4120 (dated to 1282 and written in Italy, the eldest textual witness apart from the Cairo Genizah fragments), which he also published separately as a facsimile.¹⁹ The other two manuscripts belonging to this group are New York JTS 3572 and the famous illuminated Italian Rothschild Miscellany (Israel Museum B61.09.0803—formerly Israel Museum 180/51).²⁰ Since these manuscripts share a number of features that do not appear in the Cairo Genizah fragments and were probably added when the text of *Yosippon* was copied and reshaped in Ashkenaz/Italy, this group is called the "Ashkenazic" group of manuscripts of Recension A and will be discussed in Section 3.2.²¹

Two more manuscripts belong to Recension A: Vatican Urb. 52 and Oxford Heb. d. 11. Vatican Urb. 52 presents a difficult case. In some parts of the manuscript, the wording and phrases seem to be closer to the text presented in the Cairo Genizah fragments. On the other hand, the text was later corrected and reworked from a Vorlage close to Recension B. Therefore, Vatican Urb. 52 is a witness for the early stage of Recension A, while on the other hand it shows parallels in phrasing to Recension B.

19 Flusser, *Josippon. The Original Version*.

20 Fishof, *Rothschild Miscellany*, 181–215.

21 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 44–45.

Oxford Heb. d. 11 is an example for the transition between Recension A and B. The text of *Yosippon* presented in this manuscript is part of a compilation of texts with a historiographic outlook. Some of these texts were compiled by Yerahme'el ben Solomon in Italy in the 12th century.²² In the 14th century, this collection was again integrated into a larger compilation of texts by Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi in Ashkenaz, who called his work *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* (*Book of Memories*).²³ In contrast to the other textual witnesses of Recension A, the *Yosippon* text of Oxford Heb. d. 11 encompasses *sy* 3–6 in Flusser's edition, which provide additional stories on Daniel at the Persian court. Therefore, these chapters were only added to Recension A at the point of transition to Recension B. The text of *Yosippon* in this manuscript also shares other features with textual witnesses of Recension B. Thus, Oxford Heb. d. 11, similar to Vatican Urb. 52, shows features parallel to the Genizah fragments on the one hand, and elements in common with the version in Recension B (and sometimes C as well) on the other.

This suggests that it was the text of the Cairo Genizah fragments as well as the text in Vatican Urb. 52 and Oxford Heb. d. 11 that became the "textus receptus" in the later versions, while the text of the "Ashkenazic" Recension A circulated only within this textual branch.

3.1 *The Cairo Genizah Fragments of Sefer Yosippon*

The fragments transmitted in the Cairo Genizah represent the earliest textual versions of *Sefer Yosippon* currently available.²⁴ The dating of the fragments to the 11th century shows that they were produced around two centuries before the Jerusalem manuscript, which Flusser took as the earliest witness of *Yosippon*. The Genizah fragments were written much closer to the presumable production-date of the text in the beginning of the 10th century in Southern Italy. These fragments do not attest to the entire text of *Yosippon*, yet there are fragments presenting the first as well as the last chapter of the text. This supports the notion that the fragments belonged to codices encompassing the Hebrew book of *Yosippon* as a whole.²⁵ Regarding additions and interpolations

22 See Jacobson, "Thoughts on the Chronicles."

23 Yassif, *The Book of Memory*.

24 Most of the Cairo Genizah fragments are available online either via the Ktiv-website or the Friedberg Genizah website.

25 Compare the discussion held by Shulamit Sela about the possibility that *sy* was actually produced in stages with a core comprised of the chapters on the Maccabees (similar to the Arabic Book of the Maccabees). In the course of time, according to this theory the text would have gradually grown by accruing further material before and after these chapters. Since Sela compared the Judaeo-Arabic fragments to Flusser's text without considering

to the text that establish the differences between the recensions, the fragments from the Cairo Genizah do not contain any of them save one. Their textual version does not include either the story of Daniel or the Testimonium Flavianum.²⁶ But they do contain the interpolated portions of the Alexander romance.²⁷ The fragments also differ in wording from the Jerusalem manuscript on which Flusser based his edition, at least in those passages presented by the fragments.²⁸

On paleographic grounds, the transmitted Genizah fragments can be divided into four groups, each group containing a number of fragments that belong to the same codex.²⁹ Ca. 20 fragments belong to the oldest of these codices, the so-called *Codex Italicus*, which was probably written in Southern Italy at the end of the 10th/beginning of the 11th century. This codex may come close to the Hebrew “original version” of *Sefer Yosippon*, if there indeed ever was only one.³⁰ The rest of the fragments can be assigned to three separate codices. These were probably written in the Orient in the 11th and 12th century, so they are called *Codex Orientalis* I–III.³¹ In this framework, the fragments can only be described briefly. A thorough and detailed examination of each and every manuscript fragment still needs to be done in a future study, which will require traveling to all the libraries to see the original manuscripts.³²

3.1.1 Codex Italicus

The biggest group of fragments of *Sefer Yosippon* was collected under the shelfmark of Cambridge University Library T-S 10 K 16 No. 1–20.³³ The majority of the Cambridge T-S 10 K 16 fragments belong to the same codex, which originated

its eclectic character, however, her theories are difficult to assess without a proper textual basis; for this discussion see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, Chapter 3.4 and Sela, *The Arabic Josippon*.

26 See p. 180 below on the Ashkenazic Recension A.

27 I am indebted to Peter Lehnardt (in a private conversation, 24.03.2022) for the reference to this fragment.

28 For a discussion of MS Jerusalem oct. 4120, see below on Ashkenazic Recension A.

29 For a first attempt to identify fragments belonging to the same codex, see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 39–44.

30 For the early circulation of SY’s manuscripts in Southern Italy, see the fascinating description of the robbery of a copy in a letter to Hasdai ibn Shaprut; Golb, Pritsak, *Khazarian documents*, 86–90; Mann, *Texts and Studies* 1, 1–27.

31 The dating and details on the paleography I owe to Dr. Edna Engel from the IMHM in Jerusalem.

32 This description is a modified version of my division of the fragments in my 2013 book (Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*). Some new insights are based on conversations held with Peter Lehnardt in Jerusalem in March 2022.

33 Flusser named them each J followed by the number of the fragment.

in Southern Italy. The rest, as stated above, can be attributed to the Oriental codices. After a look at the catalogues and the manuscripts presented on the Friedberg Genizah website, to my knowledge there are 24 folios preserved in different libraries that belong to the Italian codex, identifiable according to matching paleographic features. These are:

- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 16 (1 folio; SY 23–24)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S NS 254.91 (1 folio; SY 23–24)
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d. 64, fol. 120r–v (1 folio; SY 26–27)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 10 (1 folio; SY 36–38)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 15 (2 folios; SY 45–46)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S NS 175.75 (1 folio; SY 48)
- St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Evr. Antonin B 917 (2 folios; SY 49–51)³⁴
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S AS 213.32 and 34 (tiny pieces; SY 49–50)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 17 (2 folios; SY 50–51)
- Cambridge, University Library, Lewis-Gibson Glass 7 (2 folios; SY 54–56)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 18 (1 folio; SY 74–75)
- Paris, Library of the Alliance Israélite Universelle VII A.8 (1 folio; SY 76)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 18, 11, 14, 19 (4 folios; SY 77, 79–81)
- St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Evr. Antonin B 916 (1 folio; SY 84–85)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 13 and 12 (4 folios; SY 85–86, 89)

The folios of this codex present parts of SY Chapters 23–27, 36–38, 45–46, 48–51, 54–56, 74–77, 79–81, 84–86, and the last chapter, 89. The text transmitted starts with the battle of the Maccabees with Antiochus Eupator and ends with the story of Masada. The final page of the codex (T-S 10 K 16.20 No. 12) reveals in a different script the name of a later owner of the manuscript, Yeshua bar Yoshiahu b. Shemayya ha-Gaon (second half of the 12th century). He was a judge in Old Cairo/Fustat and the nephew of another judge, named Abraham ben Shemayya (1092–1132). From this it can be assumed that the nephew, Yeshua, lived around the 1140/1150s and bought books such as this one and had others copied for him.³⁵ So, this codex was produced in Southern Italy, but later brought to Cairo where it came into the possession of a Jewish judge who was interested in books. As we will see, Codex Orientalis I may have appended

34 Flusser named them each \beth followed by the number of the fragment.
35 Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 2.268 and 2.584n53.

the first part of the Interpolation to Alexander. Thus, it was in the Middle East that the story of Alexander's marvellous travels entered the text of *Yosippon*.³⁶

The other three hands which I have arranged into groups I label *Codex Orientalis* I, II and III, since they were probably written in the Orient in the course of the 12th century.

3.1.2 Codex Orientalis I

Codex Orientalis I encompasses eight folios, presenting the beginning of *Yosippon* until chapter 10. These are:

- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d. 64, fol. 118v–119v (2 folios; *SY* 1 and 9)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 3, 4 and 5 (4 folios; *SY* 1–2, 10)
- Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, No. 34 (2 folios; Alexander romance)³⁷

Especially interesting for the textual history of *Sefer Yosippon* is the fact that fragment T-S 10 K 16 No. 5, fol. 2r–v provides the text of *SY* 3. The text leaves *SY* 3 at the final line (72) in Flusser's edition and continues directly with *SY* 6, line 181. There are no gaps or holes or missing pages in the manuscript. The same can be seen in all of the manuscripts that belong to Recension A of *Yosippon*. Thus, the assumption that parts of *SY* 3 and *SY* 4–6 were not part of the earliest textual stage of *Yosippon* is confirmed by the fragments from the Cairo Genizah.³⁸

Another fragment of this codex presents *SY* 10 of *Sefer Yosippon*, which contains the story of Alexander's meeting with the High Priest and with Sanballat in Jerusalem (T-S 10 K 16, No. 3). In the later recensions, according to the traditional view, this chapter was enlarged by two interpolations, which include passages from the Alexander Romance. The first one describes Alexander's marvelous travels. The second interpolation pertains to Alexander's birth story. The earliest complete manuscripts to have the first of these interpolations on Alexander belong to Recension B of *Yosippon* and date from the 14th and 15th century. This interpolation consists of a compilation of Alexander's wars and travels, ending with a chronicle from Alexander the Great to the Roman Emperor Augustus derived from the Hebrew Alexander Romance as it is known from MS Parma, Palatina 2457 (de Rossi 1087; Italy, 14th century). This latter manuscript up to now has been the only known textual witness to this version

36 For *SY* in the book lists of the Cairo Genizah, see Allony, *The Jewish Library*, index.

37 Rosenthal, *The Cairo Geniza Collection*, 118.

38 The first manuscript to include the Daniel story is Oxford, Heb. d. 11; see p. 189 below.

apart from *Yosippon's* manuscripts.³⁹ However, recently a new fragment has been identified that is definitely part of this Oriental codex of *Yosippon*, from the University Library of Geneva, No. 34. This fragment provides passages from the first interpolation on Alexander taken from the Greek Alexander Romance and is probably the earliest existing textual witness to this Hebrew version; it was produced in the Near East in the 12th century.⁴⁰

At the same time, these passages are part of interpolation A concerning Alexander in *Yosippon*, which was thought to be added to the text much later. Since these passages in the Geneva fragment are presented in the same script as that of the other fragments of Codex Orientalis 1, the crucial question is: were these pages part of the copy of *Yosippon* in this codex, or is this a witness to a separate part of the codex that encompasses a copy of the Alexander romance?

If future discoveries of fragments belonging to this codex show that these two folios were part of *Sefer Yosippon*, then the whole story of how the interpolations of Alexander entered into the text of *Yosippon* has to be rewritten. This would mean that already at a very early stage of textual production, namely in the 12th century, the Alexander romance was integrated into *Yosippon* in the Near East.

3.1.3 Codex Orientalis 11

The reconstruction of this codex of *Sefer Yosippon* was already undertaken by Simon Hopkins in 1978.⁴¹ The codex, written in the East in the 12th century, encompasses five folios presenting passages from chapters 3–10 in *Yosippon*. Again, as in Codex Orientalis 1, sY 3 shows a direct transition to sY 6, l. 181 (Cambridge Or 1080 A 45.1). Thus, this codex too lacks chapters 4–6 (the interpolation on Daniel), another proof that these chapters were not part of *Yosippon* in the Cairo Genizah. Moreover, this codex has parallels to the texts transmitted in *Codex Orientalis 1* in that both codices present passages from chapter 9.

- Cambridge, University Library, Or. 1080 A 45.1 (1 folio; sY 3/6)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 20 (2 folios; sY 7–9)
- Cambridge, University Library, T-S C. 2.206 (2 folios; sY 9)

39 F 13461; Italy, 14th century; Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in Parma*, 146; Flusser, “Alexander-Geste;” see translation by Bowman, “Alexander and the Mysteries of India,” included now in his *Sefer Yosippon*.

40 The other one being the mentioned ms Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ebr. 2457 (de Rossi 1087; Italy, 14th century), edited by Flusser in the appendix, 461–491; see also pp. 192–194 below in the discussion of Recension B.

41 Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Literary Pieces*, 109 (appendix A).

3.1.4 Codex Orientalis III

This codex, written in the East in the 12th century like the other Oriental codices, comprises ten folios, the second biggest group of folios belonging to one single codex after *Codex Italicus*. It preserves passages from chapters 38–41, 43–46, 49–50, meaning that there are several folios that contain parallel texts to the Italian Codex, especially with regard to chapters 46 and 50. These are:

- Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 6–9, 1–2 (*SY* 38–41, 43–46)
- St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Evr. Antonin B 283 (*SY* 49–50)

There are also fragments of *Yosippon* which do not belong to these codices, but to others.⁴²

This overview of the early Cairo Genizah fragments of *Sefer Yosippon* has shown that a considerable number of Hebrew manuscript fragments is preserved in the Cairo Genizah, which represent the earliest extant textual witnesses to the Hebrew text of *Yosippon*. The fragments belonging to *Codex Italicus* were produced very close to the time of the production of the book in Southern Italy at the beginning of the 10th century. From there the text, even the manuscript, i.e. *Codex Italicus* itself, was brought to the East, copied, and later stored in the Genizah of the Ben Ezra synagogue in Fustat, where it was discovered at the end of the 19th century. The other codices represent Eastern copies of the Italian codex.

The fact that the Geneva fragments present the same script as Codex Orientalis I and have certain portions of the Alexander romance could indicate that the first Alexander interpolation was appended to the text during the copying of *Sefer Yosippon* in the East. However, in Ashkenazic Recension A, it is missing—the manuscripts of this recension do not include this interpolation. This means that Ashkenazic Recension A was derived from a text lacking the Alexander interpolation, and thus that *Sefer Yosippon* was brought from Italy to Ashkenaz in a textual version without the Alexander interpolation. The version of *Yosippon* that circulated in the East in the 12th century, however, included that passage, suggesting that it was added there. This hypothesis is supported by Vatican Urb. 52, which is close to the Genizah group. In this manuscript, discussed below, the interpolation very probably was part of the text of *Yosippon*. Furthermore, the Alexander interpolation is included in all manuscripts of Recensions B and C. From this it follows that the version of *Yosippon* that circulated in the East became the starting point for the later recensions. In contrast, the version of *Yosippon* that circulated in Ashkenaz became a separate textual branch that was further enriched by interpolations like the

42 E.g. Cambridge, University Library, T-S NS 176.12 and T-S Misc. 28.21; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. e. 30; see also Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 42–43.

Testimonium Flavianum (see section 3.2 below). However, these interpolations did not enter Recensions B and C; thus Ashkenazic A had only a minor influence on the textual development of *Yosippon* in Recensions B and C. This assumption is supported by the fact that the Cairo Genizah fragments reveal a different version of the final chapter than the manuscripts of Ashkenazic A; it is actually the version of the Cairo Genizah that is found in Recension B and C.⁴³

This demonstrates the necessity of a new edition of the Cairo Genizah fragments of *Sefer Yosippon*, because their textual versions contribute extensively to our understanding of the textual history of *Yosippon* and, in particular, to the early textual stages represented in these fragments.

3.2 *Manuscripts of Ashkenazic Recension A*

The following three manuscripts form the second group, the so-called Ashkenazic Recension A of *Sefer Yosippon*. They are: MS Jerusalem, National Library oct. 4120, MS New York 3572 (ENA 1674), and MS Israel Museum B61.09.0803 (so called “Rothschild Miscellany,” former Israel Museum 150/51/12). They share a number of specific features, which are not found in the other versions of the text. They all have a note saying that the text is based on a copy written by Gershom, the “great teacher” (הרב הגדול). It has been suggested that this remark refers to Gershom Me’or ha-Gola, known for copying the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Masorah and bringing them to his academy in Mainz.⁴⁴ That Gershom knew the *Yosippon* is reasonable to assume. However, a manuscript copy of the text written by him has not survived. Whether he really copied the text himself or whether the attribution only served as an enhancement of *Yosippon*’s authority cannot be decided at present. Gershom also produced two *piyyutim*, which contain phrases paralleled in the description of the death of Antiochus in SY 28 and a formula used in chapter 58.⁴⁵ These parallels, however, do not prove indisputably that Gershom used the book as a model for his poems or that he in copied *Yosippon* himself.

Furthermore, the manuscripts of this group do not encompass SY 3, l. 58 to the end of SY 6, i.e. they do not include the story of Daniel and Zerubavel as stated already several times. Instead, they contain a passage on the death of

43 A comparison of both versions can be found in the discussion of the Ashkenazic Recension A, section 3.2 below.

44 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 44–45. For a different opinion see Soloveitchik, “Halakha, Hermeneutics, and Martyrdom (Part II),” 280.

45 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 180–181.

Darius.⁴⁶ This feature they share with the Cairo Genizah fragments, supporting the assumption that *SY* 3–6 in Flusser’s edition were not part of the early textual stages of *Sefer Yosippon*, but were added later, probably by Yerahme’el ben Solomon in his reworked text of *Yosippon* in MS Oxford, Heb. d. 11 (see below).

Other characteristic features of Ashkenazic A are found in the beginning of Chapter 9, which has a different arrangement than the other textual versions.⁴⁷ In *SY* 60, ll. 58–143 are included in the manuscripts of the Ashkenazic redaction A but are missing or replaced in the other versions.⁴⁸ MS Israel Museum B61.09.0803 (“Rothschild Miscellany,”) provides several additional passages in the text that are not found in the other manuscripts either of Ashkenazic A or of Recension B or C. The most famous is a version of the Testimonium Flavianum, which will be discussed shortly below.

Finally, in this group of manuscripts the course of the final events at Masada differs from the other versions. In the description of the murder of the women and children at Masada, the manuscripts of the Ashkenazic Recension state that the women and children were killed the day before, and then the men spent the night together, mourning their fate, before going to fight the next morning.⁴⁹ In the Cairo Genizah version, all the people, men, women and children, mourn together during the night, and then the women and children are killed in the morning before the men leave for battle. Yet, it is the version in the Cairo Genizah fragments that is also found in the manuscripts of Recensions B and C. This again supports the notion that Ashkenazic Recension A was derived from the early versions in the Cairo Genizah and then reworked in several ways including its ending. These changes did not find their way into the other versions of *Sefer Yosippon*, but are only found in this group of manuscripts.

The following is a synoptic representation of the end of *SY* 89 from line 127 in Flusser, providing the text of the Genizah in comparison with MS Jerusalem 4120:⁵⁰

46 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 44; 47–48.

47 On the Esther story in *SY*, see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 197–203, and Dönitz, “Sefer Yosippon and the Septuagint.”

48 It is also part of MS Vat. 52; see pp. 188–189 below.

49 Flusser 11, 431; this is the version in MS Jerusalem oct. 4120, MS Israel Museum (Rothschild Miscellany), and New York JTS 3572. This version seems to be the same one as in MS Oxford Heb. d. 11, which does not belong to this group—see below.

50 For an English translation of both versions see Bowman, *Sepher Yosippon*, 392.

T-S NS 10 K 16, No.12, fol. 2r-v

Jerusalem oct 4120, fol. 119r-v

ויהי בבקר ויקחו את נשיהם ואת
בנותיהם ובניהם לשחוט אותם ארצה
ויחשבו לקרבן עולה לרצון לפני יי כי על
שמו הלכו ולא יהרגו לפני עצבי רומנים.
ויעשו כאשר דבר אליהם אלעזר בן ענני
הכהן ויחגרו איש את כלי מלחמתו
ויקהילו את נשיהם ובניהם ובנותיהם
אל רחוב מצדה וינשקו איש אל אנשי ביתו
ויחבקום ויבכו אלה נוכח אלה בכי גדול
ויענו הכהנים והזקנים ויאמרו אל הנשים
ואל הטף לאמר

טוב לכם לבכות ולמות הנה כי אם
למות בקרב עצבי רומנים. וישלחו האנשים
את ידיהם ויהרגו את נשיהם ואת
ובניהם ואת ובנותיהם וישליכו אותם אל הבורות
אשר במצדה וימלאום בעפר וילינו העם
בלילה ההוא בבכי ונהי ואל גדול ובמספד
מר.

וישימו בבוקר ויצאו כולם יחד כאיש
אחד מן העיר באכזריות חימה וילחמו
בהמון רומנים וימיתו מהם רבים עד לאין
מספר עד אשר תמו כולם במלחמה
עד הנה קץ ירושלים עיר הקדוש ועם
נחלתו.

ויהי רצון מלפני יי אלהינו שיחמול
וירחם על עמו ועל עירו ועל ביתו ועל
היכלו ועל מקדשו ועל נחלתו במהרה
בימינו ויקבץ נדתי ישראל מהרה מארבע
כנפות הארץ וישלח לנו גואל ויבנה חומות
אריאל במהרה בימינו בחיינו ובחיי כל בית
ישראל אמן.

ויקומו האנשים
ויקהילו את נשיהם ואת בניהם ואת
בנותיהם וינשקו אותם ויחבקום ויאמרו
להם

הטוב בעיניכם תמותו באדמתכם מלכת
בשבי בארץ אויביכם
ותמותו שם לפני עצבי רומנים וילינו
העם בלילה ההוא בבכי ובמספד ונהי
וקינה בוכים בכייה גדולה האנשים והנשים
והטף ויהי בבקר ויקחו את נשיהם ואת
בניהם ובנותיהם וישחטו אותם ארצה
וישימו אותם אל הבורות וישליכו עליהם
עפר. ויהי אחרי הדבר [ים] האלה ויצאו
האנשים {מן} העיר ויתגרו מלחמה במחנה
רומנים [ויהרגו] מהם רבים עד אין מספר
וילחמו היהודים עד אשר תמו כולם וימותו
על יי
[ועל מקדשו ???] מלחמות הבית השני.

אוי לנו כי חרבה ע[יר משושינו ונהרס
בית מאמינו ו]נשרף היכלינו וגלינו מנחלת
אבותינו וא[ין] ידינו. נו. יהי רצון [מלפני]ך
יי אלהינו [שיזכור שבועת אבותינו ויבנה
עירינו ושיכלל היכלנו ויקבץ פזורינו ויכנס
נדוחינו וישיב שבותינו ויחיש משיחינו
וימהר לגאלינו

ויפיל אויבינו ויכנע שונאינו וינקום
 נקמתינו ויקיים עלינו מקרא שכתוב ונתתי
 נקמתי באדום [ביד] עמי ישראל⁵¹ וגו'
 וכתו' כאיש אשר אמו תנחמינו כן אנכי
 אנחמכם ובירושלם תנוחמו⁵² ויקיים
 עלינו מקרא שכת' ונשא נס לגויים ואסף
 גדחי ישראל ונפוצות יהודה יקבץ מארבע
 כנפות הארץ? נאם יהיה נדחד בקצה
 השמים משם אקבצך יי אלהיך ומשם
 יקחך⁵³ וכת' בעת ההיא אביא אתכם
 ובעת קבצי אתכם [כי] אתן אתכם לשם
 ולתהילה בכל עמי הארץ בשובי את
 שבותכם [לענייכם] אמר יי⁵⁴ ואנו וכל
 ישראל חבירים יחד אמן כן תהא רעווא
 חזק פינחס בר מתתיה חזן.
 זה הספר ליצחק בר כלפון אבו אבי
 הישאם נוח נפש.

3.2.1 (ת) Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. oct. 4120

[B 65] *Italy, 1282, Ashkenazic semicursive, octavo, parchment, 119 folios, linings.*⁵⁵

This manuscript is the one on which Flusser based his edition. It was written in Italy by Benjamin, son of Abraham, who finished it on the 2nd of Adar, 1282.⁵⁶ He might also have copied MS Parma 2530 (de Rossi 331),⁵⁷ containing biblical writings (Psalms to Nehemiah), in 1260. In this case, the copyist could be identified with Benjamin ben Abraham from the famous Anav family.⁵⁸ This family claimed to be able to trace their descent to the nobles

51 Ezek 25:14.

52 Isa 66:13.

53 Deut 30:4; Isa 11:12.

54 Zeph 3:20.

55 The number in square brackets refers to the number of the microfilm in the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts. Available online: [https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts>NNL_ALEPH002582454/NLI#%\\$FL26291834](https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts>NNL_ALEPH002582454/NLI#%$FL26291834). For a description see Sirat, Beit-Arié, *Manuscrits médiévaux en caractères hébraïques*, vol. II, no. 11.

56 Flusser, *Josippon*. Colophon on fol. 119v.

57 IMHM Film No. 14292.

58 This is denied by Sirat and Beit-Arié in *Manuscrits médiévaux en caractères hébraïques*, vol. II, no. 11, due to the different script in MS Parma 2530. However, the Parma manuscript contains the Megillot (written in square script and vocalized), while here the text

of Jerusalem, brought to Rome by Titus.⁵⁹ This could explain interest in the subject of *Yosippon*. Benjamin lived in Rome, was the author of several works, and belongs to the most important liturgical poets of his time. His poems refer to the persecutions the Jews were suffering in Italy during the 13th century, e.g. the agitations by Nicolas Donin, the burning of the Talmud in 1245, or the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Rome in 1270.⁶⁰ The Jews in Rome were facing a time of persecution, which also may have fostered interest in the reason for the Jewish exile, the history of the destruction of the Temple as told in *Yosippon*.

The first two folios are filled with many scribbles. Among them on fol. 1r it says: זה הספר נקרא יוסיפון וקורין בו בכל תשע באב. —“This book is called *Yosippon* and it is read on every Tisha be-Av.” It is very difficult to date the note. However, it is evidence that *Sefer Yosippon* was read on Tisha be-Av as a memorial to the destruction of the First and the Second Temple.

The manuscript belongs to the group of Ashkenazic redaction A and has all above-mentioned characteristics: On fol. 42v and 43r there are the remarks inserted into the text identifying the words as those of the scribe found in a manuscript written by Rabbenu Gershom (דברים האלה מצאתי כתוב בספר ר) —“such words I found written in a book of Rabbenu Gershom, the great teacher, and written by his hand”).⁶¹ The text does not contain the stories of Daniel and Zerubavel. From sY 3, l. 58 the text continues with the passage on Darius and then returns to Flusser’s text at sY 7, l. 10.⁶² The text ends with a description of the murder of women and children at Masada that differs from the one in the Cairo Genizah fragment (see above).

3.2.2 (1) New York, Jewish Theological Seminary MS 3572 (ENA 1674) [*F* 29377], *Orient or Byzantium, 16th century, semicursive script, paper, 73 folios*.⁶³

This manuscript was copied in the Orient or Byzantium around the 15th or 16th century. It begins with sY 2, l. 47–124 on fol. 1r–v. Fol. 2r–v and starts again

belongs to a secular genre (written in semicursive). So the copyist might have changed his style due to the different genres.

59 Weinberger, *Jewish Hymnography*, 146.

60 Vogelstein, Rieger, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom*, 2.379–382.

61 Fol. 42v; see also on fol. 43r: כך קיצר רבנו גרשום הדברים —“This is how Rabbenu Gershom summarized the words.” Both remarks are found in sY 40.

62 Fol. 4v–5r; for the additional passage on Darius see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 47–48.

63 www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH000088390/NLI. Accessed July 12, 2022. The film lacks the image of fol. 73v, which includes the last lines of sY 89.

with SY 7, l. 10. From here the manuscripts encompasses the text until the end. The attribution of the text to Gershom Me'or ha-Gola is found on fol. 26r–v. For fol. 50ff. the lower part of each page is missing. The text is close to that of MS Jerusalem oct. 4120. It is an example of the circulation of the Ashkenazic A version in the East at a later period, long after the Cairo Genizah fragments were produced.

3.2.3 (7) Israel Museum B61.09.0803 (Rothschild Miscellany)/formerly Israel Museum 180/51/12

[F 32638] *Italy after 1450/before 1479/80, cursive script, parchment, octavo, fol. 206r–298r.*⁶⁴

In contrast to the other two manuscripts of this group, the so-called “Rothschild Miscellany” contains more than just the text of *Sefer Yosippon*. It is a codex of 473 folio pages, consisting of two parts: a Bible manuscript encompassing Psalms, Job, and Proverbs, and a prayer book in the Ashkenazic rite. On the margins of the second part a great many narratives, halakhic texts, and philosophical pieces were added, among them *Sefer Yosippon*, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* by Abraham ibn Daud, *Mashal ha-Qadmoni*, and more.⁶⁵ The manuscript is lavishly decorated with illustrations, ornaments, and gold initials in the Renaissance style, and was probably produced in the workshop of Leonardo Bellini.⁶⁶ It represents one of the most impressive illuminated Hebrew manuscripts known today.⁶⁷ It was produced between 1453 and 1479/80 in Northern Italy. The name of the owner and probably the commissioner of this manuscript is mentioned: Moses ben Yequtiel ha-Kohen. The name of the scribe may have been Shabtai.⁶⁸

The text of *Sefer Yosippon* starts on the margin of fol. 206r. Its artistic design is demonstrated by the fact that the story of the seven Maccabean brothers accompanies the *piyyutim* of Ḥanukkah, especially the *piyyut* by Joseph bar

64 Available online on the Ktiv website in black and white, starts with page 226 in the pictures; [https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH000180153/NLI#\\$FL138279360](https://www.nli.org.il/he/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH000180153/NLI#$FL138279360) (accessed July 12, 2022). Some pictures of the manuscript are available in colour on the website of *The Bezalel Narkiss Index of Jewish Art*: <https://cja.huji.ac.il/browser.php?mode=set&id=28>. There are two different ways of numbering the folios. Here the folios are indicated by the modern counting added on the page below.

65 For a list of content see Lévi, “Le manuscrit hébreu” and the description in the Jerusalem Catalogue of the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Film No. 32638.

66 See Bauer-Eberhardt, “Die Rothschild-Miscellanea.”

67 Fishof, ed., *The Rothschild Miscellany*; Beit-Arié, *Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, 93–126. For the dating see also Elizur, “Dating of the Rothschild Miscellany.”

68 See fol. 167r; Beit-Arié, *Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, 208–211.

Shlomo (בי אנפת ביי אודד/11th century).⁶⁹ There are several illustrations, in particular the famous one with the Maccabean knight and Judith with the head of Holofernes (fol. 217r).⁷⁰ From fol. 275r onward the text of *Yosippon* fills the whole of each page.

The text of *Sefer Yosippon* presented in this manuscript betrays all the features of the two other manuscripts of Ashkenazic Recension A, described above.⁷¹ However, the text has three additional passages. First, it provides a short description of Cleopatra's suicide by snakes in *SY* 47.⁷² Second, it includes the so-called Testimonium Flavianum of *Yosippon*, a bundle of short texts added to *SY* 57 and 58. The most famous scene involves a certain Jeshu, who advised the Emperor Caligula against the Jews. It is inserted after the story of the *Legatio ad Gaium* in *SY* 58 and has parallels to some early versions of the *Toledot Yeshu*. This passage is preceded by the story of Liza, who bore an illegitimate son after intercourse with a false God. The final passage tells the story of Hannah, who was pursued by the elders in her garden, a reworking of the Book of Susanna.⁷³

These texts appear in *Sefer Yosippon* at a place at which the author deviated from his source, i.e. *De excidio Hierosolymitano* or Ps-Hegesippus, and added the story of Philo's *Legatio ad Gaium*.⁷⁴ A later copyist found this the ideal spot to add a longer passage on the evil advisor of the emperor who tried to start a persecution but was blocked by divine interference. This passage has parallels to the earlier versions of *Toledot Yeshu* and may have been inspired by this polemical text.⁷⁵ In discussing what the Testimonium Flavianum in Josephus'

69 Fol. 217r–218v. Davidson § 1651; for the relation between *SY* and this *piyyut*, see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 183–190. For a new discussion of this *piyyut*, see Wasserman, *Liturgical Poems of Hanukka*, 74–76. See also Shalev-Eyni, “Martyrdom and Sexuality.”

70 On design and layout, see Beit-Arié, *Makings of the Medieval Hebrew Book*, 184. He assumes that this manuscript was designed after a model.

71 The reference to Gershom Meor ha-Golah is found on fol. 171r.

72 Fol. 262r–v (*SY* 47, l. 57); see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 49. This passage is also included in MS Budapest Kaufman 355, on which see below.

73 Fol. 277v–278v; see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 50–62. Flusser presents these passages at the end of his edition, thus showing awareness of the fact that this is a later interpolation, see Flusser I, 439–444. See also Lévi, “Jesus, Caligula et Claude;” Lévi, “Histoire de Suzanne.”

74 This text and its relation to *SY* has been recently examined thoroughly by Carson Bay in several articles, which completely renew our understanding of the relationship between the Latin source and the Jewish author of *Yosippon*. See Bay, “The ‘Maria Story,’” Bay, “The Jerusalem Temple and Jewish Identity,” and his contribution to this volume.

75 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 56–57.

Antiquities might have looked like, this passage from *Yosippon* was used in order to reconstruct the original wording of Josephus' text.⁷⁶

The third interpolation is an addition at the end of the text which continues the story of the prisoners after the downfall of Masada. Titus brought them to Rome and some of them settled in Otranto and in Tarent. They became the ancestors of the Southern Italian communities, as described also in the *Megillat Ahimaatz* (written in 1025 in Capua).⁷⁷ This passage appears in other manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon* too. MS Oxford, Hunt. 345 and the early printed edition of Mantua 1475 include it. MS Oxford Heb. d. 11 provides a shorter version lacking the information on Spain.⁷⁸ The passage became a foundation legend for the Jewish communities in Southern Italy, who came to flourish in the 8th–10th centuries.⁷⁹

Finally, this manuscript bears a hint at the date of production of *Yosippon* or of an early copy of the text. The text reads as follows:⁸⁰

ואגרות הרבה כאלה מצאנו בספר יוסף בן גוריון ולא כתבנו אותם פה כי הרבה לספר באגרות האלה אשר מצאנו מספרו משנת חמש מאות ושמנה שנה לחורבן הבית ואנחנו כתבנו והעתקנו מן הספר מספר יוסף בן גוריון הכהן בשנת שמנה מאות ושמנים וחמשה לחורבן.

And many more letters like these we found in the book Joseph ben Gorion and we did not write them down here, because he wrote a lot in these letters which we found in his book from the year 508 of the destruction of the Temple [576],⁸¹ and we wrote them and copied them from the book, the book of Josef ben Gorion, the priest, in the year 885 of the destruction [953].

This note led Flusser to assume that *Sefer Yosippon* was written or finished in the year 953. However, this need not necessarily be true. It could also provide the date of the copy of the text that later was used as a Vorlage for the text in

76 See the numerous publications on the Testimonium Flavianum, among others Whealey, "Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum;" Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History*, 83–85.

77 See Flusser I, 432–433, text B; Bonfil, *History and Folklore*, 235.

78 See Flusser I, 432–433.

79 See Marcus, "The Foundation Legend;" Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 266. For a further discussion of this passage see Andrea Schatz's essay in this volume.

80 SY 40; fol. 249v. All translations made by the author.

81 It is not clear what this date refers to.

the Rothschild Miscellany. Recent research supports the theory that *Yosippon* was completed in the first half of the 10th century.⁸²

3.3 *Transition to Recension B*

3.3.1 (⌘) Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Urbinas ebr. 52

[F 0069r] *Italy, 14th or 15th century, semi-cursive script, octavo, paper with linings, 186 folio.*⁸³

This manuscript represents the transition between Recension A and B.⁸⁴ It is incomplete: it lacks the beginning and the end as well as some passages in the body of the text.⁸⁵ As noted by the copyist, there were pages missing in his Vorlage.⁸⁶ The examination of the text yields the following: The text does not contain the interpolations on Daniel or the other interpolations of Recension A.⁸⁷ It shares some minor textual parallels with the Ashkenazi Recension A, but it does not contain the attribution to Gershom Me'or ha-Golah.⁸⁸ There are some features in the text of this manuscript that also appear in the witnesses of Recensions B and C, e.g. the structure of the beginning of sY 9 and the missing lines 136–173 in sY 43.⁸⁹ Thus, Flusser's characterization of the manuscript being a mixture of features of Recension A and B is correct. Obviously, the text of the Vorlage was derived from the Cairo Genizah version and then reworked, maybe on the basis of a text close to Recension B.

One of the crucial points concerning the attribution of this manuscript is the question of whether it contained the first interpolation of the Alexander romance. Unfortunately, in Vatican Urb. 52, the chapter on Alexander's visit is incomplete. Flusser was of the opinion that the missing folios could have encompassed the first interpolation of Alexander and that therefore the manuscript should be seen as a witness of Recension B. Moreover, he thought that

82 Flusser II, 4, 82–84; see also Bowman, "Dates in Sefer Josippon;" Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 9–11.

83 For description see Richler and Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 633; the manuscript is available online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.ebr.52.

84 Flusser II, 10, 15f.

85 Starts at sY 2, l. 14 and ends at sY 89, l. 42.

86 See fol. 10v, 12v, 50r.

87 See below.

88 See below. Vatican Urb. 52 shares with the manuscripts of the Ashkenazic A group the missing lines of sY 3, ll. 40–47 (fol. 4v), which are included in the manuscripts of Recensions B and C. Vatican Urb. 52 also contains ll. 58–143 of sY 60, which are part of the Ashkenazic recension but are missing in all the other manuscripts.

89 This is also found in MS Vatican 408, MS Milano 67, and the print Mantua 1475 of Recension B. In the witnesses of Recension C the gap is even larger, lacking lines 136–190.

this manuscript could have been the Vorlage for the Arabic translation of *Sefer Yosippon*.⁹⁰

A look at the manuscript reveals the following: When the text breaks up in Chapter 10, l. 58, the copyist noted: פה חסר יותר מעשרה דפים ("here more than ten pages are missing").⁹¹ It restarts in *SY* 13, l. 8. From an average estimate, one may assume that one folio in the manuscript provides the text of ca. 1.5 pages in Flusser's edition. The missing text of chapters 10–13 without the interpolation of Alexander in Flusser's edition (which fill 9 pages) would be equivalent to only 6 folio pages. Since the copyist mentions that there are more than 10 pages missing, one has to assume that these missing pages provided more text than that of Chapters 10–13. Therefore, it could well be the case that Vat. Urb. 52 included the first interpolation of Alexander. The text of this interpolation alone takes 20 pages in Flusser's edition, i.e. ca. 14 folios. Together with the missing text of *SY* 10–13, this would add up to ca. 20 folios that may be missing here. This is supported by the statement of the copyist that there were more than 10 pages missing. If this is the case, this manuscript would encompass also the first Interpolation on Alexander. This supports the assumption that the first interpolation on Alexander entered the text of *Yosippon* at early stage of the text's development, as demonstrated by Codex Orientalis 1.

3.3.2 (*) Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d. 11 (Neubauer 2797/1) [*F* 16716], *Ashkenaz, first half 14th century, parchment, quarto, semicursive script*.⁹²

This textual witness to *Sefer Yosippon* too represents the transitional stage from Recension A to Recension B. It contains the famous *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* by Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi, compiled in the first quarter of the 14th century, a huge collection of texts which includes a copy of *Yosippon*.⁹³ The family of Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi lived in the Rhineland.⁹⁴ His compilation of texts displays an interest in texts outside the Jewish traditional canon with a

90 Flusser 11, 15f. For an in-depth discussion of the Arabic translation of *SY*, see now Sela, *The Arabic Josippon*.

91 MS Vat. Urb. 52, fol. 12v. All translations are mine unless indicated otherwise.

92 No digitalization available; partial edition by Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 127–128, 148–154, 231–312, which does not include the whole text of *SY* as contained in the manuscript. The edition omits *SY* 28–89. However, the manuscript does include the book as a whole. For this reason it is not clear why Nadia Zeldes speaks about Eleazar ben Asher ha-Levi using excerpts from *SY*; see Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History*, 27–28.

93 For a detailed description of the manuscript see Haverkamp, *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen*, 163–186.

94 Raspe, "Ascher ha-Lewi und die Gründung," she argues that the manuscript served as a means of preserving family history.

historical outlook, beginning with biblical history, the Second Temple period, rabbinic and medieval times, and coming up to the messianic age. *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* is seen as one of the more important examples of medieval Jewish historiography, even though it is a compilation rather than an original historical work.⁹⁵ It also contains some of the most famous Hebrew narrative texts, as the Alexander romance or the *Mishle Sendebār*.⁹⁶ *Yosippon* provides the text with its historical backbone for the Second Temple period. Eleazar took this version of *Yosippon* from an earlier compilation of texts produced by the 12th century Italian author and compiler Yerahme'el ben Solomon.⁹⁷ It is not clear where the compilation of Yerahme'el in *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* starts and where it ends.⁹⁸ There is a core of texts that are attributed to him, because Yerahme'el inserted remarks mentioning himself. These are also found in the text of *Yosippon*, and thus it is included in Yerahme'el's collection.⁹⁹

Yerahme'el was interested in mathematics, calendrical issues, poetry, and history.¹⁰⁰ The compilation suggests that he tried to establish chronological tables and lists with the help of Jewish and non-Jewish sources.¹⁰¹ Moreover,

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- 95 For the content, see the table of contents in Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 3–8. It was actually seen as a pendant to the Christian genre of universal history; see Yassif, “Hebrew Narrative Anthology.” It also contains the chronicles on the crusades by Eliezer bar Nathan and Ephraim of Bonn; Haverkamp, *Hebräische Berichte*, 163.
- 96 The Alexander romance is represented in a different version from the one that entered into *SY* as Interpolation A and B; it was edited by Reich, *Tales of Alexander*. On this version of the Alexander story see also Dönitz, “Alexander the Great in Medieval Hebrew Traditions,” 35–38.
- 97 Gaster, ed., *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel*. This is first indicated when Eleazar ben Asher notes: למליצת ירחמיאלי—“let us return to the narrative of Yerahmeel;” Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 128.
- 98 The exact extent of this compilation is not clear. In his article, Howard Jacobson argues for a minimal version of this compilation; Jacobson, “Thoughts on the Chronicles.” Moses Gaster called the first 100 folio of MS Oxford Heb. d. 11 *Sefer Yerahme'el*.
- 99 See fol. 113r: ועתה יישר בעיני לספר המעשים אשר נעשו אחריה כי אני ירחמאל בר שלומה דברים אומ' כי כל הכתוב אשר יתוב ספרים ... ואני ירחמאל בן שלומה ליקטתי דברים Here Yerahme'el replaced Joseph ben Gorion with his own name in *SY* 35, ll. 1ff. At the end of *SY*, Yerahme'el added one word to the biblical verse, which then contains his name as an acrostic; see fol. 197r.
- 100 His poems are published in Neubauer, “Yerahmeel ben Shelomoh,” transmitted in MS Oxford Opp. 697/Neubauer 2079 [F 19364].
- 101 He also produced a version of *Seder Olam*, which starts with the destruction of the First Temple and ends with the Mishnah, presenting a list of Jewish priests, kings, and rabbis besides non-Jewish rulers; Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 365–368 and 368–382. The text includes a description of the Greek and Latin translations of the Hebrew Bible; Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 382. On the relation between this text and *SY*, see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 216–223.

Yerahme'el translated texts from Latin, Greek, and Aramaic into Hebrew.¹⁰² His collection in *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* includes Hebrew translations of the Aramaic parts of the biblical Book of Daniel as well as translations of the Greek additions to Daniel in the Septuagint.¹⁰³ The fact that Yerahme'el dealt with these texts in particular led to the assumption that it was he who added the stories from Daniel into his version of *Sefer Yosippon*.¹⁰⁴ The interpolation contains the tales of Daniel becoming the advisor of King Darius (SY 4), Daniel in the lion's den, and Daniel and Bel from the Septuagint (SY 5 and 6).¹⁰⁵ The second part deals with Zerubavel, who becomes Daniel's successor as advisor to the king and wins the contest of the three youths (SY 7). As a consequence, Zerubavel is sent to Jerusalem by the Persian King Cyrus with the order to rebuild the Temple. If the above hypothesis is true, SY 3–6 were added by Yerahme'el in the 12th century in Italy, and only from that time onward were they an inherent part of *Yosippon*.¹⁰⁶

The version of *Sefer Yosippon* within *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* has some insertions in Chapter 9, the story of Esther and Mordechai. This chapter in *Yosippon* is peculiar, because it does not present the story as it is told in the biblical book in the first place, but mostly consists of the additions to the Septuagint, i.e. the plot against Ahashverosh, Mordechai's dream, Mordechai's and Esther's prayer, and Esther's reception by Ahashverosh.¹⁰⁷ The compiler of *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* added a number of passages into this chapter which are not part of *Yosippon*. Thus, after Esther's reception follows Haman's letter and two versions of the throne of Solomon.¹⁰⁸ These texts are found in the various Esther-Midrashim. After that the text returns to *Yosippon* and continues with SY 10, Alexander's visit to Jerusalem.

This version of *Sefer Yosippon* also includes biographical passages concerning Philo and Josephus. The note on Philo is added to SY 58, which tells the story of the *legatio ad Gaium* headed by Philo.¹⁰⁹ The passage on Josephus is

102 He translated parts of the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* by Ps-Philo; see Jacobson, "Thoughts on the Chronicles," 250–263.

103 Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 231–250.

104 This is corroborated by the fact that the Daniel story in SY has some parallels in the translations of the additions to the biblical Book of Daniel as they were presented by Yerahme'el; see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 62f.

105 Dan 6; Dan 14 (addition to the Septuagint); see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 62–65.

106 For text and translation of these parts, see Gaster, ed., *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, 207–231.

107 For a discussion of this chapter, see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 197–203.

108 Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 271–281. For an English translation see Gaster, ed., *Chronicles of Jerahmeel*, 236–253.

109 Flusser I, 434f. (Oxford, Heb. d. II, fol. 145v).

added at the end of the text and follows as a note on the account of prisoners taken by Titus to Rome, which later turned into one of the ideas behind the foundation myths of the European Diaspora Communities.¹¹⁰ It is not clear whether these parts were added by Yerahme'el in the 12th century or by the second compiler Eleazar in the 14th century. In other cases, there are notes indicating the treatment of the text by the redactor. So, it most probably was Eleazar who detached Chapters 1 and 2 of *Yosippon* from the body of the text and put them in between other texts that precede the copy of *Yosippon*.¹¹¹

Thus, *Sefer ha-Zikhronot* contains a copy of *Sefer Yosippon* that was reworked and changed, in particular by the insertion of passages like the interpolation of Daniel, biographical notes on Philo and Josephus, or the short passage at the end concerning the prisoners of Titus. The text of *Yosippon* preserved herein is not based on the textual version known as the Ashkenazic redaction A, but continues the textual tradition as represented in the Cairo Genizah fragments and in Recension B, as can be seen in the final chapter (see above in the discussion of Ashkenazic A). Moreover, here and in all manuscripts of Recensions B and C there is a gap in *SY* 60, ll. 58–143. Therefore, this manuscript represents the transition between Recension A and Recension B.

4 Manuscripts of Recension B

As demonstrated above, Recension B is characterized first and foremost by continuing the textual versions of the Cairo Genizah fragments and second by the integration of the stories of Daniel and Zerubavel (*SY* 3–6).¹¹² Before the discovery of the fragment of the Alexander romance in one of the codices of the Cairo Genizah, the inclusion of two interpolations to the chapter on Alexander's visit to Jerusalem (*SY* 10) was the criterion that defined Recension B, because all the manuscripts attributed to Recension B include at least the first interpolation on Alexander.¹¹³ However, as demonstrated above, this interpolation was possibly already added to the text of *Yosippon* in

110 This passage is also contained in the Rothschild Miscellany; see above. For the text see Flusser I, 432–433, 435–437 and Oxford, Heb. d. 11, fol. 197r–199r.

111 Yassif, ed., *Book of Memory*, 127 and 148.

112 All the manuscripts also have the gap in *SY* 60, lacking ll. 58–143; see discussion of Oxford, Heb. d. 11.

113 For the inclusion of the first interpolation; see above on the Cairo Genizah fragments. For the Alexander interpolations see Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 75–90. For the Hebrew Alexander in general see Dönitz, "Alexander the Great" and the introduction in van Bekkum, ed., *A Hebrew Alexander Romance*.

the Cairo Genizah codices in the East during the 12th century; from there this version spread back to Italy, whence most of the manuscripts of Recension B originate (all of them date from the 14th century onward).

The second interpolation depicts Alexander's birth and childhood. This interpolation has many parallels to the birth story told in the Hebrew Alexander Romances transmitted in MS London 145 and MS Paris Hébreu 671.¹¹⁴ This interpolation is probably contained in the newly discovered MS Milano, Ambrosiana I 67, although only fragmentarily. It is included in the print edition of Mantua 1475. It is also included in all the manuscripts of Recension C (see below). In all manuscripts that contain the second Interpolation the texts of both interpolations have been reworked.¹¹⁵

Recension B, as established by Flusser, was represented by one manuscript only (MS Vatican 408; Italy 1443, written for Giannozzo Manetti; see below) and the early print produced in the workshop of Abraham Conat in Mantua in 1475.¹¹⁶ After the reexamination of *Sefer Yosippon's* manuscripts, four additional witnesses were classified as Recension B, so altogether there are now five manuscript witnesses for this recension. These additional manuscripts are: MS Budapest A 355 (previously identified as Recension A by Flusser) and the recently discovered MS Milano I 67 (unknown to Flusser) as complete manuscripts. Furthermore, MS Oxford Hunt. 345 (seen as an epitome by Flusser) and the binding fragments from MS Munich 153 (unknown to Flusser).¹¹⁷ Several of these manuscripts were written around the 15th century, meaning that at least in Italy Recensions A (see "Rothschild Miscellany" and Vatican Urb. 52) and B seem to have circulated at the same time.

The comparison of the textual witnesses results in the conclusion that there are three categories of Recension B: the first has a shortened textual version (early print Mantua 1475, the binding fragments in MS Munich, Steinschneider 153, and the excerpt in MS Oxford Hunt. 345).¹¹⁸ The text is shorter than in the manuscript versions of Recension A, from which many words are omitted. All references to Joseph ben Gorion being the compiler

114 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 85–90; van Bekkum *Hebrew Alexander Romance London*, 27.

115 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 85–87.

116 Flusser II.

117 This article does not provide an exhaustive discussion of the fragments and excerpts that exist from SY. However, for the discussion of Recension B, they are important because they illuminate the manuscript tradition of this recension, which is completely lacking in Flusser's work.

118 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption* and Dönitz, "Josephus torn to Pieces."

or copyist of *Sefer Yosippon*'s text are missing.¹¹⁹ A superficial comparison between the text in the Cairo Genizah fragments and this shortened version shows that the latter has less text and simplified syntactical structures. The circulation of *Sefer Yosippon* in such an epitomized version is proven not only by these manuscripts, but also by the writings of Abraham ibn Daud, who used a shortened text of *Yosippon* as a Vorlage for his compilation *Dorot Olam*.¹²⁰ Yet he probably did not use one of the transmitted manuscripts, since there are few textual parallels. He may have reworked his Vorlage in order to fit the text into his concept of *Dorot Olam*.¹²¹

MS Vatican ebr. 408 together with MS Budapest Kaufmann A 355 present a version in which the text continues the Genizah version, and both manuscripts include the Interpolation on Daniel, the first interpolation of the Alexander romance (his wondrous travels), and the Testimonium Flavianum. Finally, MS Milano I 67 presents a text that is further enlarged in comparison with the previous groups and which also shares some characteristics with Recension C (i.e., the interpolation of Alexander's birth story), so this manuscript demonstrates the transition from Recension B to Recension C.¹²²

4.1 *Group 1: Short Version*

4.1.1 (מ) Mantua 1475

Recension B is transmitted in a shortened version, which is represented in the early print Mantua 1475.¹²³ This was produced in the workshop of Abraham Conat who added an introduction in which he ascribed the book to Joseph ben Gorion: ראיתי לכתוב זה הספר הנכבד אשר חברו איש אלהים גבור חיל משוח מלחמה: מה גוריון כהן לאלהי עליון הנקרא יוסף בן גוריון—“I saw this excellent book written by a man of God, hero and soldier, anointed for war, a priest to the highest God, called Joseph ben Gorion.”¹²⁴ The print contains the interpolation to Daniel, both interpolations on Alexander, and the passage on the prisoner of Titus.¹²⁵ *Sefer Yosippon* belongs to the early Hebrew books printed in Italy.

119 On the role of Joseph ben Gorion as alias of Flavius Josephus, see below on Recension C.

120 See Vehlow, ed., *Abraham Ibn Daud's Dorot 'Olam*.

121 See the discussion in Recension C; Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, Chapter 5.3. and Dönitz, “Josephus torn to pieces.”

122 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 72–73.

123 Offenberg, “Chronology of Hebrew Printing.” For an online version of the Mantua print see https://www.nli.org.il/he/books/NNL_ALEPH001268325/NLI (accessed July 5, 2022). The book was later reprinted by Günzburg, ספר יוסיפון כפי דפוס מנטוואה.

124 SY, Mantua 1475, 269.

125 See above on Oxford Heb. d. 11 and the discussion of the passage by Andrea Schatz in this volume.

4.1.2 (7) Oxford, Bodleian Library, Huntington 345 (Neubauer 793/2) [F 20330] *Orient, 1462, semicursive, paper, fol. 218v–245v*.¹²⁶

This manuscript presents an excerpt of *Sefer Yosippon* starting with Chapter 74 until the end (SY 89) and is dated to 1462. The text is shorter than the other versions, its closest parallel being the Mantua print of 1475. At the end it also provides the passage on Titus' prisoners. The text contains parallels to the binding fragments in MS Munich 153/8 (see below).

4.1.3 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 153 VIII [F 25997], *Ashkenaz, 14th century, parchment fragments used as binding fragments for Munich Clm 3560, semicursive, 4 folios*.¹²⁷

These fragments were found in a book binding in the framework of the "Books within Books" project in Germany.¹²⁸ They encompass bits of the text of SY 29, 35, 82, and 89. In the last two passages they show parallels to Mantua 1475 and Oxford Hunt. 345. With these textual parallels these fragments provide proof that in Ashkenaz during the 14th century there was not only the Ashkenazic Recension A available, but also Recension B. Both versions of *Yosippon* circulated during the same time in the same geographical region.¹²⁹

4.2 Group 2: Long Version

4.2.1 (7) Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Kaufmann A 355 [F 15131] *Ashkenaz/Italy, 16th century, semicursive, paper with linings, 236 pages*.¹³⁰

This manuscript is incomplete. It starts with SY 5, l. 57 and ends with SY 88, l. 58. It is numbered according to pages. The text includes the interpolations on Daniel as well as the first interpolation of the Alexander romance

126 Available online: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/8fuaacfc-207f-42a9-89ce-78dccadb51a3> (accessed July 12, 2022).

127 Available online: <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb00039620?page=1> (accessed July 12, 2022). Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*; Lehnardt, *Die hebräischen und aramäischen Einbandfragmente*, 638.

128 The search for Hebrew fragments that were reused as book bindings or covers was organized in the framework of a DFG-funded project called Genizat Germania supervised by Prof. Dr. Andreas Lehnardt (Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz). See now <http://www.hebrewmanuscript.com> (accessed May 14th, 2023).

129 For a more detailed discussion of these fragments, see Dönitz, "Josephus Torn To Pieces." Another binding fragment containing SY was found in the Vatican Library: MS Vatican 617/1 [F 74201], Spain, 15th century. It has fragments of SY 49–50; see Richler and Beit-Arié, eds., *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 505.

130 Available online: https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts/viewerpage?vid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001794800205171-1#%FL39031739; See Weisz, *Katalog der hebräischen Handschriften*, 113.

(pp. 18–34). Moreover, this manuscript includes the story of Cleopatra's death (p. 124), like the Rothschild Miscellany of Ashkenazic Recension A, so there is a connection between these two recensions. Moreover, Budapest 355 also includes the interpolation of the Testimonium Flavianum in *Sefer Yosippon* (pp. 158–163). It shares the gap in the text of *SY* 60, ll. 58–143 with MS Oxford Bod. d. 11 and the other manuscripts of the longer Recension B. So, this manuscript of *Yosippon* is a perfect example of how the different recensions start to merge in the 15th and 16th centuries. It is difficult to determine the role of this witness in the stemma, which is why Flusser placed it in Recension A; in my opinion it belongs to Recension B. Yet, since there are overlapping interpolations with the Rothschild Miscellany, there seems to be a fluid textual tradition here.

4.2.2 (7) Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 408
 [F 08636] Italy, Fano 1443, Italian semicursive script, parchment, octavo, 153 folios.¹³¹

This manuscript belongs to the long version of Recension B. The manuscript was copied in Fano/Italy by Elijah ben Moses for the Florentine humanist Giannozzo Manetti (1396–1459). The copy was completed on Thursday, 28th of Kislev 5204 = 1443.¹³² The text of *Sefer Yosippon* contains the Daniel interpolation and the first interpolation to the Alexander chapter. It also possesses a version of the Testimonium Flavianum which is different from the passages in MS Rothschild Miscellany and MS Budapest 355 (see above).

This is the only manuscript of *Sefer Yosippon* that was definitely written for a Christian audience.¹³³ The Italian humanists grasped Josephus as an accessible source for Jewish history. Their interest in *Yosippon*, of course, was probably mainly sparked by the quest for information on Jesus in these writings. Thus, the humanists knew Josephus as well as *Yosippon*. Giannozzo Manetti, who commissioned this copy, started his study of Hebrew in 1435 and admired Philo and Josephus for their knowledge of Greek and Hebrew respectively. Josephus, in his mastery of both languages, was an inspiration for his own studies. Manetti owned copies of Josephus' works in Latin as well.¹³⁴

131 Available online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ebr.408 (accessed July 4, 2022). For the description in the catalogue see Richler and Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 353–354.

132 The same scribe copied MSS Vat. ebr. 95 in 1438 (commentary on Job by Gersonides), Paris, BnF hébreu 196 in 1439 in Cortona (commentary on the Bible by David Qimhi; F 4179), and Parma 2445 (collection of philosophical and other works) in 1444.

133 Stein Kokin, "The Josephan Renaissance," 231; Flusser II, 56.

134 Stein Kokin, "The Josephan Renaissance," 207–210. On *SY*'s copy see 218, FN 68.

So, Vatican 408 is the manuscript that Manetti commissioned from Elijah ha-Melamed of Fano in 1443. However, it seems as if he did not use it much. In his writings, he quotes Josephus several times, but never *Sefer Yosippon*. It has been argued that his interest in *Yosippon* was mainly elicited by the fact that he hoped to find a reference to Jesus in that text.¹³⁵ The copyist was aware of the fact that his commissioner was Christian and might be searching for exactly this information. Therefore, he decided not to include the whole passage. So in fact, MS Vatican ebr. 408 does include the Testimonium Flavianum from *Yosippon*. Yet the manuscript does not encompass the passage on Jesus in its full scope; the text breaks up halfway through and omits the ending.¹³⁶ It starts with a narrative of Jews, who are drawn to Christianity. Among them is a certain man who is described with these words: ויאמרו בא מלאך אלהים בנו—“and they said there comes a messenger of God, his son, of whom the prophets have prophesied.”¹³⁷ Yet the text does not give the name of this messenger, who becomes the advisor of the Emperor. In other manuscripts, he is named שוי, as a permutation of ישו.¹³⁸ He promotes the cult of the Emperor and the erection of a statue to be worshipped. A Jewish embassy is sent to Rome to ask for the revocation of this abominable situation in Jerusalem. The following story, which narrates how the Emperor died and his evil advisor is killed in a brutal way after a trial, is omitted in this manuscript. The copyist Elijah may have wanted to spare these details, which suggest Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus. A careful reader may still have recognized this passage as referring to Jesus. In any case, however, Manetti did not mention it.¹³⁹

4.3 *Group 3: Transition to Recension C*

4.3.1 Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana I 67 Inf.

[F 4118r] *Spain, 15th/16th century, semicursive, quarto, paper, 80 folios. No digitization available.*¹⁴⁰

135 Stein Kokin, “The Josephan Renaissance,” 220f.; Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the Renaissance*, 79.

136 Vat. ebr. 408, fol. 94v–95r; see Flusser I, 439–440, ll. 1–28. For a discussion of the version in Vat. ebr. 408 see Stein Kokin, “The Josephan Renaissance,” 226.

137 Vat. ebr. 408, fol. 95r.

138 Rothschild Miscellany, fol. 278r; Budapest A 355, p. 158. In Milano I 67 there is a gap in the manuscript.

139 Stein Kokin, “The Josephan Renaissance,” 220f., 231f.; Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the Renaissance*, 80.

140 There is no description of this manuscript in the catalogue by Bernheimer, *Codices Hebraici Bybliothecae Ambrosianae*.

This manuscript is one of the witnesses of *Sefer Yosippon* that was not known to Flusser. The manuscript is incomplete at the beginning and at the end, starting at sY 4, l. 25 and ending at sY 85, l. 6. Thus, it contains the interpolation on Daniel. There are several pages missing in the body of the text. Chapter 10 is incomplete, starting on fol. 9v, but fol. 10r begins with the ending of the second interpolation on Alexander followed by the first interpolation and the Chronicle. This means that this manuscript is the first that included both interpolations on Alexander (see above). It also proves that both interpolations on Alexander were included in *Yosippon*'s text before the reworking of Judah Mosqoni (see below Recension C). The manuscript lacks sY 55, l. 73 to sY 59, l. 2 (fol. 61v–62r). Therefore, it is not certain whether it contained the Testimonium Flavianum. The text shows expanded phrasing in comparison to the other manuscripts of Recension B. All of these elements support the role of MS Mailand 67 as marking a transitional stage between Recension B and C.

5 Manuscripts of Recension C

In the following, I will discuss the manuscripts of Recension C, which is the longest and the latest version of *Sefer Yosippon*. This longer recension became the most popular version of the book from the Early Modern period onward—many translations are based on it (the Yiddish translation printed in 1546, the Early English translation in 1561).¹⁴¹ It is presented in three manuscripts, of which two were known to Flusser. The third was identified when I reviewed the Jerusalem IMHM catalogue for *Yosippon* manuscripts listed there. All three manuscripts were copied in Italy in the 15th century. Recension C was first printed in Constantinople in 1510 and in Venice in 1544. It was used by Haim Hominer, who published this version first in 1956 and later in 1961 and 1967.¹⁴²

All three manuscripts of Recension C include the introduction by the 14th century scholar Judah Mosqoni (1328 until after 1370).¹⁴³ According to his own words, he had several manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon* of various length and quality before him:

141 For the Yiddish translation, see Dönitz, "Josephus im jiddischen Gewand;" for the early English version see Reiner, "The English Josippon;" Vehlow, "Fascinated by Josephus."

142 Hominer, ed., *Josiphon*; Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 91–102.

143 MS Paris 1280, fol. 1r–3v; MS Vatican Borg. 1, fol. 1–4; MS Milano H 70, fol. 1r–2v; Hominer, *Josiphon*, 34–40.

כי מצאתיו ארוך כזה מלבד שהיו חסרים ממנו ספורים סודיים רבים אשר המה העקר והיסוד בספר. והם הספורים המלמדים להועיל. גם מצאתיו מקוצר אשר קצרו והעלים ריב ספוריו החכם ר' אברהם ב'ר דוד הלוי הידוע בן אל צדיק מגדולי חכמי גרנאטא. וגם מצאתיו עוד מקוצר על דרך אחרת קרובה לדרך ר' אברהם הנז' בהתעלות ספורים רבים גם כן קצרו החכם הגדול ר' שמואל הנגיד מגדולי מדינת קורטובה. ואמנם עזרני יי ואמצאה את הספר כלו בלשון החכם יוסף הכהן בן גוריון הכהן מחברו ולא חסר ממנו ספור אחד מכל הספורים אשר כתב בו כאשר אודיע עוד. ואז שמחתי מאד בו במוצא שלל רב ... אמרתי אני עם לבי מה יש לעשות בזה הספר כי אם להוציא במספר צבא הספורים הנמצאים בכלל ספר וספר מהספרים הפרטים. שהם חלקי הספר הכולל הגדול הנקרא בעברי יוסיפון וביוני יוסיפוס וברומי ג'וסיפוס.¹⁴⁴

Because I found it long like this, except that there were missing from it many important stories, which are the basis and the essence of the book. They are the stories that teach a lesson. And I also found it (the book) shortened, because he shortened it and he omitted many stories, the wise Rabbi Abraham ben David ha-Levi, who is known as a son of God and a righteous from the sages of Granada. And I also found it shortened in another way, (yet) similar to the way Rabbi Abraham did it, who is mentioned above, by omitting many stories. Also the great sage R. Samuel ha-Nagid shortened it, from the great (sages) of the city of Cordoba. And the Lord helped me, and I found the complete book in the language of the wise Joseph ha-Kohen ben Gorion ha-Kohen, its author, and nothing is missing from it, not one of all the stories he wrote in it, as I will mention later. And so I enjoyed it and found great peace ... And I said to myself, what can be done with this book but to publish it with all the multitude of stories that are included in every single book. They constitute the parts of the complete book called in Hebrew *Yosippon*, in Greek *Josephos* and in Rumi (Latin) *Giosippus*.

Mosqoni complained that none of the manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon* he found was complete. He mentions the shortened versions of *Yosippon*, e.g. the one produced by Abraham Ibn Daud.¹⁴⁵ Finally, he found one “in the language of the wise Joseph ha-Kohen ben Gorion.” This could mean that he actually saw a text ‘by Josephus himself,’ either in Greek or in Latin. That he knew about translations of Josephus’ works can be derived from the final sentence of the quotation, where he presents the different names of Josephus in Hebrew,

144 MS Paris 1280, fol. 2v.

145 See on Recension B above and the discussion below.

Greek, and Latin. This fits in with the character of Recension C, which shows an enlarged and broadened textual version with several additional passages in the text; some seem to have been taken from non-Jewish sources in Latin. The most prominent one is the interpolation about the coronation ceremony of Vespasian. He also may have added passages from the text's Latin source, *De excidio* (Ps-Hegesippus).¹⁴⁶

Apart from the additions and rewriting of the text, Mosqoni divided the text into books and paragraphs and added a list of contents in his introduction. Moreover, it is in this recension that the author of the text and Joseph ben Gorion (i.e. Flavius Josephus) are unified into one and the same person. From then on, Joseph ben Gorion, i.e. Flavius Josephus, was identified as the author of *Sefer Yosippon*. In the Christian reception of *Yosippon*, the identification of Joseph ben Gorion/Flavius Josephus and the author of *Yosippon* was taken for granted and even used as a polemical tool against the Jews.¹⁴⁷ Mosqoni also adds details from Josephus' biography.¹⁴⁸

Judah Mosqoni came from Byzantium, traveled through several countries searching for manuscripts of the Torah commentary by Abraham Ibn Ezra, and finally moved to Majorca.¹⁴⁹ There, beginning in 1356, he started to compile his version of *Sefer Yosippon*. A few years later, in 1362 he began to write a super-commentary on Abraham Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Torah.¹⁵⁰ Mosqoni's redaction of *Yosippon* still awaits a more thorough examination with regard to its reworking of the text, its interpolations and their sources, as well as the cultural context in which Mosqoni composed this version.¹⁵¹

Mosqoni's text shares several features with the reworking of *Sefer Yosippon* produced by the 12th century Spanish scholar Abraham Ibn Daud known as *Divre Malkhe Yisrael*, mentioned by Mosqoni in his introduction (see quotation

146 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 97–100.

147 Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the Renaissance*. It was Azaria de Rossi who first differentiated between the two authors and their works in the middle of the 16th century; see Weinberg, "Early Modern Jewish Readers of Josephus."

148 Hominer, *Josiphon*, Chapters 8, 35, 38, 43.

149 See the description of his travels in his introduction to the super-commentary on Ibn Ezra now in Kreisel, *R. Yehudah Le'on ben R. Mosheh Mosqoni*, translated by Bowman, *Jews in Byzantium*, 283–285.

150 Kreisel, *R. Yehudah Le'on ben R. Mosheh Mosqoni*.

151 See a preliminary analysis in Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 91–102, and in Dönitz, "Historiography among Byzantine Jews." Recently, Katrin Kogman-Appel provided some further insights into his contemporary intellectual milieu in her latest book: Kogman-Appel, *Catalan Maps and Jewish Books*. For the library of Judah Mosqoni see Steinschneider, "Yehuda Mosconi;" Lévi, "L'inventaire;" Hillgarth, ed., *Readers and Books*, 434–441.

above). This text presents a reworking of *Yosippon* with a polemical tendency against the Karaites.¹⁵² The changes made by Ibn Daud include shortenings of the text as well as added information, such as the Midrash on Zechariah at the end of the text as well as the story of the foundation of Rome by Romulus and Remus. These changes and additions are also found in Mosqoni's redaction of *Yosippon*. Therefore, Flusser assumed that Ibn Daud used a manuscript of Recension C. However, in my analysis, I put forth the possibility that Ibn Daud used a manuscript of Recension B and reworked it. The parallels between Ibn Daud's text and Mosqoni's redactions of *Yosippon* therefore are evidence of the fact that Mosqoni used Ibn Daud's *Divre Malkhe Yisrael*. Since Mosqoni explicitly says that he used Ibn Daud's text, it is probable that he took these passages from Ibn Daud when he compiled the long version of *Yosippon*.¹⁵³

5.1 (פ) *Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Hébreu 1280*

[F 30898] *Italy, 1472, square and semi-cursive, parchment and paper, octavo, 186 folios.*¹⁵⁴

This manuscript was copied by Judah ben Solomon of Camerino in the year 1472 in Lucera for Raphael Cohen from Lunel, who lived in Foggia (here called Manfredonia).¹⁵⁵ It has glosses in the margins. The manuscript contains all the characteristic features of the Mosqoni recension, the introduction by Mosqoni (fol. 1r–3v), a list of contents according to paragraphs (fol. 4r–39r), and the interpolation on the coronation of Vespasian (fol. 147r–148r). In *SY* 58 there is no interpolation of the Testimonium Flavianum as in Recension A and B, but one sentence hints at Jesus nevertheless:¹⁵⁶

בימים ההם היו מחלקות רבות וקטטות גדולות ביהודה בין פרושים ובין פריצי ישראל
אשר נטו אז אחרי ישוע בן פנדירא הנצרי אשר עשה פליאות גדולות בישראל עד
נצחוהו הפרושים ותלוהו על העץ.

152 Vehlow, *Abraham Ibn Daud's Dorot 'Olam (Generations of the Ages)*.

153 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 235–239. Zeldes repeats the argument by Flusser, basing herself on the very same texts that I analysed; see Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the Renaissance*, 17–18.

154 Available online: [https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts/viewerpage?vid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001319660205171-1#\\$FL55482365](https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/manuscripts/hebrew-manuscripts/viewerpage?vid=MANUSCRIPTS&docid=PNX_MANUSCRIPTS990001319660205171-1#$FL55482365) (accessed July 5, 2022); for a description see Beit-Arié, Sirat, *Manuscrits médiévaux en caracteres hébraïques 1*, no. 132 and <https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc5378x>.

155 According to the colophon on fol. 185v; for the text see Beit-Arié, Sirat, *Manuscrits médiévaux*, vol. 1, no. 132.

156 MS Paris 1280, fol. 123v.

In these days there was great strife in Judah between the Perushim and the lawless of Israel who were attracted to Jeshua ben Pandera, the Christian, who did great miracles in Israel until the Perushim defeated him and hanged him on a tree.

5.2 (Ⓜ) *Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Borgiana ebr. 1*

[F 11654], Italy, 15th century, semi-cursive script, paper, octavo, 191 folio.¹⁵⁷

This manuscript was copied by Ephraim ben Yoav of Moderna for Mordechai ben Benjamin the physician. Unfortunately, the year is not stated. Ephraim copied at least five other manuscripts between the years 1467 and 1501 in Florence and northern Italy, and thus his copy of *Sefer Yosippon* probably has been produced in the second half of the 15th century as well.¹⁵⁸ The folios are numbered by hand and a number is stamped in the left corner below, which deviates by one from the written numeration. The first folio is an addition and contains a description of the codex in Italian.

The text starts with the introduction by Judah Mosqoni (fol. 2r–5r) and his list of contents (fol. 5r–41r) according to paragraph numbers, which are also found in the margins of the text. The text of *Sefer Yosippon* starts on folio 41v. The interpolation on the coronation of Vespasian is found on fol. 152v–154r. On fol. 129v, at the beginning of sY 58, there is a sentence that may have referred to Jesus. It has been censored and made illegible. The copy is very similar to MS Paris 1280 and was produced around the same time.

5.3 *Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 70 Inf.*

[No Microfilm]; Italy, 15th/16th century, semi-cursive script, paper, 105 folio.

This manuscript was unknown to Flusser. I discovered it in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan during my visit in 2007. It shares all the characteristics of Recension C. However, the text contains some alterations, e.g. in sY 57–60. In sY 58 there is also a censored, but readable, sentence referring to Jesus slightly different than that in Paris 1280:¹⁵⁹

בימים ההם קמו המחלקות והקטטות בין הפרושים והפריצים על דבר ישו בן פלטר
הנצרי שהיו אומרים שהיה משיח עד נצחוהו הפרושים ותלוהו על העץ חב הים
ערב פסח.

¹⁵⁷ Available online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.ebr.1 (accessed July 5, 2022).

¹⁵⁸ Richler and Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 516.

¹⁵⁹ Milano, Ambrosiana H 70 Inf, fol. 69v.

In those days there arose strife and dispute between the Perushim and the lawless over the matter of Jeshu ben Paltera, the Christian, about whom they said that he was the Messiah until the Perushim defeated him and hanged him on a tree on the eve of the festival of Pessah.¹⁶⁰

The three manuscripts transmitting *Sefer Yosippon*, Recension C, were all produced in Italy during the decades between 1470 and 1500. At the same time, Giannozzo Manetti ordered his copy of *Yosippon* (Vatican 408/Recension B). The Rothschild Miscellany was produced in Italy between 1450 and 1480, representing the Ashkenazic Recension A and including the Testimonium Flavianum. The interest in *Yosippon* and the circulation of several recensions at that time in Italy reflects the interest of humanists, both Christian and Jewish, in Second Temple history. The integration and disintegration of the Testimonium Flavianum into the text of *Yosippon* in the manuscripts mirrors the Jewish-Christian encounter on the subject of Josephus.¹⁶¹ Also in exactly that period *Yosippon* was printed for the first time in Mantua in 1475. Thus, the copies of Recension C fit with the general interest in historiography in humanist Italy. The text's development finds ends with this recension. In the following centuries, *Yosippon* would be printed and translated into various languages, many of them based on Recension C.

6 Conclusion

What does this all mean for our understanding of *Sefer Yosippon* and the history of its transmission? First of all, the character of *Yosippon* as an open book that was altered and enlarged by many scribes and scholars needs to be taken into account when dealing with the text. There hardly ever existed "one" single *Yosippon*. Thus, whenever discussing textual evidence from this book, one must consider which text is meant and in which recension or manuscript the relevant passage is found. Descriptions of the manuscripts support the notion that *Yosippon*'s textual transmission was a fluid one; at the same time it is possible to establish subgroups of manuscripts belonging to the three established recensions. The literary structure remained as a basis, while the extensions and

160 For a discussion of these different versions of the reference to Jesus, see Stein Kokin, "Josephan Renaissance," 227 note 115; Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History*, 83–85. See also the numerous publications on the Testimonium Flavianum, among others Whealey, "Josephus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and the Testimonium Flavianum."

161 See Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History*; Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, 50–65.

insertions show how the work was read according to the needs and views of its readers and copyists in their various times and environments.

Second, shortly after it was written in Southern Italy, *Sefer Yosippon* spread throughout the Mediterranean region and as far as the Near East, as evidenced by the fragments of the Oriental codices preserved in the Cairo Genizah. Here the text was read as a historical narrative taken from non-Jewish sources, which is why it received its first interpolations on Alexander's wars and travels.¹⁶² At the same time, the book was known in Central Europe, i.e. in Ashkenaz and in Spain. In Ashkenaz, *Yosippon* became a model for the literary formation of Jewish martyrdom. In Spain, the text served Abraham ibn Daud as a means for polemic against the Karaites as well as against the Christians.¹⁶³

Sefer Yosippon's manuscript transmission and its reception history in the Medieval Jewish diaspora communities of Europe and the Middle East illuminates the framework in which *Yosippon* was seen and read by its wider Jewish audience. The interpolations, in particular those on Daniel at the Babylonian court and the Testimonium Flavianum, added material to the Jewish-Christian dispute in the 12th as well as in the 15th century. By integrating these texts into the Hebrew paraphrase of Flavius Josephus' writings, they served their Jewish readers as ammunition in the struggle over the monopoly of the right to interpret the history of the Second Temple and its destruction by the Romans.¹⁶⁴

Appendix: List of Manuscripts of *Sefer Yosippon*

Recension A

Cairo Genizah

Cambridge, University Library, Or. 1080 A 45.1

Cambridge, University Library, T-S 10 K 16, No. 1–20 (1)

Cambridge, University Library, T-S AS 213.32 und 34

Cambridge, University Library, T-S C 2.206

Cambridge, University Library, T-S NS 254.91

Cambridge, University Library, T-S NS 175.75

162 See also the rich Judaeo-Arabic tradition of *sy*; Sela, *The Arabic Yosippon*; Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, Chapter 3. For the Arabic tradition and its relevance for the Ethiopic translation, see the oeuvre of Yonatan Binyam and his contribution to this volume.

163 Dönitz, *Überlieferung und Rezeption*, Chapters 4 and 5.

164 That this is one of *Yosippon's* major characteristics has recently be shown beautifully in the publications of Carson Bay on the adaptation of *Yosippon's* source, Ps-Hegesippus, in the Hebrew text; see Bay, "The Maria Story," Bay, "The Jerusalem Temple," and chapter 11 of this volume.

Cambridge, University Library, Lewis-Gibson Glass 7
 Geneva, Bibliothèque publique et universitaire, No. 34
 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d. 64
 Paris, Library of the Alliance Israélite Universelle VII A.8
 St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Evr. Antonin B 916
 St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Evr. Antonin B 917 (ב)

Ashkenazic A

Israel Museum 180/51/12 (Rothschild Miscellany)/ Israel Museum B61.09.
 0803 (ט)
 Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Heb. oct. 4120 (ח)
 New York, Jewish Theological Seminary MS 3572 (ENA 1674) (ז)

Transition to Recension B

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Urbinas ebr. 52 [ס]
 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Heb. d. 11 (Neubauer 2797/1) (ו)

Recension B

Group 1: Short Version

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Huntington 345 (Neubauer 793/2) (ה)
 München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 153 VIII

Group 2: Long Version

Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Kaufmann A 355 (פ)
 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 408 (ג)

Group 3: Transition to Recension C

Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana I 67 Inf.

Recension C

Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, H 70 Inf.
 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Hébreu 1280 (צ)
 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Borgiana ebr. 1 (ח)

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