The number of Judaeo-Persian documents deriving from the Cairo Genizah and from other oriental sources of similar antiquity (i.e. roughly tenth to thirteenth centuries CE) is now quite considerable. In my Tentative Bibliography only one Judaeo-Persian document is listed. This is a document kept at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, and it was published by D. S. Margoliouth in 1899 under the title: ‘A Jewish-Persian law-report’. It remained for a long time the only published Judaeo-Persian document from the Cairo Genizah. Shortly afterwards another very early Judaeo-Persian text was published by the same scholar, the famous Dandan Uiliq letter, found in Chinese Turkestan. Very close in time to these two publications, Carl Salemann, a Russian scholar, published a brief notice of the extremely important Tafsir of Ezekiel from the Firkowicz Collection, which certainly derives from an unspecified oriental depot of manuscripts, though clearly not from the famous Cairo Genizah. This is about all that was published of early Judaeo-Persian texts for more than sixty years.

In 1968 a new era began in the study of the Judaeo-Persian texts, with the publication by D. N. MacKenzie of what he called a ‘Jewish Persian Argument’ from a fragment at the British Library, a very interesting text from the linguistic as well as from the historical and literary points of view. The text is not really an argument; it is a portion

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5 When D. N. MacKenzie sent me his offprint, he added the dedication: ‘This is better than a modern Scottish-Israeli argument’, alluding to an exchange of letters between us concerning the Middle Eastern politics of the time.
from a preamble to a Karaite composition dealing systematically with the Jewish precepts, a genre of compositions known as *Sefer Miṣvot*. As is common with such pieces of writing, basic theological issues are discussed, and the tone is sometimes polemical.

About the same time I became aware of the existence of several fragments in Judaeo-Persian in the major Genizah collections. The first impetus came from a suggestion made by my teacher S. D. Goitein, who alerted me in the 1960s to the existence of a document in Judaeo-Persian in the Mosseri Collection, which had just become accessible in microfilm form about that time. I subsequently looked for all Judaeo-Persian texts in the various Genizah collections, in Cambridge and elsewhere, with the help of colleagues who were working on other types of Jewish material, such as Judaeo-Arabic documents, *piyyuṭ*, and similar stuff. The plan to publish a complete corpus of these fragments was formulated, and I have made an effort to draw up a list of all known Judaeo-Persian texts in the accessible manuscript collections and of transcribing and translating the individual texts. Even now, this plan has not yet been carried out. I have benefited over the years from the assistance of a former student, Dr Ronit Shamgar-Nikolsky, who helped me with the transcriptions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union the study of manuscripts kept in St Petersburg and other Russian collections was made possible. Dr Thamar E. Gindin worked on the Tafsir of Ezekiel from St Petersburg for her Ph.D. thesis, and we are now trying to make ready for publication the rest of the corpus. It is to be hoped that the unpublished material will be ready for publication within a few years.

A few words may be in order concerning the term ‘Early Judaeo-Persian’. The discovery of the Genizah documents in Judaeo-Persian has made it possible to reach a better understanding of the changes in Judaeo-Persian and of their significance for the history of the Persian language. Most of the fragments which derive from the Cairo Genizah and from other Genizah sources belong to a layer of language that is earlier by some two to four centuries than the earliest Judaeo-Persian literary monuments known to us previously. This has made it necessary to distinguish between two broad chronological corpora of texts

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7 Ibid.; a new transcription and translation of this document is now necessary.