mentary to Hekhalot texts is now the most important project facing scholars in this field.

Joseph Dan


2) It is the second volume in the series, but the first to be published. Paragraphs 1-80 include Sefer Hekhalot, known as Third Enoch (see below, note 5).


Colette Sirat, Patrice Cauderlier, Michèle Dukane Akiva Friedman, La Ketouba de Cologne. Un contrat de mariage juif à Antinoopolis (Papyrologica Coloniensia XII), Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen 1986, 72 pp. and XX pl., paper DM 52,—.

Between the Bar Kokhba letters and the earliest Genizah documents — a space of some 750 years — we have only one dated manuscript in Hebrew characters: the Cologne papyrus Inv. 5853. This fact alone would endow the papyrus with considerable interest. But it is important for other reasons too: its impressive size (nearly 30 cm wide by perhaps nearly a metre in height originally) and unusually good state of preservation; its language (which is not Hebrew but a combination of Aramaic and Greek); and its content, a contract of marriage including a list of items presented to the bride by her mother.

The date of the marriage is not preserved in its entirety, but the editors have plausibly reconstructed it as 417 CE (and probably the 15th of November). The place is ’NTYNW, that is Antinoopolis. The editors argue on the basis of the method of correcting errors that the document was actually drawn up on the occasion of the marriage, and consequently we have the date and place of the manuscript itself. Although it is impossible to generalise on the basis of a single specimen, the discovery of even
one dated manuscript for this otherwise empty period of several centuries is bound to be of great value for students of Hebrew palaeography.

The language of the document represents (in the present state of our knowledge) a somewhat peculiar mixture. The first two and a half lines, containing the consular date, are entirely in Greek. The body of the document is in Aramaic, but contains a number of Greek words, notably the items of the dowry. It can be plausibly inferred that the document issues from a society which, while employing Aramaic for certain legal purposes, uses Greek not only as an administrative language but also in everyday speech.

The combination is at first sight mildly surprising, although on reflection it is hard to see anything revolutionary in the discovery that Jews in Egypt in the early 5th century spoke Greek, or that they drew up their marriage documents in Aramaic. There is no reason to doubt that Jews went on speaking Greek in Egypt up to the Arab conquest and indeed well beyond it. Unfortunately neither the papyri nor the Cairo Genizah manuscripts help us to study this linguistic question in any detail. The only dated Genizah document bearing on the use of Greek was written six centuries after the Cologne papyrus, in the year 1022, and in Byzantine Asia Minor (it was published by J. Mann in *The Jews in Egypt* II.94-6). Superficially it resembles our papyrus: it is a marriage document, and the items of the dowry are listed in Greek, each with its value. But there are significant differences: there is no Greek date, only a Jewish one, and the basic language is Hebrew, with only a limited amount of formulaic legal Aramaic.

The Greek words in the papyrus are written in ‘Hebrew’ characters, identical to those employed for the Aramaic. In fact this may well be the earliest surviving specimen of Greek written in Hebrew characters, a practice of which there are many examples in the Cairo Genizah (and which is of great interest for the phonology of Greek). There is no attempt at marking the vowels or accents, and there does not seem to be any great effort at consistency. For example, Greek α is written with an aleph or omitted with apparent indifference. It is interesting that (contrary perhaps to what one might expect) the aleph tends to be omitted where the Greek alpha carries the accent. Aleph is also used not just to start a syllable after a vowel, but also occasionally to end a syllable and even, curiously, within a syllable, regardless of the actual vowel (e.g. /'wɡ/'wst'w for Avgoustou), a usage which is not easy to explain. Among other interesting features, m is once unarguably omitted before p, and assuming the bridegroom’s father’s name, written smptj, is Shabbetai (Sabbataios) we have an early example of Greek mp for b. All in all the phonology would repay careful study.

It is a pleasure to welcome this meticulous edition of a difficult and important text. It is a fruitful collaboration between experts in a number of