speech—is satisfied by reading the kethibh, and I propose to treat this as original.

The qere has arisen through a misunderstanding. Since, when he buys the land, Boaz also takes Ruth as his wife (vv 9, 10), it was assumed that the two things belonged together and that the redeemer of the land should take Ruth in marriage as a condition of his redemption, and so qənîṯî was taken to be second person. The emendation in pointing was, no doubt, assisted by the fact that twice already, at least 1), in the book, a verb, which in the consonantal text is apparently first person singular perfect qal, has been emended by a qere to read second person singular. In these places, however, the verbs are feminine and display the old feminine ending; here the verb can only be masculine, and so the yod must indicate the first person singular.

In my search for supporting opinion in following the kethibh, I have found this only in a note by Th. C. Vriezen, who argues for the integrity of the consonantal text (including but his translation, “I maintain with regard to Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, the rights to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance” 2), is very dubious. The more natural interpretation is that which I have given above.

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A PALEOGRAPHIC NOTE ON THE COLOPHON OF MS. NEOFITI 1

In her article on “An Argument For Further Study Of The Paleography Of Codex Neofiti 1” in VT, XX:1 (January 1970), pp. 56-64, Shirley Lund takes issue with the method whereby Alejandro Díez-Macho dates the manuscript in his editio princeps. She writes “Both Díez-Macho and Martin are of the opinion that the year in which the manuscript was completed is hidden in the colophon 3). I myself

1) *wa*yârabîl* (iii 3), *wa*šakâbî (iii 4); in some MSS, and perhaps also printed editions, apparently *wa*šamî (iii 3) and *wa*yâda*śat (iii 4) also have the old yod ending. Bertholet, Rudolph and Jouon mention *wa*šâmî, Gerleman mentions *wa*yâda*śî, and Nowack mentions both.

2) Th. C. Vriezen, “Two Old Cruces”, Oudtestamentische Studiën, V (1948) p. 81. He achieves this translation by explaining qənîṯî as qinnêtî, from the root *qn*, and mèʾî as ‘with regard to’.

am extremely dubious about their (sic) being a date in the colophon. Bernheimer states that “authors and printers make use of this method very often; on the contrary, among the scribes it is extremely rare” 1). Neither Díez-Macho nor Martin cites one example of a manuscript so dated. The one example which Bernheimer cites is a secular document in which the word which provides the date is distinguished from the other words in the phrase by the customary sign 2). I would suggest that, to assist us in dating the manuscript, a search be made for the hands of the copyists of Neofiti on other manuscripts; and I am of the opinion that this search should include both fifteenth and sixteenth century manuscripts”.

The cipher in question is לארד הוחזר, contained in the final colophon of the manuscript (f. 405). Díez-Macho has interpreted the word הוחזר as a cipher signifying A.D. 1504 (i.e., 5 + 50 + 5 + 4 + 200 = 264, or the year 5624 of the Era of Creation.) I am convinced that his method is correct for three reasons.

First, the fact is, that Bernheimer notwithstanding, the dating of manuscripts by mediaeval scribes is not rare. In fact, the recent specimen of “Manuscrits Médiévaux En Caractères Hébraïques” published by the Comité De Paléographie Hébraïque (Paris—Jerusalem 1969) includes exactly the evidence required. A case in point par excellence is the well-known Paris: Bibliothèque nationale ms. #110. It too is a targum manuscript, “Paraphrase araméenne des Hagiographes (Targoum Yonatan); Ruth, Psautiers, Job, Proverbes, Cantique des Cantiques, Ecclésiaste, Lamentations, Esther et seconde paraphrase d’Esther”.

As stated in the final colophon (f. 139b), the manuscript was copied by Nathan ben Sa’adia ha-Cohen Shal’al in Tlems’en, Algeria for his personal use. The ms. includes eight final colophons, the first seven of which are in the form of ciphers consisting of biblical phrases. The last colophon is dated anno mundi without cipher, thereby bequeathing a cross-reference for dating. Interestingly, three of the ciphers use the identical Hebrew root (HDR) as the word in Ms. Neofiti 1 which


2) Ibid., p. 158, with example on p. 135 and explanation on p. 137, n. 3.