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ʾinǧīl-in mubīn: A mixed archaic, Quranic, and Middle Arabic translation of the gospels and its implications for the nature of Middle Arabic

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a close linguistic study of a unique translation of the gospels into Arabic as attested in three manuscript witnesses. The translation is unique insofar as it imitates the Quran, especially in lexicon and rhyme. Linguistically it mixes numerous features specific to the Quran with features from both the Classical Arabic (ClAr) tradition, including poetic archaisms not typical of standard ClAr, as well as from Christian Middle Arabic. I argue that the regnant framework for Middle Arabic – that it exists on a spectrum from dialects to standard Classical Arabic – is insufficient for understanding this text. Instead, we need to conceptualize the high register for at least some communities as encompassing distinctively Christian features, which originated as living features and had achieved prestige, along with ones from Classical Arabic and Quranic recitation traditions, and even Old Hijazi.

Keywords: Middle Arabic; Arabic Bible; Arabic historical linguistics; Christian Arabic; Arabic gospel manuscripts

1. Introduction

Scholarly understanding of the nature of the linguistic variation characteristic of pre-modern Middle Arabic texts has evolved in recent decades, from it being a distinct linguistic phase corresponding to a period of history (as in, e.g., Blau 1977), to a sociolinguistic phenomenon which has existed for as long as Arabic has existed, and which continues to the present (Lentin 2008; Khan 2011; Den Heijer 2012). Despite general acceptance of this re-conceptualization of Middle Arabic, many questions remain about both the linguistic origin and development of specific features attested in Middle Arabic, as well as whether, and to what degree, these features constituted a normative register at which a particular author was aiming. One such debate is the ongoing question of whether non-Classical Arabic features attested in Middle Arabic texts originated as hypercorrections, reflecting, originally at least, a lack of grammatical training or competency (as, e.g., Blau 1966–67; 1970; 1999; see also Hary 2007), or were deliberate but unsystematically used colloquialisms (as in, e.g., Lentin 2008: 219), or rather reflect the systematic use of innovative hybrid compromises between Classical Arabic and dialectal grammars (Bellem and Smith 2014). Despite differences in approaching and answering such questions, however, scholars of Middle Arabic by and large share the fundamental assumption, namely that Middle

Arabic as a phenomenon "is a continuum, or a mix, between the H variety (*usually iden-tified as Standard or Classical Arabic*) and the L variety (colloquial Arabic, also dubbed Neo-Arabic" (Den Heijer 2012: 6, emphasis mine). In other words, even once distinct Middle Arabic registers formed, thereby becoming prestigious vehicles of literary produc-tion in their own right (as, among others, Classical Judaeo-Arabic), they still originated – and remained sociolinguistically situated – in the middle of a spectrum between standard Classical Arabic at the high end, and colloquial dialects at the low one.

In this paper I seek first to challenge this shared assumption and, second, to add to the typology of Middle Arabic features, in the context of a close linguistic study of a unique medieval gospel translation in Arabic preserved in three manuscripts: Vatican Arabic 17 (1009 CE), Vatican Arabic 18 (993 CE), and Leiden Or. 561 (fifteenth c. CE). The translation is unique insofar as it imitates the style and lexicon of the Quran, even when these differ from what became normative Classical Arabic. Linguistically, forms specific to the Quran are mixed with features from not only the ClAr tradition, including, e.g., poetic archaisms not associated with standard ClAr, but also from Christian Middle Arabic, and even possibly colloquialisms. The three manuscripts attest very little variation in the consonantal frame of the translation; however, Vatican Arabic 17 and 18 (VAr. 17 and VAr. 18) are nearly fully vocalized, whereas Leiden Or. 561 (henceforth Or. 561) is much less, though not rarely, vocalized. And while the vocalization and orthoepic mark-ings in the two earlier manuscripts, VAr. 17 and 18, are very similar to Classical Arabic, there are nevertheless several differences which have likely parallels in the language of the Quran. The phonology attested in the vocalization layer of the later manuscript, Or. 561, is much further from Classical Arabic, being virtually identical to that attested in other vocalized Christian gospel manuscripts from the medieval period. Or. 561 thus represents a deliberate Christianization of the recitation of the gospel.

There are several important implications of the data from the translation, and the manuscript witnesses to it, for the scholarly study of Middle Arabic. First, what we think of as typical, normative Classical Arabic (ClAr) features were not the only ones with which authors were interacting and mixing during the medieval period. In fact, the data – here and elsewhere – increasingly suggest the early linguistic diversity, reported by the early grammarians and attested in, e.g., vocalized Quranic manuscripts, was not forgotten completely but remained in use, even prestigious, among some groups of Christians for longer even than among Muslims. Second, I argue that several of the sali-ent Christian phonological features attested in the vocalization layer of Leiden Or. 561 (such as *tanwīn*) which are both non-ClAr and also absent from any modern dialect, never-theless originated as living features. At some point these features died out in the living speech of many, even eventually most, but not before becoming prestigious variants in their own right. As such, they were not ever pseudo-corrections, not always living collo-quialisms (insofar as they were likely not living features of all scribes who employed them), nor ClAr/colloquial grammar hybrids; rather, they belong to a fourth category made up of once-living features which subsequently became prestigious variants for com-position and recitation of (at least) the gospels. Such features were mixed with ones from ClAr or Quranic recitation traditions, as well as still others – archaic and innovative – in a high (H) register that was much more dynamic than conventionally conceptualized. I con-clude that what is now normative ClAr represented, for at least some Christian commu-nities, but one of several clusters of prestigious forms that might be used and mixed.

In what follows I begin with a discussion of several salient linguistic features attested in the consonantal skeleton of the text. These features are common to all three manuscripts. Subsequently, I discuss the vocalizations attested in VAr. 17 and 18, followed by those of Or. 561. I conclude by elaborating on the implications of these manuscripts for the study of Middle Arabic.

1.1. Description of the MSS

The three manuscript witnesses to this Quranic style gospel translation are: Vatican Arabic 17 (VAr. 17), Vatican Arabic 18 (VAr. 18), and Leiden Codex Or. 561 (Or. 561). The earliest of the three manuscripts is VAr. 18, which was produced according to the colophon in 993 CE. It contains only the Gospel of Luke, although it originally contained a complete translation of the four gospels. It consists of 93 folia of paper. VAr. 17 was produced just a few years later, in 1009 CE, and is a virtually complete copy of the four gospels. It contains 299 folia of paper. The colophons of these two codices indicate that they were in use both in Egypt and Constantinople, perhaps in contexts in which Christians and Muslims shared close social connections and in which Christians might want a gospel text that was comprehensible, and linguistically respectable, to Muslims (Kashouh 2012: 128). Indeed, VAr. 17 was copied by a Muslim named Ḥamdān ʿAlī. Finally, Or. 561 is the latest copy of this version, datable to the fifteenth century CE. It consists of 151 folia of paper. Kashouh has suggested that this translation represents a translation from the Peshitta, independent of other translations attested in the Christian gospel manuscripts (Kashouh 2012: 128–30).

Each of the three manuscripts is available online.[1] Of the three manuscripts, Or. 561, is still clear and well-scanned. VAr. 17 is legible in most places, although the paper has darkened so as to make legibility challenging in some contexts. VAr. 18 is the least legible of the three manuscripts, with darkening of the paper presenting a challenge, as well as an apparent smudging of the ink used.

While there is relatively little difference between the consonantal texts of the three manuscripts, there are some orthographic differences, especially between VAr. 17 and 18 on the one hand, and Or. 561 on the other. More significantly, the vocalizations differ between the two groups. In VAr. 17 and 18, the vocalizations are essentially identical to what one would find in a normative ClAr manuscript. Vocalization is nearly ubiquitous, with a few exceptions (on which see below). In Or. 561, on the other hand, vocalization is much sparser, though not rare. Significantly, the linguistic patterns attested in the vocalization layer of Or. 561 differ from VAr. 17 and Var. 18, but with features in common with other Christian manuscripts.

2. Linguistic notes on the consonantal skeleton

In the description of the consonantal text of the translation I draw from Leiden Or. 561 unless otherwise noted. This decision is due not only to the consistent clarity and legibility of the text in that manuscript compared with the other two, but also because it is the most complete. As noted previously, there are very few differences, and those differences are typically lexical rather than grammatical (Kashouh 2012: 129; see also a collation of his test passages in appendix one, §12.6). The data, description, and examples in this and following sections are drawn from a systematic analysis of the entirety of the Gospel of Matthew, and 20 per cent each of the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John.

2.1. Orthography and phonology

Each of the manuscripts is written in *naskh* script, and the orthography generally conforms to the norms of Classical Arabic with some notable exceptions, which I will discuss briefly here. Note that throughout this paper, the Arabic text is replicated from the

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[1] Vatican Arabic 17 and 18 were accessed via the online library of the Vatican: https://digi.vatlib.it/mss/Vat.ar.
Leiden Or. 561 was accessed via the online library holdings of Leiden University: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1871327/pages.

manuscript exactly wherever possible. If this is not possible due to the limits of type font, I note the difference in parentheses.

Archaic spellings occur throughout the translation, often standing alongside later, more standard, spellings of the same words. One common orthographic archaism is the absence of word-internal *alif* to indicate a long vowel, especially in the words *salām*, e.g. السلم عليك يا من كان لليهود مليكًا "Greetings to you, king of the Jews" (40a), and *ṯalāṯ(ah)*, e.g. ثلث أيام وثلث ليالٍ "three days and three nights" (16a). Another archaism is the writing of the imperfect of ClAr *yasʾal* without the medial *alif*, e.g. تسلون "you (mpl) ask" (7b), and تسله شيًا "you ask him something" (27b). On the other hand, the imperative from the root *sʾl* is attested in the masculine plural written اسلوا تعطوا "ask (mpl) and you (mpl) will be given" (8b). This hybrid form, between Quranic سل and ClAr اسأل, suggests the presence of the medial *hamzah* of the root, /isʾal/, rather than the Hijazi /sal/, and it is indeed written with a *hamzah* above the *sīn* in VAr. 17 (180r). Outside of these contexts, as well as other words which even in ClAr orthography are never spelled with *alif*, such as the demonstratives *hāḏā / hāḏihī / ḏālika*, long *ā* is spelled with *alif* consistently. This strongly suggests an intentional archaizing of the spelling in certain places, closer – though not always identical – to the Quranic spelling where it differs from ClAr.

Another category of words spelled variably, with archaic and standard spellings, are ones which in the Quran are spelled with a final <-wh> / وه when absolute. Of these, two – صلوه "prayer", and حيوه "life" – occur in this translation. The word *ṣalāt*, "prayer", is attested numerous times, mostly with the Quranic spelling صلوه <ṣlwh> (7a; 23b). The word حيوه <ḥywh> "life" is likewise attested with both archaic and standard spellings, and in one place (24b) the phrase *dār al-ḥayāt* "eternal life" is spelled once each دار الحياة <ḥyʾh> and several lines later دار الحيوه <ḥywh>. Similarly, the word *tawrāh* "Torah" alternates between Quranic توريه <twryh> (15a) and standard توراه <twrʾh> (14a; 14b) spellings. These spellings again attest to a deliberate attempt to mimic the Quran orthographically, in addition to linguistically (on which see further below).

Perhaps the most saliently Quranic features of the translation is the frequent spelling of assimilation with verbal V and VI, which occur alongside unassimilated ones, just as in the Quran (Fischer 2002: §47), listed in Table 1.

The example from folio 7a, اتروي <ʾtrwy> attests a prothetic *alif* but is etymologically unclear. The context, hypocrites wanting to be seen praying (Matthew 6: 5 ff.), suggests it is a form V from the root *rʾy*, in which case it perhaps reflects a variant from a variety in which *hamzah* had been lost and the middle root consonant shifted to a *w*, although this is the only example of such a variant in the portions of the manuscripts studied for this paper.

Table 1. Assimilation of verb forms V and VI

Arabic text	Equivalent in ClAr	Folio
اساقطت منه فے البحر	تساقطت	10b
ما نالنا والمعتزله نطوّع صياما	نتطوّع	11a
تلفيه صحيحا فارغا قد ازين	تزيّن	16b
فاذكر ما نباه به عيسى	فتذكّر	39b
صادف اخرين ما اشاغلوا	تشاغلوا	27a
واجاوزت سته أيام	تجاوزت	23a
وما اتروي من سوق لصلوه ينحون	ترأّي \ تروّي	7a

Another assimilation pattern that occasionally occurs is the spelling of the *nūn* of the preposition *min*, "from", to following nouns, typically when the noun is prefixed with the definite article, listed in Table 2.

Unlike the assimilation in verbal forms V and VI, this type of assimilation is not found in the Quran, nor is it standard ClAr. These spellings could therefore reflect a living feature. This is not the only option, however, and given the otherwise standard nature of the orthography, we should consider other alternatives. In fact, a parallel in non-standard ClAr practice is attested. Wright lists the following kind of variation involving the preposition *min* among so-called poetic licenses: فَمَا أَبْقَتِ الأَيَّامُ مِلْمَالِ عِنْدَنَا, "Fate has left no wealth in our possession", where مِلْمَالِ <milmʾl> = مِنَ الْمَالِ (Wright II: §242, pp. 380–81). If the latter phenomenon – a poetic or H register variant used in the text for stylistic purposes – is correct, then it provides another example of the non-normative ClAr features which are sprinkled throughout.

One example the parsing of which is not totally clear is:

(23) فهذا جنسٍ لا يطاق الا بصلوة خلصت وامصيام <wʾmṣyʾm>, "And this is not possible except with faithful prayer and fasting".

The prefixed *mīm* is familiar from the other examples of the assimilated form of *min*. Different, however, is the prothetic *alif*, which is absent in the other examples of assimilated *min*, as well as the absence of the definite article. The previous noun is preceded by the preposition *bi*, *bi-ṣalāt* "with prayer", and it seems likely that the preposition would have been the same, i.e. *bi-ṣalāt ... wa-bi-ṣiyām*. In this case, the *mīm* underwent an unexpected nasalization of sorts, from the bilabial stop to nasal, perhaps due to an anticipatory assimilation to the final *mīm*, although this is not at all certain. The prothetic *alif* is most likely interpreted as representing a prothetic *I*, thus /im-ṣiyām/.

Despite the presence of clearly archaic, and in some cases specifically Quranic spellings, there are differences between the spelling of some categories of words in the Quran and the present translation, which in this case follows the ClAr orthography. The most prominent of these cases is the spelling of etymological III-Y roots with pronominal suffixes. In ClAr orthography, III-Y verbs are spelled with *alif maqṣūrah* when word-final; however, before pronominal suffixes it is spelled *alif mamdūdah*: بنى "he built", but بناﻩ <bnʾh> "He built it". In the Quran, however, both of these are spelled with the *yāʾ*: بنى and بنه <bnyh>. This reflects the fact that, phonetically, in the language behind the Quranic consonantal text III-Y verbs were realized with final /ē/ or /ay/, not ClAr /ā/ (Van Putten 2017: §6–§7, pp. 55–9). Already by the eighth and ninth centuries CE, the ClAr spelling of these forms is attested ubiquitously in the corpora of the papyri and inscriptions (Van Putten 2022: §5.8, p. 118). Thus, in terms of the combination of orthographic features, this translation is Quranic and archaizing but only to the point of imitating practices of the post-eighth century CE period.

Table 2. Assimilation of *min* to definite article in following noun

Arabic text	Equivalent in ClAr	Folio
وما ان ترونني ملان	من الآن	33a
فكونوا ملان مستيقظين	من الآن	34n
قالت ارنا ايه ملسماء	مِن السماء	21b

Perhaps the most salient difference between the patterns of consonantal orthography in the translation, and Quranic and ClAr orthography, concerns the use of *alif*, especially to indicate the presence of the glottal stop in ways that classical orthography does not. Indeed, *alif* is used in numerous places to spell a glottal stop where, in ClAr orthography, either a glide or the *hamzah* would be used, e.g. (11b) وبرأت <br²t> "she was healed" (= ClAr بُرِئَت). In most cases of non-Quranic and ClAr spellings, word-internal combinations of vowels and the glottal stop lead to sequences of two consecutive *alif*s, which, along with sequences of two glides, were disallowed in Quranic spellings. In a few cases, the sequence spells etymological combinations of short vowels and glottal stop, as in the examples listed in Table 3. Most such sequences spell combinations of glottal stop and a long *ā*, shown in Table 4.

These spellings become even more frequent in Middle Arabic texts from the Ottoman period, for example (Lentin 1997: 111–2). One final orthographic usage of the *alif* that, though rare, occurs in the translation and is contrary to Quranic and ClAr orthography is the occasional use of *alif* presumably to mark overlong *ā* in the perfect 3ms of the verb *qāl*, e.g. (9b) قاال "he said" <q²l>. While the pattern of non-ClAr usage of *alif* to mark combinations of *a* vowels and the glottal stop is medieval and later, it is not qualitatively unique. Indeed, as Puin (2011: 170, 173) notes, such spellings of ² with *alif* are attested in an early Quranic manuscript, Ṣanʿāʾ DAM 01–29.1. Despite Puin's arguments for the historical anteriority of this practice, Van Putten (2018: 114–6) argues convincingly that this practice was innovative. Thus from very early on, and increasingly over time, the absence of a single letter with a single shape that represents glottal stop, especially given the dual role of *alif* to mark both glottal stop and long *ā*, gave rise independently to several scribal practices which use *alif* to mark glottal stop, even when it contradicts ClAr norms.

Phonetic spellings occasionally occur and are worth mentioning here. First, in a handful of cases, a prothetic *alif* is written before verbs that in other varieties of Arabic are form I:

- (22a) لان انسيتم زادكم "because you have forgotten your provisions", presumably /insī-tum/ instead of /nasī-tum/
- (26b) ومن اترك بيوتا "And whoever has left a house (to follow me)", presumably /itrak/ instead of /tarak/
- (21a) فليكن لك ما اطلبت "So let you receive whatever you ask for", presumably /iṭlab-t (a)/ instead of /ṭalab-ta/
- (12b) واذا انزلتم ارضا "And when you enter a land", presumably /inzal-tum/ instead of /nazal-tum/

Another example is (9b) فلما اطهر "And when he was healed". It is not clear, however, whether the verb is passive, referring to the man whom Jesus healed (i.e. "When he

Table 3. Spellings of *v́v / *v́V

Folio	Spelling	ClAr equivalent	Transcription
4b	تراای	تَرَأَى	taraʾʾā
17b	رااي	رَأَى	raʾā
19a	ساالتها	سَأَلْتَها	saʾalat-hā
27b	ترااسوا	تَرَأَسُوا	taraʾʾasū

Table 4. Spellings of *ʾā* / *ʾāʾv*

Folio	Spelling	ClAr equivalent	Transcription
8a	الاس	آس	ʾās
8a	اساه	آساه	ʾāsā-hu
8b	هباة	هَباءة	habāʾah
8b	ابآة	إباءة	ʾibāʾah
11a	الطرااة	الطُراءة	al-ṭurāʾah
12a	السماييه	السمائيّه	al-samāʾiyyah
12b	سالل	سَأَل	saʾal
15a	الآب	آب	ʾāb
21a	اسيا	آسيًا	ʾāsiyan
23b	ااذ	أَذ	ʾāḏ
27a	ثراةة	ثَراءة	ṯarāʾah
37b	ااكلين	آكِلين	ʾākilīn
39a	ااتيا	آتيًا	ʾātiyan
41a	اان	آن	ʾān

was healed"), or active, referring to Jesus (i.e. "When he had healed"). In either case, since form IV is virtually unattested with this verb, it is likely that either underlying /iṯhar/ or possibly passive /Vṯhir/ is indicated.[2] Lastly, in one place, etymological *ẓ is spelled with a ḍād instead of ẓāʾ, the sole example of an otherwise well-known and attested phenomenon already in the earliest Islamic era documents (Hopkins 1984: 40–1): (38a) فايقضوا "so wake (him) up" instead of ClAr فايقظوا . These phonetic spellings often (although not always) occur in contexts of direct speech, which might reflect their intentional use to create contrast between the refined narrative and character speech. If so, it is a helpful reminder that such colloquialisms need not reflect inability on the part of the composer of a text, but can be artfully and skilfully mixed with even quite refined texts, such as this.

2.2. Morphology

The present section presents phenomena that are saliently distinct from standard ClAr orthography, which include archaisms of various kinds, varied spellings of the same underlying form, and innovative spellings based on analogy. I address each of these categories in turn.

A number of non-ClAr archaic morphological forms are used, often alongside the standard ClAr forms. This is most commonly seen in the various forms of the demonstrative and relative pronouns used. According to the early grammarians, there were morphological differences between the demonstrative pronouns in eastern (Najdi) Arabic dialects and those of the Hijaz. The Hijazi forms are characterized by a final -h on the feminine singular, which is lacking from the Najdi form: Hijazi hāḏihī vs. Najdi hāḏī. The distal set is distinguished by the presence of an element l(i) in the Hijaz that is absent in the Najdi forms: Hijazi ḏālika (msg) / tilka (fsg) vs Najdi ḏāka (msg) / tīka (fsg) (Sībawayh

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[2] If the latter is the correct interpretation, then this could indicate an internal passive form similar to what is found in some modern dialects, e.g. Najdi Arabic: srig "he was robbed" (Ingham 2008: 332).

1988: II, 5, 77 f.; IV: 182, 411; al-Farrāʾ 2014: 11–12, 22, 94). The Hijazi forms are characteristic of the Quran, as well as in standard ClAr, whereas the Najdi forms are mostly limited to poetry. Proximal forms from both sets are found throughout the manuscript:

Old Hijazi:

هذه فالام بذاتِهِ (14b) "This is the essence of the matter".

Old Najdi:

وفشت هذي الكلمه (8a; 42a) "And this word spread".
فكان ذاك زولًا (21a) "And that (man) was wise".

Additionally, addressee agreement – in which a suffixed -kum is added to various demonstrative and deictic forms when addressing a group of people – is well-attested in the manuscript, always with the Hijazi forms with infixed l(i):

ذلكم الذے عليكم اسمي (16a; 12b) "That one who (comes) in my name".
تلكم مريدٍ من أناس (8a) "This is the desire of men".

This feature is regular in the Quran, but is not regular in standard ClAr (Van Putten 2022: §A.4.4; Fischer 2002: 146, 147). This feature is extended via analogy to other forms based on deictics which end in -ka, especially hunālikum and kaḏālikum:

وهنالكم ما هو اعظم من هيكلكم (15a) "And there is one who is greater than your temple".
كان كذلكم فے السمآءِ (25a) "It is likewise (bound) in heaven".

Finally, alternative variants are attested, such as the masculine singular distal demonstrative hāḏāk, e.g. (37b) هذاك لي دم "That is my blood". This variant is well-attested in the modern dialects, from the Levant to Morocco (Vicente 2006: 569–72). However, it is also an archaic feature (Wright I: 268). With cases such as these, where a form is both archaic and dialectal, it can be difficult to determine the proper explanation of its occurrence. Yet perhaps we do not have to make such a choice. It seems to me quite likely that both aspects can play a role. The composer of this translation clearly chose intentionally from among a number of variants, but the fact that this form was both archaic and dialectal, but rare in writing, could have made it all the more appealing. The more frequent form is ḏālik(a), well known from the Quran and ClAr, e.g. (12b) وما ذلك كافيا "But this is not enough".

  The relative pronouns attested in the version are Hijazi, which are also those attested in standard ClAr, in each of singular, dual, and masculine plural contexts:

Masc.Sg. – (37b) الذي قلت فانهُ اياه "The one whom I told you, it is him"
Fem.Sg. – (22a) الآية التي كانت للنبي يونس "The sign which was (give) to the prophet Jonah"
Masc.Dual – (12a) ويعقوب ويحيي اللذان هُما لزبدي ابنان "And James and John, who are the two sons of Zebedi"
Masc.Pl. – (27b) الذين ترااسوا في الأمم "Those who presided over the peoples"
Fem.Pl. – (35a)واما الخمس الاتي جهلن "And as for the five (virgins) who ignored" and (35a) تبعه اللواتي استعددن "Those women who had prepared, followed him".

Here again, though, there are alternative forms which are peppered throughout the text. In one case, the form ٱللَّذ‬ /allaḏ(i)/, a by-form of *allaḏī*, occurs: (21b) واللَّذ نالت منهُ زمانه "And the one who was struck by a chronic illness". Another intriguing variant used in the manuscript is the feminine plural الالي /al-ʔulā/, which is a rare archaic form, beside the more common forms *allātī* and *allawātī*, reported above (on the variation in these forms, see Wright II: 271): (34a) فيا ويلات الحوامل والالي رضعن في تلكم من ايام "Woe to the pregnant women, and those who are breastfeeding in those days". The selection of demonstrative and relative pronominal forms is clearly intentionally archaic, in this case incorporating forms not common in standard ClAr. But whereas elsewhere the Quranic forms were less common, here the Quranic forms became standard for ClAr, and the use of archaic ones resulted in deviation from Quranic morphology. Still, the productive use of addressee agreement in demonstrative and other deictic forms clearly draws on the Quran against later ClAr norms.

There are several other cases in which archaisms are used alongside forms which are more common and more typical of ClAr. For example, in addition to the use of *ladā*, "at, by the side of", the archaic form *ladun* is attested, in combination with the preposition *min*, as well as with pronominal suffixes:

(4a) ليتم الذي قيل من لدن الرب "To fulfil that which had been spoken by the Lord".
(25b) افما كان الاجذر بك ان تحنوا على لدنك كما حنوت عليك "Would it not have been better for you to have compassion on your (debtor) as I have had compassion on you?"

Another possible archaism is the use of *tifʕāl* / *tafʕāl* nouns as *maṣdar*s of form II verbs instead of the more common *tafʕīl* patterns (on which, see Wright II: 115–6):

(22a) وسال الحواريين عما يعزوه اليهِ الناس تحدانا وتسنادا "And he asked the disciples about whom the people claim him to be".
(22a) فما ابرمته في الأرض كان مبرمًا في السماءِ توثاقًا وتعقادا "And what you have bound on earth will be bound in heaven".
(31b) وما اجتروا بعد علـے تسال "And they did not dare to ask (him anything) again".
(35b) وانهُ لَك توفاه "It is for you a recompense".

In the case of the example of (31b), I am interpreting the form تسال as representing an underlying *tisʔāl* due to the fact that it is in a series of rhymes with CāC. The examples of توثاق and توفاه, with the retained *wāw*, would suggest /tawṯāq/ instead of /tiwṯāq/ and /tawfāh/ instead of /tiwfāh/. While these forms are far less common in Classical Arabic than *tafʕīl*, they are attested in various modern dialects, and indeed are the more common form in some North African dialects, such as Algerian (e.g. Dhina 1938: 327) and Moroccan (Harrell 1962: 63). It is thus possible that, as with the case of *hāḏāk* above, we are dealing with forms chosen both for their local familiarity and the fact that they are accepted archaic forms which nevertheless go against the standard ClAr forms.

Also worth mentioning among the general stock of archaic forms used in the translation is the vocative suffix *-āh*, on nouns followed by the vocative particle *yā*: (21) اعني سيداه "save me, master!" A final feature worth mentioning here is that the combination of prepositions + *mā*, which when used as interrogatives are spelled short without *alif* (*bi-mā* spelled as بم), are productive in this translation, including the following forms:

(20b; 23a) حتّام "until when?" (= حتّى ما).
(23a) الام "until when?" (= إلى ما).
(20a) قالُ لهُ عيسى علام شككت "He said to him, 'Why do you doubt?'" (= على ما).

Some archaisms are connected more explicitly with the language of the Quran. One is the use of shortened jussive forms of *kān*, spelled يك (ClAr *yaku*; Old Hijazi *yak*; Van Putten and Stokes 2018: 169):

(9b) فليك لك عن مقدار "So let it be equally to you".

(13b) والطوبے للذے لم يك فے ريب مني "Blessed to the one who does not doubt me".

These occur alongside the typical ClAr form *yakun*:

(21a) فليكن لك ما اطلبت "So may you receive what you have requested".

(6a) ومن يقل يا جاهل فربه يكن معروضًا علے نار "And whoever says to his lord, 'you ignoramus!' will be subject to fire".

Another archaism connected with the language of the Quran over against what became standard ClAr is the shape of the jussive and imperative forms of geminate (II=III) verbs. In the Hijaz, un-metathesized forms were used, whereas elsewhere metathesized forms were the norm (Rabin 1951: 161 f.): Hijazi *urdud* "return" vs. non-Hijazi *rudd(a/u/i)*. In this gospel translation, the Hijazi forms, which are the norm in the Quran, are regularly used:

(38a) هبوا نمرر "let us pass!".

(38b) اردد السيف "put your sword back!".

(22b) ومن يحبب احيا نفسه "And whoever desires to save his life...".

These un-metathesized forms are the norm for the manuscript. The determinative pronoun set, indicating "possessor(s) of X", are frequently used in the text:

(21b) اني لذو اشناق "I have compassion".

(6a) الي ذي سلطنه "to the one who has authority".

(12a) ولا يك احدكم ذا سربالين "And no one of you will have two pairs of trousers".

In the plural, while both *ḏawū* and *ʾulū* forms are attested, the latter are more common:

(3b) ذوُو البيت "The owners of the house".

but:

(6a) اولي السابقه "those with priority".

(14b) الحكمآءِ واولو الفهم "the sages and ones with understanding".

Finally, the locative adverb set differs between Old Hijazi *hunālika* "there", with a deictic *li-*, and Old Najdi *hunāka* without it. In standard ClAr, the Najdi form *hunāka* is more common, whereas in the Quran, the Hijazi form *hunālika* is more common. In this translation, the Hijazi/Quranic form is more common:

(21a) ما هنالك "that which is there".

As noted above, this form also inflects for addressee agreement:

(15a) هنالكم ما هو اعظم من هيكلكم "There is someone who is greater than your temple".

In most cases, other than the archaisms, as well as Quranic forms mentioned above, the morphology follows ClAr norms. This is notable especially when it comes to, e.g., forms of the imperative of I-ʾ verbs, which vary depending on whether they occur by themselves or with a prefixed *fa-* or *wa-* (Fischer 2002: 128). In the gospel translation, these forms occur with the same distribution:

(19b) ايذن للناس يمضوا الي القُري "Allow the people to go to the villages".
(20a) فاذن لِي اتِك علَى المآءِ "So allow me to come to you on the water".

Also following the ClAr pattern are verbs such as *ʾamara* "he ordered", which when by itself is typically realized *mur* "order (msg)!", but when prefixed with a *fa-* or *wa-* is spelled with the *alif*:

(21b) مروا الناس ياخذوا مجالسهم "Order the people to take their seats".
(10) فامرنا "So order us".

In a few cases, however, there is some variation in the spelling of what are apparently the same form. For example, the imperative of *ʾatā*, "he came", is spelled both اتوني and ايتوني:

(23b) اتوني بِهِ "Bring him to me".
(30b) ايتوني بدينار "Bring me a denarius".

Relatedly, in cases where III-W verbs occur alongside III-Y by-forms in ClAr, the present translation attests similar variation, sometimes using the III-W form, while elsewhere III-Y ones. For example, the root *ḥnw* "to be compassionate" occurs in some corpora as *ḥny*. In this translation, the III-W root form is used, e.g. (25b) حنوت عليك "I have treated you compassionately". On the other hand, the root *ksw* "to clothe" likewise attests a by-form *ksy*, which is the form used in this translation, e.g. فكسيتمون "And you clothed me". Forms that are consistently III-W in Quranic and ClAr remain III-W in this translation. In that way, it is unlike the modern dialects, which attest a near-complete merger of III-Y/W verbs > III-Y.

 In addition to archaic and standard ClAr forms, a few innovative morphological forms, relative to Quranic and ClAr, occur in the translation. Here again, many of the innovative forms involve III-W/Y roots. Perhaps most notable are the spellings of form I participles from III-W/Y roots, which are spelled with two *yāʾ*s, indicating an analogical restoration of the root consonant, as in pre-modern corpora and some modern dialects (Blau 1966–67: §101, 199–200). Examples from the translation include:

(33a) الماضيين "Those leaving", presumably underlying /al-māḍiyīn/ (= ClAr الماضين /al-māḍīna/).
(24b) الملقيين "Those casting", presumably underlying /mulqiyīn/ (= ClAr الملقين /al-mulqīna/).
(28b) مُشتريين "ones purchasing", presumably underlying /muštariyīn/ (= ClAr مشترين /muštarīna/).
(28b) للمصليين "to those praying", presumably underlying /li-l-muṣalliyīn/ (= ClAr للمُصلِين /li-l-muṣallīna/).

This feature seems like a good candidate for colloquialism, insofar as it likely reflects the way this sequence (i.e. /iyī/) was realized in the speech of many authors. The fact that it is consistent in the text suggests that its usage was intentional.

2.3. Morpho-syntax

More than any other features, those of nominal case inflection and verbal mood inflection, and specifically the differences between ClAr and all non-ClAr corpora, have framed and shaped the discussion of Arabic linguistic history in general, and the distinction between the pre- and Islamic periods specifically (Blau 1966–67; 1977; 1999; 2002; 2006; Hopkins 1984).[3] Due to this framework, and the pervasive belief that Middle Arabic texts are, by definition, characterized by non-ClAr nominal and verbal inflection, Middle Arabic texts are rarely subjected to systematic analysis in which a percentage, or the whole, text is tagged and the different inflections quantified and plotted. I have done just such a quantification for these categories. As we will see, the different layers of vocalized texts are each significant in the case of this translation. The manifestations of nominal case represented in the consonantal skeleton are almost completely standard, whereas those represented by the vocalization markings vary.

2.3.1. Nominal case inflection

The present section discusses those features associated with nominal case inflection that are represented orthographically by consonants, which include: the accusative when written on orthographically eligible words with an *alif*; the five nouns in construct (on which a glide corresponding to triptotic case is written); duals and sound masculine plural forms. The topic of nominal case inflection written only with vocalization markings will be discussed in each manuscript's respective vocalization section below.

2.3.1.1. Accusative alif. According to my count, the accusative *alif* (or *tanwīn alif*) occurs 758 times in the included manuscript sections, of which 743 occur in standard ClAr accusative roles (98%). In other words, the overwhelming majority of *tanwīn alif* usages are standard ClAr. There are only 15 non-accusative, and thus non-ClAr, usages of *tanwīn alif*. These 15 cluster in three main syntactic categories: genitive (7/15), subject of a verb (including *laysa*; 4/15), and numbers that are typically marked with genitive (2/15). Examples of syntactic genitives marked with *tanwīn alif* include:

(33b) ويكون موت وجوع ورجف فــے ارض بعد ارضا "And there will be death and hunger and disturbances in land after land".

(44a) ذلك بانه كان كذي يعلم سلطانا لا كما يفعل السافرون "Because he teaches as one with authority, and not as the scribes".

Examples of subjects marked with *tanwīn alif* include:

(24b) وما الذــے ترتاون فــے ذي مايه من ضـان فضل منها واحدا "And what do you think about a man who owns 100 sheep, and one of them gets lost".

(21a) قال لها ما حسنًا ان يوخذ خبيزًا لابناۤء ويباح كلابا "And he said to her, 'It is not good for bread for the children (of Israel) to be taken and given to the dogs'".

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[3] Subsequent literature covering the aspects of case and verbal mood inflection, their supposed breakdown and disappearance, is vast. Virtually all subsequent discussions of the topic, however, rely on the discussions and framework of Blau and Hopkins. Indeed, in many cases scholarly discussions of the topic simply cite their discussions without further comment. Therefore, I have cited those publications which are foundational for, and representative of, a much larger trend.

Examples of non-ClAr number marking include:

(21b) الحفت بنا اياما ثلثه "And she has been here begging us for three days".
(21b) وعده الاكلين اربعه الف رجالًا "And the number of those who ate is four thousand men".

The final two examples include one predicate of *ʾ*inna*, as well as one example which is opaque:

(47a) ذلك بما قالوه من انهُ روحًا من نجس قديم "They said of him that he is an unclean spirit".
(21b) قال عيسي للحواريون اني لذو اشناق على امّةٍ جمآءِ عقيرا "And Jesus said to the disciples, 'I am burdened for a childless nation'".

What are we to make of these non-ClAr usages of *tanwīn alif*? Are they pseudo-correction (hyper/hypocorrections), as Blau has argued (1966–67: 317–45)? It is, of course, possible. However, these contexts are precisely the same as those in which non-ClAr *tanwīn alif* occurs elsewhere in the corpus of vocalized Christian gospels from St Catherine's monastery in the Sinai Peninsula. Stokes (2023b) has argued that this pattern is connected with non-standard usages of *tanwīn alif* in unvocalized manuscripts, especially Sinai Arabic 72, 74, and 75. In the Christian gospels he studies, subjects of verbs, as well as, e.g., the use of the plural form of the noun with the *tanwīn alif* following numbers in the thousands, are each common. In a subset of manuscripts, the genitive is also occasionally written with the *tanwīn alif* as well. Stokes argues that this distribution is due to several factors. Phonetically a development from phonemic distinction before *tanwīn* (*un/*in/ *an*) merged to a single, non-phonemic vowel (variously realized, thus written -Vn). At the same time, early on there was only *tanwīn alif* which was used to write *tanwīn*. The variation in attested distribution of *tanwīn alif* was based on the degree to which scribes decided to adhere to orthographic and grammatical norms associated with the writing tradition they learned. Early on, they basically did so, with few exceptions (cf. Sinai Arabic 72, 74, and 54), although Sinai Arabic 75 is a notable exception. The development of vocalizations – namely *fatḥatān*, *kasratān*, and *ḍammatān* – enabled nuance that was impossible using only the consonantal spellings. The non-ClAr usages attested in this translation align with those from elsewhere in the Christian tradition and, as we will see, the vocalization patterns of *tanwīn* in Or. 561 is identical to those attested in vocalized Christian manuscripts as well.

2.3.1.2. Five nouns in construct. When in construct, the so-called "five nouns" (Arabic *al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḥamsah*) – *ʾab* "father", *ʾaḫ* "brother", *ḥam* "father-in-law", *fam* "mouth", and *ḏū* "possessor" – are written with a consonant corresponding to its triptotic case. Each of the five nouns occurs in construct in this translation. In total, there are 118 occurrences of one of these nouns in construct and, of these, 115 inflect as in ClAr (98%). In each of the three non-ClAr inflections, the nominative form occurs in a syntactically accusative role:

(12b) فكان قد اسلم الأخ اخوه للموت وما وجم والابن ابوه وما رحم "And it is that a brother will turn his brother over to death and not regret, and a son his father and feel not compassion".
(50a) فاخرج كلًا الا أبو الجاريه وامها والذين كانوا معهُ قاصدين "And he sent away everyone except the young girl's father and her mother, and those who were wanting him".

Once again, the vast majority of cases inflect as in ClAr. The three exceptions follow the pattern found by Kootstra (2022) in a detailed study of the papyri of the first three Islamic

centuries, where the nominative form was by far the most commonly used form in non-standard roles.

2.3.1.3. Duals. A total of 99 occurrences of nominal forms inflected for the dual occur in the portion of the translation studied here. Of those, 96 are inflected as in ClAr (97%). In each of the three instances of non-ClAr inflection, the oblique occurs in a syntactically nominative context:

وحيث اجتمعا اثنين او ثلثه علے اسمي فاني بينهم فے المقام (25a) "And wherever two or three have gathered in my name, indeed I am among them".

وانتوي عيسے ان يلم بالبيت المقدس ومعه الاثني عشر حواريا (27b) "And Jesus decided to go to the temple, and the twelve disciples were with him".

وكان لها الاثني عشر سنة وهم يتهوكون (50a) "And she was twelve years old, and they were in awe (of her healing)".

Interestingly, the three examples of non-ClAr inflection each involve the word "two" (*iṯnayn*) or "twelve" (*iṯnay ʿašar*). While it is tempting to see colloquial influence in these examples, another interpretation is possible. Elsewhere in the Christian corpus, the phrase "the twelve" (*al-iṯnā ʿašar*) is frequently either nominative or oblique, regardless of case. This is true even in manuscripts in which the dual is otherwise regularly inflected. For example, in Sinai Arabic 76, the dual is inflected as in ClAr, with a few exceptions. In the first 20% of that manuscript, 66 of 71 duals are inflected as in ClAr; of the five which were not, two were *iṯnay ʿašar* "(the) twelve", both of which were oblique in nominative contexts, e.g. (Sinai Arabic 76, 37) هاولاى الأثني عشر "These are the twelve". It is thus possible, perhaps even preferable, to see these examples in the present gospel translation in a sense as intentional Christianisms – the use of a very familiar phrase in a way that contravenes typical inflection for a sociolinguistic purpose.

2.3.1.4. Sound masculine plurals. In the portions of the translation included in this study I identified 778 instances of sound masculine plural. Of those, 766 (98%) inflect as in ClAr. Of the 12 instances of non-ClAr inflection, nine are cases of a nominative form in a non-nominative context, and three cases of an oblique form in a nominative context. Of the nine nominatives in non-nominative contexts, eight involve the word *ḥawāriyy*, "disciple":

قال عيسے للحواريون لقد استعصي ان يصل ذو غني الي دار النعيم (26b) "Jesus said to the disciples, 'It is impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom'".

وعاك الي الحواريون فالفاهم راقدين (38a) "And he approached the disciples and found them sleeping".

ووجد الحواريون فے عودته هاجعين (38a)[4] "And when he returned, he found the disciples[4] sleeping".

Of the three cases of oblique forms in nominative contexts, two are participles functioning as predicates in nominative sentences:

ومن يغمم صغيرا من الذين هم بي مومنين (24b) "And whoever misleads a small child among those who believe in me...".

وقالوا ما بال فريق يحيي على دومهم صايمين (79a) "And they said, 'why do John's followers always fast (but yours do not)?'".

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[4] The more common Christian Arabic term for "disciples" is *talāmīḏ*; the use of *ḥawāriyyūn/īn* in this text represents another example of the use of Islamic terminology throughout the translation.

Here again, given that the overwhelming majority of cases are inflected correctly, it is difficult to take these examples as unintentional mistakes. While they might be, the clustering of these non-ClAr inflections among certain lexemes, a pattern in common with the dual inflection as well, suggests it is more likely that these Christianized forms were intentionally mixed in with the otherwise ClAr inflection.

2.3.1.5. Case inflection in consonantal text – summary. The various manifestations of morphosyntactic case inflection in the consonantal framework – shared across the manuscripts – occur as in the Quranic and ClAr systems. The few instances in which it does not align are so relatively few in number, and cluster in contexts and lexemes that are familiar from other corpora in such a way that it suggests intentional use of non-ClAr inflection, perhaps in order to index a particularly Christian Arabic, or otherwise more colloquial sound.

2.3.2. Modal inflection

This section discussions the features of verbal mood inflection that are detectable in the consonantal frame of the translation, which include distinctions between indicative/non-indicative in dual and plural forms, as well as jussive/non-jussive distinctions in forms from II-W/Y, III-W/Y, and II=III (i.e. C^2=C^3) roots. The topic of modal inflection represented only by vocalization markings will be discussed in each manuscript's respective vocalization section below. The data collected for verbal mood is drawn from the first 20% of manuscript (Leiden Or. 561), which includes the entirety of the Gospel of Matthew.

2.3.2.1. Dual and plural – indicative vs. non-indicative. Due to the fact that in the dual and plural, there is no morphological distinction between subjective and jussive, thus the only meaningful categories are indicative, marked morphologically with a final V-ni (dual) / V-na (masculine plural) and a non-indicative ending with final V-ø. In total, 68 dual or plural verbs in indicative syntactic contexts occur in the first 20% of the Gospel of Matthew, of which 67 are inflected as in Quran and ClAr (99%). The lone exception is an indicative form which occurs after لو / *law*, "if" which typically takes either a perfect or jussive form:

(7a) فما اجركم لو تدرون "(If you love only those who love you), then what, do you think, is your reward?"

However, Fischer (2002: §453, p. 231) mentions that in "earlier stages of Arabic" indicatives were also used, depending on the context and desired verbal aspect. Further, in this example the verb تدرون occurs in rhyme position in a section in which the rhyme is CūR/CīR. It is thus probable that the indicative was used in order to maintain the rhyme. Indeed, the translation itself is paraphrasing here, since there is no verb with this meaning in the Syriac or Greek versions of Matthew.

In terms of non-indicative contexts, 92 occur in this portion of Matthew, with all 92 (100%) inflecting as in Quranic and ClAr.

2.3.2.2. II/III-W/Y and II=II – non-jussive vs. jussive. Similar to the data from indicative/non-indicative categories, II-W/Y, III-W/Y and II=III verbs, which distinguish morphologically between non-jussive and jussive forms in the consonantal text, follow Quranic and ClAr. In the selected portion of the manuscript 50 instances of verbs from one of these three categories occur in jussive contexts, with all 50 (100%) inflecting as in Quranic and ClAr. Of the 60 verbs from these three categories that occur in non-jussive contexts, all 60 (100%) are likewise inflected in line with Quranic and ClAr.

2.3.2.3. Modal inflection in consonantal text – summary. As with nominal case marking, verbal moods which are explicitly marked in the consonantal portion of the translation inflect as in ClAr.

2.4. Syntax

The syntax of this translation is remarkable in a number of respects, to the degree that it deserves – and requires – a full treatment. Further, it requires a nuanced and detailed study of the Quran, which it clearly imitates throughout, in order to fully understand. Due to the lack of such a study, as well as space limitations here, I offer only a few notes about some of the more salient recurring aspects of its syntax, especially when they stand apart from textbook ClAr.

Numerous aspects of the patterns of negation either pattern with the Quran against what later became normative ClAr, or attest interesting variations worth noting here. The best-known feature which patterns with the Quran, and Old Hijazi, against what became normative in ClAr is the use of *mā* to negate nominal sentences, either taking the predicate in the accusative case or introduced by the prefix *bi*, both of which are common:

(20b) وان هو اكل وما يداه بمغسولتين "He eats with unwashed hands".
(6a)   وما انت ببارحه "You are not passing".
(21b) وما ذلك كافيا "But that is not sufficient".
(10a) ومالے حيث يسند منهُ راسًا ارجًا "But I do not have a place where he [sic] might lay his head".
(21a) قال لها ما حسنًا ان يوخذ خبيزًا لابناۤء ويُباح كلابا "He said to her, 'It is not good for the bread of the children (of Israel) to be taken and given to dogs'".

The use of *mā* in this context is associated with the Quran, especially when unmediated by the prefix *bi-*, i.e. when it takes its predicate in the accusative, which is called *mā al-ḥiǧāziyyah*, "The Hijazi *mā*", which is primarily attested in the Quran (Fischer 2002: §367.1, p. 191). The pseudo-verb *laysa* is also well-attested as a nominal negator:

(10a) او ليس للثعالب وجرٌ "Do the foxes not have dens?".
(14a) فلقد جآء يحيي وليس بذي ماكل ولا مشرب "John came and did not drink or eat".

Of these two options, *mā*, either with *bi-* or without, is slightly more common than *laysa*. Out of 34 nominal sentences from the first 20% of the Gospel of Matthew in which one of the two negators occurs, *laysa* occurs 14 times (41%) while *mā* occurs 20 (59%). Finally, the negator *ʾin* occurs rarely by itself to negate a nominal sentence:

(19a) فان فيهم الا مليم "there is only evil among them" (lit. "there is not among them except evil").

While the negator *ʾin* by itself is relatively rare, it is much more common following the negator *mā*, the combination of which is used to negate both verbal and nominal sentences:

(8a)   فما ان هي بزارعة "It does not sow".
(8b)   وما ان قذيت ما بك "And you having not removed (the plank) in you".
(170a) وما إن تَشتطيعُ "And you are unable".

The combination of *mā* + *ʾin* is attested in ClAr, but is rare and considered by Wright to be indicative of "elevated" style (Wright 1896/2005: 301). Noteworthy also is the use of negators other than *lan* (especially *lā* and *mā* + *ʾin*) to negate the future, while the negator *lan* is occasionally used to negate the present:

وما ان ترونني ملاّن حتي تقولوا بورك الوارد باسم الرحمن (33a) "And you will not see me from now until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of God'".

قال اولن تروا الجميع ذلكم قالوا بلي (33a) "He said, 'Do you not see all of them?' They replied, 'we do!'".

Negation in this translation thus draws on some specifically Quranic patterns, especially the use of *mā* as a nominal negator, mixed with other archaic forms, likely designed to lend a feeling of sophistication to the text.

 Other notable syntactic features include, e.g., the use of the particle *qad* + imperfect to express certainty in the present or future, rather than uncertainty or possibility:

هكذا قد تنيرون فے الناس اذا شاهدوا الصالح من اعمالكم (5b) "Thus you will shine among men, when they see your righteous works".

فانهم قد يقولون ولايفعلون (31b) "For they talk but do not do".

There are numerous instances of variation in agreement throughout the manuscript, e.g.:

وسخ الوابل وجري الوادے وعصفت الرياح وناطحن البيت فثبت (9b) "The torrent flowed, and the river ran, and the winds blew, and they rammed the house, but it remained steadfast".

In this example, the noun *ar-riyāḥ* "the winds" triggers a 3fs perfect (*ʿaṣafat*), but the following verb (*nāṭaḥna*) is a 3fp, despite the fact that, whatever the subject – just "the winds" or all of the previously mentioned elements – the inanimacy should theoretically trigger the same 3fs inflection. Another example is:

وانقضت الامثال الذي ضربها (18b–19a) "And then the parables that he had given ended".

Here, a feminine singular head noun is modified by a relative clause headed by a masculine singular relative pronoun.

 Finally, a phenomenon relevant to a famous debate in the history of the native Arabic linguistic tradition is found in (37b) الذي قلت فانهُ اياه "What you said is the truth" (lit. "That which you have said, it is it"). The final part of the sentence فانهُ اياه, "it is the truth" (lit. "it is it") is directly parallel to the famous *masʾalah zunbūriyyah*, "Question of the Hornet", a famous debate between the Baṣran grammarian Sībawayh and the Kufan grammarian Al-Kisāʾī, over the final clause of the sentence:

كُنْتُ أَظُنُّ أَنَّ الْعَقْرَبَ أَشَدُّ لَسْعَةً مِنَ الزُّنْبُورِ، فَإِذَا هُوَ هِيَ \ إِيَّاهَا "I always thought that the scorpion had a more painful sting than the hornet, and it is true".

When asked whether the pronouns in the final clause should both be subject pronouns (i.e. *huwa hiya*) or the first subject and the second object (i.e. *huwa ʾiyyāhā*), Sībawayh answered the former while Al-Kisāʾī answered the latter. A Bedouin arbiter was called in and, having purportedly been bribed, answered that Al-Kisāʾī was correct. In later tradition, Sībawayh was venerated (Versteegh 2014: 72). Whether this story is consciously alluded to here in this construction, or rather reflects some stylistic preference – whether

based on his own dialect or some other aesthetic preference unknown to us – is unclear. However, given the deep familiarity of the composer(s) with various archaic morphological and stylistic variants, and indeed a seeming preference for non-standard alternatives, it would not be surprising at all if he intentionally used the (by then) less common variant of the two; in this case, subject pronoun + object pronoun.

2.5. Lexicon

Among the most remarkable things about the language of this translation relative to other Christian Arabic translations of the gospels is the use of Islamic forms of the names of Jesus, his disciples, and other figures, instead of the Christian Arabic ones. Jesus is in most cases عيسي instead of ايشوع \ ايسوع \ يسوع; John is يحيي instead of يوحنا \ يوحنان, etc. (Kashouh 2012: 128). Further, religious terms are often explicitly Islamic, such as the use of Islamic epithets of God like *raḥmān* (33a), as well as the reference to Jesus' followers as اشياع عيسي "partisans of Jesus", the plural of *šīʿah* (38b). Additionally, there are words and terms that are either rare or non-existent in the ClAr lexica, but which are rather typical of the Quran (e.g. إنْ، حوب and the sound masculine plural نبيون, "prophets", instead of the broken plural الأنبياء). Table 5 presents a far-from-exhaustive list of some salient lexical forms from the portions of the manuscript included in this study, with the hope that a fuller treatment of the lexicon of this translation will be undertaken in the near future.

2.6. Rhyme

While Quranic forms and terminology pervade all linguistic domains of the translation, the language and style of the translation is most recognizably Quranic in its rhyme scheme. I will first present the rhyme schemata attested in the first 20% of Or. 561 (41

Table 5. Salient lexical forms

Folio	Arabic text	Meaning
3b	القيتموه	"You found"
4b	دوب	"honey"
5a	ياسوا	"It scatters"
6a	حوب	"fault"
8b	النبيون	"prophets"
16a	اني	"where?"
19a	ان	"It is not"
31b	تُخلص اللهِ	"You love God"
31b	رُباني \ ربانيّين	"Rabbi"
32a	مملكوت	"kingdom"
34a	مسيحون	"messiahs"
36a	خُشّت	"It was cut off"
41b	المايتين	"The dead (pl)"

folia), followed by a discussion of the most significant aspects of the rhyme for an under-standing of the nature of the language of the translation. For clarity and convenience, I have adopted the signs from Van Putten (2019: 8–9):

C	Any consonant	
Ǧ	*maǧhūr*	ʾ, ʿ, ġ, q, ǧ, y, ḍ, l, n, r, ṭ, d, z, ẓ, ḏ, b, m, w, ṣ
R	Resonant	Subclass of *maǧhūr*: l, n, r, m; very common rhyme consonant
H	*mahmūs*	h, ḥ, ḫ, k, š, s, t, ṯ, f
V	High long vowel	ī, ū
A	Low long vowel	ā
v	High short vowel	i, u
a	Low short vowel	a

The following section includes a list of the schemata, along with the relevant folia in which each occurs. It should be noted that, as in the Quran, the translation often switches back and forth between rhymes, thus any given folio might be listed as attesting more than one rhyme scheme.

2.6.1. VC rhymes
As with the Quran, these rhyme variants are among the most common in the gospel trans-lation as well:

VR: 3b–4b; 6a–7b; 8b; 9a; 23b; 24a; 24b; 25b; 26a–26b; 27b; 28b–29a; 30a; 30b–33b; 36a; 36b; 36b–37a; 37a–39b; 39b–40a; 40b;
VǦ: 4b; 14b–15a; 28b; 40a;
VH: 5b–6a; 19b-20a; 24a; 39b.

By far the most common is VR, many of which are sound masculine plural *-ūn/īn*. Of the VǦ variants, the most common is Cūḏ (4b)/Cūd (28b; 40a). The most common VH variants are Cūh (5b–6a;39b) and Cīh (19b–20a; 24a). Among the best evidence that final short vowels are not realized in rhyming position in this translation, as in the Quran, is the rhyme of 3ms pronominal suffixes with, e.g., adjective ending in *-ūh*, as in (6a) when the indefinite adjective منقوه "coward, good-for-nothing", rhymes with تجفوه "it (the peo-ple) will treat him harshly".

2.6.2. vC rhymes
While relatively less common the vH pattern is not uncommon. These patterns are always combinations of the genitive *i* followed by a 3ms pronominal suffix (Ci-h). The fact that these are realized as genitives is highly likely given that the sentences are written so as to ensure that each final noun is syntactically genitive:

vR: 7b–8a
vH: 10b–11a; 13b; 14a–14b; 16b; 26b–27b; 36a.

2.6.3. AC rhymes
AR: 4b; 11b–12a; 23b; 28a–28b; 34a; 36a–36b;
AǦ: 5a; 7b; 10a–10b; 11a; 13a; 21b; 25a; 26a; 35a; 40a; 40b;
AH: 8a–8b; 24b; 26a; 34a; 35a; 36a.

The rhyme pattern AC is among the most commonly used in the translation, again reflecting its popularity in the Quran. Of note are the instances of AĞ rhymes, which reveal and corroborate aspects of the underlying realization of the rhyme. First, many AĞ rhymes involve nouns ending in *-āʾv, which rhymes with other nouns ending in AC. Second, many examples, such as (5a) where all forms end in *Cāq*, involve words which are in different syntactic contexts and would therefore have different final vowels. This corroborates evidence from elsewhere that word-final vowels were not realized, at least in rhyme position, in the language of the consonantal text. Of the AH rhymes, the most common is *Cās* and *Cāt*.

2.6.4. aC rhymes
aH: 5a–5b; 10b; 12a–12b; 20a–20b; 25a–25b.
aĞ: 8b–9a; 14a; 29a–29b; 30a–30b.
aR: 23a–23b; (39b?); (40b?).

All instances of aH are feminine singular nouns ending in *-ah*. The rhyme, however, tends to involve recurring nominal patterns as well. For example, (5a–5b) involves feminine singular active participles of form I verbs, i.e. *CāCilah* forms; (10b) involves mostly *Caʿīlah* forms; (12a–12b) are nouns ending in the feminine singular genitilic *-iyyah*; (20a–20b) consist of mostly *mufāʿalah* and *fāʿilah* forms; and (25a–25b) are mostly II-ʾ feminine singular participles of form I verbs, i.e. *Cāyilah* forms. As elsewhere, case is not consistent, which strongly suggests that these are realized *Cah*. Corroborating this realization is the fact that of the aĞ patterns, *Cat* occurs but only with strings of 3fs perfect verbs, not *tāʾ marbūṭah*.

2.6.5. CA rhymes
The broad category of CA is popular, and includes III-Y verbs (*alif maqṣūrah*), III-W verbs (*alif mamdūdah*), III-Y nouns (*alif maqṣūrah*), III-W nouns (*alif mamdūdah*), as well as indefinite accusative *an (realized /ā/ and written with *alif mamdūdah* = *tanwīn alif*), and, in one place, the 3fs pronominal suffix *-hā*.

*ay (alif maqṣūrah): 16b–17b; 19a–19b; 33b;
an (indefinite accusative): 9a–9b; 20b–21b; 21b; 22a–23a; 36b; 39b; 40b;
aw (alif mamdūdah): 18b; 36b;
*-hā (3fs PN Suffix): 13a.

In most cases, nouns or verbs from one of these categories do not rhyme with each other. This is as in the Quran, where, with two exceptions, words ending in *ayv (*alif maqṣūrah*) and *awv (*alif mamdūdah*) do not rhyme with the other. However, while the dispreference for rhyming nouns and verbs from the different categories is predominant in the translation, there are more exceptions to it than in the Quran. Interestingly, in the few places where III-W (*alif mamdūdah*) forms are regularly rhymed, they are not interrupted by III-Y (*alif maqṣūrah*) forms, but are occasionally interrupted by indefinite accusative ones, as in (18b).
 Stretches of *alif maqṣūrah*s are sometimes interrupted by III-W forms:

(16b–17b) stretch of III-Y forms interrupted by *qasā* "it was solid, hard" (III-W);
(19a–19b) stretch of III-Y forms interrupted by *ṣafā* "to be pure" (III-W).

However, these interruptions are few in number compared with others, such as III-W and indefinite accusatives. Importantly, final *-ī* / *-iyy* is occasionally rhymed with III-Y forms

(as in, e.g., 19b where *al-muḍiyy* "the departure" (written with *shaddah* over the *yāʾ*) is rhymed with preceding *ʾaġnā* "richer" and following *lil-qurā* "to the villages"), but not with III-W forms or indefinite accusatives.

The most common of the CA rhyme patterns involves rhyming indefinite accusative nouns. Here again, the vast majority of the time the pattern is observed; in a few cases, however, it is interrupted, either by III-Y forms (as in, e.g., 9a–9b where *masrā* "place of departure" interrupts the pattern), or by III-W (as in, e.g., 36b, where half of the words in the section are III-W, the other half are indefinite accusative).

Thus, while final *ā* forms appear to rhyme with each other, the integrity of each pattern is generally maintained. III-W and indefinite accusatives rhyme with each other more frequently than with III-Y forms, and the latter rhyme with final *-ī* / *-iyy* forms, but neither of the others does. The likeliest interpretation of this is that the phonetic realization of each is /ā/, but that the scribe who composed the translation was intimately familiar with the Quranic rhyme scheme, which included the orthographic distinction between *alif maqṣūrah* and *alif mamdūdah* forms.

2.6.6. aCC rhymes
In one stretch, final nouns and verbs consistently end in a geminate aRR rhyme pattern:

aRR: 15a–15b

The nouns are in varying syntactic contexts, which confirms again the lack of realization of final short vowels in rhyme.

2.6.7. vCC rhymes
The least common rhyme pattern is one in which nouns ending in masculine singular gentilic ending *-iyy* rhyme:

vǦǦ: 18a

2.6.8. Summary of rhyme patterns
The rhyme patterns attested in this gospel translation replicate most of those attested in the Quran, with VR, AC, and CA (indefinite accusatives) among the most commonly attested. Final short vowels were not realized in rhyme position. The CA rhymes further demonstrate the intimate familiarity of the composing scribe with the details of the Quran by largely maintaining the distinction between III-Y forms and others realized with final *-ā*, such as III-W and indefinite accusative ones, despite the fact that the occasional overlap between each suggests that, as in standard ClAr, the phonetic realization of all of these forms was /ā/.

3. Linguistic remarks on vocalization of VAr. 17 and 18

The earliest manuscript witness to this gospel translation, VAr. 18 (993 CE), is vocalized often, though not fully. The next oldest manuscript, VAr. 17 (1009 CE), is almost fully vocalized. In both, the vocalizations are, with a few exceptions, identical to standard ClAr patterns. For example, case marking, where noted, fully conforms to ClAr. The assimilation of third person pronominal suffixes to preceding Ci, Cī, and Cay is also standard ClAr, with singular, dual and plural forms assimilating in these contexts. Other vocalizations are also consistent with ClAr, such as final **-āʾv* ones, whereas, as we will see, this is not the case with Or. 561: (VAr. 18, 13v) لَقَد جَآء "He has come".

Despite the basic identity of vocalizations in both VAr. 17 and VAr. 18 with ClAr ones, VAr. 17 nevertheless attests two orthographic practices, both related to the spelling of the glottal stop in certain contexts, which could suggest significant differences with ClAr. VAr. 17 regularly, but again not ubiquitously, spells glottal stop in the expected places based on etymology:

فإِذا ما أَلقَيتُموهُ (169r) "And when you have found him".
سَمِعَ فِے الرَّامِه مِنْ بُكاً (169r) "He heard wailing in Ramah".
قَالَ وَقَد رَأى (170v) "He said, 'He has seen'".

This explicit marking of the glottal stop with the *hamzah* includes contexts in which the consonantal spellings do not contain the typical seat (*kursī*), such as the archaic/Quranic spelling of *tasʾal* "you ask", so examples like تسلوا (179v) "(if) you ask" are written with a *hamzah* atop the *sīn*. While there are cases in which words with etymological *hamzah* are written without it, in many, perhaps most cases it is included. Remarkably, with very few exceptions, active participles from II-ʾ and II-W/Y roots, which in ClAr attest a glottal stop instead of glide (i.e. *fāʾil* instead of *fāyil*) are never written with a glottal stop:

السايلين (168v) "Those asking" (= ClAr السائلين)
القايلين (169v) "Those saying" (= ClAr القائلين)
فالسَايِلُ مُجابٌ (180r) "The who who asks is answered" (= ClAr فالسائل).

In many cases, the *alif* of the participle is spelled with *maddah*, as in فَالسَآيِلُ (180r), which in many ClAr manuscripts indicates the presence of the glottal stop even without an explicit *hamzah*. While it is possible that the *maddah* was doing such double duty in this manuscript as well, this is unlikely due to the fact that the *maddah* is written very frequently (although again, not ubiquitously) to mark internal *ā* even when no glottal stop was present:

وَأَقرَعُوا الْبَآبَ (180r) "So knock on the door!".
وَالْطَّآلِبُ واجِدٌ (180r) "The one who seeks, finds".

A possible exception to this could exist if the use of *sukūn* can be interpreted as indicative of glottal stop in, e.g., راٮٮٮ (167v) "seeing (mpl)". Elsewhere, derived forms from the same root apparently attest the glottal stop in participles, e.g. مُتَرأٮٮًا (168r) "appearing (msg)". If so, it could be that certain roots were produced with a ClAr glottal stop, while most were not. But at the same time, a form I participle is attested with a *shaddah* over the initial *yāʾ* instead of a *sukūn*: راٮٮٮٮ (168v), suggesting /rāyyīna/.

I suggest that the most natural interpretation of this disparity between the regular marking of glottal stop with a *hamzah* in most instances and its virtually complete absence marking form I active participles with the ClAr shape *fāʾil* in others, is that it was not realized in these participles, and that their shape was *fāyil*. And although it is of course possible that this feature is an unintentional colloquialism in the text, the fact that the vocalizations are otherwise typical of ClAr makes it unlikely that it was unintentional. Still, such a distribution, if accurate, seems rather odd. If it does not reflect a (somewhat inexplicable) intentional colloquialism, it could perhaps be explained as an archaism. Van Putten (2018) has argued based on a close study of the Quranic consonantal text, including evidence from internal rhymes, that the variety underlying the Quranic text lacked the glottal stop in most cases, with the exception of word-final *-āʾ, where it was apparently retained. Thus, the language of the Quran likely had *fāyil* participles, and it is also a possibility that this phonological feature is echoed here. As with the

orthography and morphology, where archaisms are intentionally mixed in variously throughout the text, so too here is a phonological archaism included in the recitation reflected in VAr. 17 (and likely, as we will see, in Or. 561 as well).

A second noteworthy feature regards the spelling of the *alif* of the definite article and the prefix *alif* before perfects of verbal forms VII through X. In ClAr, these are *hamzat al-waṣl*s, i.e. a non-phonemic vowel inserted to resolve what would have been a consonant cluster, e.g.:

Definite Article: *l-kitāb > al-kitāb*
Form VII: *nfaʿala > infaʿala*
Form VIII: *ftaʿala > iftaʿala.*

In the ClAr orthographic tradition, the *alif* is marked with a sign called a *waṣlah* آ to indicate the *hamzat al-waṣl* (instead of a phonemic *hamzah*, called a *hamzat al-qaṭ*ʿ, which was written with the *hamzah* sign). In VAr. 17, many of these instances of *hamzat al-waṣl*s are written with a *hamzah* sign without a *waṣlah*, suggesting they could have been realized as *hamzat al-qaṭ*ʿ, contrary to ClAr norms:

مِن رُوح أَلْقُدُس (167v) "from the Holy Spirit".
مِن لَدُن رَبِّ أَلْعَلَمِينَ (168r) "from the Lord of the word".
فِـــي أَلْحُلْم (170r) "in the dream".
أَذْهَبُوا (168v) "Go! (mpl)".
فَحِينَ أَستَمَعُوا (169r) "And when they heard".
أَستَنشَعَرَ خَوْفاً (170r) "And he felt fear".

In places where etymological *ʾi occurs, the *hamzah* is written below the *alif*, as in (169r) وَدَخَلُوا إِلَى أَلْبَيتِ "And they entered the house". This is regular throughout the manuscript, and is good evidence that, were these cases of form I imperatives and derived form perfects realized *i-* or *ʾi-*, they would have likely been written with the *hamzah* below the *alif*. These spellings thus strongly suggest that at least the imperatives, perfects of derived verbal forms VII through X, and the definite article were realized as *hamzat al-qaṭ*ʿs, and primarily with a *a* vowel. Here again, the consistency (though not the ubiquity) of the spelling of these forms with *hamzah* signs atop the *alif* is too regular to be unintentional mistakes. And as with the lack of *hamzah* in participles discussed above, this feature is very possibly an archaism. It is clear from the Damascus Psalm Fragment that the derived forms VII through X were realized with *hamzat al-qaṭ*ʿ rather than the ClAr *hamzat al-waṣl* (Al-Jallad 2020: 79 f.):

(V. 56) Οα.αβ.τε.λευ /wa-ʾabtalaw/ "they tempted".
(V. 57) φα.ανκα.λε.β(ο)υ. /fa-ʾanqalabū/ "and they turned their backs".

The evidence from the Quran is less clear, but there is some evidence that these categories were realized with *hamzat al-qaṭ*ʿ in at least some instances (Van Putten 2022: §A.3.10). Here again, then, there is evidence for phonological archaisms in VAr. 17, along with the morphological and syntactic ones discussed above, which also differ from standard ClAr.

4. Linguistic notes on the vocalization layer of Leiden Or. 561

Unlike VAr. 17 and 18, Or. 561 is not fully, or even mostly, vocalized. Vocalization is not, however, rare; indeed, it occurs in certain contexts, especially: contexts where *ḍammah* is
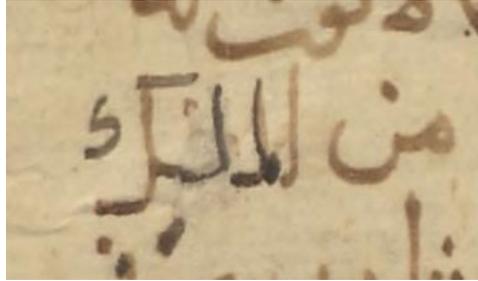
Figure 1. (3b) <min al-malki> "from the angel"

used with participles of verbal forms II–X; vocalizations of *tanwīn* (on which, see below); suffixed pronouns, especially the 3ms; and certain lexemes. Vocalization further occurs somewhat randomly, which nevertheless sheds some light on the phonetic and phonological layers of the underlying variety. I turn now to a brief discussion of those aspects of the vocalization that are both non-ClAr and which recur.

At various places in Or. 561, a later hand makes various edits of the underlying text and vocalization. These edits are always clearly distinct from the original text because the original ink is light brown in colour, whereas the later editing hand is written in black ink. It is unclear how soon after copying the edits were made. The edits are of several kinds. First, where the original text has become unclear due to damage or smudging, the editor fills in what he thinks belongs, as in Figure 1.[5]

Second, in numerous places, the editing hand adds vocalizations, especially related to nominal case inflection. These case-related changes often involve marking out the non-ClAr ones and replacing them with the standard variants, as in Figure 2.

Third, certain words are crossed out and replaced with another word, as in Figure 3.

The grammatical edits and additions to the text are always in the direction of making the text closer to standard ClAr, and it is likely that the lexical replacements were geared towards replacing words felt either too unfamiliar or colloquial with words more commonly used and associated with ClAr as perceived by the editor. Other examples of this lexical replacement include:

(4b) دوب "honey" was replaced with عسل
(5a) حوب "fault" was replaced with ذنب.

Interestingly, the later editor did not replace overtly Islamic words with others felt to be less Islamic.

4.1. Orthography and phonology

While vocalization of nominal and verbal forms is inconsistent and sparse compared with VAr. 17 and 18, there are nevertheless indications of non-ClAr phonetic and phonological features based on what vocalizations are present. The first category of such features

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[5] These images were made from the digitized manuscript, accessed through the digital collections holdings via Leiden University's Library website here: https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/1871327?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=29c15f9d83a2522b18dd&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=0#page/1/mode/1up.

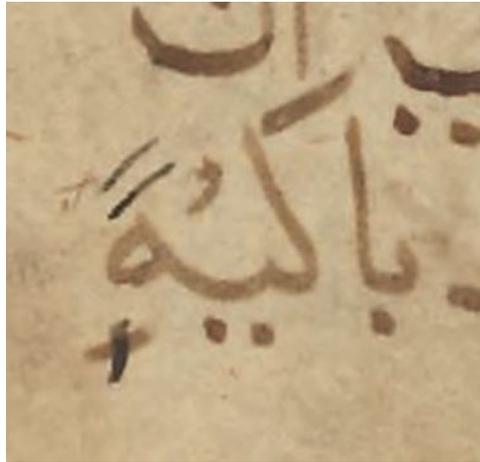It is reproduced here in accordance with the Creative Commons License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/.

Figure 2. (4a) Original: <bākyhi> /bākiyati(n)/, Edited to: <bākiyat-an> "weeping"
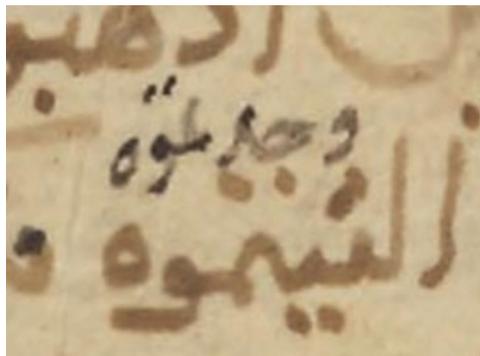

Figure 3. (3b) Original: <ʾlqytmwh> "you found him", Edited to: <wǧdtmwh>

involves *ḍammah* marking to indicate apparent rounding or backing of etymological **a* and **i*. For example, *ḍammah* is often found in the context of bilabials, indicating a rounding of the vowel, as in the examples listed in Table 6.

In a few of the above examples, such as *ʿumādan* and *ġaḍub*, it is possible that the pharyngeal (in the former) or the emphatic (in the latter) also influenced the vowel, thereby representing a backing effect on the vowel. This is attested elsewhere, as in the examples listed in Table 7.

In a final example attested in the portion of the manuscript included in this study, an example of *ḍammah* in a root in which *i* is expected, despite the absence of a bilabial or emphatic:

(20b) فزُدنا فيهِ تبصيرًا وتنقيبا "And we increased in insight and discernment".

The context in which vocalizations are most consistently used throughout the manuscript are those in which etymological glottal stop occurs. Of the various contexts, the three most relevant from the perspective of the vocalizations in Or. 561 are glottal stop in

Table 6. Backing/rounding of *a and *i > u

Folio	Arabic text	Phonetic realization	ClAr equivalent
14b	مُشِيَّاتِهِ	/mušiyyāt(i)-hi/	/mašĭ'āti-hī/
19b	فركُب في السفين	/rakub/	/rakiba/
20a; 29b	مُمَّا يغزيهِ	/mummā/	/mimmā/
22a	عُمادا	/ʿumād-an/	/ʿimād-an/
23a	فيما قَبُل	/qabul/	/qabl(u)/
25a	اوُد	/ʾawudd/	/ʾawadd/
25b	وغضُب	/ġaḍub/	/ġaḍiba/

Table 7. Backing of *a(:)

Folio	Arabic text	Phonetic realization	ClAr equivalent
19b	فضُالات	/faḍa:lāt/	/faḍālāt/
29a	عُلمِ	/ʿulmin/	/ʿilm-in/
29b	فعُل	/faʿul/	/faʿala/
31b	عُداتَك	/ʿudāt-ak/	/ʿadāt-ak/
32b	فيعُرش	/fa-bi-ʿurš/	/fa-bi-ʿarš/
34b	افتُري	/ʾa-fa-turā/	/ʾa-fa-tarā/

phonetic contexts other than *-āʾv, glottal stop in word-internal -āʾi contexts (i.e. form I active participles of II-Y/W roots and faʿāʾil plurals), and word-final *-āʾv contexts. The patterns and variation for each context will be reviewed in turn.

Marking of the glottal stop with the *hamzah* sign outside of *āʾv contexts is variable, with *hamzah* occasionally written, though more frequently it is omitted. For example, ʾisrāʾīl is spelled variously:

(4a; 21a) اسراييل but (3b) اسراييل (with a *hamzah* above the initial yāʾ; ClAr اسرائيل).

The word *šayʾ is likewise spelled with and without *hamzah*:

(23b; 27b) شي but (31b) بشيء
(20a) كييبًا "depressed" (with *hamzah* above the initial yāʾ).

Frequently on the same folio, within a few lines of each other, two forms with essentially the same phonetic combination are written variously, one with and one without hamzah: (13a) يومن "he believes" but رؤوسكم "your heads". Given this type of variation in inclusion or omission of the *hamzah* sign, while it is possible that forms with and without glottal stop were included, it seems more likely that in such cases the glottal stop was assumed present, but only occasionally written. The primary exception is apparently the combination *īʾ, which is always spelled without *hamzah*, but with a *shaddah*, indicating a regular shift of *īʾ > iyy, e.g.:

(14b) مُشِيئَاتِه "his desires", ClAr مَشِيئَاته
(39b) نبيّ "a prophet" and (31b) النبيّون "the prophets".

The latter form is regular in ClAr for the lexeme, even though etymologically it is clear that the *hamzah* was etymological.[6]

The *maddah* sign is used to write the glottal stop, often without the use of the *hamzah* sign. The most frequent of these contexts is *ʾā. This is a regular part of the ClAr orthographic tradition, and is the most common context in which the *maddah* is used to this day:

(5b) والآيه "and the sign";
(9b) وآت العتيره "And bring (impv) goat for slaughter";
(15a) آل "tribe, family";
(16b) والآصره "and the obligation";
(33a; 34b) ملآن "from now";
(33b) آذنت "you announced".

Another familiar context is to mark the combination of *ʾaʾ, e.g. (21b; 22a) آأنتم "are you (mpl)?" and (13b) آأنت "are you (msg)?" Finally, combinations of short vowels and the glottal stop are rarely written with a *maddah* instead of the *hamzah* sign:

(19a) يعطيها ساآلتها "(that) he gives her her request";
(25a) فحين ابتدآ بها "And when he began it";
(39b) قال اني اخطآت "And he said, 'Indeed I have sinned'".

In some places, however, *maddah* is used where long *ā* occurs but where no etymological glottal stop is reconstructed when the syllable is word-final:

(9b) قآل الابرص "The leper said";
(21b) آأنتم العارفون باعلآم السمآءِ "Are you not those who know the signs of the heavens?".

This practice, while relatively rare, could be parallel to the practice common among the Quranic reciters of reciting as overlong vowels that, due to pausal loss of final short vowels, would result in an overlong syllable: non-pausal *qāla* "he said", but pausal *qāāl*. So the scribe who vocalized Or. 561 used *maddah* frequently to a mark glottal stop, in both contexts in which it would be used in the ClAr orthographic tradition (i.e. to mark combinations of the glottal stop and long *ā*) and non-ClAr contexts as well, without necessarily writing the *hamzah*. He also seems to have used *maddah* to mark long *ā* vowels, perhaps indicating an overlong *ā*, in words lacking the glottal stop completely when the vowel occurs in the final syllable of the word.

With one exception, the spelling of *āʾv forms are very consistently spelled to indicate the presence of a glottal stop, which is, however, accomplished variously with either the *maddah* sign written atop an *alif*, or the *hamzah* sign, both together, or the combination of *alif* + *hamzah* + *kasrah* (اءِ-). Examples with just *maddah* include:

(4b; 8b; 9a) وجآ "And he came";
(5b) وما يلغي اليآ "And the *yāʾ* will not be abrogated";

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6 The word is a loan from Hebrew, where it is spelled – and pronounced – with an *alif* (which in Hebrew marks glottal stop): נָבִיא /nāvîʾ/ "prophet", and נְבִיאִים /nᵊvîʾīm/ "prophets". This glottal stop is reflected in derived forms in ClAr as well, e.g. form IV ʾanbaʾa "he informed", and form V tanabbaʾa "he prophesied".

(12a) قد اقتربت الملكوت السمآايّه "The heavenly kingdom has come near";

(16b) والملآ علي الساحل "And the crowd on the shore";

(16b) قضآ ارابِه "And the fulfilment of wishes";

(28b; 41a) ورآ المدينه "Behind the city";

(34a) سنآآ لبرق "the flash of lightning";

(39a) وفآ الي مدخلهم "And he returned to their entrance".

Also common is the combination of *maddah* + *hamzah* signs:

(3b) جآؤوا "they came";

(9a) وجآءت الاوديه "And the losses came";

(13b) ولقد جآء الكتاب "And the book came".

Finally, the use of the combination of *alif* + *hamzah* marked with a *kasrah* (-ٱءِ) is commonly used to mark etymological *-ā̆ʾv contexts when they occur word-finally, regardless of syntactic context:

(5b) لجيه الانبياءِ "To the coming of the prophets";

(9b) وقال اني شاءِ "And he said, 'I desire'";

(10a) هلكِهٖ شنعاءِ "a horrible loss";

(12a) فهاولآءِ "these (mpl)";

(15a) ليتم ما جآءِ بِهٖ شعُيبَ "to fulfil what Isaiah said";

(21a) تناديه بغواث ندآءِ "You will call him for help".

This practice is widespread in later texts, and has been explained as either indicating *ʾimālah* (Talmon 2004: 225–6), or as marking either word-final ā̆ʾ or perhaps simply word-final ā̆ (Lentin 2012: 228–9). This practice is also widely attested in vocalized Christian manuscripts, where it likely indicates word-final ā̆ʾ (Stokes 2023a). That the same interpretation holds true in Or. 561 is suggested by numerous examples, but perhaps most clearly by (16b) *wa-laysa fī-hā mā̆ʾi-un* "And there is no water in it," where the grapheme <ā̆ʾi> is used but is further marked with *tanwīn ḍammah*.

The primary exception to the practice of writing *ā̆ʾv in a way so as to indicate the presence of the glottal stop is the almost total absence of any means for indicating it for word-internal *ā̆ʾi sequences, primarily, but not solely, in the active participles of form I hollow and *hamzated* verbs (i.e. II-Y/W/ʾ):

(4a) القايلين "The ones who say";

(7b) ذخايركم "Their treasures";

(8b) فالسايل "The one who asks";

(20a) يقول القايل "One saying";

(24b) فاملاكهم راييه "Their angels see";

(25a) للملكُوُت الجاييه "For the coming kingdom".

The counter-examples that occur in the portions of the manuscripts included in this study are predominantly found in one of three roots: ǧyʾ, šyʾ, and rʾy. In one example from ǧyʾ, the *alif* of the participle is marked with *maddah* + *yāʾ*: (20a) اني انا الجآيي "I am the one who is to come". A second, more intriguing example is from the root šyʾ: (9b) وقال اني شآءِ "And he said, 'I desire'". Here, the *alif* + *hamzah* + *kasrah* grapheme (-ٱءِ) is used, which as was argued above usually represents underlying /ā̆ʾ/. In this case there are two apparent possibilities: either (-ٱءِ) can occasionally also represent underlying /ā̆ʾi/ (and thus this spelling represents underlying /šā̆ʾi/), or the participle form from this root was realized /šā̆ʾ/. If the

latter, it is probably from another variety than the *tanwīn* feature, since /šāʾ/ would presumably reflect a historical loss of word-final *in, i.e. *šāʾin > šāʾi (loss of final -n) > šāʾ. This is similar to the loss of -n underlying Quranic forms such as لم يك, which probably represent an underlying /lam yak/ (Van Putten and Stokes 2018: 169). Finally, on rare occasions, the participle of the form I of *raʾā* "he saw", is marked with a *hamzah*: (8a) وانتم راؤون "And you see". Elsewhere, however, the same form is written with a *shaddah* over the first *yāʾ*, e.g. (168v) لقد كنّا رايّين "We were indeed seeing", suggesting a vocalization of /rāyyīn/.

The significant disparity between the majority of *-āʾi* forms which lack any indication of glottal stop on the one hand, and the other contexts – reviewed above – in which glottal stop is frequently indicated in at least some occurrences of the forms which recur, suggests that these word-internal *-āʾi* forms lacked regular realization of the glottal stop, which I have argued is also characteristic of the vocalization in VAr. 17.

There are, finally, a few words that, when vocalized, attest to a vocalization which is different from ClAr and other varieties of Arabic, especially *man* "who(m)?" which is vocalized مِن /min/ (6a) and *ʿan* which is spelled عِن /ʿin/ (6b; 15a; 41a).

4.2. Morpho-syntax of triptotes

Nominal case inflection as represented in the consonantal frame of the gospel is discussed above (Section 2.3.1). In this section, only those categories expressed in the vocalization layer of Or. 561 will be discussed, namely third person pronominal suffix harmonization patterns, and the distribution of the three vocalic markings which, in ClAr orthography, correspond to nominative, genitive, and accusative cases: (or "two ḍammahs"), *kasratān* (or "two karahs") and *fatḥatān* (or "two fatḥahs"). Each occurs, although *fatḥatān* is by far the most commonly attested (occurring 695x), followed by *kasratān* (460x) and then *ḍammatān* (36x). I will describe the distribution of each in turn, followed by an analysis and comparison with other vocalized Christian manuscripts.

4.2.1. Distribution of fatḥatān

As with *tanwīn alif*, the *fatḥatān* is overwhelmingly used to indicate syntactically accusative roles. Of the 695 instances of *fatḥatān* in the portions of Or. 561 included in this study, 670 (96%) mark accusatives. The 25 instances in which *fatḥatān* occurs are, again as with *tanwīn alif*, clustered in three main syntactic contexts: genitives (12), predicates (5), and subjects of verbs (5). Examples in genitive contexts include:

(3b) اذا بمجوسٌ وفُود "There was a group of Magi";
(44a) كذي سلطانًا "as one with authority";
(126a) كـے يكرم كل احدً ابنًا "In order that everyone honour a son".

However, in a few instances of *fatḥatān* in genitive contexts, the scribe appears to misparse the consonantal text:

(21a) يجوب الي صور وصيدًا وارضًا سهوبا "He went up to Tyre and Sidon, a flat land".

In the first word, Ṣaydā, the final *alif* was likely part of the spelling of the name, but perhaps the scribe was influenced to write *fatḥatān*.

Other examples of possible mis-parsing include the following two examples:

(123a) ما الانسان بقادر ان يصنع شيًا من لدن نفسِه الا بعطيه من علّا "A man is not able to do anything of himself, except that which has been given to him from above";
(124b) ويجمع ثمارً الحياه الخلود "And he will gather the fruits of eternal life".

In the former example, a final *alif mamdūdah* is part of the root; in the latter, *fatḥatān* is written on a noun lacking *tanwīn alif* and in construct.

  Examples of predicates include:

والقمه مرداةً ضخمت (41b) "And the peak was a large stone";

ولهُ اجازةً بالصبغه (43b) "And he has the authority by baptism".

Examples of subjects of verbs include:

وضرب مثلًا للملكوت الجاييه ملكًا شآ ان يبلوا عبيده (25a) "And he told them a parable of the coming kingdom, 'A king wanted to test his slaves'";

قال لهم فيلاط او ليس لكم رجلًا (41b) "Pilate said to them 'You do not have any man'".

There are two further examples of non-ClAr numbers, each with a different syntax, marked with *fatḥatān*:

وعده الاكلين اربعه الف رجالًا دون النسآءِ (21b) "And the number of those who had eaten was four thousand men, not including women";

الحفت بنا ايامًا ثلثه (21b) "She has been pleading with us for three days".

In the first of these examples, the counted noun, *raǧul*, is in the plural accusative, whereas in ClAr it would be singular genitive. In the second example, the number follows the counted noun, and is in the accusative. It is possible to interpret the accusative of *ʾayyām* as a sort of *tamyīz*, but the word order is clearly poetic.

4.2.2. Distribution of *kasrah* / *kasratān*

Whereas the vast majority of *fatḥatān*s occur in syntactically accusative contexts, 338 of the 459 instances (74%) occur in syntactically genitive contexts. Of the 121 non-genitive usages of *kasratān*, 62 (51%) occur in syntactically accusative contexts, while 58 (48%) occur in nominative ones, and one (<1%) occurs where in ClAr the adverb is marked *u*.

  Of the 62 cases of *kasrah* or *kasratān* which occur in accusative contexts, 42 (68%) occur on nouns ending in *tāʾ marbūṭah*. Of the remaining 20, 17 (85%) end in one of the following consonants: d (4x), r (7x), m (2x), n (1x), b (1x), l (1x) and ṣ (1x). Most of these are voiced consonants, including the liquids and nasals. The inclusion of *ṣād*, while only occurring once, is a bit perplexing, since it is a voiceless consonant. One intriguing explanation, which would unite these consonants, is that while according to Sībawayh the *ṣād* is a *mahmūs* consonant, in the Quran the *ṣād* patterns with the *maǧhūr* consonants in terms of rhyme scheme (Van Putten 2019: 17). While it must of course remain purely speculative, it is possible that some aspect of the phonetics of these consonants triggered a front vowel.

  In eight of these 20 instances of *kasrah* or *kasratān* in accusative contexts there is a mixed spelling, with a *tanwīn alif* spelled in the consonantal text but where the scribe of Or. 561 writes *kasratān* instead of *fatḥatān*. Here only nouns ending in *dāl* or *rāʾ* are thus spelled:[7]

واخرجوا حقاييبهم فاذا هم منها مهدون ذَهبًا ومرإٍ ومن اللبان (4a) "And they took from their bags gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh";

انهم ليرون الله جهارٍإ رويهِ عالمه (5b) "For they will see God";

يدع فے الملكوت كبيرٍإ (5b) "He will be called great in the kingdom";

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7 A parallel to this is possibly found in some of Moshe Darʿī's Judaeo-Arabic poems, where *nunation* is written with *alif* where, according to the rhyme either *-in* or *-un* is expected (Schippers 2012: 251). While Schippers reads the case of *nunation* written with *alif* in nominative contexts as representing an underlying *-un*, it is equally possible in my view that, as here, there was no phonemic distinction between the vowels in the Arabic of his poetry.

(24a) اذهب قاصدإ الـے يم "God straight away to the sea";

(30a) وتضرم ديارها نارإ اسعرت "And her house will catch fire";

(46a) كيلا يجذب جديدإ باليًا "So it is not turn apart anew";

(70a) ويعد الشعب الكامل للربّ اعدادإ سويًا "And (may) the whole people return together to the Lord".

A final three examples involve *kasrah* where either *fatḥah* or *ḍammah* would occur. In two of the three, the word *allāh* "God" is marked with *kasrah* despite being in syntactically accusative:

(45a) وهل يقدر علي غفر الخطايا من احد الاﷲِ "Is anyone able to forgive sins but God?"

(126a) ليس لنقضهِ السبت لكن بمقاله ان ﷲِ ابوه "Not for his abrogating the sabbath, but by his claim that God is his father".

In a third example, the phrase *fī-mā baʿd* is written with a *kasrah*, i.e. *fī-mā baʿdi* instead of ClAr *fī-mā baʿdu*:

(26b) افتري ما الذِے يكون لنا فيما بعدِ "He lied about what will happen to us afterward".

Turning to the occurrences of *kasrah* or *kasratān* in nominative contexts, a combination of morphology, syntax, and semantics is salient in terms of its distribution. Morphologically, for example, as with accusative, nouns ending in *tāʾ marbūṭa* constitute a significant number of nouns marked with *kasratān* instead of *ḍammatān* in nominative contexts, with 15 of the 57 cases (26%):

(5b) وكان قد وصلتهم نظرةٍ راحمه "And he was merciful to them" (lit. "a merciful view arrived them");

(120a) وانها لشهادةٍ من يحيي "It is indeed a confession from John";

(127b) ليس لكم فـے ﷲِ محبةٍ "You do not have a love of God".

Syntactically, the overwhelming majority of cases occur in one of three syntactic contexts: subjects of verbs, especially verbs of motion; subjects of possessive/existential clauses (often with *kān*); and nominal predicates. First, subjects of certain verbs, especially verbs of motion, are among the most likely to be marked with *kasratān*, accounting for 19 of the 57 (33%) instances:

(24b) وان يحن عليك اخٍ "And if a brother feels regret for you";

(33b) فيشف امرٍ امرًا ويسلم رجل رجلٍ "And a man will reveal another, and one will turn over another";

(33b) ولقد يناصب شعبٍ شعبًا وملوك ملوكًا "And a people will war with another, and kings other kings";

(45a) وجاءه قومٍ "A group of people came to him";

(45a) ومضت ايام فعاد الي كفر ناحمٍ "And days passed, then he returned to Capernaum";

(124a) سوف تأتي ساعةٍ "the hour will come".

Note that, while in many cases the verb is intransitive, this is not always the case (cf. the example from 33b).

Second, subjects of clauses expressing existence or possession constitute 16 of the 57 (28%) instances. Subjects marked with *kasratān* in these clauses occur in base nominal sentences, as well as with *kān* or the nominal negator *laysa*. Examples in base nominal sentences include:

(14a) وبه جوعةٍ اذ دخل الي بيت الله صحبهُ جميعًا "And he was hungry, then he entered the temple of God and they all followed him";

(32a) ما الاكرم عندكم اذهب ام بيتٍ "What is holier to you, gold or temple?";

(32b) وفے باطنكم غلٍ "And malice is within you";

(32b) وفے الحافها الداخله عظام الموتي ورجسٍ خبيثٌ "But in its inner wrappings are the bones of the dead and evil filth";

(28b) ولما ابتكر فے رجعاه وبه احساسٍ من جوع فے الطريق بشجرة من شجر التين "And when he had started early returning, and he had a feeling of hunger, he looked in the path and saw an olive tree".

Examples of subjects of *kān* when expressing possession or existence include:

(28b) قال لها لا كانت فيك ثمرةٍ حتي الابد "And he said to it, 'You will never again bear fruit'"

(29a) حقًّا انهُ ان يكن فيكم ايمانٍ "Truly, if you have faith";

(76a) كيلا يكون لقدمك من حجرٍ عثرٍ "In order that it not be a stumbling block to your foot".

Examples of nominal predicates, especially participles, include:

(23b) فهذا جنس لا يطاق "This is an impossible thing";

(45b) لتعلموا ان ابن البَشر مسلطٍ "So that you might know that the son of man has authority";

(123b) وانا امراةٍ من السامره "And I am a woman from Samaria".

Semantics also frequently correlates with the likelihood of marking. Specifically, words for groups of things, especially people, as well as a single person are marked with a high frequency, accounting for 13 out of the 57 instances (23%):

(10a) وتغلوه مَنهُما قوطٍ ترعي "And a distance from them there was a flock of sheep";

(23b) فهذا جنسٍ لا يطاق "And this thing is not possible";

(74b) يا قوم اني صابغكم بالمآءِ "Oh people, I baptize you with water...";

(76b) وكان ببني اسراييل ايام اليشع النبيّ خلقٍ من الاوضحين "And there was among the Israelites in the days of Elisha the prophet a group of lepers";

(78b) واتاهُ قوم "And a group of people came to him";

(127a) وتلاةُ جمعٍ كثير لرويتهم "And a large group followed him to see them".

Finally, the marking of *kasrah*/*kasratān*, in both genitive and non-genitive contexts, is frequently characterized by the same distribution which characterizes so-called dialectal *tanwīn*, where, e.g., pre-modern and modern dialects attest *tanwīn* marked on nouns when followed by adjectives, but in which the adjective is unmarked. Out of all the eligible noun + adjective combinations marked with *kasrah*/*kasratān*, in any context, 34 of 48 of these are characterized by this dialectal *tanwīn* pattern, wherein the noun is marked but the adjective is unmarked. Further, there is no apparent difference between ClAr and non-ClAr roles; for example, 21 of the 29 examples which occur in genitive syntactic contexts are characterized by this pattern. Examples from each context include:

(16a) لتطلب آيةٍ شاهره "Then you will request a conspicuous sign";

(78a) واجتمع الي عيسي خلقٍ عظيم لسماع منهُ "And a large group gathered around Jesus to hear from him";

(127b) والتج البحر عليهم بهبوب ريحٍ عقيم "And the sea groaned around them with intense winds".

4.2.3. Distribution of ḍammatān

Of the three vocalizations discussed here, *ḍammatān* is the least frequently used by far. As with *fatḥatān*, it closely tracks the contexts in which it is found in ClAr. Of the 36 instances of *ḍammah* or *ḍammatān* in the portions of Or. 561 included in this study, 33 (92%) occur in syntactically nominative contexts. The three exceptions each occur in syntactically genitive contexts, two of which occur in the context of numbers, once with a number in a genitive context marked with *ḍammatān*, another with a (diptotic) noun for "groups of people" marked thus:

ثلثه عصايبٌ كثرت عليهِ (25b) "Three groups gathered against him";

قال لهُ اليهود لفي ستٍّ واربعين من السنين (122a) "And the Jews said to him, 'In 46 years (was this temple built)'".

The nominative contexts in which *ḍammatān* is used are not randomly distributed; rather, they cluster in the same contexts as the *kasratān* in nominative contexts does, namely subjects of certain verbs, predicates, and subjects of possession or existential clauses.

Examples of subjects of active verbs include:

قال فريقٍ من المعتزله وفريقٌ من السافره (16a) "So a group of the Pharisees and a group from the Sadducees so to him";

واكُل كُلٌ واكتفى (19b) "And everyone ate and was satisfied";

فلو استيقن رجلٌ من الناس ان يهجم علے مباتهِ (34b) "So if a man ascertains from others that someone will attack his house".

Examples of nominal predicates, especially participles, marked include:

فسايل مُجابٌ (8b) "For he who asks is answered";

ثمرها طيبٌ (16a) "Its fruit is good";

لم تمت بل هي راقدة (11b) "She did not die, rather she is merely asleep".

Examples of subjects of possessive and existential clauses include:

وقال كما امنُتما فليك لكما بصرٌ (11b) "And he said, 'As you have believed so let you have sight'";

قال او ليس للثعالب وجرٌ ولطير السمآءِ وكرٌ (10a) "And he said, 'Is it not that foxes have their dens and birds of the sky have nests'";

مثل الزوان الذي كان معه برنقيٌ (18a) "The parable of the wheat, which had good earth".

Finally, the marking of *ḍammatān* in contexts where dialects, both pre-modern and modern, mark *tanwīn* on the noun but not the adjective (i.e. dialectal *tanwīn*), the marking of *ḍammatān* follows the dialectal pattern. In five of six instances of nouns followed immediately by attributive adjectives in nominative contexts marked with *ḍammatān*, four of five (80%) attest a lack of *tanwīn* on the adjective, and in three of four the adjective lacks the *ḍammah* as well:

شجرٌ قويُ (18a) "A strong tree";

وقال المسيح الزارع ربٌ وفيّ (18a) "And he said, 'The Messiah, the farmer, is a faithful lord'";

هذا عهدٌ عظيم (8b) "This is an ancient covenant".

None of the three instances of *ḍammatān* in non-nominative contexts included a noun + adjective combination.

4.2.4. Analysis of tanwīn *distribution*

The nominal case inflection attested in the vocalizations of Or. 561 are a bit complex and deserve some unpacking. First, in terms of frequency, *fatḥatān* and *kasratān* are used far more frequently than *ḍammatān*. Second, in terms of correspondence with the pattern found in ClAr, each of the vocalizations is attested in their predicted contexts, between 76% (*kasrah/kasratān* for genitive) and 96% (*fatḥah/fatḥatān* for accusative) of the time. So while there is a great deal more variation than is attested in the manifestations of case in the consonantal text, it is absolutely the case that the scribe used each vocalization primarily where it would have been written in ClAr.

Regarding the non-ClAr elements, it is clear that while they exist, they are regular and patterned. The most significant of these patterns include:

- Accusatives are written with *fatḥatān*, with the primary exceptions conditioned morphologically by the presence of *tā' marbūṭah* or a *maǧhūr* consonant.
- Genitives are written with *kasratān*, with the primary exceptions being numerals/ number constructions (marked with *ḍammatān*), a few nouns ending in *tā' marbūṭah* (marked with *fatḥatān*) or ending in an *alif mamdūdah* (marked *fatḥatān*).
- Nominatives are marked with either *ḍammatān* or *kasratān*, in about the same proportion, and clustering in a few syntactic contexts, including subjects of certain active verbs, subjects of existential/possessive clauses, and nominal predicates; *kasratān* is more frequently used when the subject is a lexeme for either a group, or a single individual of a species.

Especially noteworthy in terms of distribution is the likelihood of nouns ending in *tā' marbūṭah* to be marked with *kasratān*, regardless of syntactic context, exemplified by examples such as the following:

(16a) اما اغترستم شجرةٍ طيبةٍ ثمرها طيبّ او شجرةَ خبيثةٍ خبثها ثامره "As for when you plant a good tree, its fruit is good, or a bad plant, its rottenness likewise produces fruit".

In this example, three of the four nouns ending in *tā' marbūṭah* are written with *kasratān*, despite being in syntactically accusative contexts. However, the adjective *ṭayyib* "good", which lacks a *tā' marbūṭah* and is in a syntactically nominative context, is marked with *ḍammatān*.

While it is tempting to appeal to the oft-cited "pseudo-correction", this seems unlikely based on the aspects of the distributions noted above. Indeed, *fatḥatān* and *ḍammatān* are rarely used to mark roles that do not align with their ClAr ones. The *kasratān* is the default, occurring in both accusative and nominative contexts. Further, when *kasratān* is used in accusative contexts instead of *fatḥatān*, it is almost always phonologically conditioned; when used in nominative contexts, it occurs in precisely the same contexts as *ḍammatān* in nominative ones. What are we to make of this distribution? I propose that the most likely scenario is that the variety of Arabic underlying the vocalization layer in Or. 561 is one in which *tanwīn* had historically been retained, but in which the phonemic contrast had been lost in the short vowel preceding:

un/in/an > Vn / C_n #

Given the fact that *kasratān* seems to be the default spelling of this morpheme, it is likely that the vowel was realized as something like /i/ or /ə/. This is the realization of the same morpheme in many modern dialects which have retained dialectal *tanwīn* (Stokes 2020).

If this proposal is correct, then the peculiarities of the orthography remain to be explained. Specifically, we might wonder why the scribe did not simply spell *all* instances of *tanwīn* with *kasratān* if he is intentionally trying to represent such a phonetic reality. In order to answer that question, it is useful first to compare these data, and the orthographic details reviewed above, from other Christian manuscripts.

4.2.5. Comparison with other Christian manuscripts

A comparison with other vocalized manuscripts containing Christian translations of the gospels into Arabic reveals a spectrum of similarities, both in terms of the orthographic practices when noting non-standard *tanwīn* patterns, as well as the syntactic roles in which these instances occur. Regarding the former, in some, such as Vatican Borg. Arabic 71, only *fatḥatān* is used to note all instances of *tanwīn*. In a number of such manuscripts, there is a morphological distinction between how *tanwīn* is written in accusative and non-accusative contexts: in accusative contexts, both *tanwīn alif* and *fatḥatān* are used; in non-accusative ones, only *fatḥatān* is used:

"Then Herod summoned the Magi in secret". حينيذٌ استدعا هيرودس المجوس سرًا (Vatican Borg. Arabic 71, 3v)

In this example, the first word with *tanwīn*, *ḥīnaʾiḏin*, is written with *fatḥatān* but without *tanwīn alif* since, in ClAr, it would be written with *kasratān*. The second noun, *sirran*, is an accusative, and is thus written with *tanwīn alif*.

In another group of manuscripts, including Sinai Arabic 82, 84, 90, and 91, scribes used *fatḥatān* and *kasratān* (but not *ḍammatān*), where *fatḥatān* and *kasratān* largely overlap, but with *kasratān* often predominating on, e.g., nouns ending in *tāʾ marbūṭah*.

"So then from where are there tares in it?" فمن اين فيه زوانًا (Sinai Arabic 82, 32)
"Not a jot will pass away from the law or the prophets". لا يجوز من الناموس والانبيا ايةٍ واحده (Sinai Arabic 82, 14)

Finally, a few manuscripts, including Sinai Arabic 76 and 112, pattern with Or. 561 in using all three. The distribution of the three vocalizations in, e.g., Sinai Arabic 76 matches the one attested here in Or. 561 in virtually every detail: *fatḥatān* is used in accusative contexts, with *kasratān* marking genitives, accusatives with *tāʾ marbūṭah*, and marking the same syntactic and semantic groups as here (subjects of verbs of motion, predicates, and words for individuals or groups of people). Further, as in Or. 561, Sinai Arabic 76 attests a more frequent use of *kasratān* than *ḍammatān* in nominative contexts, with the latter occurring in contexts with, e.g., numbers, just as in Or. 561:

"He fasted for forty days and forty nights" صام أَربعين نهارا وَاربعين ليلِهٍ (Sinai Arabic 76, 22)
"And he said to them, 'What man who has a single ewe...'" قال لهم ايّ انسان منكم له نعجِهٍ واحده (Sinai Arabic 76, 43)
"Five of them were wise, and five of them were foolish". فخمس منهُنّ كُنّ عاقلات وخمسّ جاهلات (Sinai Arabic 76, 83)

The significant overlap between the patterns of vocalization in Or. 561 and those employed across the Arabic gospel manuscripts constitutes overwhelming evidence for a shared set of

traditions, both linguistic and scribal. As argued in Stokes (2023b), the variety behind the vocalizations across the Christian manuscripts can be explained as above, namely as evidence for a variety in which short vowels before *tanwīn* had merged. It seems likely that at the point at which this merger took place, some contexts had ceased to be marked by case vowels + *tanwīn*, with accusative roles, especially adverbs, as well as subjects of certain verbs, lexemes of highly specific or individuated nouns, and nominal predicates were more salient – and thus more consistently marked explicitly – than others. When the merger occurred, these contexts were still marked, but with a morpheme, composed of the single vowel and *tanwīn* (-Vn). When scribes attempted to write such a variety, they had to make use of the orthographic tools at their disposal, namely the three vocalization signs. Some made use of just one, others alternated *fatḥatān* and *kasratān*, while still others used all three. Crucially, most scribes attempted both to represent the underlying variety and adhere to the conventions of the writing tradition in which they had been trained. They accomplished this to varying degrees and in different ways.

4.2.6. Third person pronominal suffix harmonization

Along with *tanwīn* vocalizations, the patterns of vocalization of the 3ms, 3mp and 3fp pronominal suffixes are also relevant for the study of morpho-syntactic case in Or. 561. As is well known, standard ClAr is characterized by harmonization of the vowel of the 3ms, 3mp and 3fp suffixes to a previous *i* vowel, whether long or short, as well as a preceding diphthong *-ay*:

3ms *kitāb-u-hū* "his book (nominative)" but *kitāb-i-hī* "idem (genitive)";
3mp *kitāb-u-hum* "their (mpl) book (nominative)" but *kitāb-i-him* "idem (genitive)";
3fp *kitāb-u-hunna* "their book (nominative) but *kitāb-i-hinna* "idem (genitive)".

This, however, is not the only pattern documented by the early grammarians, nor did they canonize it as the only acceptable one. Further, there are alternative patterns attested among both the canonical Quranic recitation traditions, as well as others found in vocalized Quranic manuscripts (Van Putten and Sidky *forthcoming*).

As shown in Table 8, in Or. 561 a very consistent non-ClAr pattern of harmonization is attested in which the 3ms suffix harmonizes to preceding Ci, Cī, and Cay (as in ClAr), but the dual (and presumably the plural) forms do not.

Significantly, the 3ms pronominal suffix is written *-hi* (length is not indicated) not only after the preposition *bi-*, but also nouns in genitive contexts. While case endings are not written explicitly, this alternation all but guarantees its presence. The dual pronominal suffixes do not assimilate after either Ci or Cī. The plural pronominal suffixes are not vocalized following Ci, Cī, or Cay in Or. 561; however, it seems *a priori* likely that they would pattern with the dual, which is attested in multiple places with a *ḍammah*, indicating a lack of harmonization. It is impossible to know whether nominative *u* or accusative *a* were realized.

Whether this harmonization pattern was ever a living feature, or rather was one of numerous variants which were aesthetically motivated, is uncertain. The complicating factor is the lack of attested vocalization of 3mp and 3fp forms. It is possible, for example, that the bilabial nasal /m/ in, e.g., the dual and 3mp suffixes, led to the rounded vowel /u/, whereas those without it (3ms, 3fp) assimilated. Regardless of whether or not it was once a living feature, it is consistently used throughout Or. 561, and was clearly prestigious. Similar assimilation patterns are attested in the Quranic tradition (Van Putten and Sidky *forthcoming*) as well as in other vocalized Christian manuscripts (Stokes 2023a).

Table 8. Pronominal suffix harmonization patterns in Leiden Or. 561

	Ca-	Ci-	Cī-	Cay-
3ms	la-hu (8a)	bi-hi (5a) and ʿalā qāmat-hi (8a)	fī-hi (8a)	ʿalay-hi (9b)
3mdu		bi-humā (10b) and fī ṭawʿ-humā (74a)		

4.2.7. Overview of the case system in Or. 561

The evidence for morpho-syntactic case inflection in Or. 561 suggests a system in which final short case vowels were realized when non-word final, at least before pronominal suffixes, as evidenced by the assimilation of the 3ms and 3du pronouns when suffixed to nouns in the genitive. Formerly indefinite triptotes are marked with *tanwīn*, which was probably realized with a single vowel, reconstructed here as /in/ or /ən/. Despite the loss of phonemic contrast between short vowels before *tanwīn*, the morpheme continued to mark a set of salient syntactic roles, including adverbs, subjects of certain verbs and clauses expressing existence or possession, as well as lexemes expressing groups or single members of a species.

5. General discussion

The three manuscript witnesses to the gospel translation under examination in this paper attest several linguistic layers, each of which is relevant for the study of Middle Arabic. The consonantal layer reflects a mixing of various forms, especially of archaisms, many of which were associated with the language of the Quran, while others were archaic poetic forms. While many of these archaisms are mentioned, and accepted, by the Arabic language grammarians, they are often not typical in standard ClAr. Also attested in the consonantal layer of the translation are a minority of forms which are common in Middle Arabic, with specific manifestations – such as the non-ClAr use of terms for "the twelve (disciples)" – that are salient in other Christian gospel translations as well. The result is a text that is highly Quranic, and generally sophisticated and archaic, with Christian-specific features sprinkled in here and there.

The vocalizations in the three manuscripts also communicate a great deal. While VAr. 18 and VAr. 17 both generally follow standard ClAr, VAr. 17 especially apparently mixes in still other features, possibly associated with a Hijazi and/or Quranic style, reflected especially in the use of *fāyil* as the form I active participle pattern, rather than the ClAr *fāʾil* one, as well as the apparent non-ClAr use of *hamzat al-qaṭʿ* for the definite article, imperatives, and derived stem perfects.

The vocalization attested in Or. 561 is distinctly non-ClAr in most cases, reflecting a deliberate Christianization of the phonology of the text. While we cannot be certain whether the scribe who copied Or. 561 relied on either VAr. 18 or VAr. 17, it is very possible that he did. In that case, the scribe had a copy not only of the consonantal text, but also vocalizations, which he then deliberately changed. The quality of the copying of the consonantal portion of the text, which is neater and more skilfully done in some respects than in either VAr. 18 or VAr. 17, rules out incompetence or carelessness. Further, the commonality of many of the features, such as the patterns of *tanwīn* and writing of final -āʾ, also suggests that rather than reflecting a very localized tradition, the scribe

intentionally targeted a variety of Arabic associated to some degree with Christians, or at least commonly used by Christians to recite the gospels.

Returning to the topics of the linguistic nature of the features in Middle Arabic texts, as well as about the spectrum along which Middle Arabic texts are situated, the evidence in the translation – drawn from each of the three witnesses – argues against many of the standard assumptions of the field. First, the assumption that if authors don't intentionally target a particular Middle Arabic sub-variety, they would target standard ClAr, is clearly not safe in every instance and must be demonstrated by close reading of the text, rather than assumed. In this translation, both the consonantal text and vocalization layers the use of features that are not standard ClAr. In some cases, the target was Quranic Arabic, even when it disagreed with standard ClAr. Elsewhere, archaic forms were used rather than more commonly prescribed ClAr ones. In still other cases, such as the *fāʿil* participles, it seems as though the target is Old Hijazi, perhaps an early prestigious variety in the Umayyad Levant (Al-Jallad 2020). Finally, features likely associated with the vernacular of the composer or copyist were identified, as for example the occasional phonemic spellings of perfects, likely indicating syncope of the initial short vowel in an open syllable, as well as the shift of *ẓ > ḍ. Interestingly, the phonemic spellings almost always occur in direct speech, which possibly reflects a deliberate choice by the scribe to use a more vernacular register in those contexts.

Second, evidence from this gospel translation suggests that in at least some cases, Middle Arabic features which do not conform to ClAr norms, nor occur in modern dialects, are nevertheless most plausibly derived from once-living features, and can be included in discussions of the historical development of Arabic. I have argued here that the distribution of the *tanwīn* vocalizations attested in Or. 561 are virtually identical in many ways to those attested in other Christian gospels, which reflect a historical change, namely the merging of short vowels before *nunation* to a single vowel, likely realized /in/ or /ən/, which nevertheless retained for a while at least some salient syntactic functions. The harmonization of the 3ms pronominal suffix to preceding *i*, *ī*, and *ay*, but the lack of harmonization of the dual (and, presumably, plural) suffixes in the same contexts is another example. Both of these features are intentionally used, here and elsewhere (for *tanwīn* in Christian Arabic, see Stokes 2023b; for the pronominal harmonization, see Stokes 2021 for the same distribution in Judaeo-Arabic, and 2023a for a discussion of this and other patterns in Christian Arabic gospel translations).

Therefore, many of these Christian Middle Arabic features likely originated in living features, which became prestigious variants, and thus constituted a regular part of the H register. While it is questionable, even doubtful, that the feature of non-ClAr *tanwīn* was a living feature of the dialects of every scribe who employed it, it is also not clear when it ceased to be living, and in any event was clearly prestigious for centuries. We thus need to broaden the nature of the H register, at least for a subset of Middle Arabic texts, beyond textbook ClAr to include linguistic variation associated with the Quran and its recitation, as well as other variants which were prestigious in the centuries before a single set of prescriptive norms associated with ClAr became established. There were clearly multiple features and variants which held prestige, and were mixed to different effects, depending on the audience, genre, and likely other variables as well. The proposal here thus differs from previous ones in several ways, namely I argue regarding the phenomena attested in this gospel translation that: 1) non-standard features which also do not occur in modern dialects can reflect (at least originally) living features; 2) these features became prestigious; and 3) they were included in a nexus of prestigious variants which could, and among Christians often did, include ones not only from the ClAr tradition, but also Quranic recitation in its broadest sense,

even preserving archaic features otherwise forgotten or proscribed over time among Muslims.[8]

6. Conclusion

This translation of the gospels into Arabic is so far unique in the Christian Arabic corpus insofar as it linguistically imitates the Quran in a multitude of ways, especially in the lexicon and rhyme scheme. The composing scribe mixes archaic forms, some of which are peculiar to the Quran or Old Hijazi, while others are attested primarily in poetry. Each of the three manuscript witnesses to the translation is vocalized to some degree. The earliest two manuscripts, VAr. 17 and 18, are vocalized in basically standard ClAr; however, VAr. 17 attests several phonological features that are not normal in ClAr, but may indeed be archaic. The third and latest manuscript, Or. 561, differs in many respects from ClAr on the one hand, and is nearly identical in those cases to features found in other Christian Middle Arabic translations of the gospels. There is therefore a movement away from a mix of ClAr, Quranic and other archaic features in the consonantal base of the translation, vocalized in basically ClAr early on, but Christianized in terms of phonology and morpho-syntax by the fifteenth century CE. It was argued that the mix of features demonstrates that, at least for some scribes, the high (H) register was much more varied and diverse than what has become normative ClAr, extending not only to archaic and Quranic forms, but also prestigious forms that were never a part of the ClAr tradition. Finally, several features, such as the non-ClAr distribution of *tanwīn* vocalizations in Or. 561 that likewise differs from dialectal *tanwīn* in modern dialects, were argued to have originated as living features which subsequently became prestigious variants in their own right. In addition to the unique mix of features, as well as the sophisticated imitation of Quranic rhyme, this translation – and the manuscript witnesses to it – require broadening of the spectrum along which Middle Arabic texts are plotted in the medieval period, as well as more nuanced typological categories for the non-ClAr features attested therein.

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[8] This is not to dispute the occurrence in other corpora of genuine pseudo-corrections, colloquialisms, nor an intentional hybrid in contexts where ClAr and dialectal grammars disagree (Bellem and Smith 2014). Rather, I am arguing here that none of these categories adequately explains or captures the data from either this gospel translation, or other Christian corpora as well.

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