

Preface

The present work is a thoroughly revised and expanded version of the grammatical part of the *Habilitation* thesis which I submitted in 2002 to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Göttingen under the title: „Grammatical and philological studies on the Early Judaeo-Persian texts from the Cairo Geniza“.

The idea of working on Early Judaeo-Persian (EJP) goes back to the academic year of 1995/96 that I spent in Jerusalem, where Shaul Shaked drew my attention to the EJP texts and their linguistic importance and provided me with his preliminary (unpublished) editions and translations of many EJP texts he had worked on. For writing my Habilitation thesis, I concentrated on the description of the language of the private documents, of which I also prepared improved editions; I took into account only selected passages from religious texts. In the present version, the religious texts have been widely used, together with a small number of documents that have come to light only recently, e.g. the „2nd Dandān-Uiliq letter“, or the *Zefre tafsir*. It has not been possible to study for the present work also the Afghan EJP documents that have appeared on the market recently. The editions of the private documents that I had prepared for the Habilitation thesis have not been included in the present work; a joint publication of these by Shaul Shaked and myself is in preparation.

The thanks I owe to Shaul Shaked can hardly be expressed in words. From the beginning of our cooperation, he shared with me all his materials, expertise, advice and friendship. The present work could not have been begun, continued and finished without the constant support it received from Shaul. It is therefore actually a monument to his great scholarly achievements on EJP, his pioneering study of so many EJP documents that are difficult to read and understand. Shaul also read the present work and provided many corrections.

I also owe many thanks to Tamar Gindin, who wrote her PhD. thesis on the EJP tafsir of Ezekiel while I was writing my Habilitation thesis. Tamar published her edition and translation of the text in 2007; both were a great help for me in writing the grammar. I decided not to use Tamar's grammatical description of EJP (based on Ezekiel), which is forthcoming as the third volume of her work, because I preferred to write a grammatical description independent of hers. Tamar did, however, read my Habilitation thesis, and subsequently sent me a long list of comments and corrections, which were very helpful for the revision of my work. Some suggestions of Tamar's that I quote are referred to as „T. G.“.

Avi Shvitiel was so kind as to read through my habilitation thesis some years ago, and contributed valuable comments. Ofir Haim controlled the Hebrew passages of the work shortly before publication, and saved me from a number of spelling mistakes. My students Maximilian Kinzler and Jonas Elbers helped me in technical (software) matters at a late stage of the work, Maximilian Kinzler provided also the samples of characters (on p. 180), taken from the manuscript photographs of my habilitation thesis. Finally, I would also like to thank Nicholas Sims-Williams who accepted the work into the series „Beiträge zur Iranistik“ and who read it with usual care and accuracy. His comments helped me to avoid various errors and inconsistencies. Some of his comments go beyond the study of EJP proper, showing what the study of EJP can contribute to Middle Iranian philology. I decided to include some of these comments in the footnotes, marking them with „S.-W.“.