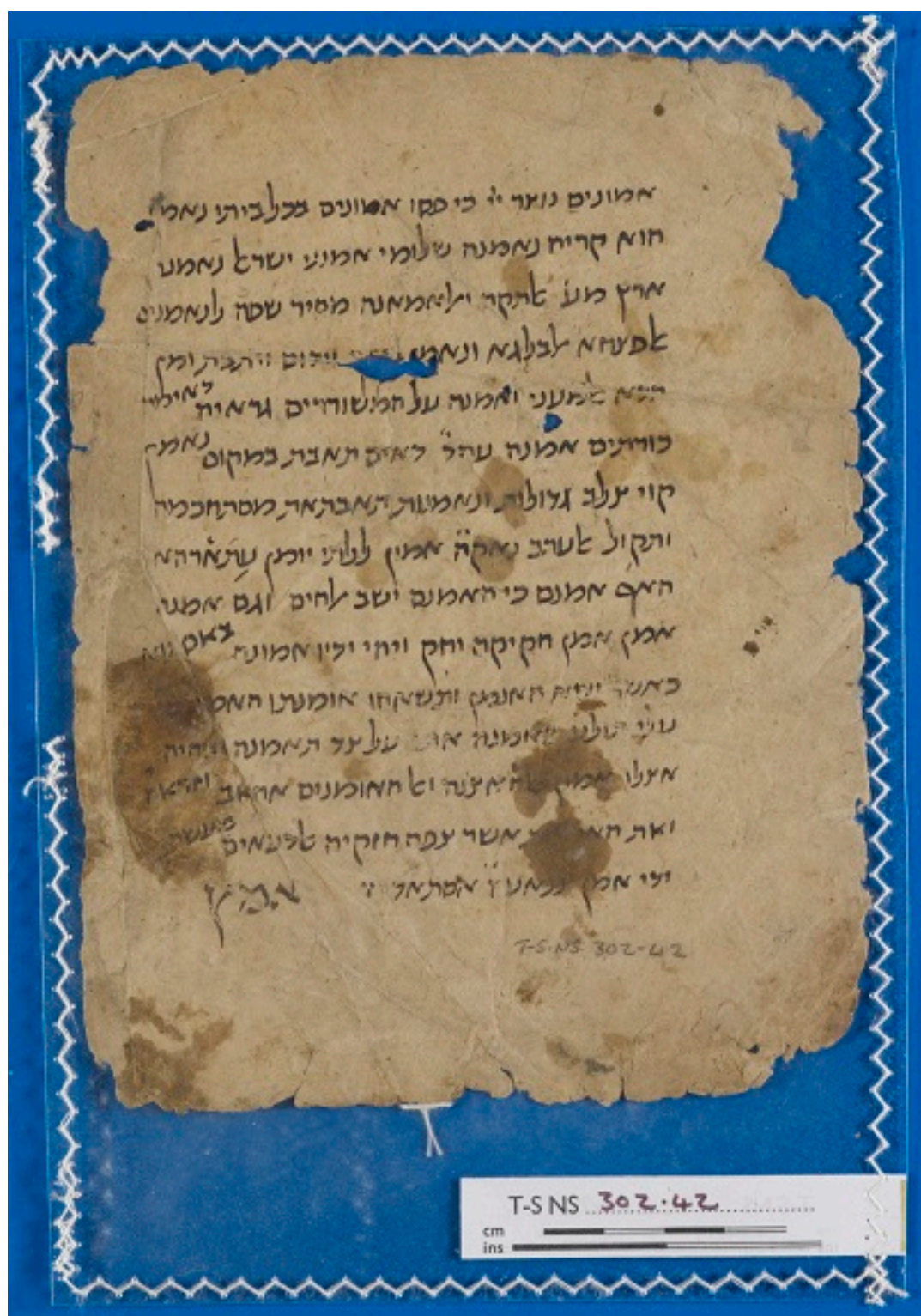


Fragment of the Month: February 2008

A hitherto unknown dictionary of Solomon b. Mubarrak, the Karaite (T-S NS 302.42, T-S NS 302.4)

José Martínez Delgado (University of Granada), Friedrich Niessen (Cambridge University)



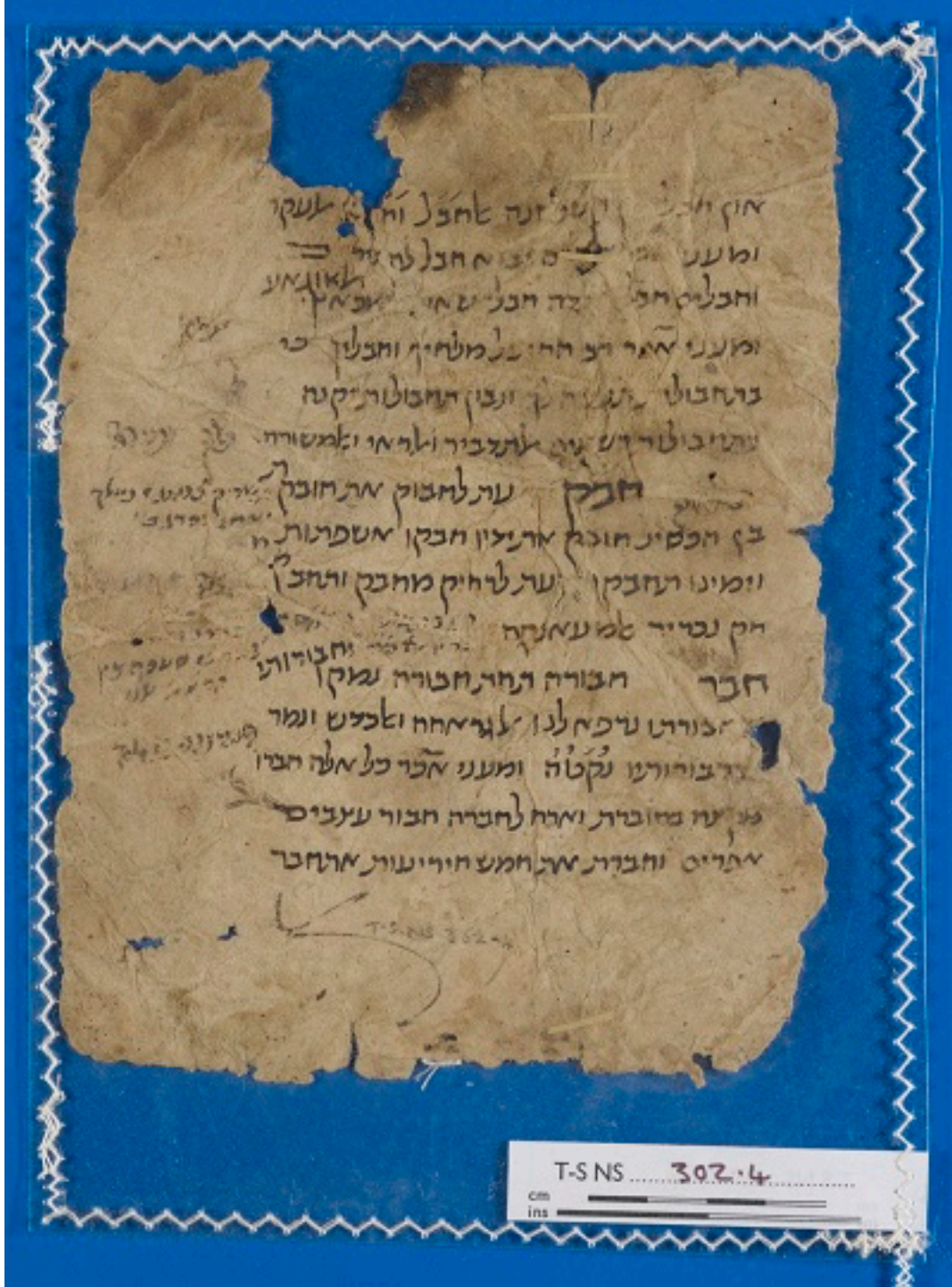
T-S NS 302.42 recto

Little is known about the author and his lexicographical work. We can only find a short note in the Chronicle of Karaite scholars by Ibn al-Hītī who mentions 'the elder Solomon b. Mubarrak b. Ṣa'īr, the author of *Al-taysīr*'. It can be assumed that he wrote his dictionary in Egypt, most probably in Cairo, at the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century, since the last work he quotes is David Qimḥī's *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (d. mid 13th century).

Only a single complete copy of Solomon b. Mubarrak's dictionary, whose edition and translation we are preparing at the moment, has been preserved among the Firkovitch manuscripts: Firkovitch I 77 (298 pages, 15th century). The full title is known from another Firkovitch manuscript (I 4512): *Al-ṭānī min al-taysīr fī ḥaṣr jawāmi al-tafāsīr* (The Second part of the Book of Simplification in the abbreviated compilation of explanations). It contains 22 chapters for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet and an appendix for biblical Aramaic.

The main sources of his dictionary are Ibn Janāḥ's *Kitāb al-'uṣūl* (The Book of Hebrew Roots) and the lost work *Kitāb al-Kāmil* (The Complete Book) of Jacob b. Eleazar (13th century), but also other authors are represented, including David Qimḥī, Samuel ha-Nagid, Judah b. Bil'am and – in one instance – Moses Maimonides.

When compiling the catalogue of Judaeo-Arabic and Arabic documents from the New Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection in Cambridge, only a descriptive characterisation of T-S NS 302.4 and 42 could be provided: 'concordance and dictionary', 'work on Hebrew roots'. Thanks to the exciting discovery of the Firkovitch manuscripts, a precise identification of these two pages, which are part of the same codex, is now possible: T-S NS 302.42 (= Firkovitch I 77, pp.13b–15a) and T-S NS 302.4 (= Firkovitch I 77, pp. 62b–63a) are fragments of Solomon b. Mubarrak's lexicographical work *Al-taysīr*.



Readers are invited to send comments to genizah@lib.cam.ac.uk. The Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit is not under any obligation to acknowledge or to publish comments.

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