

Introduction

Judgments of Solomon (احكام سليمان, JSol), a 16th century Christian-Arabic work previously believed to contain an Arabic translation of the Testament of Solomon (TSol). JSol does not in fact contain a translation of TSol, but some stories included in it are heavily inspired by TSol.

Previous scholarship

Identified as an Arabic translation of TSol by Georg Graf (*Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*), cited as such by James H. Charlesworth (*Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*) and all later scholarship. This is the first (and very preliminary) attempt to study the text.

Known MSS Witnesses

1. VAT. AR. 448 – 17th century Egypt. Originally studied by Graf who identified fols. 39-54 as a translation of TSol.
2. BNF AR 214 – 1538 Egypt. Previously unknown.
3. COPTIC MUSEUM 31. Referred to by Graf as containing a recension of JSol.
4. DAYR MĀR MĪNĀ 120. Contains a recension of JSol (fols. 34r-53v), previously unknown.

Only Vat. ar. 448 and BnF Ar 214 were examined for the purposes of this paper. Along with JSol, both manuscripts contain Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom and Proverbs. BnF Ar 214 also contains a translator's introduction referencing lost works of Solomon.

A number of divergent readings suggest that although remarkably close, they are not dependent on each other.

History

Probably originated as a compilation of various types of material in Egypt's Christian milieu (Egyptian Arabic dialect seeps through, substantial connection to Egypt). At least one of the stories is a direct translation from Coptic (Story V – *Legend of Solomon and Thabor*).

Structure

No.	Brief description	BnF Ar 214 fols.	Vat. ar. 448 fols.
I	Solomon asks God for wisdom – 1 Kings 3:4-15	186r	29r – 29v l. 13
II	Solomon and the two harlots – 1 Kings 3:16-28 (Solomon's first judgment)	186v : 1 – 187r : 6	29v : 14 – 31r : 1
III	Joachim and his daughters Mary and Martha (Solomon's second judgment)	187 : 7 – 189v : 8	31r : 1 – 34v
IV	Demons prevent people from worshipping at the temple, Solomon is given a ring to control them and forces them to work on the temple	189v : 9 – 191v : 2	35r – 37r : 15
V	ناوون [n'wwn] / ياوون [y'wwn] king of the Gentiles visits	191v : 2 – 192v : 5	37r : 15 – 39r : 2
VI	365 demons rebel against Solomon	192v : 5 – 193v : 13	39r : 2 – 40v : 5
VII	A demon steals food from one of the workers	193v : 13 – 194v : 10	40v : 5 – 41v : 13
VIIIa	ناوون / ياوون king of the Gentiles writes to Solomon asking him to rid him of the demon who plagues his land (Egypt)	194v : 10 – 196r : 7	41v : 13 – 43v
VIIIb	Solomon sends his servant with the ring to capture the demon	196r : 7 – 198r : 12	44r – 47r : 2
IXa	Queen of demons sinks ships, دارس king of كرام writes to Solomon asking to rid him of her; Solomon sends his servant who brings her to him; Solomon interrogates her and learns her name – تادورا among the demons, الاردميس among the people	198r : 12 – 199r : 17	47r : 2 – 48v : 6
IXb	Solomon asks the queen of demons to recount her sins, she tells the story of how she blinded a man named وروول and 10/12 servants in the Temple	199r : 17 – 201r : 5	48v : 6 – 51r : 8
X	A man named قستاردس and leaves his three sons a puzzling testament (Solomon's third judgment)	201r : 5 – 203r	51r : 8 – 54

Correspondences between TSol and JSol

TSol*

1:1-4 Orniás steals food from a worker
1:5-7 God gives Solomon a ring to control demons
22:1-19 Letter of Adarkes concerning the wind demon
24-25 Solomon adjures demons to hold a pillar in the air
Solomon makes demons work on the temple
Solomon interrogates demons, learns their names and asks what evils they do
Solomon tells his servant to capture the Arabian wind demon

JSol

Story VII
Story IV
Story VIIIa
Story VI
Story V
Story IXb
Story VIIIb

* Divisions of TSol into chapters as per Duling, D.C. "Testament of Solomon." Pages 935-987 in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York : Doubleday, 1983.

Differences between TSol and JSol

- In JSol, God deals directly with Solomon (He, not the archangel Michael, gives him the ring) and no thwarting angels are mentioned, hence no duality typical of TSol.
- No elaborate demonology - only the queen of demons is named, none of the other demons (including the one stealing food and plaguing Egypt) have names; only the confrontation with the queen of demons partially follows the formula in TSol (What is your name? What do you do? By what angel are you thwarted?)
- Solomon's direct interaction with demons is limited to the demons working on the Temple and the queen of demons. In all other dealings with demons, it is his servant who does the work, binding the demons with the ring and Solomon's and God's name ("God Sabaoth" or "God of Israel"). In addition, Solomon also has copies of the ring made and gives them to craftsmen working on the temple (story V) and to the man whose food is stolen by the demon (story VII). While the servant and the starving man both invoke Solomon's and God's name, the craftsmen only need a copy of the ring and a stick to make the demons work for them.