

TE'UDA

XV

A CENTURY OF GENIZA RESEARCH

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THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL
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XV

A CENTURY OF GENIZA RESEARCH

Edited by

MORDECHAI A. FRIEDMAN

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RESEARCH SERIES

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Moshe Dorf

(June 2, 1907 — October 3, 1987)

Moshe Dorf was born in Poland and emigrated to Belgium at an early age. Together with his brother, he founded a diamond processing enterprise. The personality of Moshe Dorf reflects the embodiment of initiative and action which received their concrete expression in the industrial enterprise that he established and continued to cultivate throughout his life. Concurrently, he possessed an intense spiritual wealth as well as an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and wisdom from the rich sources of the Jewish heritage. He was an active participant in various study groups and conferences devoted to Jewish Studies, especially in the field of biblical research, an avid member of the Israeli Society for Biblical Research as well as the World Jewish Society for the Study of Bible.

Moshe Dorf will be remembered by friends and relations for his congeniality and amiability, his unstinted devotion to his family, and his munificent philanthropy to numerous cultural and charitable institutions in the State of Israel.

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THE CULTURAL PROFILE OF EASTERN JEWRY IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES AS REFLECTED BY THE PAYYETANIC TEXTS OF THE GENIZA

by Ezra Fleischer

The thousands of hitherto unknown poems preserved in the Geniza have enabled a reconstruction of the history of ancient Hebrew liturgical poetry, a revelation of its main characteristics and a deep insight into its aesthetic foundations. A rather genuine expression of public will and taste, liturgical poetry (*piyyut*) may be seen as a portrayal of the cultural level and aspirations of its era and its locality.

Originally, poetry was not meant to embellish Jewish public prayer. Its presence in the old synagogue was a result of public pressure. Geonim and other rabbinic authorities objected to its inclusion in the Divine Service but to no avail. There is no doubting the fact that, in those centuries, the public was fond of poetry and was ready to spend numerous hours in the synagogue listening to *payyeṭanim* performing their ever-changing series of *piyyuṭim*.

This audience admired the delicate and subtle structure of the poetic genres. The poetics of ancient *piyyuṭ* mirror a fine sense for beauty and a highly developed literary taste. They required that the poet comply with a long series of rules in the shaping of strophic patterns, as well as in the use of rhyme, meter, rhetoric and structural devices. These rules, although unwritten, were clearly known to the public, and poets hardly dared to break them. This phenomenon has much to say concerning the cultural level, not only of the learned of those ages, but also of the common people.

It is a well-known fact that ancient liturgical poetry was written in a most peculiar language that was especially "invented" for the use of poets. The language of *piyyuṭ* was full of strange coinages and neologisms and has always been a challenge for both readers and scholars alike.

Nevertheless, it was apparently well understood by its listeners, even though the texts were actually recited only once, before an audience who was never to hear them again. This public, mixed as it was socially and intellectually, was, thus, not only well-versed in biblical and post-biblical Hebrew, but also had a sovereign command of the intricate and all but esoteric laws of payyetic Hebrew.

Early *piyyuṭim* also exhibit a most profound acquaintance of both poet and public with the enormous corpus of talmudic and midrashic lore. The payyetic texts are not only full of subtle allusions to this material but also reshape it in new combinations, understandable only to real experts. Amazingly enough, the great majority of the public that gathered in the early synagogue was prepared to meet this challenge.

Undoubtedly following public demand, early *piyyuṭ* also brought the art of music into the synagogue. From the beginning, Jewish public prayer did not have any musical aspirations. The cantors chanted their prayers but never sang them. Yet payyetic patterns prove that from the 7th century on, most synagogues kept a professional choir which performed the liturgy along with the cantor. Public prayer thus became a kind of artistic performance of poetry and song, the only entertainment available for Jews at the time. It also became a means of aesthetic and artistic education, being a genuine expression of the cultural needs and aspirations of the community.

Payyetic literature also witnesses a very high level of literacy among Jews in the early middle ages (5th—8th centuries). As attested by the impressive length of some of the earliest *piyyuṭim* and by the extreme intricacy of many of the payyetic patterns, *piyyuṭim* were originally written down by their authors and then widely spread, in written form, by eager enthusiasts and readers. Later day *payyēṭanim* possessed a profound knowledge of the works of their predecessors, and this influence is readily discerned in their own oeuvre. It is thus quite evident that eastern Jews of ancient times maintained an amazingly high level of culture, a broad and multi-faceted world of artistic interest and a highly refined taste and thirst for beauty. The liturgical poetry of the *payyēṭanim* is an authentic expression of all these qualities.

HEBREW POETRY IN BABYLONIA DURING THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES AS PORTRAYED IN GENIZA MANUSCRIPTS

by Tova Beeri

It is generally accepted that Babylonian Jewish communities rejected payyetic embellishments in their public prayers, a conclusion supported by several responsa. Nevertheless, there is no doubting the fact that Babylonian public prayer did include some examples of liturgical poetry, which was indispensable for various festive occasions.

Among the *piyyuṭim* recited, we may mention *seliḥot* on the fasts, including the Ninth of Ab; *hosha'anot* on Sukkot; *sidre 'avoda* on Yom Kippur etc. Although these *piyyuṭim* most likely originated from Eretz-Israel, the Babylonians did not comply with the prevailing Palestinian custom of varying the payyetic repertoire as often as possible. As a result, Babylonian Jewry did not require the creation of new *piyyuṭim* and so they did not foster local payyetic activity.

The study of Geniza manuscripts shows that this situation underwent a profound change at the end of the ninth century. From this period on, there is clear evidence of the existence of payyetic activity in the principal centers of the Babylonian communities.

The first known local *payyetaṅ* was *Rav Nisi Alnahrwānī*, who flourished at the end of the ninth century. He was a senior member of the Academy of Sura and a candidate for the office of Gaon in 928 together with Rav Se'adia Gaon, who was elected. Rav Nisi's poetic heritage includes mainly *seliḥot*, although the Geniza has also preserved the remains of his oeuvre in classical payyetic genres, such as components of *yoẓrot* and *qedushta'ot*.

A major change in the structure of Babylonian public prayer seems to have occurred during the first half of the tenth century. This revolution is represented by two members of the same family: Rav Ḥayyim and his son, Rav Yosef Albaradānī.

The poetic heritage of both, and especially that of Rav Yosef, proves that, in their time, the central synagogues of Babylonia already followed

the prevailing system of public prayer in Eretz-Israel, *i.e.*, the incorporation of alternate *piyyuṭim* into the liturgy performed by the *ḥazan*.

Rav Yosef Albaradānī, a highly prolific author, composed hundreds of *piyyuṭim* for every festive date; many of them were even composed in order to embellish the same liturgical occasion. All of his works are preserved in Geniza manuscripts. Rav Yosef was a self-conscious poet who often described his and his choir's performance of *piyyuṭim* before an eager audience, in most enthusiastic terms. In an epistle sent by Rav Hai Gaon to the Maghreb in 1006, he refers to Rav Yosef as the "Great Cantor" whose grandson, at the time of the letter, was still functioning as cantor in the great synagogue of Baghdad.

From that time onward, Babylonia became an important center of payyetic activity. Some of the prominent *payyetaṇim* of the tenth century are of Babylonian origin. It is important to note that the liturgical poetry created during this period in Babylonia differs neither in structure nor in language and contents from the contemporary *piyyuṭim* of Eretz-Israel.

On the other hand, it appears that Babylonia was more agreeable towards the secular uses and functions of poetry, whereas Eretz-Israel scarcely produced meta-liturgical poetry. Perhaps due to a stronger Arabic influence, Babylonia adorned some of the more important public events, such as the installation of a new exilarch *et al.*, with poetry. The Geniza has preserved various poetic works of differing secular contexts originating in Babylonia during the period under discussion.

REMAINS OF THE COLLECTED POETRY OF JEWISH ANDALUSIAN POETS IN THE CAIRO GENIZA

by Joseph Yahalom

In this article, an attempt is made to explore the possible relations between the literary activities of Jews in Spain, the farthest point of the then-known Western World during the Middle Ages, and Cairo, a rapidly developing

center of culture and poetry, during the first centuries of the second millenium.

The Geniza archives contain documents and book-lists indicating the popularity of Hebrew-Andalusian collections of poetry (*Dīwāns*) amongst Caireen Jews. Private letters evince the excitement exerted by the visit of Yehuda Ha-Levi, the doyen of the Jewish Andalusian poets, in Cairo during the middle of the twelfth century. The collection and the editing of his poetry followed in the wake of this visit.

The most important collection of the poetry of Yehuda Ha-Levi is extant in the remains of some seventy fragments deriving from a remarkably beautiful volume that was in the possession of a Caireen Jew (*Dīwān Ḥiyya*).

It is interesting to note that even later on, at the beginning of the 13th century, the most comprehensive collection of the poetry of Ha-Levi — *Dīwān Ha-Levi* — was edited by R. Yeshu'a b. Eliyyahu Ha-Levi in Cairo. Towards the end of the century, Caireen poets were even challenging the superiority of Andalusian Jews in poetry and poetics.

After the expulsion from Spain, Jewish exiles were still able to consult a copy of Yeshu'a's conscientious collection which was preserved in the prominent library of R. Abraham Iskandari in Cairo.

THE ROLE OF ARABIC IN JEWISH LITURGY AND LITERATURE ACCORDING TO GENIZA TEXTS

by Yosef Tobi

An important question in the study of medieval Judeo-Arabic literature is whether Arabic was actually used in the Jewish synagogue liturgy. While the time is not yet ripe for a decisive answer, a fairly comprehensive examination of Judeo-Arabic passages in four of the larger Geniza collections: Cambridge, Oxford, the British Library, and the Jewish Theological Seminary in America, New York, has resulted in several relevant finds.

One of the most impressive features of the Cairo Geniza is the ubiquity of Judeo-Arabic, which to some degree appears in every category of medieval Jewish literature, including secular and sacred poetry and the standard versions of compulsory and optional prayers. It thus seems that Judeo-Arabic acquired some standing in both the poetry and the liturgy of medieval Jewish society in eastern lands.

In this article, the author presents evidence from the Geniza for several types of liturgical works which circulated in Judeo-Arabic:

- a. Translations of Hebrew *piyyuṭim*, chiefly those of Se'adia: the *baqqashot*, the *tokheḥa* 'אם לפי בחרך' the series of *rahiṭim* for atonement, 'ברכי נפשי', and also 'כתר מלכות' by Shelomo Ibn Gabirol and 'ציון הלא חשאל' by Yehuda Ha-levi.
- b. Literary elaborations of the Song of Songs, Lamentations and Ecclesiastics in the Arabic *qasida* form, and also a translation of the *azharot* 'אתה הנחלת תורה לעמך' in this form.
- c. Rhymed fables by the Babylonian Ḥananya Ha-levi.
- d. Translations of the standard prayers.
- e. Commentaries on *piyyuṭim*: the above-mentioned *tokheḥa* 'בחרך' 'אם לפי' of Se'adia, the *piyyuṭim* of Yeḥezqel al-Dinawri (Babylonia, 11th century) the *azharot* of Ibn Gabirol for Shavu'ot as well as those of Yisrael ben Yosef (Toledo, 14th century).

It is true that there is no positive proof that all the above were recited in the synagogues. However, it is evident that Jewish writing in Arabic in the domains of liturgy and *belles-letters* was far more varied and extensive than known today. A comprehensive examination of the various Geniza collections will undoubtedly provide further knowledge in this matter.

In an appendix, the author edits passages from two manuscripts: a translation of the *shema*^c and the blessing before the morning prayer (from the Geniza) and a translation of the *shema*^a and its blessings in the evening prayer (from Yemen).

KARAITE ANTIQUITIES

by Moshe Gil

The accepted view on the origin of Karaism is that it sprang from the 'Ananites, a sect whose founder was 'Anan b. David, in the middle of the eighth century CE, following a conflict over the office of exilarch. Karaite sources tend to enhance the antiquity of the sect, by attributing its origins to the ancient Zadokites, a view which is completely unfounded.

The Geniza material enables a cohesive view on the origin of the sect. Even though Rav Naṭronai Gaon (ca. 860), describes 'Anan b. David as one of the *minim*, who denied the authority of the Mishna and the Talmud, an analysis of the contents of his "Book of Precepts", shows that it hardly contains anything which deviates from accepted rabbinic views. 'Anan is also described by the Karaite al-Qirqisānī in a similar vein. Novel information concerning 'Anan's grandson, Daniel, is most instructive. He is described in a contemporary Syriac source, the Chronicle of Dionysios of Tel Maḥrē, as one of the two competitors for the office of exilarch, around 820–825. Moreover, Geniza sources, quoted in the article, show that Daniel was indeed exilarch in Babylonia, and that he still had a considerable rabbinic following, mainly in the Academy of Sura. Al-Bīrūnī, who wrote around 1000, mentions the 'Ananites as part of the Karaites. He says that they are the followers of 'Anan, who flourished "a little more than 100 years ago". Thus, he clearly refers to the great grandson of 'Anan I, b. David, 'Anan II, b. Saul.

'Anan II flourished in the ninth century, 100 years after his great grandfather. Another fact, shown by Geniza documents, is that during the ninth century, until close to its end, descendants of the 'Ananite clan were heads of the Yeshiva of Jerusalem, a central rabbinic institution. Benjamin of Nihāwand, the first important ideologist of Karaism, had been the pupil of Josiah, an outstanding member of this Palestinian branch of the exilarchic clan, whose descendants became heads of the Jerusalem Yeshiva.

The emergence of Karaism was determined, in a large measure, by the early schismatic sects, from which it actually sprang. The article discusses

the relation between those early sects and Karaism, and, following Naphtali Wieder, the influence on Karaism by the early discovery (ca. 800) of writings from the Judean Desert.

It is only at the end of the ninth century that Karaism emerged as a new coherent sect. At this time, the sect already included the descendants and followers of the family of 'Anan, who had broken away from rabbinic Judaism. The origin of this 'Ananite schism lay in internal strife among different branches of the exilarchic clan, which had erupted during the middle of the eighth century, more than a century earlier, when 'Anan I futilely sought to obtain the office of exilarch. As mentioned, his great grandsons joined the ranks of the Karaites, who by that time had amalgamated with the different groups of the early sects, like that of 'Īsā al-Iṣfahānī *et al.*

TYPES OF ARABIC BIBLE TRANSLATION IN THE CAIRO GENIZA BASED ON THE CATALOGUE OF TS ARABIC

by Meira Polliack

During the tenth century, the Jews of the Orient adopted Arabic for most forms of written and spoken communication. This socio-linguistic development created a growing need, felt by two sectors of Jewish society, for translating the Hebrew Bible into Arabic: Firstly, among popular circles who attended the schools and synagogues and wished to understand the biblical text in their spoken tongue. Secondly, among the intellectual and scholarly elite who were well-versed in Arabic philosophy and literature, and who felt the necessity for a proper translation of Scripture, which could address theological concerns.

The Cairo Geniza is the major source of knowledge concerning the varied translation needs of different sectors of the Jewish public, mainly during the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. This article is based on a comprehensive survey of the Bible translations classified in the Arabic

portion of the Old Series of the Taylor-Schechter Geniza Collections, known as Arabic, 1-54. These binders contain altogether some 8,000 fragments, of which approximately 1,300 were found to contain Arabic Bible translations. These represent two thirds of the translation material in the various Taylor-Schechter collections as a whole. Most of the fragments are written on paper in Hebrew script, while a small portion is on vellum or in Arabic script. All the books of the Hebrew Bible are represented in the translation corpus, though, as might be expected, the Pentateuch and other books which served in synagogue worship, such as Psalms, are the most frequent among these remains.

An analysis of the different translation features has led to the identification of five major types of translation in this Geniza corpus. These provide an intricate reflection of the different needs and forms of translation current among the Jews of the period, and lead to a more accurate description of the development of Judeo-Arabic Bible translation from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries.

These include: (1) Pre-Se'adianic translations, dating from the ninth century, which reflect an early popular tradition of Bible translation, whose Judeo-Arabic orthography is non-standardized; (2) Se'adia Gaon's translations, which constitute about a third of the material and thus reflect the popularity of his works and the official status they reached among rabbinite communities from the tenth century onwards; (3) Post-Se'adianic translations, which date from the fourteenth century and later. These are based on adaptations and expansions of Se'adia's works in more vernacular or simple style, and were intended for a Jewish public versed in classical Arabic; (4) Popular vocabulary-lists which follow the biblical passage, consecutively or selectively and which may have functioned as didactic tools or as embryonic Bible dictionaries; (5) Karaite translations, which reflect a sectarian, alternative tradition of Arabic Bible translation current among Karaites of the tenth and eleventh centuries, including copies of the works of Yefet ben 'Eli and Yeshu'a b. Yehuda.

The article discusses the respective features of each of these distinctive types and also relates to a wide range of anonymous popular translations, written for didactic or personal purposes. These defy classification according to the above criteria, yet constitute around a third of the

material, reflecting the live nature and changing impetus of Arabic Bible translation throughout the Geniza period.

KARAITE *KETUBBOT* FROM THE CAIRO GENIZA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE KARAITE LEGAL FORMULAE TRADITION

by Judith Olszowy-Schlanger

Nearly seventy marriage documents (deeds of betrothal, marriage contracts [*ketubbot*] and blank formularies) written by members of the Karaite movement have been discovered in the Cairo Geniza. These marriage documents were drawn up in Egypt and Palestine between the 10th and early 13th centuries. They were written according to a specific Karaite tradition, which differs from that of mainstream (rabbanite) Judaism in several important respects, such as paleography (biblical square script rather than rounded, cursive script) and language (Hebrew rather than Aramaic). As far as their legal formulae are concerned, the Karaite marriage documents contain some novel clauses and original additions; by and large, however, they are modeled on various rabbanite documents.

The article focuses on the formulae of these Karaite marriage documents. Drawing on a detailed philological analysis it attempts to identify the origins of the Karaite formula tradition and to enumerate the sources of its influence. A philological comparison of the formulae of Karaite marriage documents with those of Babylonian-style *ketubbot*, Palestinian-style *ketubbot* and Babylonian-style non-marriage contracts shows that the Karaite tradition developed under the strong influence of Babylonian-style marriage and non-marriage formulae. The striking similarity of most Karaite formulae to the Babylonian formulae tradition, and their lack of similarity to the Palestinian tradition (except for two clauses shown to be borrowed from contemporary Muslim tradition) reinforces the hypothesis that the Karaite legal tradition originated in Babylonia, rather than in Palestine.

ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE KARAITE AND THE
PALESTINIAN RABBANITE MARRIAGE CONTRACTS FROM
THE GENIZA

by Mordechai A. Friedman

Judith Olszowy-Schlanger has devoted a detailed study to the Karaite *ketubbot* from the Geniza. From a comparison of the formula of these marriage contracts with that of Palestinian and Babylonian-style *ketubbot* as well as other types of Babylonian documents, she has concluded that the Karaites patterned their *ketubbot* after Babylonian models. Having found in these documents no discernable traces of the tradition of Eretz-Israel, to which Karaites immigrated, in the late ninth century, she concludes that the entire corpus of Karaite law is based exclusively on Babylonian models and is devoid of Palestinian influence. In her opinion, apparent similarities between the Karaite and Palestinian-style marriage contracts, in contrast to the Babylonian *ketubbot*, should be attributed to Islamic formulae and custom, whose influence presumably acted primarily on the Karaites and secondarily on the Palestinian Rabbanites.

The author concurs that the essentials of the Karaite formulary were fixed in Babylonia. Since it is accepted that the Karaite sect crystallized in Iraq and its environs, it is logical to assume that early Karaites based their marriage contracts on a Babylonian model. However, Olszowy-Schlanger's explanation of the exclusive similarities between the Palestinian-style and Karaite *ketubbot* is dubious.

A significant example is the clause that registers the obligations of the bride to serve and honor her husband in purity and sanctity in the fashion of virtuous and modest Jewish wives, found in these two traditions only. Since this clause is ubiquitous in tenth and eleventh century Palestinian-style marriage contracts from Eretz-Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, including specimens dating decades before the earliest preserved Karaite *ketubbot*, it is logical to conclude that after their immigration to Eretz-Israel, the Karaites borrowed this clause from the local Rabbanites. Significant support for this hypothesis can be found in the *ketubba* from Antinoopolis, Egypt, dated 417 C.E., much of whose formula corresponds

to the Palestinian model. Despite damage to the papyrus, identification of the clause is unequivocal. This conclusively proves that the formula for the wife's obligations in the Jewish marriage contract dates back to the Byzantine period, centuries before the advent of Islam and the Karaite schism. The clause was evidently inserted into the essentially Babylonian formulation of the Karaite marriage contracts after the Karaite immigration to Eretz-Israel.

The author briefly examines the stipulation, found in both Palestinian-style and Karaite marriage contracts, that (all or half of) the wife's dowry be returned to her family should she die childless, and concludes, contrary to Olszowy-Schlanger, that the Karaite usage should be attributed to Palestinian rather than to Babylonian influence.

THE GENIZA FRAGMENTS OF *SHE 'ILTOT DE-RAV AḤAI* IN THE MÜNICH LIBRARY

by M. B. Lerner

In a separate article (scheduled for publication in *Alei Sefer*), the author has offered conclusive proof that a collection of seventeen fragments acquired by the Bavarian State Library of München in 1900, derives from the Cairo Geniza. The present study focuses on two folios from the early geonic compilation, *She'iltot de-Rav Aḥai* found in this collection (München, Cod. heb. 419 III).

In spite of the fact that the München fragments were known to the scholarly world by virtue of their partial publication in ed. Mirsky, savants, nevertheless, failed to take note of all their unique features. These include: (1) exact terminology; (2) ancient Babylonian spelling; (3) unique grammatical phenomena; (4) use of the Tetragrammaton; (5) the archaic epithet *Ha-Qodesh Barukh Hu*; (6) original readings; (7) original order and arrangement of the individual pericopes.

In lieu of the fact that a paleographic examination of the manuscript points to a most early date (before the tenth century), it is postulated that

the Munich fragments evince one of the earliest extant copies of the *She'iltot* and may even approximate a "reliable text" (אב־טקסט). In a special appendix, the author has listed all known Geniza fragments of the *She'iltot* deriving from this monumental manuscript. This survey lists 21 folios, several of them damaged, which include 14 complete pericopes and the remains of 19 others.

In the second section of the article, the author presents an annotated edition of MS Munich 419 III, which contains pericopes 43 and 50 in *toto* and partial versions of four others: 44; 45; 46; 51.

THE STRUCTURE, SCOPE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HALAKHIC MONOGRAPHS OF RAV SHEMU'EL BEN ḤOFNI GAON

by Gideon Libson

The present article deals with the wide gamut of halakhic monographs of Rav Shemu'el ben Ḥofni Gaon (d. 1013) which have been uncovered in the Geniza, according to their dates of publication. Part one focuses on the testimonia to the Gaon's writings in rabbinic literature prior to the discovery of the Geniza and afterwards. The various stages of the uncovering of his manifold writings in the Geniza and their publication, a process which has wrought considerable change in the evaluation of the Gaon's halakhic works, are examined in detail.

In the second part of the article, the author discusses the scope of the halakhic creativity of Rav Shemu'el ben Ḥofni as revealed by the Geniza documents, as well as its influence on later halakhic writing. Rav Shemu'el ben Ḥofni Gaon's writings are compared with the contribution of two other *geonim* who wrote halakhic monographs — Rav Se'adya Gaon and Rav Hai. The author clarifies the characteristic features of Rav Shemu'el ben Ḥofni Gaon's writings as well as their reception by later savants. The meaning of the titles of many of his works is elucidated by parallels in Islamic legal writing. The difficulties in identifying the Gaon's monographs

are discussed and mistaken identifications by previous scholars are noted.

A special section is devoted to a discussion of the relationship between the oeuvre of Rav Shemu'el ben Ḥofni Gaon and the Code of Maimonides, including the question of whether the Gaon intended to write an all-encompassing code and the hypothesis that his extensive compositions served, both in content and form, as a model for Maimonides' Code.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE GENIZA TO THE STUDY OF THE LAW OF INHERITANCE

by Yosef Rivlin

Wills uncovered in the Cairo Geniza contain unique information concerning the development of Jewish inheritance law: halakhic rules, enactments and customs.

1. The wills highlight the permanent economic standing of the wife and the daughter. A married woman had property of her own, and so, many of the wills are bequests in which women actually bestowed sizeable gifts.

2. Can a father bequeath his property to others, thereby divesting his heirs of their inheritance? Is such a will valid? This point was in dispute during the Geonic period. Some authorities ruled that a will which does not leave something to the heirs is void. Although this was not the accepted rule, reverberations of such a principle are evident.

3. The Geniza wills provide a unique opportunity to estimate the time that lapsed between the bequest and the death of the testator. From the testimony of the witnesses who affirmed this datum, it may be concluded that this period was very short.

4. According to Jewish law, a deathbed will was null and void once the testator recovered from his illness. However, there are instances wherein the testator obligated himself not to nullify the will, whatever the case.

5. On the other hand, according to Jewish law, a will drawn up by a man in good health is irrevocable. Nevertheless, Geniza wills contain a condition that the testator may renege, if he wishes to do so.

6. Extravagant burial dress, the date formula in the written will and the comprehensive description of the testator's clear mind are apparently evidence of Islamic influence on Jewish customs.

ABRAHAM BEN YIJŪ, A JEWISH TRADER IN INDIA

By S. D. Goitein ז"ל and M. A. Friedman

S. D. Goitein's "India Book" ("On the India Route — Documents from the Cairo Geniza on the India Trade of the High Middle Ages") heralded a new era in Geniza research. The discovery of Judeo-Arabic manuscripts that illuminate the socioeconomic background of Jewish merchants who traded between the Mediterranean and India during the 11–12th centuries led Goitein to change direction in his scholarly career and undertake the systematic study of the documentary Geniza. The manuscript with which he inaugurated the 1080/1 (J) Geniza series at Cambridge University Library (CUL) was a letter written on the way to India by David to his brother Moses Maimonides. The first item with which Goitein initiated the momentous New Series of the Taylor-Schechter Collection at CUL was a letter from Maḏmūn, the "Nagid (Prince) of the land of Yemen", to Abraham Ben Yijū. The approximately eighty items of correspondence and other papers associated with Ben Yijū eventually became the most important segment of the India Book, to which chapter III is devoted.

Over the years Goitein collected over four hundred items for the India Book but postponed its completion while working on *A Mediterranean Society*. After his demise, the task of preparing the India Book corpus for publication was entrusted to M. A. Friedman. The present paper is based almost exclusively on materials found in Goitein's literary estate.

Ben Yijū (Yijū for short, a family name derived from the name of a Berber tribe) was born in al-Mahdiyya, Tunisia. The earliest dated item in his "archive" is a bill of manumission for the slave girl Ashu which he wrote in Mangalore, on the Malabar coast in South-east India in 1132. Yijū purchased and subsequently emancipated Ashu (and renamed her

Berakha) shortly after his arrival in India, undoubtedly with the intention of taking her as his wife. His sojourn in India lasted almost eighteen years, and his wife bore him two sons, one of whom died in India and a daughter, Sitt al-Dār.

Yijū became wealthy through his dealings in the export-import business and a bronze factory. Most of the papers in his file are letters between him and his business partners in Yemen, especially Aden. Customers who ordered items from the bronze factory sent raw materials — copper and tin and usually pieces of broken vessels, paid the craftsmen and described in detail how they wanted new vessels fashioned. The proprietor provided fuel and tools.

Goods exported by Yijū to Yemen were intended for both local consumption and sale to countries to the West. These included such items as pepper, betel nuts, spices and pharmaceuticals, and various kinds of iron. Few commodities were imported to India for sale. One of these was arsenic, which was used both for its pharmaceutical properties and for criminal purposes. Most imports to India were commodities, such as paper (not available there), intended for consumption by the traders from the Mediterranean and their families. The Yemenite merchants usually paid for Indian exports with gold and silver, and there was a clear imbalance in trade.

The correspondence includes much information about seafaring and shipwrecks, community and personal affairs and the intricacies of business partnerships. Traders diversified their investments and engaged in deals that involved multiple partnerships. These were usually based on mutual trust and favors, but often resulted in recriminations and law suits, in which Ben Yijū had a fair share.

Yijū was also a man of letters. He was trained as a scribe and wrote poetry. While in India he copied (on cloth, when paper was not available) the works of famous poets, including items by the laureate Judah ha-Levi within a few years of their composition. He was also a religious savant and wrote opinions on questions of Jewish law. Medical “recipes” and prescriptions that seem to be in his hand indicate that Yijū had some medical training as well.

When Yijū left India and traveled to Yemen with his family in 1149, some members of the local community appear to have raised questions

concerning the legitimacy of his marriage to a former slave girl and the status of his children. Detailed favorable legal opinions dealing with an Indian trader with such a family are written in his hand. He planned to marry off his daughter to the son of a prominent merchant from Aden. But after the death of his beloved son Surūr, Yijū departed for Egypt and resolved to give Sitt al-Dār in marriage to one of his nephews.

Following the Norman conquest of Tunisia, the Yijū family resettled in Sicily. Abraham's letter promising his daughter's hand and his riches to one of his nephews eventually reached them there. His brother Joseph Yijū decided to accept the offer, and sent to Egypt his son Peraḥya, reputed to be a religious scholar, to marry his cousin. In the meantime Abraham Yijū had lost much of his wealth. He was disenchanted with the young man, and the wedding was postponed until after Abraham's death. Peraḥya became a judge in the Jewish Egyptian community of Maḥalla, and he and his brother Samuel had various contacts with Maimonides. Future generations of the Yijū family were no longer involved in the India trade.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE LATER NAGIDS OF EGYPT IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ERETZ-ISRAEL

by Abraham David

Beginning with the sixth decade of the eleventh century, until the Ottoman Conquest in 1517, the Nagids served (with some interruptions) as heads of the Jewish community of Egypt. Their position gave them responsibility for the communities of Eretz-Israel, since, as early as the Fatimid Period, Eretz-Israel was completely subject to the Egyptian central government. However, the earliest information alluding to the subordination of the Jewish communities of Eretz-Israel to the Egyptian Nagid dates from the first quarter of the 13th century, during the ministry of R. Abraham, the son of Maimonides.

Sources dating from the 15th century reveal that a special representative of the Nagid of Egypt, known as the Nagid of Jerusalem or Witso (=Vice) Nagid, *i.e.*, Assistant Nagid, lived in Jerusalem on a regular basis. The main activity of these Nagids is most evident from the last quarter of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries. This period (1484–1517) witnessed two consecutive Nagids from the Shulal family: R. Nathan (Jonathan) Shulal (1484–1502) and, his cousin and brother-in-law, R. Isaac Shulal, who was appointed to the position of Nagid after the death of R. Nathan (1502), and who served as patron of the Jewish community in Jerusalem. During his service as Nagid, and even later on, when he settled in Jerusalem (1517–1524), he made a major contribution to strengthening of the spiritual and communal life in Eretz-Israel, and especially that of Jerusalem.

Various Geniza documents shed light on the ties of the last two Nagids with the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel, and especially with the community in Jerusalem. In this article, four letters are published: two for the first time and two reedited.

BOOK LISTS FROM THE GENIZA AS A SOURCE FOR THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY

by Miriam Frenkel

The Cairo Geniza includes different types of book lists, composed for various purposes. Veteran scholars who studied these lists have mainly focused their efforts on identifying the books themselves. The present article attempts to use the lists as a source of information on the cultural and social history of the Jews in Mediterranean society.

The large number of book lists emanating from the 12th century may indicate an intellectual flourishing of Jewish society under Islam at that time.

The physical features of the books which appear in the lists generally

follow a standard and simple format. The dedications and the formulae written on the margins indicate an attitude which views the book as an intellectual tool rather than a collector's item or decorative object.

Another salient feature of the book lists is the correlation between the names of the owners, borrowers, buyers and sellers, copyists and even binders of the books. It seems that book readers belonged to quite a limited social group. Since most of the members of this milieu also occupied public offices in the Muslim administration as well as in the local Jewish community, we may assume that they belonged to the social and intellectual elite.

Some of the lists register borrowed books. Even though they were valuable, books were readily lent. This may be explained by the fact that they were interchanged between relatives and friends of the same social circles. This phenomenon may also indicate an open and liberal attitude towards knowledge and the belief that knowledge should be free and available rather than restricted and concealed.

The book lists written by R. Joseph Rosh Ha-Seder form a distinct and special collection. R. Joseph, a tutor and a copyist, had the habit of noting his plans for writing new books in the margins of his book lists. These plans provide us with a unique opportunity to understand the views of a medieval writer and copyist of his kind. It seems that his method of approaching the written text challenges basic concepts concerning critical editions of medieval manuscripts and classical philology.

JEWISH-MUSLIM RELATIONS AS REFLECTED IN THE GENIZA DOCUMENTS

by Paul B. Fenton

There is practically no area of Jewish experience whose study has not been enriched by the discovery of the Geniza. Concerned as they mainly are with internal Jewish affairs, the Geniza documents have nonetheless shed new light on the question of interfaith relations.

The present essay examines the contribution of the Geniza documents to our knowledge of the relations between Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages in the Muslim East, in the economic, social, intellectual and religious domains.

The principles of seclusion and discrimination were waved aside by commercial and social realities which nurtured more tolerant attitudes. Denominational barriers were particularly blurred in intellectual and professional circles where a kind of cross-religious solidarity can be observed. Jews were totally integrated into Arabic culture and even displayed a degree of religious emulation in the area of Islamic spirituality as demonstrated by the followers of a Jewish pietist movement of the time.

STYLES OF HEBREW SCRIPT IN THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES IN THE LIGHT OF DATED AND DATABLE GENIZA DOCUMENTS

by Edna Engel

Hebrew paleography customarily classifies medieval script into three primary modes: square, semi-cursive and cursive. Based on the variety of Hebrew handwritings revealed in the documentary Geniza, the suggestion is raised herein that this classification should be extended by the usage of three additional sub-modes: proto-square, semi-square and proto-semi-cursive.

Classification of Hebrew scripts revealed in Geniza documents written until the end of the 11th century manifests three main regional types: Oriental, Occidental and Byzantine. The Oriental script prevails in the eastern part of the Mediterranean — Syria, Palestine and Egypt, as well as Iran, Iraq etc. in the north-east, while Spain, North Africa and Sicily are indicated as the Occidental type.

A study of the documents based on both models — “type” and “mode” — has uncovered certain stylistic features which illuminate the evolution of the script during the 10th and 11th centuries.

At the beginning of the period under discussion, the square script fully dominates all of the Hebrew scripts, both in the East and in the West. Indeed, most of the documents produced until the thirties of the 11th century, either in the Orient or in Spain, were written in the square script. Probably due to the increasing need for an un-square script, a new process emerged, reaching its peak by the simultaneous establishment of two formal modes: the semi-cursive and the cursive. However, the immediate outcome of this process was the development of two sub-modes: the semi-square and the proto-semi-cursive. Both of these modes were more flexible since they allowed a more rapid way of writing. By preserving such components like heads or serifs, the semi-square script retained its calligraphic style, notwithstanding the fluency of the writing *per se*. The proto-semi-cursive took the opposite course. Moving toward the cursive by using fluent calamus strokes, this sub-mode spoiled its calligraphic style by omitting certain components, *i.e.*, the heads or serifs of its letters.

During the 10th century and the first decades of the 11th century, the square script flourished in Egypt. However, in contemporary Syria and Palestine, the semi-square script seems to have dominated the style of writing. Nevertheless, in Babylonia as well as in other settlements scattered in the north-east of the Mediterranean, the growth of fluent scripts led to the usage of the proto-semi-cursive. This subsequently inspired the scripts employed by the Maghrebi Jews. Thus, in the second half of the 11th century, influenced by Jews emigrating from Babylon, the offspring of the Maghrebic type developed into a cardinal writing pattern, retaining a mixture of both Oriental and Occidental styles. The Oriental characteristics of the Maghrebic type bear evidence to its Oriental beginning while its Sefaradic features indicates its Occidental origin.

Similar to the developments in the Oriental script, the Occidental square script of the 10th century underwent the same process, diminishing the square almost to a vanishing point, while raising the semi-square and the proto-semi-cursive to a popular mode of writing. Moving toward the cursive becomes more intensive in the West than in the Orient, thus initiating the establishment of the cursive Maghrebic script, a script which was used mostly by Maghrebic traders inside and outside the Maghreb, during the second half of the 11th century.

THE CAMBRIDGE GENIZA STORY: SOME UNFAMILIAR ASPECTS

by Stefan C. Reif

Much discussion is being held these days concerning the wide dissemination of information on the one hand, and the defense of the rights of the owners of the materials and of the research on the other, in matters of manuscript research. It may therefore be of interest to examine briefly, by way of some freshly analyzed archival material, the history of such matters insofar as they relate to the Geniza fragments and other Hebraica at Cambridge University Library (=CUL).

Such personalities as the University Librarian, Francis Jenkinson, and the Master of St. John's College, Charles Taylor, were generous with the assistance they provided to Solomon Schechter and other Jewish scholars. Schechter himself was happy to share his discoveries in fields such as Syriac and Massora with non-Jewish scholars, but was anxious to retain more exclusive rights to texts concerning rabbinica and sectarian Judaism. He did share the Geniza finds with his colleagues at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and he reached an agreement with CUL enabling him to borrow 251 fragments, ostensibly for no more than 2-3 years, when he left for New York in 1902. His death in 1915 and that of Jenkinson in 1923 gave CUL fresh cause for concern about the fate of their fragments and it took major efforts on the part of the newly appointed University Librarian, A. F. Scholfield, to have the borrowed items returned in 1924. Indeed, five were then reported as missing and found their way back to Cambridge only in 1968. Another interesting story of loaned material is that of Paul Kahle, who directed the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Bonn from 1923 until 1938. He succeeded in borrowing a number of very precious items from CUL and it was only the rise of the Nazi régime that finally put paid to his effort to study these originals at research seminars with his students.

Over the years, there have been other examples of attempts to borrow manuscript Hebraica and Judaica from CUL, some of them successful, others not.

Perhaps the time has come to draw up a list of consistent criteria for such loans rather than to leave them to be decided on an *ad hoc* basis.

תקצירים