

Miscellany, including ABRAHAM IBN EZRA, *Elei kol yode'ei ittim* [To Those Who Know the Times]; ISAAC BEN SOLOMON ALHADIB, *La-da'at ha-molad ha-ne'elam* [To Calculate the Missing Conjunction]; beginning of PROFIAT DURAN, *Iggeret al tehi ka-avotekha* [The "Do Not Imitate Your Ancestors" Epistle]; excerpts from JACOB BEN ASHER, *Orah hayyim* [The Path of Life]; KALONYMUS BEN TODROS NASI, *Et mo'adei ha-shem ekra aleikhem* [I Proclaim to You the Holidays of God]; ZERAHIAH BEN ISAAC HA-LEVI GERONDI, *Imrat ha-shem tserufah* [The Word of God is Pure]; JEHOSEPH BEN HANAN EZOBI, *Az me-rosh mi-kadmei erets nesukhah* [From the Beginning, from Everlasting, was It Set Up]; beginning of ELEAZAR BEN MOSES HA-DARSHAN OF WUERZBURG, *Sefer ha-yihud* [The Book of Divine Unity]; ELEAZAR BEN JUDAH OF WORMS, attributed to, *Sod azazel* [The Secret of the Scapegoat]; excerpt from MOSES MAIMONIDES, *Peirush ha-mishnayot* [Commentary on the Mishnah]; beginning of SHEM TOV BEN ABRAHAM IBN GAON or SHEM TOV BEN ISAAC ARDUTIEL, attributed to, *Sefer ha-pe'er* [The Book of Splendor]; beginning of ABRAHAM BEN ALEXANDER OF COLOGNE, *Sefer keter shem tov* [The Book of the Crown of a Good Name]; JEHIEL BEN ALEXANDER HA-KOHEN, *Yesharim hukkei y-ah* [The Laws of God are Just]; ABRAHAM BEN MARINUS HA-KOHEN OF TRANI, *Addir shallit ve-ne'elam* [The Mighty, Ruling, Invisible One]; excerpts from AMRAM BEN SHESHNA GAON, *Seder rav amram ga'on* [Prayer Book of Rabbi Amram Gaon] and SIMEON KAYYARA, attributed to, *Halakhot gedolot* [Great Laws]; and other calendrical, poetic, sapiential, ethical, esoteric, mathematical, liturgical, legal, exegetical, and folkish treatises

In Hebrew and Italian, manuscript on paper  
Italy, 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries

ii (paper) + 92 folios (collation i<sup>4</sup>[+ 1] ii<sup>14</sup> [-13 -14, with loss of text] iii<sup>4</sup> [-1, cancelled blank] iv<sup>12</sup> [-1, with loss of text] v<sup>8</sup> vi<sup>14</sup> vii<sup>10</sup> viii<sup>10</sup> [-8, with loss of text] ix<sup>14</sup> x<sup>6</sup> xi<sup>2</sup> [-1, with loss of text]) on paper, primary modern foliation in pencil in Arabic numerals in upper-left corner of recto (leaf following f. 62 was skipped and not foliated), erased traces of secondary modern foliation in pencil in Arabic numerals in upper-left corner of recto following f. 3 (one number behind primary count), layout varies: I. ff. 1-18, unidentified watermark, written in neat Sephardic semi-cursive script in brown ink in a single-column of text of twenty-nine lines on ff. 6-15v, ruled in pen on ff. 2-3 with prickings visible in outer margins, but otherwise unruled (justification 150 x 85-90 mm.), marginalia in hand of primary scribe throughout, tables and diagrams on ff. 1, 2-3, 4, 8, 11v-13, 14-15, 16v; II. ff. 19-37, single watermark (Briquet 11681, "monts," Treviso, 1386), written in rapid Sephardic cursive script in black ink in a single-column of text of twenty-four lines on ff. 19-34v, unruled (justification 150-160 x 95-100 mm.), and of twenty-nine lines on ff. 35-37v, unruled (justification 180 x 115-120 mm.), marginalia in hand of primary scribe throughout; III. ff. 38-51, two watermarks (Briquet 6687, "fleur quatre," Venezia, 1398, Fano, 1402, and Briquet 8354, "M majuscule," Lucca, 1436), written in neat Italian semi-cursive script in brown ink in a single-column of text of twenty-nine-thirty-six lines on ff. 38-40, unruled (justification 180 x 120 mm.), and of twenty-six-thirty-two lines on ff. 41-44, unruled (justification 150-155 x 100-115 mm.), (ff. 44v-45 written in another hand: Italian cursive script in black ink), marginalia in hand of primary scribe throughout; IV. ff. 52-61, two watermarks (Briquet 2395, "balance," Venezia, 1376; and Briquet 8928, "R majuscule," Lucca, 1370), written in neat Italian semi-cursive script in brown ink in a single-column of text of twenty-one-thirty-one lines, ruled in pen and in blind, prickings visible in outer margins (justification 145-155 x 100-110 mm, marginalia in hand of primary scribe throughout; V. ff. 62-70, three watermarks (Briquet 7682, "bucbet," Firenze, 1443; and Briquet 4460, "compas," Palermo, 1375), written in neat Sephardic semi-cursive script in dark brown ink in a single-column of text of twenty-four lines, unruled (justification 142 x 100 mm.), (ff. 69v-70 written in another hand: Italian cursive script in blank ink); VI. ff. 71-84, single watermark (Briquet 11709, "monts," Pisa, 1466), written in neat Italian semi-cursive script in brown ink in a single-column of text of twenty-nine-thirty-eight lines, unruled (justification 165-175 x

95-115 mm.), marginalia in hand of primary scribe throughout, tables on ff. 74v-75v, 83-84v, chapter numeration on ff. 77-78v, VII. ff. 85-90, no discernible watermarks, written in casual Sephardic semi-cursive script in black ink in a single-column of text of twenty-four-twenty-six lines, unruled (justification 140 x 100 mm.), chapter numeration in outer margins, VIII. f. 91, single watermark (Briquet 3668, "ciseaux," Roma, 1454), written in neat Italian semi-cursive script in brown ink in a single-column of text of seven lines, unruled (justification 95 x 30 mm.), enlarged incipits on ff. 15v, 39v, 42v, 43v, 63-68v, 76v-78v, 84, partial vocalization on ff. 10, 24-25, 57, 61, 71, 72, modern marginalia in pencil (apparently added by a cataloger) intermittently through f. 34v, catchwords on versos of ff. 6-9, 11-12, 15, 38-43, 54-61, 63-68, 73-82, small decorative flourishes periodically throughout (especially ff. 66v, 71-73v, 83, 84), manicule on f. 63v, heading on f. 68, regular justification of lines using verbal and ornamental space holders, periodic worming (especially on ff. 41-47, where text is affected), dampstaining and/or old mold (e.g., ff. 1-28) in margins (especially outer margin) throughout, at times affecting legibility of marginalia, rounded corners, intermittent foxing, small tears, and wear in edges, stubs after ff. 15 and 91, f. 15 missing original outer-lower quadrant (subsequently repaired) with consequent loss of text, outer edge of ff. 57-91 gnawed (subsequently repaired from f. 62) with minor losses of text, ff. 0-2, 4, 19, 28-37, 61, 63, 68 reinforced along inner margins, ff. 17, 19, 27, 30-32, 73-84 repaired at head and/or foot, ff. 53-60 loose at foot, holes in margins of ff. 19, 37, 51, 62, 91. Late-sixteenth-century calf binding, worn, rubbed, some worming, paper pastedowns and flyleaves. Dimensions, page size generally 220 x 147 mm., though ff. 52-61 measure 210 x 145 mm. and ff. 85-90 measure 208 x 145 mm.; binding 220 x 150 mm.

A remarkable compilation of works from various genres – calendrical, poetic, sapiential, ethical, esoteric, kabbalistic (including a treatise on a metal anthropoid, and one on automatic writing), mathematical, liturgical, legal, and exegetical (a unique copy of a commentary on the Song of Songs), this reflects the religious and literary interests of a learned layman or mid-level communal functionary living in early modern Italy. Many of these texts are rare, some are unique to this manuscript, and others have never been printed or thoroughly studied by scholars.

## PROVENANCE

1. While the manuscript has no colophon, it is possible to date and localize its various parts based primarily on the evidence of the script and watermarks. Thus, sections I and II were copied by two separate Sephardic scribes living in Italy in the first half of the fifteenth century (on f. 2, the Hebrew year 5205 [1444-1445] is mentioned; on f. 4, a chart displays information relating to the Hebrew years 5203-5225 [1442-1465]); section III by an Italian scribe of the first half of the fifteenth century; section IV by a different Italian of the late fourteenth century; section V by an early-fifteenth-century Sephardic scribe living in Italy; section VI by an Italian of the latter half of the fifteenth century (on f. 77, dots appear twice in the margin near the name Abraham, perhaps indicating the scribe's name); section VII by a Sephardic scribe living in Italy in the sixteenth century; and section VIII by yet another Sephardic scribe living in Italy in the latter half of the fifteenth century. In addition, it should be noted that ff. 44v-45, 69v-70, seem to have been written in the same Italian hand, probably by one of the owners of the manuscript (see below) in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries.
2. Based on the age of the binding and the date of the latest handwriting in the manuscript (section VII), it seems likely that it was assembled in its present form at some point in the late sixteenth century.
3. This manuscript passed through several hands, as evidenced by the numerous owners's marks that appear throughout, though the order of transmission is not entirely clear. The

names that have been preserved include: Isaac ben Elijah ha-Rofe (front pastedown), Jacob Floris? (front flyleaf), Abram di Laudadio Aziz di Ancona (front flyleaf in Hebrew and Italian, ff. 18, 46v-47, 88, and 91v in Italian only) and his son Laudadio (front flyleaf, f. 58), Abram Floris di Venezia (f. 18), David da Rimini (f. 18), and Josephus Nesim da Fermio (front flyleaf) and his son (f. 91). Moritz Steinschneider suggests identifying the first named owner with the author of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Mich. 400/5, a mathematical treatise on Euclidian geometry written in Spain in the fifteenth century (Steinschneider, 1901). Similarly, Siegmund Salfeld mentions that Steinschneider had informed him that the book was older than Solomon ibn Melekh (1480-1530) (Salfeld, 1878). It should also be noted that together with the name of Abram di Laudadio Aziz on ff. 18, 46v-47, and 88 appears a date in the Hebrew year 5365 = 1605 (the years 5576 = 1816 also appear on f. 18 in a different hand and in black ink).

4. Samuel Schönblum (1833-1900), the most prominent nineteenth-century Judaica book dealer in the Austrian Empire, acquired the manuscript at some stage and assigned it the shelf mark "12" (front pastedown). Moritz Steinschneider examined the codex in 1869 and published material from it in 1881-1882 (see below), referring to it as no. 12 in Schönblum's collection. Similarly, Siegmund Salfeld printed extracts from one of its texts in 1879 (see below), also referring to it as "Codex Schönblum Nr. 12."
5. By 1882, the manuscript had come into the possession of Solomon Joachim Halberstam (1832-1900), a wealthy Polish Jewish scholar and bibliophile, as evidenced by Abraham Berliner's description of the codex in a partial catalog of the Halberstam library that he published that year. Halberstam inscribed his Hebrew initials in pen on the front flyleaf, followed by the manuscript's shelf mark: "N<sup>o</sup> 188", and provided a brief overview of its contents when he printed his own catalog of the collection in 1890. Interestingly, Abraham Tawrogi writes that he consulted two Halberstam manuscripts in preparing an edition of *Derekh erets zuta* that he published in 1885, but it seems that neither one of them can be identified with the present book, despite the fact that it contains a copy of that treatise (see below). It seems, then, that Tawrogi must have approached Halberstam to consult the manuscripts in his library before he had acquired this one, in or around 1882.
6. The Judith Lady Montefiore College in Ramsgate, England, purchased 412 manuscripts from Halberstam's collection, including ours. The transaction was carried out by Rabbi Moses Gaster (1856-1939), principal of the College between 1891 and 1896. The manuscript contains the library stamp of the institution, known in Hebrew as Yeshivat Ohel Mosheh vi-Yehudit, on its front flyleaf and final folio, as well as the library's shelf mark (MS 431) on both its spine and the pastedown of the upper board.
7. Between 1898 and 2001, most of the Montefiore manuscripts, including ours, were placed on permanent loan at Jews' College in London. In 2001, they were returned to the Montefiore Endowment Committee.

## TEXT

I. ff. 1-18v: f. 1, rules and tables for calculating the day of the month on which each of the four *tekufot* (seasonal turning points, i.e., winter and summer solstices, autumnal and vernal equinoxes) will fall, as well as what day of the week to start praying for rain (which depends on the date of the

autumnal equinox); [f. 1v, blank]; f. 2, a table displaying the seven types of leap years and the seven types of regular years in the Hebrew calendar, together with the days of the week on which all of the various holidays, fasts, and first days of the months will fall in each type of year, as well as guidelines outlining which of the weekly Torah portions would be combined vs. read separately; f. 2v, a table listing on what day of the week and at which hour each of the *tekufot* will fall throughout the twenty-eight-year "greater cycle;" f. 3, tables for determining how many days into the month the various *tekufot* will fall, based on how many years into the nineteen-year "smaller cycle" one finds oneself; f. 3v, explanations of two of the more complicated *dehiyyot* (reasons for pushing off the start date of a new Hebrew year), followed by a list of the years of the nineteen-year "smaller cycle" that are leap years (3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19).

As mentioned above, the pages following f. 3 feature traces of erased foliation in the upper-left corner of the recto. It would seem that the reason for this is that f. 3 had originally been skipped and that a later cataloger decided to go back and number it, forcing him to adjust the previous foliation of the following leaves via erasure and overwriting. While we cannot know for sure when this took place, it is revealing that the page numbers of the manuscript cited in materials published by Steinschneider (1869, 1906), Berliner (1881-1882), and Halberstam (1890) reflected a point prior to the foliation of f. 3, while Hirschfeld's catalog of the Montefiore Library published in 1902 mirrors the manuscript's current foliation. It seems likely, then, that the page was renumbered between 1890 and 1902 (perhaps by Hirschfeld himself) and that Steinschneider had used old notes of his from 1869 in composing the piece published in 1906.

f. 4, tables for calculating the exact time of each month's *molad* (the point of conjunction of the moon and the sun) for the years 5203-5225 (1442-1465);

ff. 4v-5, short (two-three-line) epigrams and poems attributed to Rabbis Judah ha-Levi (c. 1075-1141) (*Ashishot mi-beli yayin; Hab ki be-kol dor arayyot torefin*), Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1164) (*Mi-yaldei yom al tibbahl*), Judah al-Harizi (1165-1225) (*Im ba-avodat e-l tekhal yamekha*), Jehoseph ben Hanan Ezobi (thirteenth century) (*Me'od tehi shefal ruah*), and others. Some of these have not been printed, including: *Ilan yesh ba-hatseri, Sofer be-lo ayin, Al titmebu al av tse'iro ye'ebav, Sabadin telat mehavvin yekareih di gevar, Hen nishbe'ab tevel shevu'at alah*, etc.;

ff. 5v-7v, rules for calculating the *molad* in non-leap years;

ff. 7v-8, letter on making and empowering a talking, prophesying metal anthropoid using astrology, sent by a master to his disciple and encouraging him to create one himself. The letter was copied or translated by a certain Isaac, who found it "in an ancient, exacting book full of wisdom." The name of the master is crossed out and illegible, although "Ha-rambam" (Rabbi Moses Maimonides [1138-1204]) was added in pencil in the margin. Two other copies of this letter are known in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 214 (Franco-Germany, fifteenth century), and Budapest, Magyar tudományok akadémia, MS Kaufmann 246 (Italy, seventeenth century); the Munich epistle is virtually identical to ours, while the Budapest recension provides a fuller version of the text. Although neither of these other two manuscripts explicitly links the letter to Maimonides, a medieval Jewish scholar famed for his rationalism, in the Munich codex it follows an epistle on alchemy attributed to him. Moritz Steinschneider apparently assumed, therefore, that the present letter, too, had originally been attributed to Maimonides (Steinschneider, 1862). According to Moshe Idel, it may very well have been Steinschneider, then, who wrote "Ha-

rambam" in the margin of the manuscript when he perused it in 1869 (Idel, 2011; see also the front pastedown for a reference to Steinschneider's *Zur pseudepigraphischen Literatur*). Idel himself does not believe, however, that this letter was ever actually attributed by its original medieval copyist to Maimonides. He translates the text and comments that it "helps to illuminate the introduction of Arabic magic into some elite circles of Spanish Jews in the fourteenth century. [...] There is no doubt that at least since the age of [Abraham] Ibn Ezra, the idea of a metallic figure that could foretell the future was related to astrology" (Idel, 2011).

f. 8rv, mathematical games;

ff. 8v-9v, *Sod mesabeket*, an anonymous esoteric treatise that uses the biblical verse "playing always before Him" (Prov. 8:30) as a springboard for discussing the topic of the creation of day and night and their relationship to the thirty-two paths of wisdom. The text exists in at least one other manuscript (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS ebr. 171; Byzantine, 1493) but seems never to have been printed;

ff. 9v-10, a short, anonymous mathematical-philosophical meditation on the number ten, beginning *da ki kol heshbon hu mehubbar* (know that every calculation is interconnected), which seems never to have been published;

f. 10v, a mnemonic poem, entitled *Mishkan sheni u-metsora'im* (The Second Tabernacle and the Lepers), giving rules for when some of the weekly Torah portions are read together vs. separately (see above, f. 2). The text exists in about fifty manuscripts and was first printed in Rabbi Joseph ben Shem Tov ben Yeshu'ah Hai's *Sefer she'erit yosef* (Salonika, 1521) on the Hebrew calendar. The poem is followed by a commentary, which seems never to have been printed;

f. 11, poem, composed by Abraham ibn Ezra and entitled *Elei kol yode'ei ittim* (To Those Who Know the Times), on the topic of how to calculate the *tekufot*. According to Moritz Steinschneider, the poem was first published in the extremely-rare Riva di Trento, 1560, edition of *Evronot* (f. 22v), but with many mistakes and without the last two lines. He therefore reprinted it, together with its accompanying commentary, based on our manuscript (Steinschneider, 1881-1882). The poem is extant in at least two other copies, Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS Levy 151 (Byzantine, fifteenth century), and a manuscript in a private collection (Italy, fifteenth-sixteenth centuries);

ff. 11v-12, additional charts meant to aid in the calculation of when (day of the month, day of the week, and time) the *tekufot* will fall in a given year, as well as rules for determining in what year of the twenty-eight-year "greater" and nineteen-year "smaller" cycles one finds oneself;

ff. 12v-15, astronomical tables meant to aid in the calculation of the *molad*, composed in Palermo in Kislev 5187 (November-December 1426) by Rabbi Isaac ben Solomon Alhadib (al-Ahdab) (mid-fourteenth century-c. 1429), a noted astronomer, biblical scholar, and poet who left Spain for Sicily in 1396. Like many of Alhadib's other works, this short treatise seems not to have ever been published, but is preserved in at least two other manuscripts: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Poc. 368 (Byzantine, fifteenth century), and Budapest, Magyar tudományok akademia, MS Kaufmann A 513 (Italy, sixteenth century);

f. 15v, the beginning of *Iggeret al tebi ka-avotekba* (The "Do Not Imitate Your Ancestors" Epistle), a biting satirical anti-Christian polemical letter sent by Profiat Duran (d. c. 1414), famous scholar and physician, to his recently-converted friend David Bonet Bonjorn c. 1391. The work mocks Christianity as a religion, as well as the affairs of the contemporary Church, by sarcastically admonishing its recipient to reject the cogent, rational beliefs of his ancestors and to instead embrace the falsehoods of his newfound faith. It was originally published as part of Rabbi Isaac Akriš's (b. 1530) *Iggeret ogeret* (Constantinople, 1570) and was more recently included in a collection of Duran's polemical writings edited by Frank Talmage (1981). It seems that most of the pages of the treatise in the present copy were torn out, perhaps to avoid Christian censorship; [f. 16, blank];

f. 16v, a table giving the Christian dates and days of the week on which the autumnal equinox and winter solstice will fall throughout the nineteen-year "smaller cycle." It seems the table was never completed, as it is missing the corresponding information for the vernal equinox and summer solstice; [f. 17, blank];

f. 17v, short testimony by an anonymous author that a certain Hasdai Crescas, in his youth, had asked him to demonstrate the art of automatic writing and that he had done so for him; the rhymed verses of automatic writing follow. While the identification is uncertain, it is possible that the person referred to here is the famous rabbi, philosopher, and statesman by that name (c. 1340-1410/1411) who wrote *Sefer or ha-shem* (The Book of God's Light). Warren Zev Harvey, in an article on the kabbalistic underpinnings of *Sefer or ha-shem*, quotes this text as a possible proof that Crescas was interested already at an early stage in achieving prophecy through automatic writing (Harvey, 1983). Ours is apparently the only manuscript in which these verses appear; [f. 18, owners's marks; f. 18v, blank];

II. ff. 19-37v: f. 19rv, excerpts from Rabbi Jacob ben Asher's (c. 1270-1340) halakhic (Jewish legal) code *Orah hayyim* (The Path of Life), sec. 451, on the laws of purging utensils and crockery used in food preparation before Passover. *Orah hayyim*, vol. 1 of the author's four-volume halakhic compendium *Arba'ab turim* (Four Rows), was an immensely popular compendium of practical legal decisions relevant to everyday life. The *editio princeps* of the entire *Arba'ab turim* was printed in Pieve di Sacco in 1475;

ff. 20-25v, three *piyyutim* (liturgical poems): ff. 20-21v, *Et mo'adei ha-shem ekra aleikhem* (I Proclaim to You the Holidays of God), a *piyyut* by the Provençal rabbi Kalonymus ben Todros Nasi (d. c. 1194) that details the laws of Passover and was recited in many communities on the Sabbath before the festival. The work exists in about fifteen manuscripts and was probably published for the first time as part of the liturgical collection *Hizzunim ke-minhag ha-ma'araviyyim she-nitgoreru be-sizilya* (Constantinople, 1585);

ff. 22-24, *Imrat ha-shem tserufab* (The Word of God is Pure), a *piyyut* by the famous Provençal rabbi and poet Zerahiah ben Isaac ha-Levi Gerondi (c. 1125-c. 1186) that details the laws of Passover and was recited in some Provençal communities on the Sabbath before the festival. The work exists in only about six or seven other manuscripts and seems not to have been published until Isaac Morali's edition of 1908. It was recently republished, together with Rabbi Kalonymus Nasi's poem and a commentary, by Gabriel Zinner (1985);

ff. 24-25v, *Az me-rosh mi-kadmei erets nesukhab* (From the Beginning, from Everlasting, was It Set Up), a *piyyut* by the prominent Provencal poet Jehoseph ben Hanan Ezobi (see above) on the death of Moses that was recited in several Provencal and Sephardic communities on the festival of *Simhat Torah*. Some scholars had assumed, based on the acrostic, that the poem was written by one Mordechai ben Hanin ben Nathan, about whom virtually nothing is known; Leon J. Weinberger, however, demonstrates that it is attributed in some manuscripts to Jehoseph Ezobi and assumes this to be correct (Weinberger, 1966). As noted by Weinberger, the work is part of a genre of over one hundred Hebrew poems treating Moses's passing. It would seem that until Weinberger printed his version, the text had remained in manuscript (about eleven manuscripts, aside from ours, are known). The text here is slightly different than in Weinberg's edition and has also been partially vocalized by a later hand;

ff. 25v-29, further excerpts (see above) from Rabbi Jacob ben Asher's *Orah hayyim*, secs. 183, 430, 486, 488-490, 493, on the laws of Passover (relating to the Sabbath before the festival, the Passover Seder, the cup used for drinking the wine at the Seder, the number of cups of wine that must be drunk, and the order of prayer services on the holiday) and of the period between Passover and *Shavu'ot*. The extracts do not follow the order of the original composition but instead the copyist's own needs, and the text copied on the last folio or so appears to be original to the copyist; [f. 29v, blank];

ff. 30-34v, an anonymous commentary on the Song of Songs based to a large extent on grammatical discussions in Rabbi David Kimhi's (c. 1160-c. 1235) *Sefer ha-shorashim* (The Book of Roots). The author often explains the meaning of a difficult word by giving examples of the root's use in other contexts. He also has recourse to previous scholars, like Rabbis Hai ben Sherira Gaon (939-1038), Moses ibn Ezra (c. 1055-c. 1135), Abraham ibn Ezra, and Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi (c. 1200-1263), and sometimes glosses words using Arabic or Spanish translations. There is even a bit of subtle anti-Christian polemic in his explanation of *alamot* (maidens) in Song 1:3 (f. 30). This is the only known copy of this commentary. Siegmund Salfeld printed short snippets from it in 1879, but the majority of the work has never been published;

f. 35, the first half of Rabbi Eleazar ben Moses ha-Darshan of Wuerzburg's (mid-thirteenth century) *Sefer ha-yibud* (The Book of Divine Unity), a short essay on the absolute unity of God. Rabbi Eleazar was a grandson of Rabbi Judah ben Samuel he-Hasid (c. 1150-1217) and thus one of the later writers of the Hasidei Ashkenaz, a group of pietists living in Germany in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Gershom Scholem printed a version of this treatise based on London, British Library, MS Add. 15299 (Franco-Germany, fourteenth century), which had been copied by an anonymous student of Rabbi Eleazar's son Moses Azriel (Scholem, 1948). Recently, Daniel Abrams used seven other manuscripts (though not ours) to publish what he considered to be a more accurate version of the text that was free of the intrusions of Rabbi Moses Azriel's pupil (Abrams, 1994);

ff. 35rv, *Sod azazel* (The Secret of the Scapegoat), a short esoteric meditation on the meaning and mechanics of the scapegoat ceremony (Lev. 16) that was carried out on Yom Kippur in antiquity. In Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 858, 1 (Franco-Germany, fifteenth century), this text is attributed to Rabbi Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (c. 1165-c. 1230), the last great expositor of the traditions of the Hasidei Ashkenaz. It seems never to have been printed;

ff. 36-37v, an excerpt from Maimonides's introduction to ch. 10 of Tractate *Sanhedrin* of the Mishnah, in which he lists what he believes to be the thirteen fundamental principles of the Jewish faith. Maimonides's commentary on the Mishnah was originally composed in Judeo-Arabic and was translated into Hebrew in stages by various scholars. Because of its religious importance, the introduction to *Sanhedrin* in particular was translated and reworked many times over the years (Goshen-Gottstein, 1957). The present translation is the one attributed in two manuscripts to the great poet and translator Judah al-Harizi and in another to Samuel ben Judah ibn Tibbon (c. 1165-1232), scion of a famous family of translators (Kupfer, 1975; cf. Shailat, 1992, who doubts both attributions). About sixty manuscripts containing this translation have reached us (Kupfer, 1975). Moshe Goshen-Gottstein published an edition of the translation based on four manuscripts that he considered "representative," without making any claims of a full critical edition (Goshen-Gottstein, 1957). In the present manuscript, which is missing the end of the introduction, the numbering of the principles in the margin was added by a later hand;

III. ff. 38-51v: ff. 38-39, *Midrash va-yissa'u*, a homiletical expansion on Gen. 35:5 that chronicles the legendary wars of the sons of Jacob. In its most expansive form, this *midrash* contains three chapters, each one describing another of the battles of Jacob's sons: the first with the army of Nineveh, the second with the armies of the Amorite kings, and the third with the army of Esau and his sons. According to Zeev Safrai, the material in the second and third chapters has ancient antecedents in the pseudepigraphic *Testament of Judah* (chs. 3-7, 9) and *Book of Jubilees* (34:1-9; 37:1-25; 38:1-14), but the work in its present form derives from the early Middle Ages, perhaps having been translated from a Greek or Latin *Vorlage* (Safrai, 1987). Much of the text of these latter two chapters was incorporated into Rabbi Simeon of Frankfurt's (thirteenth century) midrashic anthology, *Yalkut shim'oni*, first published in Salonika in 1521-1526, while the first chapter was first printed as an appendix to R. H. Charles, *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees* (Oxford, 1895). The first person to publish all three chapters of the *midrash* together was Jacob Z. Lauterbach, based on six manuscripts, the *editio princeps* of *Yalkut shim'oni*, its reprint by Adolph Jellinek in *Beit ha-midrash*, vol. 3 (1855), and an article by Solomon Schechter (Lauterbach, 1933). It was subsequently re-edited by Tamar Alexander and Joseph Dan (who apparently were not aware of Lauterbach's work) based on six manuscripts (one of which was also used by Lauterbach), including ours (Alexander and Dan, 1973). The present manuscript contains only the first chapter of the *midrash* which, according to Alexander and Dan, is the chapter best represented in medieval copies of the text;

ff. 39v-40, *Amar rabbi yitshak ben parnakh*, a *midrash* on the hereafter that describes the process by which a person dies, as well as his subsequent judgment by the heavenly tribunal. Material on these themes appears in over fifty manuscripts from all parts of the Jewish world, going back to the fourteenth century (if not earlier), though apparently this genre of midrashic literature has not yet been subjected to intensive scholarly review. Some of the ideas contained herein were first published by the Hebrew philologist, grammarian, and lexicographer Elijah Levita (1468/1469-1549) in his *Sefer ha-tishbi* (Isny, 1541), s.v. *hibbut ha-kever*, and subsequently in Rabbi Isaac Akrish's *Iggeret ogeret* (see above) and Rabbi Elijah de Vidas' (sixteenth century) *Reshit hokhmah* (Venice, 1578), *Sha'ar ha-yir'ah*, ch. 12. More recently, Adolph Jellinek collected and rearranged the material, publishing parts of it in *Beit ha-midrash*, vol. 1 (1853) and vol. 5 (1873). The copy in our manuscript seems never to have been finished, as it ends off in the middle of a discussion; [f. 40v, blank];

ff. 41-42, several anonymous kabbalistic secrets: f. 41, beginning imperfectly, discusses the reward of the righteous in the hereafter; f. 41rv, beginning, "*sheloshah hemmah metivei lekhet*," a paraphrase of Prov. 30:29, expounds upon the differences between the concepts of *nefesh* (being), *ruah* (spirit), and *neshamah* (soul); ff. 41v-42, beginning "*yesh gan eden ba-arets be-makom yadua*," describes the "great secret," of the nature of the afterlife of the soul in the Garden of Eden and in Hell; concluding, f. 42, "*mi she-rotseh la-da'at ve-la'asot kol ha-bokhmot*" with the steps one should take and strategies one should employ when composing a work of wisdom.

All three of the latter secrets can be found as well in London, British Library, MS Or. 14056 (Sephardic, fifteenth-sixteenth centuries), and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS héb. 859 (Sephardic, fifteenth century), contains the text of *yesh gan eden ba-arets*. Both manuscripts, like ours, also include the document by Rabbi David Kohen Zevi described below, suggesting an intimate relationship between these three manuscripts. Recently, texts 2 and 3 were edited and discussed by Avishai Bar-Asher in his 2015 doctoral dissertation on conceptions and depictions of the Garden of Eden in thirteenth-century Kabbalah (for *sheloshah hemmah metivei lekhet*, he used our manuscript as the base text);

ff. 42-43v, the beginning of *Sefer ha-pe'er* (The Book of Splendor), an anonymous rhymed esoteric treatise on the laws of the phylacteries and the intentions one must have when wearing them. In another codex, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS ebr. 235 (Franco-Germany, 1541), there is an interpolation on f. 3 in which the authorship of the work is attributed to "Rabbi Shem Tov of Soria." Some have interpreted this as a reference to the legal scholar and mystic Rabbi Shem Tov ben Abraham ibn Gaon (late thirteenth-early fourteenth centuries), though it could technically apply to his contemporary Shem Tov ben Isaac Arduziel (Santob de Carrión), a Hebrew and Spanish poet who also lived in Soria. David S. Loewinger, in a study of Ibn Gaon's life and work, doubts very much the first interpretation of this attribution (1963). The third manuscript containing this tract, Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 2704 (Franco-Germany, fourteenth-fifteenth centuries), includes no attribution but is the lengthiest of the three extant copies of the text;

ff. 43v-44, the beginning of Rabbi Abraham ben Alexander of Cologne's (thirteenth century) *Sefer keter shem tov* (The Book of the Crown of a Good Name), a work on the four-letter Ineffable Name of God. Considered one of the most eminent students of Rabbi Eleazar of Worms (see above), Rabbi Abraham eventually left Germany for Spain where he studied the doctrines of Sephardic Kabbalah, particularly its traditions on the *sefirot* (divine spheres). His book therefore constitutes a first attempt to combine the teachings of the Hasidei Ashkenaz with those of the Spanish kabbalists. The work was immensely popular and is extant in about eighty manuscripts dating from before the year 1600. As in our manuscript, it follows *Sefer ha-pe'er* in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS ebr. 235 (in Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 2704, the order is reversed), suggesting that premodern copyists saw these texts as connected in some way. The first independent edition of *Sefer keter shem tov* was published in Amsterdam in 1810, and the most recent printing (as part of a larger collection of mystical writings) was in Jerusalem in 2001;

ff. 44v-45, strings of biblical verses connected associatively by theme and key words that repeat themselves, studded with citations from rabbinic literature (e.g., b*Berakhot* 28b and b*Avodah zarah* 4b). The purpose behind this collection of quotations is not immediately obvious; [ff. 45v-46, blank; ff. 46v-47, owners' marks; ff. 47v-51v, blank];

IV. ff. 52-61v: [ff. 52rv, blank]; ff. 53-59v, *Sefer moreh de'ab* (The Book That Teaches Knowledge), an anonymous anthology of ethical and sapiential teachings and epigrams derived from such diverse sources as the Mishnah, Talmud, *Avot de-rabbi natan*, several important anonymous tracts, Maimonides's *Iggeret tebiyyat ha-metim*, Joseph ben Meir ibn Zabara's (b. c. 1140) *Sefer sha'asbu'im*, Rabbi Judah al-Harizi's *Misblei bakhamim*, Rabbi Jehiel ben Jekuthiel ha-Rofe Anav's (thirteenth century) *Ma'alot ha-middot*, Simeon ben Zemah Duran's (1361-1444) *Magen avot*, the work of Rabbi Judah Halevi (c. 1075-1141), Abraham ibn Ezra, and Menahem ha-Me'iri (1249-1316), and especially from the Hebrew translations of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol's (c. 1021-c. 1057) *Kitab islah al-akblaq* (Hebrew title: *Tikkun middot ha-nefesh*), of Bahya ben Joseph ibn Paquda's (eleventh century) *Kitab al-bidaya ila fara'id al-qulub* (Hebrew title: *Hovot ha-levavot*), and of Hunain ibn Ishak's *Adab al-falasifa* (Hebrew title: *Muserei ha-filosofim*), among others.

The opening section (ff. 53-54) consists of mystical instructions for prayer, each line beginning with the formula *beni, bevei yodea...* (my son, know that...). Gershom Scholem attributed this text to Rabbi Azriel of Gerona (early thirteenth century), one of the most profound kabbalistic thinkers of his age, whose work was clearly influenced by Neoplatonic philosophy. The instructions (with slight differences) can also be found in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS héb. 859 (on which, see above), from which Scholem published his edition (Scholem, 1942). Scholem hypothesizes that these rules might have formed the introduction to, or selections from, Rabbi Azriel's lost commentary on the *siddur* (prayer book);

ff. 59v-61v, several short homilies:

ff. 59v-60, *Timtsa hamishab devarim be-mayim* (You Will Find that There are Five Categories of Water), which draws parallels between five types of water sources and five bodily fluids;

f. 60, selected quotations from b*Hagigah* 13b-14a about the diminution of the angels following the destruction of the Second Temple;

ff. 60rv, *Etrog yirmoz le-adam ha-rishon* (The Citron Hints at Primordial Man), which claims that the forbidden fruit Adam ate in the Garden of Eden was a citron;

f. 60v, a quotation from b*Bava metsi'a* 107b about the importance of eating bread in the morning;

f. 60v, *Shiv'ab ba'alei teshuvah bayu ba-olam* (The World Has Seen Seven Penitents), which lists the seven famous penitents of the Bible, from whom one can learn how to properly atone for one's sins: Adam, Cain, Reuben, Judah, Ahab, Manasseh, and Jeconiah;

ff. 60v-61, an alternate version of the apocryphal story of Bel and the Dragon, quoted in the name of Rabbi Shem Tov da Faro (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries), wherein Nebuchadnezzar inserts a slip of paper with the Ineffable Name of God written on it into the mouth of Bel the idol, thereby animating it. The biblical Daniel divines what had actually taken place and, while pretending to kiss the idol, uses his mouth to withdraw the slip of paper, causing Bel to fall to the ground. While Bel and the Dragon was not part of the canonical Hebrew Bible, the story was known to Jews through various adaptations, including those in *Midrash be-resbit rabbah*, *Midrash be-resbit rabbati*, and *Sefer yosippon*. Moritz Steinschneider published this version from our manuscript in an article on Da Faro, a

Sephardic kabbalist to whom is attributed a work on the theurgic powers of the commandments entitled *Sefer ha-yibud* (The Book of Divine Unity; not to be confused with the text by Rabbi Eleazar ben Moses ha-Darshan of Wuerzburg mentioned above) (Steinschneider, 1869);

f. 61, a brief exposition on how the words of the verse “this is My name for ever, and this is My memorial unto all generations” (Ex. 3:15), when combined numerically with parts of the Ineffable Name of God, hint at the 365 negative and 248 positive commandments of the Torah (see above);

f. 61, an explanation quoted in the name of Rabbi Azriel of Gerona (on whom, see above), using b*Niddah* 31b as a springboard, as to why it is that circumcision takes place on the eighth day after a Jewish boy is born. The discussion is followed by a kabbalistic commentary by Rabbi David Kohen Zevi (in another version, the name is David Kohen Tsedek). Also be found in two other manuscripts – Paris, BnF, MS héb. 859, and London, British Library, MS Or. 14056 (on both of which, see above) – and was published by Moshe Idel, who hypothesizes that the author may be identified with a well-known student of Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (1194-1270) by the name of Rabbi David ha-Kohen (Idel, 1980);

ff. 61rv, *Sod ha-havdalab*, an anonymous kabbalistic discussion of the *havdalab* ceremony performed at the end of the Sabbath, explaining why *havdalab* is recited at that time, why a manmade light source is used, why the fingernails are examined by the light of the fire, etc. This text belongs to a small group of esoteric secrets composed most probably by an early-fourteenth-century Castilian scholar who seems to have been familiar with at least some of the work of the famous kabbalist Rabbi Moses de Leon (c. 1240-1305). It is extant in at least one other copy, London, British Library, MS Or. 14056 (previously mentioned);

f. 61v, a brief meditation on two passages from b*Shabbat* 152b and *Midrash tebillim* 34:23 that record the reward of the righteous in the hereafter; ends imperfectly, as evidenced by the catchword at the bottom of the page;

V. ff. 62-70v: [ff. 62rv + 1 (unfoliated), blank]; ff. 63-68v, a convenient, well-organized, anonymous summary of the laws of ritual slaughter, beginning, “*mitsvat aseh mi she-rotseh le-ekbol besar behemah...*” (it is a positive commandment that he who wishes to eat animal meat...), here ending imperfectly, as evidenced by the discussion being cut off in the middle, as well as the catchword on the final folio; [f. 69, blank];

The text is unpublished; another copy of this unpublished text can be found in Moscow, Russian State Library, MS Guenzburg 1324 (Spain, fifteenth century). It discusses which animals must be ritually slaughtered, the precise location on the neck in which the cut must be made, how much of the trachea and esophagus need be severed, what types of implements may be used, how to check the implement for nicks, at what time of day and in what location ritual slaughter should be performed, how to actually perform the ritual, who may perform the ritual, and finally the five mistakes that render the slaughter ritually invalid. The authorities cited include the Talmud, Tosefta, Rabbis Isaac Alfasi (1013-1103), Solomon ben Isaac (1040-1105), Maimonides, Nahmanides, Isaac ben Joseph of Corbeil (d. 1280), Moses ben Jacob of Coucy (thirteenth century), and especially Solomon ibn Adret’s (c. 1235-c. 1310) *Torat ha-bayit*, as well as a pair of Italian scholars: Rabbis Judah ben Benjamin ha-Rofe Anav (thirteenth century) and Hosea ha-Levi.

ff. 69v-70, accounts of a synagogue *gabbai* (sexton), mainly in connection with donations made (in *scudi*) by congregants called to the reading of the weekly Torah portion. Some of the people named include Gabriel Coen, Giralomi dal Isach Mondolto, Rafael Fermo, and Josef de Salamon. The congregation's fiscal year seems to have commenced with the Torah portion *Naso* (Num. 4:21-7:89), following the holiday of Shavu'ot. These two leaves feature a total of three cycles of the Torah portions, representing three full fiscal years. It may be that the hand here is that of Abram di Laudadio Aziz di Ancona, one of the manuscript's owners (see above); [f. 70v, mostly blank];

VI. ff. 71-84: ff. 71rv, *Yesharim bukkei y-ab* (The Laws of God are Just), a poem by Rabbi Jehiel ben Alexander ha-Kohen summarizing the laws governing the examination of ritually slaughtered animals for physiological defects that render them unkosher. The text was first printed in Rabbi Benjamin ben Mattithiah of Arta's (c. 1475-c. 1545) responsa collection *Binyamin ze'ev* (Venice, 1539), ff. 465v-466v (no. 340 in the laws of *Issur ve-better*), though without attribution. Compared with the printed version, our copy is missing a number of stanzas, including the first two. Not listed by Israel Davidson in his monumental four-volume *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry* (New York, 1924-1933), this text is found in only about six other manuscripts aside from ours, dating from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries;

ff. 71v-72, *Addir shallit ve-ne'elam* (The Mighty, Ruling, Invisible One), a poem by Rabbi Abraham ben Marinus ha-Kohen of Trani on the same theme as immediately above. With time, this text came to be recited by certain Jewish communities on the Sabbath on which the first Torah portion of the annual cycle, *Be-resbit* (Gen. 1:1-6:8), was read in the synagogue. As such, it was included in the *Siddur tefillot ha-shanah le-minhag kehillot romanya* (Constantinople, 1510 [pp. 664-666] and Venice, 1523 [f. 438rv]), the prayer book of Romaniote (Greek) Jewry. In addition to slight textual variants between the present manuscript and the printed editions, each of them includes entire stanzas that the other does not have. The poem can be found in at least two other manuscripts, both of them Italian: Paris, BnF, MS héb. 312 (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries), and New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, MS Rab. 1094 (sixteenth century);

ff. 72v-74v, anonymous dream interpretations; the first section (f. 72v) is entitled *Sha'ar ha-perot* (The Chapter on [Dreams Concerning] Fruit) and discusses the meanings of various dreams involving fruits of different kinds. Thereafter (ff. 73-74v) follows a separate treatise entitled *Pitron balomot* (Interpretations of Dreams) that provides explanations for the meaning of dreams of all kinds (not restricted to visions of fruits). The text begins (f. 73) with instructions about what to do when one has a bad dream and ends (f. 74rv) with a citation from *Midrash tanbuma* to *Be-resbit* 13 (a story that originally appears in *yMa'aser sheni* 27b) noting that dream interpretation is relative and depends to a large extent on the interpreter.

The rabbis of the Talmud held differing views on the meaningfulness of dreams. Some felt that they were nothing more than reflections of what a person had experienced during his waking hours, others raised them to a level close to prophecy, and still others adopted positions somewhere between the extremes. The passages in *bBerakhot* 55a-57b (and particularly ff. 56b-57a) that provide detailed interpretations of various sorts of dreams would seem to reflect agreement with the first position. Subsequent Jewish literature continued the debate surrounding dreams, with kabbalists typically assigning greater significance to them than philosophers.

One of the first scholars to compose a thoroughgoing study synthesizing and organizing the various traditions on dream interpretation that had preceded him was Rabbi Solomon Almoli (c. 1485-c. 1542), a grammarian, philosopher, and kabbalist born in Spain who spent most of his life in Constantinople, working as both a rabbi/rabbinic judge and physician. His *Mefasher belmin* (Interpreter of Dreams) (Salonika, c. 1515) became very popular, especially among Eastern European Jews, and was reprinted often (usually under the title *Pitron balomot*), sometimes in abridged form, sometimes in translation (see the recent English translation by Yaakov Elman, 1998), and sometimes even without proper attribution. Although they disagree about the details, both Aaron Greenbaum (1966) and Isaac Yudlov (1979) have demonstrated the convoluted and murky nature of the printing history of this work. Because of its popularity, manuscripts of the book or sections of it abound (usually copied in regions, like the Muslim Near East, where print technology was scarce or unavailable).

While our manuscript was likely copied before the composition of Almoli's book, some of the material here overlaps to a large extent with his and may reflect one of the traditions from which he drew when compiling his work.

ff. 74v-75, *Eillu yemei ha-bodesh ve-shimmusbeihen*, an anonymous list of the thirty days of a typical lunar month (some months are twenty-nine days long) with their horoscopes: what one should or should not do and what will or will not happen on them. Activities discussed include going to the bathhouse, doing business, beginning journeys, praying and fasting, planting, going to court, finding lost items, lending and borrowing money, etc. For example, "Day 17 – he who gets sick on it will not convalesce, and keep yourself from performing any activity: do not give or take anything, and do not cut your hair. But it is good for accepting others' oaths, although he who swears falsely on it will die";

f. 75rv, *Eillu yemei ha-bodesh u-pitron balomot*, another anonymous list of the thirty days of a typical lunar month and the significance of any dream dreamt on each day: will it come true or not, and if it will, does it portend joy or sorrow. Similar lists can be found in many manuscripts of the *mabazor* (prayer book) of the Jews of Rome, as well as codices copied from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries in other parts of the Jewish world. One version made its way into Almoli's book as well (Treatise 1, Gate 3, Chapter 4, Section 2);

ff. 75v-76, *Megillat ta'anit batra*, an anonymous list of fast days commemorating terrible tragedies that befell the Jewish people from the times of the Bible through the period following the destruction of the Second Temple;

Shulamit Elizur, wrote an entire book on this enigmatic composition (2007), argues that its origins lie in Palestine in antiquity and that it was later incorporated into the geonic *Halakhot gedolot* (on which, see below). From the evidence we have, it would seem that these fasts were probably never widely observed; indeed, later on, many rabbis would point out the halakhically problematic nature of some of them. Still, the list achieved wide circulation, especially after it was included in Rabbi Jacob ben Asher's *Orah hayyim* (on which, see above), sec. 580, and then in the corresponding section of Rabbi Joseph Caro's (1488-1575) *Sbulhan arukh*. It also found its way into some manuscripts and all printed editions of *Megillat ta'anit* (*editio princeps*: Mantua, 1513), an unrelated, and earlier, Aramaic-language list of days on which fasting is *prohibited*, due to the happy occasions they mark. Elizur's critical edition of *Megillat ta'anit batra* is based on over seventy manuscripts and early

printed editions of the treatise. Many copies of the text differ in terms of the number of fasts, their dates, and the events they commemorate. Our version more or less matches that printed by Elizur, although a couple dates differ (see 26 Sivan and 9 Shevat).

f. 76, a collection of various Talmudic statements about proper bathroom etiquette (see b*Berakhot* 60b, 62a), extant in several manuscript *siddurim*;

f. 76rv, *Ke-ha-yom ha-zeh bi-yerushalayim* (As This Day in Jerusalem), an anonymous blessing for the bride and groom, meant to be added at the end of the marriage ceremony;

The text apparently first appears in *Seder rav amram ga'on* (on which, see below), though it has some parallels in the post-Talmudic tractate *Soferim* 19:7. Ezra Daniel Chwat hypothesizes that it originated as a kind of responsive blessing from those assembled at the wedding, somewhat like the formula *ke-shem she-nikbnas la-berit* recited at a circumcision (Chwat, 2014). Our text differs only slightly from the one he prints, and is followed by a number of laws about the wedding blessings culled from *Seder rav amram ga'on*;

ff. 76v-79, *Massekhet derekh erets zuta*, one of the minor tractates of the Talmud, which provides guidelines for moral behavior and encourages the cultivation of character traits like temperance, resignation, gentleness, modesty, patience, respect for age, and an attitude of forgiveness;

Scholars have long debated how to date this work, with hypotheses ranging from the early third century to the latter half of the eighth century (on which, see Sperber, 1994). Examination of the manuscript tradition reveals that the current form of the text, as it is usually printed at the end of the Talmudic tractates of *Nezikin* (Torts), consists of what were actually originally three separate smaller units: *Massekhet yir'at bet* (comprising chapters 1-4 and 9 of contemporary editions), *Derekh erets ze'ira* (comprising chapters 5-8), and what is now referred to as chapter 10. The popular nature of the material probably accounts, at least in part, for the chaotic state of its recensions.

Our copy contains the chapters of *Massekhet yir'at bet*, which Michael Higger considers to be the oldest stratum of the work (Higger, 1935). In his critical edition of *Massekhet derekh erets zuta*, Higger prints two slightly different versions of *Massekhet yir'at bet*; ours more closely reflects version 1 (with the exception of the conclusion), which he based on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Poc. 262 (Oriental, 1202) (Higger, 1929). While the present manuscript was not consulted for Higger's edition, Marcus van Loopik includes it in a list of sixty-seven copies of the work that he was able to identify (Van Loopik, 1991). The fact that our text is immediately followed by a digest of laws relating to the observance of the Sabbath (among other topics) may be reflective of the medieval custom, starting in the Land of Israel but eventually spreading throughout the Diaspora, to study *Massekhet derekh erets zuta* on the Sabbaths between Passover and Shavu'ot (on which, see Sperber, 1994).

ff. 79-82v, a collection of various ritual laws, including (in order): the laws of *havdalab* (f. 79rv), the *Shema* prayer (ff. 79v-80), the *Amidah* or statutory prayer (f. 80rv), the Sabbath and its sanctification (ff. 80v-81), and (once again) the sanctification of the Sabbath and *havdalab* (ff. 81-82v). The majority of the material here comes from *Seder rav amram ga'on*, although the text from the words *hilkhot kiddush ve-havdalab* on f. 81 to the top section of f. 82 derives from *Halakhot gedolot*. The

discussion at the bottom of f. 82v cuts off abruptly, indicating (along with the presence of a catchword) that the end of this section of the manuscript is missing;

*Seder rav amram ga'on*, edited by Rabbi Amram ben Sheshna Gaon (d. c. 875), is considered the oldest version of the Jewish prayer book to have come down to us. The work originated as a responsum probably sent to the Jewish community of Barcelona, which had asked the famous rabbi to compose for them an organized prayer rite, and from there it spread throughout Spain and other parts of Europe, including Provence, France, and Germany. It includes the text of the prayers for the entire year (weekdays, Sabbaths, holidays, fast days, etc.), as well as the laws and customs pertaining to them, based largely on the rulings of the Talmud and of previous *ge'onim*. Because of its popularity and daily relevance, it was adapted, added to, and changed in various locales and at different points in Jewish history, so that the surviving manuscripts of the text no longer reflect the version its author originally composed. As a result, Ernst Daniel Goldschmidt, who edited a critical edition of the book based on seven manuscripts as well as citations of the *Seder* in other early works, noted that his version could only ever approximate what the text *might* have looked like at the point of its inception (Goldschmidt, 1971). Somewhat surprisingly, the *editio princeps* of the *Seder* was published relatively late, by Nahman Nathan Coronel in Warsaw in 1865.

*Halakhot gedolot* (Numerous Laws) is one of the earliest halakhic codes, dating from the period of the Babylonian *ge'onim*. It provides a systematic and comprehensive digest of all the laws in the Babylonian Talmud (with some material deriving from the Jerusalem Talmud and the decisions of the *ge'onim*), grouping together discussions of the same topic found in disparate tractates and giving them a more logical order. Like *Seder rav amram ga'on*, the book achieved wide popularity, and in the course of time the rulings of later authorities were interpolated. As a result, the work has survived in two very different recensions, the first of which was published in Venice in 1548 and the second of which appeared in Berlin in 1888, edited from a Vatican manuscript by Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer (whose grandson, also named Azriel, edited a slightly different version of the book based on a Milan codex). (Though parts of *Halakhot gedolot* are extant in scores of manuscripts, only three contain most or all of the text.) The authorship of the book, as well as its relationship to Rabbi Yehudai Gaon's (eighth century) *Halakhot pesukot* (Decided Laws), have been the subjects of a good number of scholarly debates. The most prevalent view is that *Halakhot gedolot* was composed by Rabbi Simeon Kayyara (ninth century), who apparently came from Basra in Iraq and may have taught at the famous academy of Sura.

f. 83, *Seder yeridat ha-geshamim*, anonymous weather and produce forecasts for the year based on whether or not (and, if so, at what hour of the day) clouds appear in the sky on 13-15 Tammuz, as well as whether or not it rains or is cloudy on 19-20 Tammuz;

ff. 83-84v, a series of anonymous regimen calendars, containing dietary, hygiene, and/or humoral physiology rules: f. 83, *Eillu yamim kashim le-kol melakhab*, a list of four dates on which one should not work at all if they fall on a Monday. Those who let blood or eat goose meat on these days will die within a short period of time thereafter; f. 83rv, *Ve-eillu yamim aberim kashim le-bakkiz dam*, a list of two days of each month of the year on which one should not let blood; f. 83v, *Yamim ha-bakkazah* [sic], another list of two days of each month of the year (excepting Tammuz and Av) on which one should not let blood, plant, harvest produce, start on a sea journey, etc. During Tammuz and Av (and Shevat), one should not let blood at all. In addition, it is advised that once one lets blood, one should not eat/drink milk, cheese, or onions but rather roasted eggs, fatty meat, and wine; f. 84rv,

*Eillu ben yemei ba-bakkazot la-anashim ve-li-behemot*, a list of the thirty days of a typical solar month and whether or not it is a good idea to have one's own or one's animal's blood let on it, as well as the consequences that follow therefrom. In addition, for five months of the year (April, May, June, July, August) one should avoid letting blood from the right side of one's body, while during the rest of the year, one should avoid letting from the left side;

Many medieval Christians believed that certain days of the week and of the month, as well as certain months of the year, were particularly auspicious or inauspicious for hygienic/medical activities like bloodletting. Latin manuscripts include two basic types of calendars that kept track of these days and months: lunaries (prognoses for the outcome of illnesses, bloodletting, or dream interpretation based on the lunar calendar) and lists of so-called "Egyptian Days" (typically three days on the solar calendar, usually Mondays, on which one should avoid bloodletting and the consumption of goose meat). As discussed by Justine Isserles, medieval Hebrew codices reflect similar beliefs and often included parallel regimen calendars outlining the best days of the week, month, and year for eating certain foods and engaging in particular activities, especially bloodletting. She also points out that the scribes of these texts apparently preferred borrowing from, and adapting, Christian sources to drawing on the large body of medical, hygienic, and prophylactic knowledge recorded in the Talmud (on bloodletting in particular, see *bShabbat* 129a-b, 144a).

Popular texts of this genre can be found in large numbers of medieval and modern manuscripts copied in all parts of the Jewish world and dating from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, often in manuscripts that also include dream interpretation treatises, weather forecasts, discussions of how to calculate the *tekufot*, lists of fast days, and other calendrically-related material, as does our manuscript. For a selection of other manuscripts with similar content, see Oxford, MS Bodleian Library, Mich. 569 (Franco-Germany, late thirteenth century), Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm. 1771 (Italy, fourteenth-fifteenth centuries), Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 246 (Spain, 1429-1431), and St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy, MS B 40 (Italy, sixteenth century);

VII. ff. 85-90: ff. 85-87v, a list of difficult words, together with their definitions, in tractate *Shabbat* of the Babylonian Talmud. While chapter numbers (2-23; chapters 1 and 24 are missing) are recorded, the words seem to not necessarily appear in the chapters under which they are entered; [f. 88, owner's mark; ff. 88v-89, blank]; ff. 89v-90, recipes for various potions and elixirs written in a cursive Italian hand in Latin characters; [f. 90v, blank];

VIII. f. 91: f. 91, seven lines of dream interpretations attributed to the biblical Joseph.

Texts like this one, as well as those attributed to the biblical Daniel and to Rabbi Hai Gaon (939-1038), served as primary sources for Almoli's book-length study on Jewish traditions of dream interpretation (on which, see above); [f. 91v, owners's marks].

Note on collation: Neither Berliner nor Halberstam mentions anything about the contents of sections VII and VIII of the manuscript in his cataloging. While it is unlikely that these texts were added to the book between the appearance of their catalogs and Hirschfeld's (in which these sections are treated), one wonders why they were skipped in the first place.

As a miscellany, our manuscript brings together treatises of various genres. While the contents of the constituent treatises are not always thematically related, broad strokes can be drawn to characterize their general subject matter. Thus, section I mostly includes calendrical material, and section II is largely dedicated to the holidays, particularly Passover. Section III features an array of midrashic and kabbalistic-theological texts, while section IV focuses especially on ethical and sapiential teachings. Section V contains a halakhic tract on the laws of ritual slaughter, and section VI picks up on that theme, but also adds material relevant to the calendar, including Sabbath-related laws and calendrically-conditioned dream interpretations, weather predictions, hygiene regimens, and other popular texts. Finally, section VII, too, combines the learned with the folkish by featuring both a short lexicon of difficult terms in the Talmudic tractate *Shabbat* and a number of recipes in Italian for various potions, while section VIII simply continues the dream interpretation discussions from before.

Given the diverse and varied makeup of this codex, it seems likely that it was compiled by a learned layman or a midlevel communal functionary at some point in the sixteenth century in Italy. In fact, the accounts inscribed in section V would seem to indicate that it was probably owned, at least for a time, by a *gabbai* in a synagogue (perhaps one of the people named at various points throughout the manuscript, like Abram di Laudadio Aziz di Ancona). The calendrical focus of much of the material, as well as the ubiquity of practical halakhic discussion, also points to an owner responsible for the smooth operation of the ritual life of his community.

The scholarly value of the manuscript is therefore dual: on the one hand, it includes many rare texts (some of them unica) that have never been published or properly studied; on the other, it can teach us much about the social and religious function of the community *gabbai* in early modern Italy. The combination of folkish and learned works similarly reveals a good deal about the intellectual orientation of Jews in that time and place. This codex, then, is interesting in the realm of both intellectual and cultural history and deserves to be analyzed not only for its content but for what it can tell us about the society that produced it.

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### ONLINE RESOURCES

Our MS (accessible from within the National Library of Israel)

[http://rosetta.nli.org.il/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps\\_pid=IE10599358](http://rosetta.nli.org.il/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE10599358)

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